

Şahīḥ al-Bukhārī [100] – The Death of Scholars and the
Departure of Knowledge



Commentaries by **Dārussalām**, **Shaykh Muḥammad bin Şālih al-'Uthaymīn** [d. 1421H], and **Ḥāfiẓ Şalāḥuddīn Yūsuf** [d. 1441H]



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❁ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī [100] – The Death of Scholars and the Departure of Knowledge ❁

Book 3: The book of knowledge

Chapter 34: How the (religious) knowledge will be taken away

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَالًا، فَسُئِلُوا فَأَمَّتُوا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا»

It is narrated on the authority of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا that he said: I heard Allāh’s Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: **“Allāh does not take away the knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious learned men till when none of the (religious learned men) remains, people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So, they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”**

→ Commentary by Dārussalām (Sunan at-Tirmidhī):

In this ḥadīth, there is a great urge and advocacy for the Muslims that they should value and honor their God-conscious scholars, the people should get maximum benefit from them, otherwise the time may be near that they will be deprived of this favor. (1)

→ Commentary by Dārussalām (Sunan ibn Mājah):

a) Muslims will not lose knowledge of religion in one go. What in fact will happen is that the true scholars will gradually be taken away from the community. That will herald the end of the religious sciences as well. In order to forestall such a dangerous situation, the Muslim community must exert its utmost effort to produce scholars specializing in the Islāmīc sciences and law.
b) It is the duty of a religious scholar to give his verdict in the light of the Qurān and aḥādīth, instead of giving it on the basis of his own personal opinion or analogy. (2)

(1) [2652 (5/54-55), Sunan at-Tirmidhī, Dārussalām (Eng)]

(2) [52 (1/108-109), Sunan ibn Mājah, Dārussalām (Eng)]

→ Commentary by Shaykh Muḥammad bin Šāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ:

The author, Ḥāfiẓ an-Nawawī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ recorded this ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا under the chapter on the virtues of knowledge which is learnt and taught for the sake of Allāh – the most High. He narrated that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **“Verily, Allāh does take away knowledge by snatching it from the people.”**

The ḥadīth indicates that knowledge will be taken away and there will be no scholar on the surface of the earth to guide mankind to the Religion of Allāh, so the Ummah will degenerate and go astray. Therefore, the Qurān will be taken away; it will be snatched from the hearts of men and from copies of the Qurān.

As Ahlus Sunnah would say: ‘The Qurān is the revealed word of Allāh, and not created. From Him it originated and to Him it will return.’ They say the meaning of ‘to Him it will return’ is that it will go back to Allāh – the Mighty and Sublime – towards the end of time when people would have abandoned it completely; neither would they recite it nor act by it.

Similar to this is the honored Ka’bah. Allāh protected it when Abrahah who wanted to demolish it moved towards it with mighty elephant and numerous soldiers. Allāh – the Mighty and Sublime – shielded it from him and Allāh revealed an entire chapter of the Qurān about it: **“Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant [The elephant army which came from Yemen under the command of Abraham al-Ashram intending to destroy the Ka’bah at Makkah]. ❁ Did He not make their plot go astray? ❁ And He sent against them birds, in flocks, ❁ striking them with stones of sijjīl (baked clay). ❁ And He made them like (an empty field of) stalks (of which the corn has been eaten up by cattle).”** [Sūrah al-Fīl 105: 1-5]

❁ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ۖ ❶ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ۚ ❷ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۖ ❸ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ۖ ❹ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ۖ ❺ (سورة الفيل)

“**Ṭayran abābīl**”: Allāh sent the birds; Abābīl, different groups, with each bird carrying between its legs stones of sijjīl; that is, from roasted and hard clay. Allāh commanded these birds to throw the stones at the soldiers, and whenever the stone hits a man on his head it would come out from his anus. This continued until He made them like a field of plants eaten by animals and blended together.

However, people will desecrate the sanctity of this House and commit various acts of disobedience in it towards the end of time. Then, Allāh will overpower them with a short man with curved legs from Abyssinia who will demolish it stone by stone. He will come with soldiers to break and demolish the Ka'bah stone by stone. Whenever a stone is removed, it will be passed down the line of soldiers from Makkah until it will end up in the ocean. They will remove its stones to the last.

Contemplate on this matter, Allāh – the Mighty and Sublime – had protected it in the earliest time from these disbelievers because He knew that He will raise a Messenger there who will remove people from misguidance, oppression and polytheism to guidance, justice, and His Oneness. When people will desecrate its sanctity towards the end of time, Allāh will empower the one who will destroy it. This is based on His wisdom. No one will challenge or oppose this man. Allāh – the Mighty and Sublime – with His wisdom will make him firmly established on this.

Similarly, the Qurān will be removed from the hearts of men and from copies of the Qurān and it will ascend to the Lord, the Mighty and Sublime. This is because it is His words; it originated from Him and to Him will it return.

However, knowledge will not be taken away from the hearts of men, but it will be taken away by the death of the scholars. The real scholars will die and there will be no learned person left. Then people will choose those who will rule them as leaders and they will consult them for legal ruling. But they will be ignorant people who will issue verdict without knowledge, so they will go astray and lead others astray, and refuge is with Allāh.

