



فضل علم السلف على علم الخلف

The Superiority of the Knowledge of the Salaf Over the Knowledge of the Later Generations

ابن رجب الحنبلي

By Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī
(d. 795 AH)

الحمد لله رب العالمين، وصلى الله على محمد وآله وصحبه أجمعين وسلم تسليماً
كثيراً.

أما بعد؛ فهذه كلمات مختصرة في معنى العلم، وانقسامه إلى علم نافع وعلم غير
نافع، والتنبيه على فضل علم السلف على علم الخلف. فنقول وبالله المستعان، ولا
حول ولا قوة إلا بالله:

All praise and thanks are due to Allah. May Allah send His blessings and peace
upon Muhammad (ﷺ), his Family, and Companions. To proceed:

These are some concise words about the meaning of knowledge and its sorting into
that which is beneficial and that which is not; as well as highlighting the excellence
of the knowledge of the *Salaf* over that of the *Khalaf*. We say, seeking Allah's aid, and
there is no power or ability except with Him.

قد ذكر الله -تعالى- في كتابه العلم تارة في مقام المدح، وهو العلم النافع، وذكر
العلم تارة في مقام الذم، وهو العلم الذي لا ينفع. فأما الأول فمثل قوله تعالى: {قُلْ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، وقوله: {شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ، وقوله: {وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا وقوله: إِنَّمَا
يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ، وما قص الله سبحانه من قصة آدم وتعليمه الأسماء
وعرضهم على الملائكة وقولهم: سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ
الْحَكِيمُ، وما قص الله سبحانه من قصة موسى -عليه السلام- وقوله للخضر: هَلْ
أَنْبَغُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَ مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُسُدًا، فهذا هو العلم النافع.

Allah has mentioned knowledge in His Book, sometimes in a praiseworthy way; this is beneficial knowledge, and at other times in a blameworthy way; this is unbeneficial knowledge.

Examples of the first category include Allah's statements,

“Say: are they equal, those who possess knowledge and those who do not?” [Az-Zumar: 9]

“Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Him, and so do the angels and those who have knowledge, upholding justice” [Āl-‘Imrān: 18]

“And say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge” [Ṭā Hā: 114]

“It is only the scholars amongst His servants who truly fear Allah” [Fāṭir: 28]

This type of knowledge is also found in what Allah mentions regarding the story of Adam, Allah teaching him the names of all things and this then being presented to the angels, who responded,

“Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except that which You have given us. You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.” [Al-Baqarah: 32]

Another example can be found in the story of Mūsā and what he said to Khidr,

“May I follow you so you may teach me the right guidance which you have been taught?” [Al-Kahf: 66]

...this is beneficial knowledge.

وقد أخبر عن قوم أنهم أوتوا علماً ولم ينفعهم علمهم، فهذا علم نافع في نفسه لكن صاحبه لم ينتفع به، قال تعالى: مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا، وقال تعالى: وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ * وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ، وقال تعالى: فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ

هَذَا الْأَذْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلُهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ ... الْآيَةُ وَقَالَ :
وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ . وَعَلَى تَأْوِيلٍ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْآيَةِ عَلَى عِلْمٍ عِنْدَ مَنْ أَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ .

Allah has informed us about a people who were given knowledge but their knowledge did not benefit them. This knowledge, in and of itself, is beneficial, but the one to whom it was granted was not benefited by it. Allah says,

“The example of those who were charged to obey the Torah, but did not do so, are like a donkey saddled with books” [Al-Jumu‘ah: 5]

“And recite to them the tale of the one to whom We gave Our signs, but he sloughed them off, so Satan took him as a follower and he became of those who were deceived. If it had been Our will, We could have raised him up by these signs, but he clung to the earth and pursued his desires.” [Al-A‘rāf: 175-176]

“And after them came a people who inherited the Book. They took the fleeting gains of this lowly world, saying, 'We shall be forgiven.' Yet if a similar chance came to them again, they would seize it.” [Al-A‘rāf: 169]

Allah also says,

“So Allah allowed him to stray despite knowledge.” [Al-Jāthiyah: 23]

One of the explanations of this verse is that Allah sent him astray in spite of his knowledge.

وَأَمَّا الْعِلْمُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَهُ اللَّهُ -تعالى- عَلَى جِهَةِ الذَّمِّ لَهُ، فَقَوْلُهُ فِي السَّحَرِ: وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ، وَقَوْلُهُ: فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ

يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ، وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ

As for the knowledge that Allah has mentioned in a blameworthy way, are for example, His statement regarding magic,

“And they learn that which harms them and does not benefit them. And surely they know that he who purchases it would have no portion in the Hereafter.” [Al-Baqarah: 102]

“And when their messengers brought them clear proofs, they exulted in the knowledge that they already had, but they were soon overtaken by that which they had mocked.” [Ghāfir: 83]

“They know the outer things of the life of this world, but are heedless of the Hereafter.” [Ar-Rūm: 7]

ولذلك جاءت السنة بتقسيم العلم إلى نافع وغير نافع، والاستعاذة من العلم الذي لا ينفع، وسؤال العلم النافع.

ففي "صحيح مسلم عن زيد بن أرقم أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يقول :
"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ، وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ، وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَتَّبِعُ،
وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا."

Likewise, the *Sunnah* also divides knowledge into beneficial and unbeneficial. It guides us to seek refuge from knowledge that is not beneficial and to ask for knowledge that is.

Imam Muslim records on the authority of Zayd ibn Arqam that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

O Allah! I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit; from a heart that has no fear; from a soul that is never content; and from a supplication that is not responded to.

وخرّجه أهل السنن من وجوه متعددة عن النبي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم وفي بعضها: "وَمِنْ دُعَاءٍ لَا يُسْمَعُ." وفي بعضها اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ الْأَرْبَعِ.»

The compilers of the Sunan also recorded this narration via a number of different routes, from the Prophet (ﷺ). In some of them, the wording is,

“from a supplication that is not heard.”

and in others, the wording is,

“I seek refuge in You from these four.”

وخرج النسائي من حديث جابر أن النبي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم كان يقول: «اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ

وخرّجه ابن ماجه ولفظه أن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال: «سَلُوا اللَّهَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَتَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ.»

وخرّجه الترمذي من حديث أبي هريرة أن النبي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم كان يقول: «اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي، وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي، وَزِدْنِي عِلْمًا.»

وخرج النسائي من حديث أنس "أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يدعو: «اللَّهُمَّ
انْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي، وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي، وَارْزُقْنِي عِلْمًا تَنْفَعُنِي بِهِ»."

An-Nasā'ī recorded a narration on the authority of Jābir that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

"O Allah! I ask You for beneficial knowledge that benefits and I seek Your refuge from unbeneficial knowledge."

This was also recorded by Ibn Mājah, with the wording,

"Ask Allah for beneficial knowledge and seek refuge with Allah from unbeneficial knowledge."

At-Tirmidhī has also recorded this on the authority of Abu Hurayrah with the wording,

"O Allah! Benefit me by what You have taught me, teach me what will be benefit me, and increase me in knowledge."

An-Nasā'ī recorded a narration on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to supplicate saying,

"O Allah! Benefit me with what You have taught me, teach me what will benefit me, and provide me with knowledge by which You will allow me to benefit."

وخرج أبو نعيم (هـ) (من حديث أنس أن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - كان يقول :
«اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ إِيمَانًا دَائِمًا، فَرَبَ إِيمَانٍ غَيْرِ دَائِمٍ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ وَعِلْمًا نَافِعًا، فَرَبَ
عِلْمٍ غَيْرِ نَافِعٍ».

وخرج أبو داود من حديث بريدة عن النبي صَلَّى الله عليه وسلم قال: "إِنَّ مِنْ
الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا، وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ جَهْلًا."

وإن صعصعة بن صوحان فسر قوله: "إِنَّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ جَهْلًا"، أن يتكلف العالم إلى
علمه ما لم يعلم فيجهله ذلك.

ويفسر أيضاً: بأن العلم الذي يضر ولا ينفع جهل؛ لأنّ الجهل به خير من العلم
به؛ فإذا كان الجهل به خيراً منه فهو شر من الجهل، وهذا كالسحر وغيره من
الجهل، وهذا كالسحر وغيره من العلوم المضرة في الدين أو في الدنيا.

Abu Nu'aym recorded the narration of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

“O Allah! I ask You for faith that endures, for faith can
disappear, and I ask You for knowledge that benefits for some
knowledge can be unbeneficial.”

Abu Dāwūd recorded the narration of Buraydah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Indeed,
some forms of speech are magic and some knowledge is ignorance."

Şa'sa'ah ibn Şuwḥān explained the statement, "and some knowledge is ignorance"
to mean, 'A scholar burdens himself with taking on knowledge that is not
necessary, and as a result, he becomes ignorant.' It has also been explained to
mean, 'The knowledge which brings about harm and does not benefit is
actually ignorance.' This is because being ignorant of it is better than knowing
it. Therefore, if ignorance of that knowledge is better than knowing it, its
knowledge is worse than ignorance. Such is the case with magic and other types
of knowledge that harms one in their religion or worldly life.

وقد رُوي عن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - تفسير بعض العلوم التي لا تنفع. ففي "مراسيل أبي داود عن زيد بن أسلم قال": قيل: يا رسول الله، ما أعلم فلانًا! قال: بم؟ قالوا بأنساب الناس، قال: علم لا ينفع وجهالة لا تضر."

It has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) the examples of some of the sciences of knowledge that are unbeneficial. Abu Dāwūd, in *al-Marāsīl*, recorded on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam that it was said, 'O Messenger of Allah! How knowledgeable is so and so!' He inquired, 'Knowledgeable of what?' They replied, 'Genealogy.' He remarked, "This is knowledge that does not benefit, and ignorance of it causes no harm."

وخرّجه أبو نعيم في كتاب "رياضة المتعلمين" من حديث بقية عن ابن جريج عن أبي هريرة مرفوعًا. وفيه أنهم قالوا: أعلم الناس بأنساب العرب، وأعلم الناس بالشعر، وبما اختلفت فيه العرب. وزاد في آخره: "العلم ثلاثة ما خلاهن فهو فضل: آية محكمة، أو سنة قائمة، أو فريضة عادلة. وهذا الإسناد لا يصح، وبقية دلّسه عن غير ثقة."

Abu Nu'aym, in his book, *Riyāḍat al-Muta'allimīn*, recorded a narration from Baqiyyah; who narrated from Ibn Jurayj; who narrated from Abu Hurayrah; from the Prophet (ﷺ). In this wording, they responded concerning this knowledgeable man that he was, 'the most learned of people concerning the genealogies of the Arabs, poetry, and the differences that existed amongst the Arabs'. At the end of this narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) added, "Knowledge is of three types, anything else is surplus: an unequivocal verse of the Qur'an, an established Sunnah, and an equitable ruling of inheritance." This chain of narration is not authentic; Baqiyyah is a *mudallis*, and here narrated from one who

is not trustworthy.

وآخر الحديث خرجه أبو داود وابن ماجه من حديث عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص مرفوعاً: **«الْعِلْمُ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ فَضْلٌ: آيَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ، أَوْ سُنَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ، أَوْ فَرِيضَةٌ عَادِلَةٌ»** وفي إسناده عبد الرحمن بن زياد الإفريقي وفيه ضعف مشهور.

The end of this narration has also been recorded by Abu Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Knowledge is of three types, anything additional is surplus: an unequivocal verse of the Qur’an, an established Sunnah, and an equitable ruling of inheritance." Its chain of narration contains ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Ziyād al-Ifriqī who is well-known to be weak.

