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## Self-importance, conceitedness and harshness

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

### Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)<sup>1</sup> on Self-importance, Conceitedness and Harshness | An advice to the Students of Knowledge

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said, “I advise you and myself firstly to fear Allaah, then [I also advise you and myself] with some of those things which branch off from the fear of Allaah, the Blessed and Most High. The first of which is that you seek knowledge purely for the Face of Allaah, that you do not want any reward nor thanks [for doing so], nor to be at the head of gatherings, only to the extent which Allaah the Most High specified the scholars with when He said, **“Allaah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge.”**<sup>2</sup>

And secondly that you keep away from the pitfalls that some of the students of knowledge fall into, from them being: how quickly one of them is dominated by self-importance [*ujb*] and conceitedness [*ghuroor*] such that he will dart forward, obstinate, issuing religious verdicts for himself and others based upon whatever is apparent to him without seeking the aid of the people of knowledge from the Salaf as-Saalih of this nation who bequeathed a great heritage to us illuminated with Islaamic learning. [A heritage they left] so that we could seek its help in putting an end to many of the calamities that have accumulated through the ages; some of which we have lived through and which were [like] pitch-black darkness.

Seeking aid through the sayings of the Salaf and their opinions helps us to eliminate this darkness and to return to [take from] the spring of the Book and the authentic Sunnah.

And I will not conceal from you the fact that I lived in a time where I saw two opposing matters.

The first was when all of the Muslims, the Shaykhs and the students, the general masses and the scholars, lived in the centre of blind-following, not just of the madhhabs, but also of their fathers and forefathers, and in the midst of that we would call to the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)<sup>3</sup> at this location and that.

And in various Islaamic countries there were individuals doing the same as us, so all of us were living like the strangers which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) described in some of his well-known hadeeths from which is, **“Indeed Islaam started as something strange, and it will soon return to being something strange [just] as it began, so glad tidings for the strangers.”** And in some narrations there occurs that he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, **“They are righteous people, few amongst many. Those who disobey them are more than those who obey them.”** And in another narration there occurs, **“They are the ones who correct that which the people have corrupted from my Sunnah after me.”**

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<sup>1</sup> (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

<sup>2</sup> Soorah Mujaadilah [58:11]

<sup>3</sup> (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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I say: We lived through that time. Then we started to see a pleasant impact of the call of the rectifying strangers upon the believing youth. And we saw these youth stand upright in all earnestness in many of the Islaamic countries, being keen to cling to the Book and the Sunnah when they knew it to be authentic.

But this happiness of ours at this awakening which we felt in these last years did not last until we were taken by surprise by a transformation which occurred in these youth in some of the countries, and which almost wiped out the effects of this good awakening.

And what was the cause of that?

Herein lies the lesson. [It was nothing] except for the fact that they were afflicted with self-importance and conceitedness due to them seeing that they now were upon something of correct knowledge. And [they did] not [see themselves as such] amongst the group of lost Muslim youth only, but even amongst many of the Shaykhs of knowledge, and this was when they felt that they had risen above the people of Sheikhdome [or people who truly were Shaykhs] and the people of knowledge spread-out throughout the world.

Just as they didn't thank Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, for the success [taawfeeq] He granted them [in guiding them] to this correct knowledge and its manners. Instead they deceived themselves and [falsely] thought that they had something to stand upon.

So they took to issuing crude religious verdicts [fataawaa] not based upon an understanding of the Book and the Sunnah. So these religious verdicts came from [people with] immature opinions, [whereas] they thought it was knowledge taken from the Book and the Sunnah—and thus they were misguided due to those opinions as well as misguiding others.

And the effects of that seen in the existence of a group in some of the Islaamic countries will not be hidden from you, [a group] who took to openly declaring all other Islaamic groups to be disbelievers using philosophical arguments which there is no time to delve into now in this brief word, especially when we are in the middle of advising and reminding the students of knowledge and the callers.

For this reason I advise our brothers, the people of the Sunnah and the Hadeeth, in all the Islaamic lands to be patient in seeking knowledge and not to be deceived by the knowledge they may have acquired. They should only follow the path and not just rely on their own understanding or what they call their 'ijtihad'!

And I have heard many of our brothers saying with the utmost ease, with total unaffectedness and without any concern, "I made ijtihad [in this issue] ... I think it is like this ..." or, "I don't hold that to be correct!" And when you ask them, "What is it that you have based your 'ijtihad' upon such that your opinion is such and such? Did you rely upon the understanding of the Book and the Sunnah and the unanimous consensus [ijmaa'] of the scholars from the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)<sup>4</sup> and other than them? What did you use to help you? Did you use the books of fiqh and hadeeth and the understanding of the scholars to help you in that? Or is it [nothing but] desire and understanding deficient in its outlook and its derivations [of rulings from the proofs]?"

[And] indeed, it is.

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<sup>4</sup> (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

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In my opinion, this is the cause of that self-importance and conceitedness. And it is due to this that in the Islaamic world I find a very strange phenomenon becoming apparent in some of the books [being written]—and it is: that you will find someone who is an enemy of the hadeeth authoring works in the field of the science of hadeeth! Only so that it may be said, “He has written [a book] on the science of hadeeth.”

And if you were to go back to that which he has written in this noble [branch of] knowledge you will find that it is nothing but the mere reporting of quotes which he has gathered and collected from here and there and from which he authored this book of his! What is the impetus behind that do you think? It is the love of showing-off and prominence. And he who said the following spoke the truth, “The love of showing off will be the end of you/your downfall.” [lit.: “will break the backs.”]

For this reason I repeat what I said to my brothers, the students of knowledge: that they distance themselves from every mannerism that is not Islaamic, part of which is that they do not become deceived by the knowledge they have been given and that [they do not let] self-importance overcome them, and that lastly they advise the people with that which is best.

And that they distance themselves from having a harsh and severe manner in calling [to Allaah], since all of us believe that when Allaah the Mighty and Majestic said, “**Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better,**”<sup>5</sup> He only did so because the Truth in and of itself is [already] heavy on the people, it is heavy on the souls of mankind and that is why they become arrogant and don’t accept it, except for those upon whom your Lord has mercy. So when another thing and another weight, i.e., harshness in calling to Allaah [da’wah], is added to the weightiness of the truth on the human soul, it will result in driving the people away from the call. And you know the saying of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “**Indeed from among you are those who drive people away.**” He said it three times.

In conclusion, I ask Allaah (عزوجل)<sup>6</sup> that He does not make us from those who drive the people away, but rather that He makes us from those wise people who act upon the Book and the Sunnah.

And I entrust you to Allaah.

Was-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuhu.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Soorah an-Nahl [16:125]

<sup>6</sup> (عزوجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Imaam al-Albaanee, Duroos, wa Mawaaqif, wa Ibar, of Abdul-Aziz ibn Muhammad Abdullaah as-Sadhaan, pp. 161-164.*