

Mawlana Shaykh Muhammad Adil ar-Rabbani

THE VIRTUE OF SAYING “I DON’T KNOW”

As-Salāmu ‘Alaykum wa RaḥmatuLlāhi wa Barakātuh.

A‘ūdhu BiLlāhi Minash-shayṭāni r-rajim. BismiLlāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

Wa ṣ-Salātu wa s-Salāmu ‘alā Rasūlinā Muḥammadin Sayyidi l-Anwālina wa l-Akbarin.

Madad yā RasūlAllāh, Madad yā Sādāti Aṣḥābi RasūlilLāh, Madad yā Mashāyikhinā,

Dastūr Mawlana Sheikh Abdullāh al-Fā’iz ad-Dāghistāni, Sheikh Muḥammad Nāẓim al-Ḥaqqāni. Madad. Tarīqatunā aṣ-Suḥbah wa l-Khayru fi l-Jam‘iyyah.

Our Prophet ṣallā Llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam says, “In the end of times, true knowledge will diminish, while those who pose as scholars will multiply.” What does this mean? It means there will be an abundance of people who fancy themselves to be something significant. They impart incorrect knowledge and misinformation to others, leading people astray. These so-called scholars—the ‘ulama s-su’ (corrupt scholars)—bear a heavy burden. There are many of them. They issue fatwa (rulings) according to their own minds. They speak according to their own desires or self-interest. The end of times—the very era we are living in now—is exactly like this. Each of them says whatever comes into their head. Moreover, they actually believe it themselves: “I am speaking the truth; look, people consult me, asking, ‘What should we do? How should we proceed?’” In doing so, they incur a grave liability. For if people act upon what they say, the responsibility rests entirely on them.

That is why, even the greatest scholars would say, “I do not know.” Regarding matters they were unfamiliar with, they would simply say, “I do not know.” Imām Malik, the founder of the Maliki madhhab, was once asked a question. “What do you say about this?” he was asked. “I do not know,” he replied. It is said that out of fifty questions put to him, he answered “I do not know” to thirty-five of them. The inquirer asked in astonishment, “How can you not know?” He replied, “I do not wish to incur a burden; I say ‘I do not know’ when I do not know.” Saying “I do not know” is, in fact, a great merit and a virtue. For the person who, despite not knowing, follows their ego and answers—fearing that others might think them ignorant—incurs a burden.

Therefore, if there is a matter you do not understand, you must research it and ask about it. For there are many people who issue—or even fabricate—fatwas on every conceivable subject. The burden of doing so is immense. There are such bizarre statements, fabricated fatwas, and answers circulating—defying all reason—that listing them all would take until nightfall. Therefore, one must be extremely cautious; do not incur such a heavy burden. What kind of burden is this? If a hundred kilograms were placed upon you, you would be crushed; if five hundred were placed, you would be utterly destroyed—yet this burden is far heavier still! You may not see it with your eyes, but its

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weight is so crushing that you would feel profound regret in the Hereafter. If someone asks you a question in this world, say: “There is a Mufti—ask him; there are religious scholars—consult them. “Do not venture into matters you do not understand and thereby shoulder a burden. Whether it concerns inheritance, family matters, or financial dealings... do not meddle in affairs” you do not fully comprehend; simply say, “I do not know.” By saying “I do not know, you free yourself from that burden. Only if you truly possess the knowledge—and there are people who would benefit from it—should you speak. Otherwise, if you speak merely to satisfy your ego—fearing that others might look down on you—you are mistaken; indeed, even the great Imam Malik was once challenged: “With all your vast knowledge, how can you say you do not know? You pass yourself off as a scholar!” He replied: “I cannot shoulder such a burden.” Yet today’s people are often a crowd of utter ignoramuses. While attempting to guide the people under the guise of scholarship, they lead both themselves and the public astray. May Allāh ﷻ protect us. May Allāh ﷻ shield us all from such individuals and from those who follow their egos.

Wa min Allāhi t-Tawfīq. Al-Fātiḥa.

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