وقد ورد الأمر بأن يتعلم من الأنساب ما نوصل به إلى الأرحام، من حديث أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: **«تَعَلَّمُوا مِنْ أَنْسَابِكُمْ مَا تَصِلُونَ بِهِ أَرْحَامَكُمْ»** خرجه الإمام أحمد والترمذي

The command to learn genealogy to the extent that it allows one to join their ties of kinship is found in the narration of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Learn of your genealogies such that allows you to join the ties of kinship." Recorded by Tirmidhī and Aḥmad

وخرجه حميد بن زنجويه من طريق آخر عن أبي هريرة مرفوعاً: **«تَعَلَّمُوا مِنْ أَنْسَابِكُمْ مَا تَصِلُونَ بِهِ أَرْحَامَكُمْ ثُمَّ انْتَهَوْا، وَتَعَلَّمُوا الْعَرَبِيَّةَ مَا تُعْرِفُونَ بِهِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ**

ثُمَّ انْتَهُوا، وَتَعَلَّمُوا مِنَ النُّجُومِ مَا تَهْتَدُونَ بِهِ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ثُمَّ انْتَهُوا " وفي إسناده رواه: ابن لهيعة، **وخرج أيضاً من زواية نعيم بن أبي هند قال: قال** عمر: تعلموا من النجوم ما تهتدون به في بركم وبحركم ثم أمسكوا، وتعلموا من النسبة ما تصلون به أرحامكم، وتعلموا ما يحل لكم من النساء ويحرم عليكم ثم انتهوا

Ḥumayd ibn Zanjawayh recorded this narration from another route, also on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ), "Learn of your genealogies such that allows you to join the ties of kinship, then stop. Learn of the Arabic language that which allows you to understand the Book of Allah, then stop. Learn of astronomy that which allows you to travel at night upon land and sea, then stop." Its chain of narration contains the narrator, Ibn Lahī'ah.

He also recorded, from the route of Nu'aym ibn Abū Hind, that 'Umar said, "Learn of astronomy that which allows you to travel through land and sea, then stop. Learn of genealogy that which allows you to join the ties of kinship and would teach you which women are lawful for you and which are not, then stop."

وروى مسعر عن محمد بن عبيد الله قال: قال عمر بن الخطاب: تعلموا من النجوم ما تعرفون به القبلة والطريق.

وكان النخعي لا يرى بأساً أن يتعلم الرجل من النجوم ما بهتدي به.

ورخص في تعلم منازل القمر أحمد وإسحاق، نقله عنهما حرب، زاد إسحاق: ويتعلم من أسماء النجوم ما يهتدي به.

وكره قتادة تعلم منازل القمر، ولم يرخص ابن عيينة فيه، ذكره حرب عنهما.

وقال طائوس: رب ناظر في النجوم ومتعلم حروف أبي جاد ليس له عند الله خلاق.

خرجه حرب، وخرجه حميد بن زنجويه من رواية طائوس عن ابن عباس

Mis'ar reported from Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydillāh that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, "Learn of astronomy that which allows you to know the direction of the *qiblah* and roads.' An-Nakha'ī did not see any problem in a person learning enough about astronomy to use it as a guide. Aḥmad and Ishāq allowed learning about the phases of the moon, as reported from them by Ḥarb. Ishāq additionally said that it was allowable to learn the names of the stars that which allows one to be guided.

Qatādah disliked that the phases of the moon be learnt, while Ibn 'Uyaynah did not allow it; Ḥarb quoted this from them. Ṭāwūs said, "Perhaps the one who studies the stars and the letters of Abu Jād has no standing with Allah,' recorded by Ḥarb. It was also recorded by Ḥumayd ibn Zanjawayh from Ṭāwūs as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās.

وهذا محمول على علم التأثير لا علم التسيير فإن علم التأثير باطل محرم، وفيه ورد الحديث المرفوع: «مَنْ اقْتَبَسَ شَعْبَةً مِنَ النُّجُومِ فَقَدْ اقْتَبَسَ شُعْبَةً مِنَ السِّحْرِ» خرجه أبو داود من حديث ابن عباس مرفوعاً. وخرج أيضاً من حديث قبيصة مرفوعاً «الْعِيَافَةُ وَالطَّيْرَةُ وَالطَّرْقُ مِنَ الْجِبْتِ» والعيافة: زجر الطير، والطرق: الخط في الأرض. فعلم تأثير النجوم باطل محرم، والعمل بمقتضاه كالنقرب إلى النجوم، وتقريب القرابين لها كفر.

This is to be understood to refer to the knowledge of astrology, not to that knowledge that allows one to travel through the earth, the former being false and prohibited.

There is a narration concerning this in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever acquires knowledge of the stars has acquired a branch of magic." Recorded by Abu Dāwūd from the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

He also records the narration of Qabīṣah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Taking omens from the flight of birds, taking evil omens in things, and geomancy are all forms of magic." *Iyāfah* refers to the practice of divination through the frightening of birds and *farq* refers to the practice of divination through the drawing of lines on the earth. Therefore, astrology is false and prohibited, and acting according to it by seeking to draw close to stars or offering sacrifices to them, constitutes disbelief.

وأما علم التسيير فإذا تعلم منه ما يحتاج إليه للاهتداء ومعرفة القبلة، والطرق كان جائزاً عند الجمهور. وما زاد عليه فلا حاجة إليه وهو يشغل عما هو أهم منه، وربما أدى التدقيق فيه إلى إساءة الظن بمحاربي المسلمين في أمصارهم. كما وقع ذلك كثيراً من أهل هذا العلم قديماً وحديثاً، وذلك يفضي إلى اعتقاد خطأ الصحابة والتابعين في صلاتهم في كثير من الأمصار، وهو باطل.

As for learning about the stars what is needed for navigation and travel, finding the direction of the *qiblah*, and knowing the routes of travel, this is permissible in the view of the majority. There is no need to learn any more of this science than what is needed, for to do so would preoccupies one from learning more important things. Over-studying this science in minute detail can lead one to start doubting the directions of the *qiblah* that the Muslims have become accustomed to. This has actually happened to many astronomers, past and present. This in turn leads to the belief that the Companions and Tabi'ūn prayed in the wrong direction in many of the lands they settled in, and this is a false belief.

وقد أنكر الإمام أحمد الاستدلال بالجدي، وقال إِنَّمَا ورد **"ما بين المشرق والمغرب قبلة"** يعني: لم يرد اعتبار الجدي ونحوه من النجوم.

وقد أنكر ابن مسعود عَلَى كعب قوله: **إن الفلك تدور**. وأنكر ذلك مالك وغيره، وأنكر الإمام أحمد عَلَى المنجمين قولهم أن الزوال يختلف في البلدان. وقد يكون إنكارهم أو إنكار بعضهم لذلك؛ لأن الرسل لم تتكلم في هذا وإن كان أهله يقطعون به، وإن الاشتغال به ربما أدى إِلَى فساد عريض.

This is why Imam Aḥmad rejected the use of the North Star, instead saying, "All that is reported is, "What is between the east and the west is the *qiblah*." Meaning that the narrations do not tell us to consider the North Star or other stars for this purpose.

Ibn Mas'ūd rejected the words of Ka'b when he said, "The heavenly spheres are subject to determined movement", and likewise such matters were rejected by Mālik and others. Imam Aḥmad even rejected the statement of some astronomers that noon occurs at different times in different lands.

It is possible that their reasoning behind rejecting this, or at least the reasoning of some of them, was the fact that the Messengers had never spoken about such issues - despite the fact that the astronomers declare this with certainty. It is possible busying oneself with this can lead to great harm.

وقد اعترض بعض من كان يعرف هذا عَلَى حديث **"النزول ثلث الليل الآخر"**، وقال: **ثلث الليل** يختلف باختلاف البلدان فلا يمكن أن يكون النزول في وقت معين. ومعلوم بالضرورة من دين الإسلام قبح هذا الاعتراض، وأن الرسول - صلى الله عليه وسلم - أو خلفاء الراشدين لو سمعوا من يعترض به لما ناظروه، بل بادروا إِلَى عقوبته أو إلحاقه بزمرة المخالفين المنافقين المكذبين.

Some astronomers used their knowledge to reject the narration of Allah's descent during the last third of the night by saying, 'The last third of the night occurs at different times in different countries, so it is not possible that this descent can occur at one time.' The abhorrence of this claim is known in the religion by necessity. If the Messenger (ﷺ) or the Rightly-Guided Caliphs were to have heard such claims, not only would they have not listened to them, but they would have rushed to punish these people and would have considered them to be amongst the deniers and hypocrites.

كذلك التوسع في علم الأنساب هو مما لا يحتاج إليه، وقد سبق عن عمر وغيره النهي عنه. مع أن طائفة من الصحابة والتابعين كانوا يعرفونه ويعتنون به.

The same applies to delving too deeply into genealogy; there is no need for it. The statements of 'Umar and others prohibiting this have already preceded. This despite the fact that a group of the Companions and Successors knew this science and studied it.

وكذلك التوسع في علم العربية لغة ونحوًا، وهو مما يشغل عن العلم الأهم، والوقوف معه يحرمُ علمًا نافعًا. وقد كره القاسم بن مخيمرة علم النحو، **وقال**: أوله شغل وآخره بغي، وأراد به التوسع في معرفة اللغة وغريبها وأنكر على أبي عبيد توسعه في ذلك **وقال**: هو يشغل عما هو أهم منه. **ولهذا يقال**: إن العربية في الكلام كالملاح في الطعام. **يعني**: أنه يؤخذ منها ما يصلح الكلام كما يؤخذ من الملاح ما يصلح الطعام، وما راد على ذلك فإنه يفسده.

The same applies to delving too deeply into the Arabic language and its grammar, it can also distract one from learning more important knowledge, and to restrict oneself to only this knowledge, prevents one from acquiring much

more beneficial knowledge.

Al-Qāsim ibn Mukhaymirah disliked Arabic morphology, he said, “Its beginning stages is a distraction and its end is transgression.” He was referring to delving too deeply into it. Imam Aḥmad also disliked studying the Arabic language too deeply and, rebuked Abu ‘Ubayd for doing so, saying, “It diverts one from studying more important matters.” This is why it is said, 'Learning Arabic grammar in language is like salt on food,' meaning, you take what is needed to correct your speech just as salt is taken to flavour food. More than what is needed would spoil it.

وكذلك علم الحساب يحتاج منه إلى ما يعرف به حساب ما ينتفع من قسمة
الفرائض والوصايا والأموال التي تقسم بين المستحقين لها، والزائد على ذلك مما
لا ينتفع به إلا في مجرد رياضة الأذهان وصقالها لا حاجة إليه ويشغل عما هو
أهم منه.

The same applies to delving too deeply into mathematics even though it can be needed to work out the shares of inheritance, wills, and the division of property amongst those who are due it. Anything additional to this is merely mental exercise and serves to sharpen the mind, there is no need for it and to delve into it preoccupies one from that which is more important.

وأما ما أحدث بعد الصحابة من العلوم التي توسع فيها أهلها وسموها علومًا،
وظنوا أن من لم يكن عالمًا بها فهو جاهل أو ضال، فكلها بدعة. وهي من
محدثات الأمور المنهي عنها، فمن ذلك ما أحدثته المعتزلة من الكلام في القدر
وضرب الأمثال لله، وقد ورد النهي عن الخوض في القدر.

As for those sciences that were invented after the time of the Companions,

whose proponents delved deeply into them and claimed that they were from knowledge, and that whoever is not aware of them is either an ignorant or misguided, all of them are innovations. They are amongst the newly invented affairs that have been prohibited.

From amongst these sciences are those innovated by the Mu'tazilah in their discussion of the pre-decree (*qadr*), and setting up analogies for Allah, despite there being a clear prohibition of delving into *qadr*.

وفي صحيح ابن حبان والحاكم عن ابن عباس مرفوعاً: "لَا يَزَالُ أَمْرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ مُوَافِياً وَمُقَارِباً مَا لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمُوا فِي الْوَلَدَانِ وَالْقَدَرِ." وقد رُوي موقوفاً، ورجح بعضهم وقفه. وخرج البيهقي من حديث ابن مسعود مرفوعاً: "إِذَا ذُكِرَ أَصْحَابِي فَأَمْسِكُوا، وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ النُّجُومُ فَأَمْسِكُوا"، وقد رُوي من وجوه متعددة في أسانيدھا مقال.

Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim recorded the narration of Ibn 'Abbās that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "This nation shall always remain steadfast and balanced so long as they do not discuss the outcome of children and the divine decree." This has also been reported as a statement of Ibn 'Abbās only and some declared this to be more correct.

Al-Bayhaqī recorded the narration of Ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "When my Companions are mentioned, refrain, and when the stars are mentioned, refrain."

This has been reported via a number of chains, all of them being problematic.

ورُوي عن ابن عباس "أنَّه قال لميمون بن مهران: إياك والنظر في النجوم، فإنها تدعو إلى الكهانة، وإياك والقدر فإنَّه يدعو إلى الزندقة، إياك وشتم أحد من أصحاب محمد - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فيكبك الله في النار على وجهك وخرجه أبو نعيم مرفوعاً ولا يصح رفعه.

It is reported that Ibn ‘Abbās said to Maymūn ibn Mihrān, “Beware of looking into the stars for they lead to fortune telling, and beware of delving into the divine decree for this leads to heresy, and beware of abusing any of the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ), lest Allah throw you face first into the Fire.” Abu Nu‘aym also reports this as a Prophetic statement, but it is not authentic.

والنهي عن الخوض في القدر يكون على وجوه:

منها: ضرب كتاب الله بعضه ببعض فينزع المثبت للقدر بآية والنافي له بأخرى ويقع التجادل في ذلك. وهذا قد رُوي أنَّه وقع في عهد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - غضب من ذلك ونهى عنه وهذا من جملة الاختلاف في القرآن والمرأء فيه، وقد نهى عن ذلك

ومنها: الخوض في القدر إثباتاً ونفيًا "بالأقيسة العقلية، كقول القدرية: لو قدر وقضى ثم عذب كان ظالمًا، وقول من خالفهم: إن الله جبر العباد على أفعالهم، ونحو ذلك.

ومنها: الخوض في سر القدر، وقد ورد النهي عنه، عن علي وغيره من السلف،

فإن العباد لا يطلعون على حقيقة ذلك

The prohibition of delving into the divine decree encompasses a number of matters:

1. Using parts of the Book to contradict other parts. For example, the one who affirms the divine decree quote a particular verse, while the one who denies it quote another verse and they start debating. It is reported that such an event happened during the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), whereupon he became angry and prohibited it. Such matters are from disputing about the Qur'an and this has been prohibited.
2. Discussing the divine decree, either by way of affirmation or negation, by rationalising and employing logical arguments. This is exemplified by the saying of the Qadariyyah, 'Were Allah to decree everything and then punish people, He would be unjust and oppressive,' and the saying of their opposites, 'Allah has forced the servants into performing their actions,' and the likes.
3. Delving into the secrets of the divine decree, the prohibition of which has been reported from 'Alī and others from amongst the Salaf. This is because the servants will never be able to understand its true reality.

ومن ذلك- أعني: محدثات الأمور- ما أحدثه المعتزلة، ومن حذا حذوهم من الكلام

في ذات الله -تعالى- وصفاته بأدلة العقول وهو أشد خطرًا من الكلام في القدر؛

لأنّ الكلام في القدر كلام في أفعاله، وهذا كلام في ذاته وصفاته

Another example of this, i.e. newly invented matters, is the innovation of the Mu'tazilah, and those who followed their path, in their discussion of the essence of

Allah, Exalted is He, and His Attributes through the use of rationalisation. This is more dangerous than delving into the divine decree, because discussing the divine decree is to discuss the actions of Allah, whereas here one is discussing His very essence and Attributes.

وانقسم هؤلاء إلى قسمين: أحدهما: من نفى كثيرًا مما ورد به الكتاب والسنة من ذلك لاستلزامه عنده التشبيه بالمخلوقين، كقول المعتزلة: لو رُوي لكان جسمًا؛ لأنه لا يرى إلا في جهة. وقولهم: لو كان له كلام يسمع لكان جسمًا. ووافقهم من نفى الاستواء، فنفوه لهذه الشبهة، وهذا طريق المعتزلة والجهمية. وقد اتفق السلف على تبديعهم وتضليلهم، وقد سلك سبيلهم في بعض الأمور كثير ممن انتسب إلى السنة والحديث من المتأخرين.

This group is divided into two categories:

The first: Those who negate much of what is reported in the Book and Sunnah regarding the Attributes of Allah, due to the implication, in their view, of a likeness between the creation and Creator. From amongst these are the Mu'tazilah who said, 'If He can be seen, He must be a body because one requires a direction in which to see', and, 'If His speech can be heard, He must be a body.' Those who negated His ascension did so by means of the same reasoning. This is the path of the Mu'tazilah and the Jahmiyyah; and the Salaf agreed that they were misguided innovators. This path of theirs has been traversed, in some matters, by many of those who are attributed to the Sunnah and *ḥadīth* amongst the later generations.

والثاني: من رام إثبات ذلك بأدلة العقول التي لم يرد بها الأثر، ورد على أولئك مقاتلهم، كما هي طريقة مقاتل بن سليمان ومن تابعه كنوح بن أبي مريم، وتابعهم طائفة من المحدثين قديماً وحديثاً، وهو أيضاً مسلك الكرامية، فمنهم من أثبت لإثبات هذه الصفات الجسم، إما لفظاً وإما معنى، ومنهم من أثبت لله صفات لم يأت بها الكتاب والسنة كالحركة وغير ذلك مما هي عنده لازم الصفات الثابتة. وقد أنكر السلف على مقاتل قوله في رده على جهم بأدلة العقل، وبالغوا في الطعن عليه، ومنهم من استحل قتله، منهم مكي بن إبراهيم شيخ البخاري وغيره

The second category: Those who wished to affirm the Attributes of Allah via logical rationalisations that are not mentioned in the texts, and through these they refuted the stances of the first group. Proponents of this include Muqātil ibn Sulaymān and those who followed him such as Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam; they were in turn followed by a group of the *Muḥaddithīn* of the past and present.

This is also the way of the Karramiyyah. From amongst them were those who affirmed a body for Allah, as a result of their affirming His Attributes, either in meaning or wording. Others from amongst them affirmed attributes for Allah that have not been mentioned in the Book and Sunnah, such as 'movement' which they believe to be necessary outcomes of His Attributes that have been established.

The Salaf refuted Muqātil's statements and what he did in his refutation of Jahm, and they went to great lengths in censuring him, to the extent that some of them considered it lawful to kill him! Amongst these was Makkī ibn Ibrāhīm, the

teacher of Al-Bukhārī.

والصواب ما عليه السلف الصالح من إمرار آيات الصفات وأحاديثها كما جاءت من غير تفسير لها ولا تكيف ولا تمثيل، ولا يصح عن أحد منهم خلاف ذلك ألبتة، خصوصاً الإمام أحمد، ولا خوضاً في معانيها ولا ضرب مثل، الأمثال لها. وإن كان بعض من كان قريباً من زمن أحمد فيهم من فعل شيئاً من ذلك اتباعاً لطريقة مقاتل، فلا يقتدى به في ذلك، وإنما الاقتداء بأئمة الإسلام كابن المبارك ومالك والثوري والأوزاعي والشافعي وأحمد وإسحاق وأبي عبيد ونحوهم. وكل هؤلاء لا يوجد في كلامهم شيء من جنس كلام المتكلمين فضلاً عن كلام الفلاسفة، ولم يدخل ذلك في كلامه من سلم من قدح وجرح.

وقد قال أبو زرعة الرازي: كل من كان عنده علم فلم يصن علمه واحتاج في نشره إلى شيء من الكلام فلستم منه.

The correct position in all of this is the position of the Righteous Salaf in their applying the verses and narrations concerning the attributes of Allah, as they came to us without interpretation, asking how, or likening them to the creation. No position contrary to this one is authentically reported from the Salaf, especially Imam Aḥmad. Neither is anything reported from them proving that they probed into their meanings or gave analogies for Allah's attributes.

This, even though there were some who lived around the time of Aḥmad who did do some of this, and in so doing, followed the way laid out by Muqātil, but they are not to be followed in this. Those who should be followed are the Imams

of Islam such as Ibn al-Mubārak, Mālik, Thawrī, Awzā'ī, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad, Ishāq, Abu 'Ubayd and their likes.

One will not find anything in the words of those mentioned above that is similar to the statements of the rhetoricians (*Mutakallimīn*), let alone the words of the philosophers. Rather, this is not found in the words of anyone who has not been censured or disparaged.

Abu Zur'ah al-Rāzī said, "Whoever possesses knowledge, and does not preserve his knowledge, and requires rhetoric (*kalām*) to spread it, you should have nothing to do with him!"

ومن ذلك- أعني: محدثات العلوم- ما أحدثه فقهاء أهل الرأي من ضوابط وقواعد عقلية ورد فروع الفقه إليها. وسواء خالفت السنن أم وافقتها طردًا لتلك القواعد المقررة، وإن كان أصلها مما تأولوه على نصوص الكتاب والسنة لكن بتأويلات يخالفهم غيرهم فيها، وهذا الذي أنكره أئمة الإسلام على من أنكروه من فقهاء أهل الرأي بالحجاز والعراق وبالغوا في ذمه وإنكاره.

From amongst the innovated sciences, is that which has been introduced by the Jurists belonging to the People of Opinion, comprising of rational principles and rules which are used as a basis for all *fiqh* rulings. They do this irrespective of whether they conform to the Sunnah or oppose it, even if the root basis of these principles may well be based upon interpretations of texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah. However, others

opposed these interpretations. This was what the Imams of Islam rejected when they refuted the Jurists amongst the People of Opinion in the Ḥijāz and Iraq; they went to great lengths in censuring and refuting them.

فأما الأئمة وفقهاء أهل الحديث؛ فإنهم يتبعون الحديث الصحيح حيث كان إذا كان معمولاً به عند الصحابة ومن بعدهم أو عند طائفة منهم، فأما ما اتفق السلف على تركه، فلا يجوز العمل به؛ لأنهم ما تركوه إلا على علم أنه لا يعمل به.

قال عمر بن عبد العزيز: خذوا من الرأي ما يوافق من كان قبلكم؛ فإنهم كانوا أعلم منكم، فأما ما خالف عمل أهل المدينة من الحديث فهذا كان مالك يرى الأخذ بعمل أهل المدينة، والأكثر أخذوا بالحديث.

As for the Imams and the Jurists amongst the Ahlul-Ḥadīth, they follow the authentic narrations, whatever they might be, so long as that narration was acted upon by the Companions and those who came after them, or at least by some of them. As for those narrations that the Salaf unanimously agreed to leave, it is not permissible to act by them, since they left acting according to them because of their certain knowledge that they should not be applied.

‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz said, “Take from opinions that which conforms to the practice of those who came before you, for they were more knowledgeable than you.” As for the specific case where the narration contradicts the practice of the people of Madinah, Mālik was of the opinion that the practice of the people of Madinah should be adhered to, whereas the majority adhered to the narration.

ومما أنكره أئمة السلف، الجدل والخصام والمرء في مسائل الحلال والحرام أيضاً، ولم يكن ذلك طريقة أئمة الإسلام، وإنما أحدث ذلك بعدهم كما أحدثه فقهاء العراقيين في مسائل الخلاف بين الشافعية والحنفية، وصنفوا كتب الخلاف ووسعوا البحث والجدال فيها، وكل ذلك محدث لا أصل له، وصار ذلك علمهم، حتى شغلهم عن العلم النافع.

From amongst the matters rejected by the Imams of the Salaf was argumentation and disputation about issues concerning the lawful and prohibited; this was not the way of the Imams of Islam. This was innovated later. An example of this is what was done by the Jurists of Kufah and Basrah, regarding the differences amongst the Shāfi'is and Ḥanafīs. They authored works on this and delved deeply into, researching and debating. This is also innovated and has no basis. This became the limit of their knowledge, and it preoccupied them from more beneficial knowledge.

