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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

Chapter Nineteen

On the Conclusion of What the *Shehu* Discussed in His Lectures: A Discussion of the Division of the Types of Preaching and Admonition and The Prerequisites for Resoluteness in Guiding Mankind

Realize that preaching from the perspective of admonishing mankind about the affairs of the Hereafter, its terrors and what will happen in that realm along with reminder of the matters of Paradise are in two divisions: [1] praiseworthy; and [2] blameworthy.

As for praiseworthy preaching, it is admonishing people with the signs of Allah's Book and sound narratives. Allah ta`ala says:

﴿فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ﴾

“Remind by means of the *Qur'an* those who fear the threat.” And Allah ta`ala says:

﴿وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

“Remind, for verily the reminder is beneficial to the believers.” Likewise, all the verses, prophetic traditions, narratives and sound reports which many of the scholars have narrated. As for blameworthy preaching it is admonishing them with the ignorant storytellers have innovated from mentioning falsehood and fabricated traditions.

As for the type of preaching which is known to be prevalent in these *Sudanese* lands of ours, it is to guide the people to what is essential for them from the individual obligations to teach them and urging them to all levels of knowledge; for it is obligatory upon every jurist (*faqih*) who has completed his individual obligations to then commence with his collective obligations. It is also obligatory upon him to establish himself in every village and locale. If someone establishes this matter then it removes the responsibility from the rest of the people of that region. They should consider this action of calling people to beneficial knowledge as the best means of drawing near to Allah ta`ala and firmest of stations with Allah. This was disclosed by *Imam* al-Ghazali in his *Ihya' l-'Uluum 'd-Deen* and Ahmad ibn Hajr al-Haythami in his *az-Zawaajir*.

If you were to say: “It has been narrated from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace that he said:

((إِذَا رَأَيْتَ شَحًّا مَطَاعًا وَهُوَ مُتَبَعًا، وَإِعْجَابَ كُلِّ ذِي رَأْيٍ بِرَأْيِهِ، فَعَلَيْكَ بِخَوِيصَةِ نَفْسِكَ))

“You see stinginess being obeyed, passions being followed and every possessor of an opinion being amazed with his own opinion, then incumbent upon you is the private affair of your own soul.” This prophetic tradition and in what resembles it proves that one should avoid the affairs of the common people and that one should seek the safety

of the private affairs of his own soul due to the corruption of the times. For there can be no doubt and there is no disagreement concerning the fact that these are the times which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace indicated in his statement, as al-Hassan al-Yusi mentioned in his lectures.”

I say: This interpretation is based upon the knowledge that if guiding the people, commanding them and forbidding them with words and deeds will bring no benefit to them; or if one realizes, out of necessity, that admonishing them will only incite strife and disorder, or that it will lead to greater evils; then the obligation of commanding the good and forbidding evil is removed from him regarding them and he should return to the rights which his own soul had upon him. As for as their rights are concerned, it is highly recommended to preach to them in the first case, since they do not have a legitimate excuse to reject sound teachings. He should speak to the people concerning that and mention to them the wisdom of Allah ta`ala. If the people listen to him and return to Allah, then this is what is desired. However, if they refuse, then he has established an excuse with Allah and has established what is obligatory for him to established with regard to Him. Allah ta`ala says:

﴿وَلَتَكُنَّ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ

الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“There should arise from among you a community who calls to the exemplary, commands the good and forbid indecency. These are the prosperous.” The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said as related by Imam at-Tirmidhi and others:

((لتأمرن بالمعروف، ولتنهون عن الممكر، أو ليوشكن الله أن يبعث عليكم عقاباً منه، ثم تدعونني فلا يستجاب لكم))

“You should command the good and forbid indecency or perhaps Allah will send upon you a punishment from Himself. You will then supplicate Him and He will not answer you.” He, upon him be peace also said:

((إذا ظهرت الفتن وسكت العالم فعليه لعنة الله))

“When tribulations appear and the scholars are silent, then upon them is the curse of Allah.”

