



WIFĀQUL 'ULAMĀ (SA)

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN 'ULAMA

ASPIRING TO PRESERVE THE ESSENCE OF SUNNAH



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Learning Dīn from the correct sources

Importance of Dīn

Allāh Ta'ālā defines success in the Qur'ān Karīm: “So, whoever has been saved from the fire and is admitted to Paradise has indeed attained success!” (3/185)

This success cannot be achieved without Dīn. Incorrect practice or, worse still, incorrect understanding and belief places a person in great danger of missing out on this eternal success.

Gaining the correct understanding of Dīn

Who we study under, whose gatherings we attend, and who we listen to will mould our lives and determine how we practice our Dīn. Therefore, we must learn from those who bring us closer to Allāh Ta'ālā.

This was commonly understood throughout the ages. The great Tābi'i, Ibn Sīrīn Rahimahullāh has said: “Verily this knowledge is Dīn, so be wary of who you take your Dīn from.” (Muslim)

Sa'd Ibn Ibrāhīm Rahimahullāh has said: “The people used to say: “Learn Hadīth (only) from trustworthy individuals.”” (Al-Jāmi' Li-Akhlāq Ar-Rāwi, 143)

The danger of learning under unqualified or impious individuals

Nabi Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam foretold a time when 'Ilm and Dīn will be taken from ignorant persons: “Verily Allāh will not remove 'Ilm suddenly by removing it from the (hearts of) people. Rather, He will remove 'Ilm by taking away the 'Ulamā'- until (such a time) when not one (true) 'Ālim remains. The people will then take ignorant ones as their leaders. They will be asked (questions regarding Dīn), and they will answer without knowledge. So they will go astray and lead others astray.” (Bukhāri, 100)

Ibn Mas'ūd Radhiyallāhu 'Anhu said: “People will remain on goodness for as long as they attain 'Ilm from their seniors (pious, qualified individuals). They will be destroyed once they begin taking from their juniors (unfit individuals) and their evil ones.” (Jāmi' Bayān Al-'Ilm, 1057)

By learning Dīn from those unfit to disseminate it, we tread the path to destruction. Despite having the formal “qualifications,” if a person openly transgresses the commands of Allāh, he can never be regarded as a source of true Dīn. Intermingling and lack of purdah, interfaith involvement, propagating Dīn through Harām means, modernization efforts, etc., are all common indicators to be vigilant of.

Qualities of True ‘Ulamā’

Allāh Ta’ālā states in the Qur’ān Karīm: “Only the ‘Ulamā’ (truly) fear Allāh from amongst His slaves.” (35/28)

‘Atā’ Rahimahullāh says regarding this Āyah: “The person that fears Allāh is a (true) ‘Ālim.” (Jāmi’ Bayān Al-‘Ilm, 1544). Similarly, Mujāhid Rahimahullāh mentioned: “The (true) Faqīh is the one that fears Allāh.” (Jāmi’ Bayān Al-‘Ilm, 1547)

Merely studying or obtaining an Ijāzah does not make one a true ‘Ālim. The true ‘Ālim fears Allāh Ta’ālā and acts upon the knowledge that he has attained. It will be those ‘Ulamā’ that will be of benefit to us in our dunyā and Ākhirah, and it is them that we should follow and listen to.

The ‘Ulamā’ of the past scrutinized a potential teacher for certain qualities before accepting knowledge from him.

Ibrāhīm An-Nakha’ī Rahimahullāh says: “When the ‘Ulamā’ wished to learn from a certain man, they would look at his Salāh, his appearance, and his habits.” (Al-Jarh wa Ta’dīl, 1/1, 15). If these traits were found to be against Dīn or the Sunnah, they would stay away.

In our times, 3 qualities are essential:

- 1) He practices upon his ‘Ilm and does not openly flaunt the commands of Allāh Ta’ālā and the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam.
- 2) He had teachers that nurtured and taught him (i.e., he did not self-study)
- 3) He follows the ‘Ulamā’ he learnt from (i.e., he stays upon the path of his elders and does not modernize and compromise upon his Dīn)

Most importantly, we should only learn Dīn from persons who belong to the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama’ah (i.e. they are neither Shia, Salafi, Qadiyani, Modernist, etc.).

The effect of evil Suhbah (companionship)

People often say, “We’ll take the good and leave the bad.”

The far-reaching effects of evil “suhbah” (companionship) make this approach impossible.

Most of us do not have the required knowledge to distinguish between right and wrong. Every person feels capable of doing so, which is why we see people being led astray by incorrect ideologies daily.

Abū Qilābah Rahimahullāh said: “Do not sit with misguided people nor (even) argue with them because I have no guarantee that they won’t include you in their misguidance or confuse you in things you already know. (Shu’abul Īmān, 9015)

The Sahābah Radhiyallāhu ‘Anhum became the flag-bearers of Islām through staying in the blessed company of Nabī Sallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam.

Nabī Sallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam said: “A man is upon the Dīn of his friend, so each of you should look at whom he befriends.” (Abū Dāwūd, 4833). One cannot separate the ‘Ilm from the person. The practices and outlook of an orator or teacher undoubtedly rub off on the listener.

Recent trends

Of late, there has been a trend of international “celebrity scholars” and even female orators visiting our shores.

“Be wary of who you take your Dīn from!”

Keep an eye out for certain red flags:

- Charging of exorbitant amounts
- Hosting only exclusive events
- A female traveling without a Mahram
- Attending and addressing mixed events without complete segregation
- Breaking of any law of Sharī’ah

Whether local or international, we must be careful who we listen to and attain Dīn from.

Nabī Sallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam said: “The thing I fear most for my Ummah is every hypocrite that has a knowledgeable tongue.” (Musnad Ahmad, 143)

We should continuously recite the Du’ā:

اللَّهُمَّ أَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَأَرِزْنَا اتِّبَاعَهُ وَأَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَأَرِزْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ

O Allāh, show us the truth to be true and grant us the ability to practice upon it and show us falsehood to be false and grant us the ability to abstain from it.

May Allāh Ta’ālā guide us to the correct ‘Ulamā’ and understanding of Dīn, and may He protect us from scholars and influencers who will lead us away from Him, Āmīn.