وقد أنكر ذلك السلف وورد الحديث المرفوع في السنن (١) « (مَا ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدًى، إِلَّا أُوتُوا الْجَدَلَ. ثُمَّ قَرَأَ {مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ} [الزخرف: ٥٨]. » [وقال بعض السلف: إذا أراد الله بعبد خيراً فتح له باب العمل وأغلق عنه باب الجدل، وإذا أراد الله بعبد شراً أغلق عنه باب العمل وفتح له باب الجدل.]

The Salaf rejected this and there is a narration recorded in the Sunan concerning this in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A nation never went astray after being guided

except as a result of disputation," then he recited the verse, "They only say this to you for argument's sake, they are indeed a disputatious people."

Some of the Salaf said, "When Allah desires good for His servant, He opens for him the door of action and closes for him the door of debate. When Allah desires evil for His servant, He closes the door to action and opens instead the door of debate."

وقال مالك: أدركت هذه البلدة وإنهم ليكرهون هذا الإكثار الذي فيه الناس اليوم - يريد المسائل.

وكان يعيب كثرة الكلام والفتيا ويقول: يتكلم (أحدهم) (*) (كأنه جمل مغتلم، يقول: هو كذا هو كذا، يهدر في كلامه.

وكان يكره الجواب في كثرة المسائل ويقول: قال الله عز وجل: {وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي} [الإسراء: ٨٥] فلم يأت في ذلك جواب وقيل له: الرجل يكون عالمًا بالسنن يجادل عنها؟ قال: لا ولكن يخبر بالسنة، فإن قبل منه وإلا سكت.

وقال: المراء والجدال في العلم يذهب بنور العلم.

وقال: المراء في العلم يقسي القلب ويورث الطعن،

وكان يقول في المسائل التي يسأل عنها كثيرًا: لا أدري.

وكان الإمام أحمد يسلك سبيله في ذلك.

وقد ورد النهي عن كثرة المسائل وعن أغلوطات المسائل، وعن المسائل قبل وقوع الحوادث، وفي ذلك ما يطول ذكره.

Mālik said, "I have met the inhabitants of this city and they used to dislike this excessiveness in which we find the people today," meaning excessive questions. He

used to censure excessive speech and legal verdicts saying, “They speak as if they were lascivious camels saying, ‘It is like this, it is like that’, being reckless with their words.” He used to dislike answering when faced with many questions and would say, “Allah says,

“They ask you about the soul, say: the soul is my Lord's concern”

and he would then not respond to the question.”

He was asked, “A person who has knowledge of the Sunnah, should he argue in order to defend it?” He replied, “No, he should inform the other of the Sunnah, if he accepts, fine, otherwise he should remain silent.” He would also say, “Arguing and disputing about knowledge takes away the light of knowledge.” He also said, “Disputing about knowledge hardens the heart and breeds enmity.” He would often say in response to questions that he was asked, “I do not know.”

Imam Aḥmad followed the same path in this as Mālik. There are narrations that prohibit asking excessive questions, asking tricky and also asking about events that have yet to occur; the narrations in this regard are too many to mention.

ومع هذا ففي كلام السلف والأئمة كمالك والشافعي وأحمد وإسحاق التنبيه على مأخذ الفقه، ومدارك الأحكام بكلام وجيز مختصر يفهم به المقصود من غير إطالة ولا إسهاب.

وفي كلامهم من رد الأقوال المخالفة للسنة بالطف إشارة وأحسن عبارة، بحيث يغني ذلك من فهمه عن إطالة المتكلمين في ذلك بعدهم، بل ربما لم يتضمن

تطويل كلام من بعدهم من الصواب في ذلك، ما تضمنه كلام السلف والأئمة مع اختصاره وإيجازه.

Despite this, the words of the Imams of the Salaf such as Mālik, Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad and Ishāq, are a clear guide to the sources of jurisprudence and the wisdoms of the divine laws, all in a succinct and comprehensive manner that one can understand, without undue length or difficulty. Their words also contain a refutation of those who oppose the Sunnah, phrased in the nicest of words and composed, in the subtlest and best of ways, such that there is no need left for the laborious discussions of the rhetoricians. Indeed, at times, their lengthy discussions can be devoid of correctness, and that correctness is found in the statements of the Salaf and the Imams, despite its brevity.

فما سكت من سكت عن كثرة الخصام والجدال من سلف الأمة جهلاً ولا عجزاً، ولكن سكتوا عن علم وخشية لله. وما تكلم من تكلم وتوسع من توسع بعدهم باختصاصه بعلم دونهم، ولكن حباً للكلام وقلة ورع.

كما قال الحسن وسمع قومًا يتجادلون: هؤلاء قوم ملوا العبادة وخف عليهم القول، وقل ورعهم فتكلموا.

وقال مهدي بن ميمون: سمعت محمد بن سيرين وما رآه رجل ففطن له، فقال: إني أعلم ما يريد، إني لو أردت أن أماريك كنت عالماً بأبواب المراء. وفي رواية قال: أنا أعلم بالمراء منك ولكني لا أماريك.

وقال إبراهيم النخعي: ما خاصمت قط،

وقال عبد الكريم الجزري: ما خاصم ورع قط.

وقال جعفر بن محمد: إياكم والخصومات في الدين؛ فإنها تشغل القلب وتورث النفاق.

وكان عمر بن عبد العزيز يقول: إذا سمعت المراء فأقصر.

وقال من جعل دينه غرضًا للخصومات أكثر التنقل.

وقال: إن السابقين عن علم وقفوا، وببصر نافذ قد كفوا، وكانوا هم أقوى على البحث لو بحثوا،

وكلام السلف في هذا المعنى كثير جدًا.

Therefore, the Salaf, when they refrained from excessive argumentation and debating, did not do so because of ignorance and inability, rather because of knowledge and the fear of Allah! Those who came after them who did speak much and went to great lengths in widening issues, did not do so because they had knowledge that the Salaf did not, rather because of the love of speech and lack of leaving the doubtful.

When al-Ḥasan heard a group of people arguing he said, "These people have tired of worship, speech has become trivial to them, there abandoning the doubtful has decreased, and this is why they speak." Maḥdī ibn Maymūn said, "I heard Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn say whenever a person tried to engage him in debate, 'I know what he wants, and if I wished to argue with you, I know full well the methods of debate.'" In another wording he said, "I know more about debating than you, but I will not debate with you."

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī said, "I have never argued." 'Abdul-Karīm al-Jazarī said, "A person who leaves off the doubtful will never engage in useless debate." Ja'far ibn Muḥammad said, "Beware of disputing about this religion for it preoccupies the heart

and breeds hypocrisy.” ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz used to say, “When you hear debating, stop.” He also said, “Whoever makes his religion a tool for debating, will frequently change his stances.” He also said, “The predecessors stopped where they did out of knowledge, and through sharp insight did they refrain, even though they were more capable of debating had they wanted to.” There are many quotes from the Salaf in this regard.

وقد فتن كثير من المتأخرين بهذا، وظنوا أن من كثر كلامه وجداله وخصامه في مسائل الدين فهو أعلم ممن ليس كذلك، وهذا جهل محض.

وانظر إلى أكابر الصحابة وعلمائهم كأبي بكر، وعمر، وعلي، ومعاذ، وابن مسعود، وزيد بن ثابت كيف كانوا؟ كلامهم أقل من كلام ابن عباس وهم أعلم منه.

وكذلك كلام التابعين أكثر من كلام الصحابة، والصحابة أعلم منهم. وكذلك تابعوا التابعين كلامهم أكثر من كلام التابعين، والتابعون أعلم منهم.

فليس العلم بكثرة الرواية ولا بكثرة المقال، ولكنه نور يقذف في القلب يفهم به العبد الحق، ويميز به بينه وبين الباطل، ويعبر عن ذلك بعبارات وجيزة محصلة للمقاصد.

Many of the later people have been tried with this, thinking that one who speaks and disputes much about matters of the religion is more knowledgeable than one who does not. This is pure ignorance! Just look to the senior Companions and the scholars amongst them, such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Mu‘ādh, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and Zayd ibn Thābit; what were they like in this regard? Their words were less than the words of Ibn ‘Abbās and they were more

knowledgeable than him! Similarly, the words of the *tābi'ūn* are more than those of the Companions, even though the latter are more knowledgeable. The words of the third generation are more than those of the second generation, even though the latter are more knowledgeable.

Therefore, knowledge is not simply narrating a great deal, nor is it having many opinions, rather it is a light which is placed in the heart, through which the servant comes to understand the truth, and differentiates between truth and falsehood, and is able to express that truth in brief, concise words.

وقد كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أوتي جوامع الكلم واختصر له الكلام اختصاراً.

ولهذا ورد النهي عن كثرة الكلام والتوسع في القيل والقال، وقد قال النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : **"إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَبْعَثْ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا مَبْلَغًا، وَإِنَّ تَشْقِيقَ الْكَلَامِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ"** يعني أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إنما يتكلم بما يحصل به البلاغ، وأما كثرة القول وتشقيق الكلام فإنه مذموم،

وكانت خطب النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قصداً، وكان يحدث حديثاً لو عده العاد لأحصاه، **وقال: "إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا"** وإنما قاله في ذم ذلك لا مدحاً له، كما ظن ذلك من ظنه، ومن تأمل سياق ألفاظ الحديث قطع بذلك.

وفي الترمذي وغيره عن عبد الله بن عمرو مرفوعاً: **«إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُبْغِضُ الْبَلِغَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ، الَّذِي يَتَخَلَّلُ لِسَانِهِ كَمَا يَتَخَلَّلُ الْبَقَرَةُ لِسَانِهَا»**

وفي المعني أحاديث كثيرة مرفوعة وموقوفة على عمر وسعد وابن مسعود وعائشة وغيرهم من الصحابة. فيجب أن يعتقد أنه ليس كل من كثر بسطه للقول وكلامه في العلم، كان ممن ليس كذلك.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was granted conciseness in speech and his words were the

briefest of words. This is why we are prohibited from excessive speech and narrating everything we hear.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Allah never sent a Prophet except as a conveyor; and over-elaborate speech is from Satan," meaning, that the Prophet (ﷺ) only ever spoke to the extent required to convey the message. As for overly excessive, elaborate speech, it is blameworthy. The sermons of the Prophet (ﷺ) would be brief and to the point and his speech could be counted in its words. He (ﷺ) said, "Indeed from speech is that which is magic." He said this by way of rebuke, not by way of commendation as thought by some. Whoever considers the context of these words will be certain of this.

At-Tirmidhī and others collect the narration of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Allah hates the excessively eloquent men, who move their tongues just as cows do." There are many narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Companions in this regard, such as from ‘Umar, Sa’d, Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Ā'ishah, and others.

Therefore, it is necessary to realise that not everyone who speaks a lot, delving into great detail, is more knowledgeable than one who does not.

وقد ابتلينا بجهلة من الناس يعتقدون في بعض من توسع في القول من المتأخرين
أنه أعلم ممن تقدم، فمنهم من يظن في شخص أنه أعلم من كل من تقدم من
الصحابة ومن بعدهم؛ لكثرة بيانه ومقاله، **ومنهم من يقول**: هو أعلم من الفقهاء
المشهورين المتبوعين، وهذا يلزم منه ما قبله؛ لأن هؤلاء الفقهاء المشهورين
المتبوعين أكثر قولاً ممن كان قبلهم، فإذا كان من بعدهم أعلم منهم لاتساع قوله
كان أعلم ممن كان أقل منهم قولاً بطريق الأولى، كالثوري والأوزاعي والليث

وابن المبارك وطبقتهم، وممن قبلهم من التابعين والصحابة أيضاً؛ فإن هؤلاء كلهم أقل كلاماً ممن جاء بعدهم.

We have been tried by the ignorant people who start believing that just because someone speaks a great deal, he is more knowledgeable than those who have preceded him. Amongst them are some who believe that a particular person is more knowledgeable than the Companions and those who came after them, simply because of his speech and detail. Some say that such a person is more knowledgeable than the famous and accepted Jurists. However, this statement of theirs implies the same as the previous statement. This is because those famous and accepted Jurists spoke more than those who came before them, hence if someone who comes after them knows more than them, just because of his detailed discussions, then for sure he should be more knowledgeable than those who spoke less than them, such as Thawrī, Awzā'ī, Layth, Ibn al-Mubārak and those of their generation, and those who came before them from the Successors and Companions.