And the sharī'ah will remain among these ignorant people, they will give judgement with it among the people while they are ignorant. At that time, the real Islām, which is based on the Qurān and Sunnah, will be lost because its bearers have been taken.

The ḥadīth encourages and emphasizes seeking for knowledge as not to reach the situation described by the Messenger of Allāh **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ**.

Informing of an event is not the same as endorsing it. That is, that the Messenger **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** tells us about something does not mean that he approves of it and legalizes it. He **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** stated and swore that: **“Surely, you will follow the ways of those before you”**, that is, you will tread the paths of those that came before you. They asked: “The Jews and the Christians?” He **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** said: **“Yes, the Jews and the Christians.”** (3) He stated that this

(3) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (3456 & 7320)

Ummah will commit what the Jews and Christians are upon. This information is a warning and not an approval or a validation. We must understand the difference between what the Prophet ﷺ stated as a validation and what he stated as a warning.

The Prophet ﷺ stated that the scholars would die. Thus, we should devote ourselves to learning so that this time will not meet us, a time in which the scholars will die and only these ignorant leaders will remain. Those who will deliver religious verdicts without knowledge, and then they will go astray and will lead others astray.

We ask Allāh for beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds, and pure and abundant provision. (4)

→ **Commentary by Ḥāfiẓ Ṣalāhuddīn Yūsuf رحمه الله:**

It is a sign of the nearness of the Day of Judgement that the world will be deprived of genuine religious scholars, and illiterate people will become leaders who will have neither the knowledge of the Qurān nor that of the ḥadīth. Despite their ignorance of the Qurān and the ḥadīth, they will be called mujtahid (jurist entitled to independent reasoning) and imām (leader) and will mislead people with their legal opinions and self-created problems. Besides urging us to acquire religious knowledge with a view to producing more scholars in the society, this ḥadīth also warns us against the ignorant self-styled ‘ulamā’. It also warns us against entrusting religious leadership to them. (5)

Takhrīj:

- Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (7307)
- Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (67 (1/55-56))
- Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2673)
- Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1858 (1/491))
- Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2652)
- Sunan ibn Mājah (52)
- Sunan ad-Dārimī (239 (1/55))
- Musnad Aḥmad (6511 (11/59-60); 6787 (11/395-396); & 6896 (11/498-499)) [Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt]
- Musnad Aḥmad (6511 (6/70); 6787 (6/308-309); & 6896 (6/382)) [Aḥmad Shākir]
- Musnad al-Bazzār (2422-2423 (6/400-402))
- Musnad Abī Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī (2406 (4/48))

(4) [1392 (5/500-503), Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn, Dārussalām (Eng)]

(5) [1392 (2/1031-1032), Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn, Dārussalām (Eng)]

- Musnad Shihāb (1103-1104 (2/162-163))
- Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān (4571 (10/432-433); 6719 (15/114-115); & 6723 (15/118))
- Muṣannaf ‘Abdur-Razzāq (21395 (9/113); 21401 (9/114); & 21405 (9/115))
- Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah (40379 (21/376))
- Bayḥayqī’s Sunan al-Kubrā (20352 (10/198-199))
- Nasā’ī’s Sunan al-Kubrā (7876-7877 (5/391))
- Shu’ab al-Īmān (1541 (3/189-192))
- Al-Mu’jam al-‘Awsaṭ (55 (1/21-22); 988 (1/297); & 3222 (3/301))
- Al-Mu’jam aṣ-Ṣaḡḥīr (459 (1/336-337))
- Sharḥ as-Sunnah (147 (1/315-316))
- Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār (306-311 (1/283-284))
- Ḥilyatul Awliyā’ (2/181 & 10/25)
- Kanzul ‘Ummāl (28741 (10/145); 28980 (10/187); & 29095 (10/207)) – on the authority of Abī Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
- Kanzul ‘Ummāl (28981 (10/187))
- Mu’jam ash-Shuyūkh (172 (1/156); 265 (1/232-233); 285 (1/247); 765 (1/621); 844 (1/679-670); 1145 (1/905-906); & 1441 (1/1111-1112))
- Majma’ al-Zawā’id (995-996 (2/396-397)) – on the authority of Abī Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
- Majma’ al-Zawā’id (998 (2/398-399)) – on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا
- Tārīkh al-Baghdād (895 (2/382-383)) – on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا
- Tārīkh al-Baghdād (1070 (3/79))
- Tārīkh ad-Dimashq (4381 (19/71)) – on the authority of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا
- Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’ (11/144-145)
- Al-Ādāb ash-Shar’iyah (2/67)
- Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (206)
- Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1392)
- Al-Jāmi’ aṣ-Ṣaḡḥīr [Suyūṭī] (1826 (1/114))
- Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ (1854 (1/379))
- Talkhīṣ al-Jāmi’ al-Kāmil (1236-1237 (1/374-375))
- Ibn al-Mubārak’s az-Zuhd (765 (1/624))
- Khalq Af’āl al-‘Ibād (384 (2/194-195))
- Majmū’ al-Fatāwā – ibn Taymiyyah (18/303)

