

Chapter Ten

Statements from the Muhadithin on Taqleed (Those who are experts in the detail explanation of the Hadith)

Imam Tirmidhi, a great Muhadith himself and the compiler of one of the canonical collections, who said: *“The Fuqaha are more knowledgeable about the meaning of Hadith.”*

*Mulla ‘Ali Qari commented: “The early scholars said: ‘The Hadith scholar without knowledge of fiqh is like a seller of drugs who is no physician;’ he has them but he does not know what to do with them; ‘and a Fiqh scholar without knowledge of hadith is like a physician without drugs’: he knows what constitutes a remedy, but does not have it available.”*¹

The salaf and Khalaf clarified this rule in many famous statements showing that, for all the exalted status of the Muhaddith, yet the Faqih excels him.

Ibn Abi Zayd al-Maliki reports Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna as saying: “Hadith is a pitfall except for the Fuqaha,” and Malik’s companion ‘Abd Allah ibn Wahb very frequently said: “Hadith is a pitfall except for the scholars. Every memorizer of hadith that does not have an Imam in Fiqh is misguided, and if Allah had not rescued us with Malik and al-Layth (ibn Sa’ad), we would had not been misguided.”²

Ibn Abi Zayd comments: “He (sufyan) means that to her than the jurists might take something in its external meaning when, in fact, it is interpreted in the light of another hadith or some evidence which remains hidden to him; or it may in fact consist in discarded evidence due to some other (abrogating) evidence. None can meet the responsibility of

1 Al-Qari, Mu’tadaq Abi Hanifata al-Imam fi Abaway al-Rasul. Page: 42.

2 Ibn Abi Hatim in the introduction of al-Jarh wal-Ta’dil. Page 22-23.

knowing this except those who deeped their learning and obtained fiqh.” Imam al-Haytami said something similar.³

Ibn al-Mubarak said: “If Allah had not rescued me with Abu Hanifa and Sufyan (al-Thawri) I would have been like the rest of the common people.” Al-Dhahabi relates it as: “I would have been an innovator.”⁴

Imam Ahmad’s teacher, Yahya ibn Sa’ad al-Qattan (d.198), despite his for most status as the Master of hadith Masters’ and expert in narrator-recommendation and discrimination, would not venture to extract legal rulings from the evidence but followed in this the fiqh of Abu Hanifa as he explicitly declared: “We do not belie Allah. We never heard better than the juridical opinion of Imam Abu Hanifa and we followed most of his positions.”⁵

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “The energy of the scholars is care and help while the energy of fools is to quote.”⁶

Ibn Abi Layla said: “A man does not understand hadith until he knows what to take from it and what to leave.”⁷

Imam Shafi’i narrated that Imam Malik ibn Anas was told: “Ibn ‘Uyayna narrates from al-Zuhri things you do not have!” He replied: “Why, should I narrate every single hadith I heard? Only if I wanted to misguide people!”⁸

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattah. Abu Ghudda mentioned some of the above examples and commented: “If the likes of Yahya al-Qattan, Waki’ ibn al-Jarrah, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Yahya ibn Ma’in, and those who compare with

3 In al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya. Page 283

4 Ibn Hajar. Tadhkirat (10:449-452) and al-Dhahabi’s Manaqib Abi Hanifa.

5 Al-Dhahabi, Tashkirat al-Huffaz (1:307) and ibn Hajar, Tadhhib (10:450)

6 Narrated mursal from al-Hasan by ibn ‘Asakir and al-Khatib, al-Jami’ li Akhlaq al-Rawi (1983 ed. 1:88)

7 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jami’ Bayan al-‘Ilm (2:130)

8 narrated by al-Khatib in al-Jami’ li Akhlaq al-Rawi (2:109)

them, did not dare enter into Ijtihad and Fiqh, then how rash are the claimants without the lest shame nor modesty! Allah is our refuge from failure.”⁹

It has also been narrated about ‘Abdullah ibn Wahb – one of the most eminent students of Imam Malik and an outstanding scholar of Hadith that he stated: “I met (i.e. studied under) three hundred and sixty scholars, and had it not been for Imam Malik and Imam Laith ibn Sa’ad I would have gone astray in knowledge.”¹⁰ He is also reported to have stated: “Every student of Hadith who does not have an Imam (guide/leader) in Fiqh is astray. And had it not have been for Imam Malik and Laith we would have been astray.”¹¹

Imam Sha’rani wrote in Mizan al-Kubra: “When Ibrahim ibn al-Laqani passed away (in 1041 A.H.) some pious people saw him in a dream and asked him how Allah had treated him; the Shaykh al-Islam said, “When the questioning angles seated him, Imam Malik came and said, ‘Is it apt to ask such a person whether he believes in Allah and His Messenger? Leave him alone,’ and they left him.

9 Abu Ghudda, al-Isnad min al-Din . Page: 68.

10 Athar Al-Hadith Sharif. Page 75 from Abi Hibban in Muqaddamatul Jaruheen 1/42.

11 Athar Al-Hadith Sharif. Page 83 from Abi Zayd in Kitaabul Jaam’i. Page 117