



Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge: Taking Knowledge From the Asaaghir

An explanation of some points from “Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge” (of Shaikh Abdus-Salaam Burjis) by Abu Hakeem Bilaal Davies. Transcribed by Hisham Abu Maryam and Umm Maryam for SalafiPublications.Com, edited and amended by Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq, checked by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank.

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Shaykh Burjis begins mentioning that this is one of the sicknesses of this particular time. This is because it is a problem that has come about by taking this Ilm from the people who are young in their age with the presence of one who is older than them.

Ibn Mas’ood (radiallahu anhu) mentioned: “Verily, the people will not cease being in good, as long as they take their Ilm from the older ones (scholars), and from the trustworthy ones and from their scholars. And if they take it from the younger ones and the evil ones from amongst them, then they are sure to be destroyed.” (reported by al-Laalikaa’ee and others [As-Saheehah 2:309,310]).

Abu Umayyah al-Jumhee (radiallahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: “Verily from the signs of the hour is that Ilm will be taken from the asaaghir (smaller, younger ones).” (Reported by Ibn al-Mubarak in az-Zuhd and at-Tabaraanee [As-Saheehah:693]).

Some of the ulema said that the asaaghir are the Ahlul Bid’ah. Shaykh Burjis intends with this chapter those who are younger, smaller (in age).

Ibn Qutaibah (rahimahullah), explaining this narration of Ibn Mas’ood mentioned that the reason for the Salaf making these statements about taking Ilm from the young ones is that the shaykh or the older shaykh does not have with him the characteristic that the young ones have from longing for enjoyment and frolic, his being erratic, his hastiness and his foolishness. For he (i.e. the older scholar) has with him experience and there is no doubt that this enters upon his Ilm. He is not overtaken by desires and he is not distracted neither by cravings nor by desires. And the Shaytaan does not make him slip like the Shaytaan makes the young ones slip, for with age comes composure, dignity, nobility and the awe that comes with older individuals.

As for the young ones, then some of the things that the older shaykh is for the most part free of, the young one can have these affairs enter upon him, (from desires, cravings, the shaitaan making him slip etc.). And if those things enter upon him and he begins to give fataawaa, then he will be destroyed and he will destroy others ('Naseehatu Ahlil Hadeeth' of al- Khateeb al-Baghdaadi p.16).

Ibn Abdul Barr (radiallahu anhu) mentioned that Umar (radiallahu anhu) said: "Verily, I know when the people are in a sound, rectified state and when they are corrupt. If the fiqh come to them from the small ones, then verily the older ones will find it hard to accept it. And if the fiqh comes to them from the older ones, then the younger ones will follow and they will both be guided."

Abdullah (we assume Ibn Mas'ood - radiallahu anhu) mentioned: "Verily, you will not cease to be in goodness as long as Ilm comes to you from the older ones. And, if the Ilm is in the young ones, then verily the older ones will make the young ones out to be foolish"

Shaykh Burjis then explains: "In these last two statements is one of the reasons for not taking the Ilm from the smaller ones –(as was mentioned by Ibn Qutaibah) and that is the fear that Ilm will be rejected if it comes from a younger person.(...he goes on to say...) The intent here is not to make hijrah from the Ilm of the small person (i.e. reject completely) with the presence of the older person. Rather the intent is to put the people in their correct and proper places.

As for the young one who is up and coming and seems to have intelligence and have some Ilm, then his position should be in the schools or giving reminders and in the assistance of research. As for that this person is put on a pedestal for fatawa and that one writes to him with questions - then no, a thousand no's, because that is a death for him and a fitnah and a deception."

Fudhayl ibn Iyaad (rahimahullah) mentioned: "If I was to see a person and the people had gathered around him then I would say 'Verily this is a mad individual!' Because who from the people has people gathering around him except that he wants to make his speech beautiful".

Fudayl ibn Iyaad (rahimahullah) mentioned: "It has reached me that the scholars of the past, if they were to learn then they would act, and if they acted then they would become busy with acting and if they became busy acting upon their Ilm they would be lost by the people. And if they are lost, then they would be sought. And if they are sought verily they would flee." (Siyar A'laamin Nubalaa 8/434)

Benefits From This Lesson

1. Knowledge and understanding (ilm and fiqh) is taken from the major and senior scholars, and from the trustworthy ones.
2. Amongst the signs of the hour is that knowledge will be taken from the younger, inexperienced people. And the Salaf would also explain “asaaghir” (the younger ones) to be in reference to the People of Innovation. Ibnul-Mubaarak said: “They are the people of desires (ahwaa) and innovation”¹. And this in reference to the hadeeth of Abu Umayyah.
3. The older and major scholars have experience, wisdom, composure, deliberation, reserve and patience and awe. Hence, they are less prone to error.
4. However, the knowledge of the younger ones is not rejected altogether, rather the above is all from the angle of putting everything in its proper place.
5. The Salaf would hate to give fatwaa, and hated attention and gatherings of people around them.
6. The Salaf, being occupied in acting upon their knowledge, would be sought by the people, and hence they fled (for fear of being put to trial).

¹ Related by Ibnul-Mubaarak in ‘az-Zuhd’ (no. 61) and by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in ‘al-Jaami’ li-Ahkaam’ (1/137).