وهذا تنقص عظيم بالسلف الصالح، وإساءة ظن بهم، ونسبته لهم إلى الجهل وقصور العلم، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله. ولقد صدق ابن مسعود في قوله في الصحابة: "إنهم أبر الأمة قلوباً، وأعمقها علوماً، وأقلها تكلفاً" ورُوي نحوه عن ابن عمر أيضاً. وفي هذا إشارة إلى أن من بعدهم أقل علوماً وأكثر تكلفاً، وقال ابن مسعود أيضاً: "إنكم في زمان كثير علماؤه قليل خطبائه، وسيأتي بعدكم زمان قليل علماؤه كثير خطبائه" فمن كثر علمه وقل قوله فهو الممدوح، ومن كان بالعكس فهو مذموم.

وقد شهد النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - لأهل اليمن بالإيمان والفقہ، وأهل اليمن أقل الناس كلامًا وتوسعًا في العلوم **لكن** علمهم علم نافع في قلوبهم، ويعبرون بالسنتهم عن القدر المحتاج إليه من ذلك، وهذا هو الفقہ والعلم النافع.

Such a position constitutes clear disrespect of the righteous Salaf, and having an evil opinion of them and accusing them of ignorance or deficiency in knowledge. There is no strength or ability except with Allah.

Ibn Mas'ūd spoke the truth when he concerning the Companions said, "Amongst mankind, they had the most righteous of hearts, they had the most profound and in-depth knowledge, and they were the least excessive." Something similar is narrated from Ibn 'Umar. In this, there is an indication that those who came after them are of less knowledge and more likely to go to excess. Ibn Mas'ūd also said, "You are in a time in which the scholars are many but the preachers are few. After you will come a time in which the scholars are few but the preachers are many." Therefore, whoever's knowledge is great but speech is little is to be commended, and whoever is the opposite is to be rebuked.

The Prophet (ﷺ) testified that the people of Yemen had faith and understanding. The people of Yemen are the least of people with regards to speech and delving unnecessarily into detail. However, their knowledge is beneficial knowledge that has taken root in their hearts, and they only express of it what is required. This is understanding and beneficial knowledge.

فأفضل العلوم في تفسير القرآن ومعاني الحديث، والكلام في الحلال والحرام ما كان مأثور من الصحابة والتابعين وتابعيهم إلى أن ينتهي إلى زمن أئمة الإسلام المشهورين المقتدى بهم، الذين سميناهم فيما سبق.

The best of what exists with regards the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis, explanation of *ḥadīth*, and discussion of the lawful and prohibited is that which is related from the Companions, the Successors, and the following generations until the time of the famous Imams we have previously referred to.

فضبط ما رُوي عنهم في ذلك أفضل العلم مع تفهمه وتعقله والتفقه فيه، وما حدث بعدهم من التوسع لا خير في كثير منه، إلا أن يكون شرحًا لكلام يتعلق من كلامهم.

وأما ما كان مخالفًا لكلامهم فأكثره باطل أو لا منفعة فيه، وفي كلامهم في ذلك كفاية وزيادة فلا يوجد في كلام من بعدهم من حق إلا وهو في كلامهم موجود بأوجز لفظ وأخصر عبارة،

ولا يوجد في كلام من بعدهم من باطل إلا وفي كلامهم ما يبين بطلانه لمن فهمه وتأمله،

To precisely understand what has been narrated from them in this regard is the best of knowledge, along with understanding and comprehending that. what occurred after them from unnecessary detail contains no good for the most part, unless it is explanation of their statements. As for that which contradicts their speech, most of it is false or contains no benefit whatsoever. Their words suffice us and more, there is no truth that one finds in the words of those who came after them, except that it can be found in their words in the most succinct and comprehensive of ways.

Likewise, there is no falsehood found in the words of those who came after them, except that you will find in their words, after understanding and due consideration, a clarification of its falsehood.

ويوجد في كلامهم من المعاني البديعة والمآخذ الدقيقة ما لا يهتدي إليه من بعدهم ولا يُسلّم به.

فمن لم يأخذ العلم من كلامهم فاته ذلك الخير كله مع ما يقع في كثير من الباطل متابعة لمن تأخر عنهم،

ويحتاج من أراد جمع كلامهم إلى معرفة صحيحه من سقيمه، وذلك بمعرفة الجرح والتعديل والعلل، فمن لم يعرف ذلك فهو غير واثق بما ينقله من ذلك ويلتبس عليه حقه بباطله، ولا يثق بما عنده من ذلك. كما يرى من قل علمه بذلك لا يثق بما يروى عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عن السلف لجهله بصحيحه من سقيمه، فهو لجهله يجور أن يكون كله باطلا لعدم معرفته بما يعرف به صحيح ذلك وسقيمه.

There is, in their words, profound meanings and precise points, not found in the words of those who came later. Whoever does not take knowledge from their words will miss out on all that good, as well as falling into much falsehood by way of following those who came after. The one who wishes to collate their words, needs to know the authentic from the weak. This comes about by knowing the science of authenticating and disparaging narrators, and the science of the defects of narrations. Whoever is not versed in these sciences, cannot be sure of what he quotes from them and will soon confuse the truth with falsehood, and he cannot be depended upon in this regard. When such a person reports from the Prophet (ﷺ) or the Salaf, his narrations cannot be

trusted because of his ignorance of the authentic from the weak. Such a person may as a consequence of this ignorance, believe that all of it is false.

قال الأوزاعي: العلم ما جاء به أصحاب محمد - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فما كان غير ذلك فليس بعلم.

وكذا قال الإمام أحمد، **وقال في التابعين: أنت مخير - يعني: مخير في كتابته وتركه.**

وقد كان الزهري يكتب ذلك، وخالفه صالح بن كيسان ثم ندم على تركه كلام التابعين.

وفي زماننا يتعين كتابة كلام أئمة السلف المقتدى بهم إلى زمن الشافعي وأحمد وإسحاق وأبي عبيد،

وليكن الإنسان على حذر مما حدث بعدهم، فإنه حدث بعدهم حوادث كثيرة، وحدث من انتسب إلى متابعة السنة والحديث من الظاهرية ونحوهم وهو أشد مخالفة لها لشذوذه عن **الأمة** وانفراده عنهم بفهم يفهمه، أو يأخذ ما لم يأخذ به الأئمة من قبله.

Al-Awzā'ī said, "Knowledge is that which the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) brought, anything else is not knowledge." This was also stated by Imam Aḥmad, and he further said concerning the *tābi'ūn*, "You are free to choose," meaning it is up to you if you wish to record their words or leave them. Az-Zuhrī used to write their narrations and Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān disagreed with him on this, only to later regret this position.

In our times, it is imperative to write the words of the accepted Imams of the Salaf, up to the time of Shāf'ī, Aḥmad, Ishāq and Abu 'Ubayd. People should be

wary of what happened after them, for many new matters occurred after them. There also appeared those who attribute themselves to following the Sunnah and narration, such as the Zāhiriyyah and their likes. These people are often opposing the Sunnah due to their opposition to the Imams and their singular understanding, or due to their taking texts that the Imams before them did not take.

فأما الدخول مع ذلك في كلام المتكلمين أو الفلاسفة فشر محض، وقلّ من دخل في شيء من ذلك إلا وتلطخ ببعض أوضارهم. كما قال أحمد: لا يخلو من نظر في الكلام إلا تجهم.

وكان هو وغيره من أئمة السلف يُحذِّرون من أهل الكلام وإن ذبوا عن السُّنة. وأما ما يوجد في كلام من أَحَبَّ الكلام المحدث واتبع أهله من ذم من لا يتوسع في الخصومات والجدال ونسبته إلى الجهل أو إلى الحشو، وإلى أنه غير عارف بالله أو غير عارف بدينه، فكل ذلك من خطوات الشيطان نعوذ بالله منه.

As for delving into the words of the rhetoricians and the philosophers, this is pure evil. Rare is it to find one who delves into this without being adversely harmed by some of their evil. This is why Aḥmad said, "None delves into rhetoric (*kalām*) except that he takes on board the ways of Jahm.'

He, as well as the other Imams of the Salaf, used to warn against the people of rhetoric, even if they at times, defended the Sunnah. As for what is to be found in the words of those who love this rhetoric, and follow its adherents in rebuking those who do not delve into disputation and debate, accusing them of ignorance, or a lack of awareness of Allah, or that they do not possess true understanding of this religion, then all of this is from following the footsteps of

Shayṭān. We seek refuge with Allah from such a person.

ومما أحدث من العلوم والكلام في العلوم الباطنة من المعارف وأعمال القلوب وتوابع ذلك، بمجرد الرأي والذوق أو الكشف وفيه خطر عظيم، وقد أنكره أعيان الأئمة كالإمام أحمد وغيره.

وكان أبو سليمان يقول: إنه لتمر بي النكتة من نكت القوم فلا أقبلها إلا بشاهدين عدلين: الكتاب والسنة. وقال الجنيد: علمنا هذا مقيد بالكتاب والسنة، من لم يقرأ القرآن ويكتب الحديث لا يقتدى به في علمنا هذا.

From the sciences that have been innovated is sciences that deal with the hidden matters, internal affairs of the heart and other related issues. All of this is based upon conjecture, spiritual experience (*dhawq*), or spiritual realisation (*kashf*). This contains a great danger, and was rejected by the greatest of the Imams such as Aḥmad and others.

Abu Sulaymān used to say, "Sometimes a point of inspiration occurs to me as it does to others, but I do not accept it without the testimony of two just witnesses: the Book and the Sunnah." Junayd said, "This knowledge of ours is determined by the Book and the Sunnah, whoever has not read the Qur'an or written *ḥadith* is not to be followed in this knowledge of ours."

وقد اتسع الخرق في هذا الباب، ودخل فيه قوم إلى أنواع الزندقة والنفاق، ودعوى أن أولياء الله أفضل من الأنبياء، أو أنهم مستغنون عنهم، وإلى التنقص بما جاءت به الرسل من الشرائع، وإلى دعوى الحلول والاتحاد أو القول بوحدة الوجود، وغير ذلك من أصول الكفر والفوق والعصيان، كدعوى الإباحة، وحل

محظورات الشرائع. وأدخلوا في هذا الطريق أشياء كثيرة ليست من الدين في شيء، فبعضها زعموا أنه يحصل به ترقيق القلوب كالغناء والرقص، وبعضها زعموا أنه يراد لرياضة النفوس، كعشق الصور المحرمة ونظرها، وبعضها زعموا أنه لكسر النفوس والتواضع، كشهوة اللباس وغير ذلك مما لم تأت به الشريعة، وبعضه يصد عن ذكر الله وعن الصلاة كالغناء والنظر المحرم، وشابهوا بذلك الذين اتخذوا دينهم لهواً ولعباً.

This door of innovation has been widely opened, and and some of those who have walked through it, have fallen into various forms of heresy and hypocrisy, and claiming that the *Awliyā'* are better than the Prophets, or that they have no need of the Prophets, leading to the belittling of the laws conveyed by the Messengers, having the belief of incarnation and unification, or the belief of the unity of being and other such matters which are the foundations of disbelief, sin, and evil; such as the assertion that everything is permissible and that many of the prohibited matters are lawful to them.

By doing this, they have introduced many affairs into this religion that have nothing to do with it. Some of them claimed that by doing this, hearts would be softened, such as through singing and dancing. Others claimed that the soul needs to be trained by desiring forbidden pictures and looking at them. Yet others claimed, that they thought these things would break the desires of the soul or lead to humility, by desiring clothes and other such matters that are not legislated in the *Sharī'ah*. Indeed, some of these issues actually prevent a person from the remembrance of Allah and prayer, such as singing and looking at that which is prohibited. By doing this, they resemble those who took their religion as mere play and amusement.