Then realize that having resolution and commencing with what has been mentioned has its prerequisites. Among them is: [1] application of the Book of Allah and the *Sunna*; and [2] acquaintance with the sciences of the *shari`a*. This is in order that he may not flounder in the issues of the religion nor be perplexed by legal mishaps. On the contrary, he should join together that which has been disconnected of the sciences and engage in them the way a fish swims the depths of the sea. He should transcend knowledge the way a bird transcends the uninhabited regions of the stratosphere, with piercing inner-vision and exalted resolution.

As for what some of the people of these *Sudanese* lands of ours are doing - where mere students and common people commence to preach, jump to spread knowledge and guide the people. This is a grave affliction and a tremendous tribulation. Whenever you like you can encounter ignorant people who have squandered their own souls, who are ignorant of some of what is obligatory upon them, not to speak of not attaining the level of knowledge that we have previously mentioned. For the only thing, which incites them to do, that is the enticement of Satan. They are provoked by the corrupt passions of the soul in seeking knowledge, rank and position with worldly people and pouncing upon the wealth of the people.

They falsely imagine that they possess excellent intention and sincere resolution in guiding the people and teaching them. They think that they are deserving of the title of scholar. Rather, they even consider that teaching is an obligation and that they have no choice but to do so. Can you not see how that assault real knowledge and falsely teach and violate the narrated sciences and reason, until the hearts of the common people feel awe for them. They then obey them and flock to them from every direction. It is then that the religion becomes destroyed at their hands and corrupted. The people become preoccupied with what the corrupt souls of these false teachers have contrived. This is what the Prophet indicated, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in the tradition concerning the removal of true knowledge and the people taking as their leaders ignorant ones. The people then question them and they give legal decisions without sound knowledge - until when the Prophet, upon him be peace said:

((فضلوا وأضلوا))

“They have gone astray and will have led others astray.” Each one of these are more dangerous in the religion to the Muslims than one thousand devils. There can be no news like eye-witnessing. So understand!

From that also is those who are not deserving to establish themselves to teach. *Sharif Jamal 'd-Deen as-Samhuudi* once said: “It is obligatory for you not to be established in teaching and instructing the people when you are not deserving of it. And you should never mention in your lectures that which you have not studied, this is regardless if the prerequisites have been met or not. For this is simply making sport with the religion making contention among the people. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

((المتشبع بما لم يعط كلابس ثوبي زور))

“Circulating that which you were not given is like one who dresses in the attire of false testimony.”

It has been related by *Shaykh as-Shibli*: “Whoever commences with leadership prematurely has embarked upon his own degradation.” It has been narrated from *Abu Haneefa*: “Whoever seeks after leadership before its time will remain in disgrace as long as he endures.” One of the wise said concerning the instructions of those who are not authorized to teach:

تصدر للتدريس كل مهوس * جهول ليسمى بالفقيه المدرس

The giving of instructions is now commenced by every foolish person

Ignoramuses in order that they can be called a jurist and an instructor.

فحق لأهل العلم أن يتمثلوا * بببيت قديم شاع في كل مجلس

The right of the people of knowledge is that they resemble

An ancient house whose teaching pervades every assembly.

لقد هزلت حتى بدا من هزالها * كلاها وحتى سامها كل مفلس

For knowledge has become so wasted away until it has become from its scrawniness

Completely depleted and until every loser and failure claims it.”

It is obligatory with regard to the common people and everyone who is included in its meaning to guide and object in those things whose knowledge is equal to the common as well as the elite. This is to be done without them establishing themselves no commencing to sit and teach people, by agreement of the scholars. Among these also is possibility, as many scholars have narrated. Among these also is having excellent character. Allah ta`ala says:

﴿وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ﴾

“If you were harsh and hard hearted they would have fled from around you.” These are the three prerequisites that are essential in preaching and establishing instructions for the masses.

As for the remaining prerequisites, they are not incumbent regarding guiding others. These depend upon the teacher: like having excellent intention and one’s words conforming to one’s actions. These two are prerequisites for perfection. Not the prerequisites for action.



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