فالعلم النافع من هذه العلوم كلها ضبط نصوص الكتاب والسنة وفهم معانيها، والتقيد في ذلك بالمأثور عن الصحابة والتابعين وتابعيهم في معاني القرآن والحديث، وفيما ورد عنهم من الكلام في مسائل الحلال والحرام والزهد والرقائق والمعارف وغير ذلك، والاجتهاد على تمييز صحيحه من سقيمه أولاً، ثم الاجتهاد على الوقوف على معانيه وتفهمه ثانياً، وفي ذلك كفاية لمن عقل، وشغل لمن بالعلم النافع عني واشتغل.

Beneficial knowledge in all of these sciences, is to be precise in following the texts of the Book and Sunnah, to understand their meanings, and to confine oneself to what has been reported from the Companions, the Successors, and their successors in the meanings of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, the lawful and prohibited, asceticism, softening of the heart, the internal affairs etc. One should try their utmost to firstly distinguish between the authentic narrations and the weak, and secondly to then correctly understand these narrations. This is sufficient for those who possess intelligence, and busyness for those who wish to busy themselves beneficial knowledge.

ومن وقف على هذا وأخلص القصد فيه لوجه الله عز وجل واستعان عليه، أعانه وهداه ووقفه وسدده وفهمه وألهمه، وحينئذ يثمر له هذا اعلم ثمرته الخاصة به وهي خشية الله، كما قال عز وجل {إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ} [فاطر: ٢٨].

قال ابن مسعود وغيره: كفى بخشية الله علماً، وكفى بالاغترار بالله جهلاً. وقال بعض السلف: ليس العلم بكثرة الرواية ولكن العلم الخشية.

وقال بعضهم: من خشي الله فهو عالم ومن عصاه فهو جاهل. وكلامهم في هذا المعنى كثير جدًا.

Whoever suffices with this, makes his intention sincerely for the sake of Allah and seeks His aid, then Allah will aid him, guide him, grant him success, make him firm, grant him understanding, and inspire him. It is only then, that the fruit of this knowledge will ripen: the fruit being the fear of Allah, just as He says,

“It is only the learned amongst His servants who truly fear Allah.”

Ibn Mas‘ūd and others said, “The fear of Allah is sufficient as knowledge, and to be deceived about Allah is sufficient ignorance.” Some of the Salaf said, “Knowledge is not by narrating much, rather knowledge is the fear of Allah.” Others said, “Whoever fears Allah is a scholar and whoever disobeys him is the ignorant.” There are many statements in this regard from them.

وسبب ذلك أن هذا العلم النافع يدل على أمرين:

أحدهما: على معرفة الله وما يستحقه من الأسماء الحسنى والصفات العلى والأفعال الباهرة، وذلك يستلزم إجلاله وإعظامه وخشيته، ومهابته ومحبه ورجاءه والتوكل عليه، والرضا بقضائه والصبر على بلائه.

والأمر الثاني: المعرفة بما يحبه ويرضاه وما يكرهه ويسخطه من الاعتقادات والأعمال الظاهرة والباطنة والأقوال.

فيوجب ذلك لمن علمه المسارعة إلى ما فيه محبة الله ورضاه والتباعد عما يكرهه ويسخطه؛

The reason for this is that beneficial knowledge leads to two matters:

1. Knowledge of Allah and what He is worthy of from Beautiful Names, Lofty Attributes, and majestic Actions. This necessitates venerating Him, glorifying Him, having fear of Him, being in awe of Him, loving Him, having hope in Him, putting one's reliance in Him, being content with His decree, and bearing His trials with patience.
2. Knowledge of what He loves and is pleased with and that which He detests and angers Him from beliefs, inner and outer actions and statements.

The one who has this knowledge, will hasten towards that which Allah loves and is pleased with and avoiding all that He detests and angers Him.

فإذا أثمر العِلْمُ لصاحبه هذا فهو علم نافع، فتى كان العِلْمُ نافعاً ووقر في القلب لله، فقد خشع القلب وانكسر له وذل هيب وإجلالا وخشية ومحبة وتعظيماً ومتى خشع القلب لله وانكسر له وذل قنعت النفس بيسير الحلال من الدنيا، وشبعت به فأوجب لها ذلك القناعة والزهد في الدُّنيا. وكل ما هو فإن لا يبقى من المال والجاه وفضول العيش الذي ينقص به حظ صاحبه عند الله من نعيم الآخرة وإن كان كريماً على الله كما قالوا ذلك ابن عمر وغيره من السلف وروى مرفوعاً. وأوجب ذلك أن تكون بين العبد وبين ربه عز وجل معرفة خاصة، فإن سألَه أعطاه، وإن دعاه أجابه، كما قال في الحديث الإلهي: "وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ -إِلَى قَوْلِهِ- فَلَمَّا سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَمَّا اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ" وفي رواية: "وَلَمَّا دَعَانِي لِأُجِيبَنَّهُ."

When knowledge brings these fruits, it is beneficial knowledge. Whenever knowledge is beneficial and it takes root in the heart, the heart fears Allah, submits to Him, and humbles itself in awe, glorification, fear, love, and veneration. When this happens, the soul is then content with the smallest of

lawful worldly provisions, which in turn leads to contentment and abstinence from this world. As such there remains no property, status, or needs beyond the basics that is looked at with desire by the servant, which would be a cause for the decrease of his portion with Allah of the bliss of the Hereafter.

This was stated by Ibn 'Umar and others from amongst the Salaf and has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ). When this happens, a special relationship between Allah and the servant is made. If he asks, He grants, and if he supplicates, He answers as is mentioned in the *ḥadīth al-qudsī*, "...My servant continues to draw close to Me by performing the optional deeds until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask of Me, I would grant him, and were he to take refuge with Me, I would grant him refuge." In another narration, "Were he to supplicate to Me, I would respond."

وفي وصيته - صلى الله عليه وسلم - **لابن عباس**: **احْفَظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظْكَ، احْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ أَمَامَكَ، وَتَعَرَّفْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّحَاءِ يَعْرِفْكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ** "

فالشأن في أن العبد يكون بينه وبين ربه معرفة خاصة بقلبه بحيث يجده قريباً منه يستأنس به في خلوته ويجد حلاوة ذكره ودعائه ومناجاته وخدمته، ولا يجد ذلك إلا من أطاعه في سره وعلا نيته،

كما قيل لو هيب بن الورد: **أيجد حلاوة الطاعة من عصى؟ قال: لا، ولا من هم.**
ومتى وجد العبد هذا فقد عرف ربه وصار بينه وبينه معرفة خاصة؛ فإذا سألَه أعطاه وإذا دعاه أجابه.

In his (ﷺ) advice that was to Ibn 'Abbās he said, "Remember Allah, He will be

remember you. Remember Allah and you will find Him in front of you. Know Allah in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship." The goal of the servant is that there be, in his heart, a specific connection between him and His Lord, whereby he finds Him close all the time and takes comfort with Him in times of solitude. He finds pleasure in remembering Him, supplicating to Him, privately calling upon Him and serving Him. This is only experienced by those who obey Him in open and in secret.

Wuhayb ibn al-Ward was asked, "Can one who commits disobedience find the sweetness of obedience?" He replied, "No, and neither can one who thinks to do so." When the servant finds this, he has then developed this relationship with his Lord, and a special relationship develops between them, such that when he asks, He grants; when he supplicates, He answers.

كما قالت شعوانة لفضيل: أما بينك وبين ربك ما إذا دعوته أجابك؟ فغشي عليه. والعبد لا يزال يقع في شدائد وكرب في الدنيا وفي البرزخ وفي الموقف؛ فإذا كان بينه وبين ربه معرفة خاصة كفاه الله ذلك كله، وهذا هو المشار إليه في وصية ابن عباس بقوله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - "تَعَرَّفْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّخَاءِ يَعْرِفَكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ"

وقيل لمعروف: ما الذي هيجك إلى الانقطاع؟ وذكره الموت والقبر والموقف والجنة والنار، فَقَالَ: إن ملكًا هذا بيده إذا كانت بينك وبينه معرفة كفاك هذا كله.

Sha'wānah said to Fuḍayl when he asked her to supplicate for him, "Does there not exist between you and your Lord a relationship such that if you supplicate to Him, He answers you?" upon which he fell unconscious. The servant continuously faces hardship and difficulty in this world, in the *barzakh* and at

standing on the Day of Judgement. When there exists this special relationship between the servant and His Lord, Allah will suffice him during all of this. This is what is indicated in the Prophet's (ﷺ) advice to Ibn 'Abbās, "Know Allah in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship."

Ma'rūf was asked, "What had prompted you to seek isolation?" The questioner mentioned death, the grave, the place of the final standing, Paradise and Hell as possible causes, to which he replied, "The King controls all of this is in His hand, when there exists a special relationship between you and Him, He suffices you during all of this."

فالعلم النافع ما عرف بين العبد وربّه **ودل** عليه حتى عرف ربّه ووحده وأنس به واستحيا من قربّه وعبدّه كأنه يراه،

ولهذا قالت طائفة من الصحابة: إن أول علم يرفع من الناس: الخشوع.

وقال ابن مسعود: إن أقوامًا يقرءون القرآن لا يجاور تواقهم، ولكن إذا وقع في القلب فرسخ فيه نفع.

وقال الحسن: العلم علمان، فعلم على اللسان فذاك حجة الله على ابن آدم، وعلم في القلب فذاك العلم النافع .

وكان السلف يَقُولُونَ: العلماء ثلاثة: عالم بالله عالم بأمر الله، وعالم بالله ليس بعالم بأمره، وعالم بأمر الله ليس بعالم بالله. وأكملهم الأول، وهو الذي يخشى الله ويعرف أحكامه،

Beneficial knowledge is that which brings a special relationship between the servant and his Lord, and leads the servant to knowing his Lord, singlinh Him out alone, finding solace in Him, being shy of Him, and worshipping Him as though you see Him.

This is why a group of the Companions said, "The first knowledge to be raised

from the people will by attentive humility (*khushū*).” Ibn Mas’ūd said, “There are people who recite the Qur’an, yet it does not pass beyond their throats; were it to reach the heart and take root therein, it would be of benefit.” Al-Ḥasan said, “Knowledge is of two types: knowledge that is restricted to the tongue, and that is Allah's proof against the children of Adam; and knowledge that takes root in the heart and that is beneficial knowledge.”

The Salaf used to say, “The scholars are of three categories: the scholar who knows Allah and His commands; the scholar who knows Allah but not His commands; and the scholar who knows His commands but does not know Allah.”

The best and most complete of them is the first, he is the one who truly fears Allah and knows His rulings.

فالشأن كله في أن العبد يستدل بالعلم على ربه فيعرفه؛ فإذا عرفه ربه فقد وجده
منه قريباً، ومتى وجده منه قريباً قربته إليه، وأجاب دعاءه كما في الأثر
الإسرائيلي: «ابن آدم اطلبني تحذني، فإن وجدتني وجدت كل شيء، وإن فُتئت
فأتتك كل شيء، وأنا أحب إليك من كل شيء». »
وَكَانَ ذُو النُّونِ يُرِيدُ هَذِهِ الْأَبْيَاتَ بِاللَّيْلِ:

اطْلُبُوا لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ	مِثْلَ مَا وَجَدْتُ أَنَا
قَدْ وَجَدْتُ لِي سَكَنًا	لَيْسَ فِي هَوَاهُ عَنَّا
إِنْ بَعَدْتُ قَرَّبَنِي	أَوْ قَرُبْتُ مِنْهُ دَنَا

The point here is that the servant uses knowledge to learn and gain knowledge about his Lord. When this happens, he will find Him close. When he is close to Him, He will bring him close and answer his supplications. It is mentioned in Judeo-Christian

narration, “Son of Adam! Seek me and you will find Me, and when you find Me you will find everything. However, if you don't find Me, you will have lost everything. I am more beloved to you than anything else.”

Dhun-Nūn used to repeat these verses of poetry by night,

Seek for yourselves

The likes of what I have found

I have found an abode for me

In which there is no other desire

If I move away, He draws me close

And if I move closer, He draws even closer.

وكان الإمام أحمد -رحمه الله- **يقول عن معروف: معه أصل العلم: خشية الله.**
فأصل العلم: العلم بالله الذي يوجب خشيته، ومحبته والقرب منه والأنس به
والشوق إليه، ثم يتلوه العلم بأحكام الله، وما يحبه ويرضاه من العبد من قول أو
عمل أو حال أو اعتقاد.

فمن تحقق بهذين العلمين كان علمه علماً نافعاً، وحصل له العلم النافع والقلب
الخاشع والنفس القانعة والدعاء المسموع،

ومن فاته هذا العلم النافع وقع في الأربع التي استعاذ منها النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم وصار علمه وبالاً وحجة عليه، فلم ينتفع به؛ لأنه لم يخشع قلبه لربه، ولم
تشبع نفسه من الدنيا، بل ارداد عليها حرصاً ولها طلباً، ولم يسمع دعاؤه لعدم
امتناله لأوامر ربه وعدم اجتنابه لما يسخطه ويكرهه، هذا إن كان علمه علماً

يمكن الانتفاع به، وهو المتلقى عن الكتاب والسنة؛ فإن كان متلقى من غير ذلك فهو غير نافع في نفسه، ولا يمكن الانتفاع به، بل ضوء أكثر من نفعه.

Imam Aḥnād used to say about Ma'rūf, "He possesses the foundation of knowledge: the fear of Allah." Therefore, the foundation of knowledge is that knowledge which leads to fearing Him, loving Him, drawing close to Him, finding contentment with Him and ardently desiring Him. This is followed by knowledge of the rulings of Allah, all that He loves and is pleased with from the servant of statement, action, condition, and belief. Whoever realises these two types of knowledge has found beneficial knowledge; he has attained beneficial knowledge, a fearful heart, a content soul and an answered supplication.

Whoever does not attain this knowledge will fall into the four matters that the Prophet (ﷺ) sought refuge from, and his knowledge will actually become a source of misery for him and a proof against him. He will not benefit from it because it did not make his heart fearful of his Lord, it did not satisfy the desires of the soul for this world, rather it only strengthened it, his supplication went unheard because he did not obey the commands of his Lord and avoid all that He detests and angers Him. This is provided that his knowledge is the knowledge from which benefit can be attained, i.e. the knowledge found in the Book and Sunnah. Whatever knowledge may be derived from other than these two sources is not beneficial in and of itself, and there is no hope of deriving benefit through it, rather its harm is greater than its benefit.

وعلاوة هذا العِلْم الَّذِي لَا يَنْفَعُ أَنْ يَكْسِبَ صَاحِبُهُ الزَّهْوَ وَالْفَخْرَ وَالْخِيَلَاءَ، وَطَلَبَ الْعُلُوَّ وَالرَّفْعَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْمَنَافَسَةَ فِيهَا، وَطَلَبَ مَبَاهَاةَ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَمَمَارَاةَ السُّفَهَاءِ وَصَرَفَ وَجْهَهُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ، وَقَدْ وَرَدَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَنْ مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِذَلِكَ فَالنَّارُ النَّارُ".

The sign of knowledge that does not benefit is pride, arrogance, and conceit.

Such a person seeks high status in this world and competes for it. He debates with the scholars, argues with the foolish and hopes to direct the attention of others towards himself. It is reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that whoever seeks knowledge for this purpose, "for him is the Fire, the Fire!"

وربما ادعى بعض أصحاب هذه العلوم معرفة الله وطلبه والإعراض عما سواه، وليس غرضهم بذلك إلا طلب التقدم في قلوب الناس من الملوك وغيرهم، وإحسان ظنهم بهم، وكثرة أتباعهم، والتعظيم بذلك على الناس، وعلاوة ذلك إظهار دعوى الولاية كما كان يدعيه أهل الكتاب، وكما ادعاه القرامطة والباطنية ونحوهم، وهذا بخلاف ما كان عليه السلف من احتقار نفوسهم وازدراءها باطنًا وظاهرًا. وقال عمرو: من قال إنه عالم فهو جاهل، ومن قال أنه مؤمن فهو كافر، ومن قال هو في الجنة فهو في النار.

Some people who possess this type of knowledge claim to have this special relationship with Allah, seeking of Him and turning away from all else. Their true purpose behind this claim is only the desire for precedence in the hearts of the kings and others, that people think well of them, and that they enjoy a large and dedicated following.

The sign of this is that they will openly make the claim of *wilāyah*, just as the People

of the Book, and later, the Qarāmiṭah and Bāṭiniyyah and those like them. This is the exact opposite of the way of the Salaf who used to think little of themselves, both inwardly and outwardly. ‘Umar said, “Whoever baosts, ‘I am a scholar’ is an ignorant one, and whoever boasts, “I am a believer” is a disbeliever, and whoever claims, ‘I am in Paradise’ is in Hellfire.”

ومن علامات ذلك: عدم قبول الحق والانقياد إليه والتكبر على من يقول الحق، خصوصًا إن كان دونهم في أعين الناس، والإصرار على الباطل خشية تفرق قلوب الناس عنهم بإظهار الرجوع إلى الحق. وربما أظهروا بالسنتهم ذم أنفسهم واحتقارها على رءوس الأشهاد؛ ليعتقد الناس فيهم أنهم عند أنفسهم متواضعون فيمدحون بذلك، وهو من دقائق أبواب الرياء، كما نبه عليه التابعون فمن بعدهم من العلماء. ويظهر منهم من قبول المدح واستجلابه مما ينافي الصدق والإخلاص؛ فإن الصادق يخاف النفاق على نفسه ويخشى على نفسه من سوء الخاتمة، فهو في شغل شاغل عن قبول المدح واستحسانه.

A further sign of this is that such a person will not accept the truth or submit to it. He will act arrogantly towards those who speak the truth, especially if they are seen to be of a lesser stature than him in the eyes of the people. He will persist upon his falsehood simply out of fear that the hearts of people may oppose him by his returning to the truth. Such people may even publicly censure themselves and show that they think little of themselves in front of an audience so that people believe that they are humble and thereby praise them.

This is from the subtler forms of showing off as pointed out by the Successors and those scholars who came after them. Their willing acceptance of praise and encouragement of it, negates their claim of being truthful and sincerity. The truthful

person will always fear falling into hypocrisy and meeting an evil end. Such a person is always fighting off being praised and accepting it.

فلهذا كان من علامات أهل العلم النافع أنهم لا يرون لأنفسهم حالا ولا مقامًا، ويكرهون بقلوبهم التزكية والمدح، ولا يتكبرون على أحد.

قال الحسن: إنَّما الفقيه الزاهد في الدُّنيا الراغب في الآخرة، البصير بدينه المواظب على عبادة ربه .

وفي رواية عنه قال: الَّذِي لا يحسد من فوقه، ولا يسخر ممن دونه، ولا يأخذ على علم علمه الله أجرًا.

وهذا الكلام الأخير قد رُوي معناه عن ابن عمر من قوله. وأهل العلم النافع كلما ازدادوا من هذا العلم ازدادوا لله **تواضعًا** وخشية وانكسارًا وذلاً.

قال بعض السلف: ينبغي للعالم أن يضع التراب على رأسه تواضعًا لربه. فإنه كلما ازداد علماً بربه ومعرفة به ازداد منه خشية ومحبة وازداد له ذلاً وانكسارًا.

This is why a sign of the People of Knowledge is that they do not think themselves to be of any great stature or station, they detest in their hearts praise and commendation and they do not act arrogantly towards anyone. Al-Ḥasan said, “The Jurist is the one who abstains from this world and desires the Hereafter, he has insight into his religion and is continuous in the worship of his Lord.” In another narration he said concerning the scholar, “One who does not envy those above him, or mock those beneath him, and does not take wages for knowledge that Allah has taught him.”

The meaning of this last statement has also been reported to us from Ibn ‘Umar. The more the people of this beneficial knowledge increase in knowledge, the more they increase in humility before Allah, fear of Him, and submission to

Him. Some of the Salaf said, “The scholar should place dust on his head out of humility before his Lord.” Each time he increases in knowledge of his Lord, he increases in fear and love of Him, as well as humility and submission.

ومن علامات العلم النافع: أنه يدل صاحبه على الهرب من الدُّنيا، وأعظمها الرياسة والشهرة والمدح، فالتباعد عن ذلك والاجتهاد في مجانبته من علامات العلم النافع فإن وقع شيء من ذلك من غير قصد واختيار كان صاحبه في خوف شديد من عاقبته، بحيث أنه يخشى أن يكون مكرًا واستدراجًا، كما كان الإمام أحمد يخاف ذلك على نفسه عند اشتهاه اسمه ويُعدّ صيته.

From the signs of beneficial knowledge is that it will teach one to flee from this world and what is in it, the worst of which is the desire for leadership, fame, and praise. To avoid this and make every effort in staying away from this is from the signs of beneficial knowledge. If any of this does occur, without his choice or desire, he is in a state of extreme fear of his end, as he fears that it could be a divine plan and a means of gradually leading him to an evil end. It was because of this that Imam Aḥmad used to fear for himself once he became famous.

ومن علامات العلم النافع: أن صاحبه لا يدعي العلم ولا يفخر به على أحد، ولا ينسب غيره إلى الجهل إلا من خالف السنة وأهلها؛ فإنه يتكلم فيه غضبًا لله لا غضبًا لنفسه ولا قصدًا لرفعها على أحد.

وأما من علمه غير نافع فليس له شغل سوى التكبر بعلمه على الناس، وإظهار فضل علمه عليهم ونسبتهم إلى الجهل، وتنقصهم ليرتفع بذلك عليهم وهذا من أقبح الخصال وأردئها، وربما نسب من كان قبله من العلماء إلى الجهل والغفلة

والسهو، فيوجب له حب نفسه وحب ظهورها، وإحسان ظنه بها وإساءة ظنه بمن سلف.

From the signs of beneficial knowledge is that one does not lay claim to having knowledge or become boastful of it. He does not accuse others of ignorance unless they oppose the Sunnah and its people, in which case he speaks against them out of anger for the sake of Allah, not out of personal anger or the desire of besting him.

As for he whose knowledge is not beneficial, he has no concern except to show his supremacy over the rest of the people by means of his knowledge, to accuse them of ignorance, and to demean them. This is from the worst and lowliest of traits. Such a person will even cast the scholars who came before him as being ignorant and negligent; because such a person loves himself and wants to promote himself, he has a good opinion of himself and a bad opinion of those who came before him.

وأهل العلم النافع على ضد هذا. يسيئون الظن بأنفسهم، ويحسنون الظن بمن سلف من العلماء، ويقرون بقلوبهم وأنفسهم بفضل من سلف عليهم ويعجزهم عن بلوغ مراتبهم والوصول إليها أو مقاربتها.

وما أحسن قول أبي حنيفة وقد سئل عن علقمة والأسود: أيهما أفضل؟ فقال: والله ما نحن بأهل أن نذكرهم، فكيف نفضل بينهم؟!

وكان ابن المبارك إذا ذكر أخلاق من سلف ينشد:

لا تعرضن لذكرنا في ذكرهم ليس الصحيح إذا مشى كالمقعد

The people of beneficial knowledge are the exact opposite; they have a bad

opinion of themselves and have a good opinion of the scholars of the past. Their hearts accept the nobility and excellence of their predecessors and their inability to reach their ranks, or come close to them. Amazing is the saying of Abu Ḥanīfah when he was asked as to which of the two was better, 'Alqamah or al-Aswad, "By Allah, we are not even deserving of mentioning them let alone determining which of them is better!"

When the manners of the Salaf were mentioned to him, Ibn al- Mubārak would say the following verse of poetry,

Do not mention us alongside them

The healthy, when walking, are not like the decrepit

ومن علمه غير نافع إذا رأى لنفسه فضلا على من تقدمه في المقال وتشقق الكلام، ظن لنفسه عليهم فضلا في العلم أو الدرجة عند الله لفضل خص به عن سبق فاحتقر من تقدمه، وأزرى عليه بقلة العلم، ولا يعلم المسكين أن قلة كلام من سلف إنما كان ورعاً وخشية لله، ولو أراد الكلام وإطالته لما عجز عن ذلك،
كما قال ابن عباس لقوم سمعهم يتمارون في الدين: أما علمتم أن الله عبداً أسكتتهم خشية الله من غير عي ولا بكم، وإنهم لهم العلماء والفصحاء والطلقاء والنبلاء، العلماء بأيام الله غير أنهم إذا تذكروا عظمة الله طاشت لذلك عقولهم وانكسرت قلوبهم وانقطعت ألسنتهم، حتى إذا استفاقوا من ذلك يسارعون إلى الله بالأعمال الزاكية، يعدون أنفسهم من المفرطين، وإنهم لأكياس أقوياء ومع الظالمين والخاطئين، وإنهم لأبرار برآء، إلا أنهم لا يستكثرون له الكثير، ولا يرضون له بالقليل، ولا يدلون عليه بالأعمال، هم حيث ما لقيتهم مهتمون مشفقون وجلون خائفون. خرج أبو نعيم وغيره

Whoever's knowledge is not beneficial and deems himself to be better than

those who preceded him in his positions, will also deem himself better than them in knowledge or in standing before Allah. He will look down upon those who came before him and mock them for having little knowledge. This poor person does not realise that the lack of speech arising from the Salaf was due to their leaving the permissible and fearing Allah. Had they wished to speak and elaborate, they were fully capable of doing so.

When Ibn ‘Abbās heard some people debating about the religion he said, “Do you not know that Allah has servants who are silenced by their fear of Allah, and not any illness or dumbness. They are the true scholars; eloquent, intelligent, noble; scholars aware of Allah’s blessings, except that when they remember the greatness of Allah, their minds are overcome, their hearts break from the fear of Allah, and their tongues are silenced. When they recover from this state they hasten to perform righteous deeds, thinking themselves to be amongst those who have fallen short. They are intelligent and strong against the oppressors and sinners, whilst being pious, free of oppression and sin. They never believe that they have done too much and are content with little worship. They do not look down on any actions of worship. Wherever you meet them, you will find them focused, humbled, trembling and fearful.” Reported by Abu Nu‘aym and others.

وأخرج الإمام أحمد والترمذي من حديث أبي أمامة، عن النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ «الْحَيَاءُ وَالْعِيُّ شُعْبَتَانِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ، وَالْبَذَاءُ وَالْبَيَانُ شُعْبَتَانِ مِنَ التَّفَاقُحِ» وحسنه الترمذي، وخرجه الحاكم وصححه.

وخرج ابن حبان في "صحيحه" عن أبي هريرة، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "الْبَيَانُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَالْعِيُّ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَلَيْسَ الْبَيَانُ بِكَثْرَةِ الْكَلَامِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبَيَانَ الْفَصْلُ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَلَيْسَ الْعِيُّ قَلَّةَ الْكَلَامِ وَلَكِنَّ مَنْ سَفِهَ الْحَقَّ."

وفي مراسيل محمد بن كعب القرظي، عن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم -: "ثلاث ينقص بهن العبد في الدُّنْيَا ويدرك بهن في الآخرة ما هو أعظم من ذلك: الرحم والحياء وعي اللسان."

قال عون بن عبد الله: ثلاث من الإيمان: الحياء والعفاف والعي، عي اللسان لا عي القلب ولا عي العمل، وهن مما يزدن في الآخرة وينقصن من الدُّنْيَا، وما يزدن في الآخرة أكبر مما ينقصن من الدُّنْيَا. ورؤي هذا مرفوعاً من وجه ضعيف.

وقال بعض السلف: إن كان الرجل ليجلس إلى القوم فيرون أن به عيًّا وما به عي إنه لفقيه مسلم.

Imam Aḥmad and Tirmidhī recorded the narration of Abu Umamah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Modesty and withholding the tongue are two branches of faith. Lewdness and eloquent speech are two branches of hypocrisy." It was declared sound by Tirmidhī and also recorded by Ḥākim who declared authentic.

Ibn Ḥibbān recorded the anrration of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Clear speech is from Allah and an inability to speak is from Satan. Clear speech is not speaking a great deal, rather it is stating the truth. An inability to speak does not mean little speech but it means to make a mockery of the truth."

Amongst the *mursal* reports of Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraḏī from the Prophet (ﷺ) is that he said, "There are three matters which would cause the servant loss in this world, but he will find that which is greater than them in return in the Hereafter: joining the ties of kinship, modesty, and withholding the tongue."

'Awn ibn 'Abdillāh said, "Three matters are from faith: modesty, chastity, and withholding; withholding the tongue, not withholding the heart or actions. These are things which cause gain in the Hereafter and loss in this life but what is gained in the Hereafter is greater than what is lost in this world." This has also been reported as a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) but is weak.

Some of the Salaf said, "Perhaps a man sits with some people and they think that he is unable to speak, whereas he is fully capable of speech, but he is a Muslim scholar."

فمن عرف قدر السلف عرف أن سكوتهم عما سكوتوا عنه من ضروب الكلام وكثرة الجدل والخصام، والزيادة في البيان على مقدار الحاجة لم يكن عيباً ولا جهلاً ولا قصوراً، وإنما كان ورعاً وخشية لله واشتغالا عما لا ينفع بما ينفع. وسواء في ذلك كلامهم في أصول الدين وفروعه، وفي تفسير القرآن والحديث، وفي الزهد والرقائق والحكم والمواعظ، وغير ذلك مما تكلموا فيه.

فمن سلك سبيلهم فقد اهتدى، ومن سلك غير سبيلهم ودخل في كثرة السؤال والبحث والجدال والقليل والقال؛ فإن اعترف لهم بالفضل وعلى نفسه بالنقص كان حاله قريباً.

Whoever knows the worth of the Salaf will know that their silence in certain matters such as excessive speech, argumentation and debating, and increasing upon explanation beyond what is necessary did not come from an inability to speak, nor ignorance, nor due to shortcoming. Rather, it came from their leaving off the permissible, fear of Allah, and their preoccupying themselves with those affairs which would be of benefit rather than those affairs that contain no benefit. Regardless of whether it be in the foundations of the religion or its

tertiary issues, the exegesis of the Qur'an, the explanation of *ḥadīth*, asceticism, matters which soften the heart, wisdoms and exhortations, and whatever else the Salaf spoke about.

Whoever follows their path in this is rightly guided, and whoever does not; instead involving himself in excessive questioning, disputation, and speculation; is not rightly guided. However, if this latter person was to admit their excellence and his own shortcoming, then he is closer to them.

وقد قال إياس بن معاوية: ما من أحد لا يعرف عيب نفسه إلا وهو أحمق. قيل له: فما عيبك؟ قال: كثرة الكلام. وإن ادعى لنفسه الفضل ولمن سبقه النقص والجهل، فقد ضل ضللاً مبيئاً وخسر خسراناً عظيماً.

وفي الجملة ففي هذه الأزمان الفاسدة إما أن يرضى الإنسان لنفسه أن يكون عالماً عند الله أو لا يرضى إلا بأن يكون عند أهل الزمان عالماً؛ فإن رضي بالأول فليكتف بعلم الله فيه. ومن كان بينه وبين الله معرفة اكتفى بمعرفة الله إياه، ومن لم يرض إلا بأن يكون عالماً عند الناس دخل في قوله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - «مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُبَاهِيَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ، أَوْ يُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ، أَوْ لِيَصْرِفَ بِهِ وُجُوهَ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ، فَلْيَتَّبِعْ مَفْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ».

Iyās ibn Mu'āwiyah said, "Only a fool is unaware of his own deficiencies." It was asked of him, "What is your shortcoming?" He replied, "Speaking too much." However, if this latter person was to attribute excellence to himself and deficiency and ignorance to those who preceded him, then he has clearly deviated and has suffered a great loss.

In summary, in these corrupt times, it is upon a person to either be content that he is a scholar in the sight of Allah, or not be content with this and instead

content himself with being a scholar in the eyes of people. If he chooses the first, let him suffice with Allah's recognition of him, for whoever has a special relationship with Allah will suffice with Allah's recognition of him. Whoever chooses the second, then he falls under the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), "Whoever seeks knowledge to compete with the scholars, or to argue with the fools, or to win the attention of people, let him take his place in the Fire."

قال وهيب بن ورد: رب عالم يقول له الناس: عالم، وهو معدود عند الله من الجاهلين.

وفي "صحيح مسلم" عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم "إن أول من تسعر به النار ثلاثة: أحدهم من قرأ القرآن وتعلم العلم ليقال هو قارئ أو هو عالم، ويقال له: قد قيل ذلك، ثم أمر به فيسحب على وجهه حتى ألقي في النار." فإن لم تقنع نفسه بذلك حتى تصل درجة الحكم بين الناس، حيث كان أهل الزمان لا يعظمون من لم يكن كذلك ولا يلتفتون إليه، فقد استبدل الذي هو أدنى بالذي هو خير وانتقل من درجة العلماء إلى درجة الظلمة.

Wuhayb ibn al-Ward said, "It could be that a scholar is called such by the people, but in the sight of Allah, he is from the ignorant." Imam Muslim recorded the narration of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The first to be burnt in the Fire are three...", one of whom is the scholar and the reciter of the Qur'an who only learnt their knowledge that they may be called, 'scholar', or 'reciter'. That was said of them and they will be dragged face first into the Fire."

If one does not content his soul with this, contenting it instead with the position of judge simply because this is a position that people respect, then he has chosen that

which is lesser instead of that which is best, and he has moved from the ranks of the scholar to the ranks of oppressor.

ولهذا قال بعض السلف لما أريد على القضاء فأباه: إِنَّمَا تَعَلَّمْتَ الْعِلْمَ لِأَحْشَرَ بِهِ
مَعَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ لَا مَعَ الْمُلُوكِ؛ فَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ يَحْشُرُونَ مَعَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْقَضَاةَ يَحْشُرُونَ مَعَ
الْمُلُوكِ.

ولا بد للمؤمن من صبر قليل حتى يصل به إلى راحة طويلة، فإن جزع ولم يصبر
فهو كما قال ابن المبارك: من صبر فما أقل ما يصبر، ومن جزع فما أقل ما
يتمتع.

وكان الإمام الشافعي رحمه الله ينشد:

يا نفس ما هي إلا صبر أيام

كان مدتها أضغاث أحلام

يا نفس جوري عن الدُّنْيَا مبادرة

وخل عنها فإن العيش قدام

فنسأل الله تعالى علماً نافعاً، ونعوذ به من علم لا ينفع، ومن قلب لا يخشع، ومن
نفس لا تشبع، ومن دعاء لا يسمع. اللهم إنا نعوذ بك من هؤلاء الأربعة، الحمد لله
رب العالمين، وصلى الله وسلم على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه أجمعين.

This is why, when one of the Salaf was offered the position of judge, he refused it
saying, "I only sought knowledge so that I may be resurrected with the Prophets,
not that I may be resurrected with kings. The scholars are resurrected with the
Prophets and judges are resurrected with kings."

It is necessary that the believer have a small amount of patience in order for him
to attain everlasting bliss. If he despairs and becomes impatient, he is as Ibn al-

Mubārak said, “Whoever has patience, how short is the duration of his patience.

Whoever despairs, how short is the duration of his enjoyment.”

Imam Shāfi'ī used to say the following lines of poetry,

O my soul, it is only a few days of patience,

Its length is like a fleeting dream

O my soul, through this world pass swiftly

And leave it for true life lies ahead

We ask Allah for beneficial knowledge and we seek refuge with Him from knowledge that does not benefit, from a heart that does not fear Him, from a soul that is not content, and from a supplication that is not answered. O Allah, we seek refuge with You from these four!

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. May Allah bestow his peace and blessings upon our leader, Muhammad, upon all of his family and all of his Companions.