

“The Salaf did not Acquire Knowledge except by way of the Scholars!”

Al-‘Allāmah Shaikh Rabī’ bin Hādī al-Madkhalī حفظه الله تعالى

This brief advice from Al-‘Allāmah Shaikh Rabī’ bin Hādī al-Madkhalī حفظه الله تعالى highlights the critical importance of sitting with the Scholars and taking knowledge from them (when and where possible of course, especially for those living in other lands away from the Scholars), as well as the danger of isolating from them under “self-study”; indeed the worst of manners and etiquette are witnessed from those who do not sit with the Scholars, as the Shaikh mentions.

In just the last decade or two, we have witnessed the deaths of many of our most senior and major scholars رحمه الله, at the forefront of them, the likes of (just to mention a few, not all):

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh ibn ‘Uthaymīn رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh ibn Bāz رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh al-Albānī رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh Muqbil رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh Ahmad an-Najmī رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh Zaid al-Madkhalī رحمه الله

al-‘Allāmah Shaikh al-Luhaydān رحمه الله

By the blessing of Allāh though, we still have among us many scholars, those known for knowledge, wisdom, and uprightness, the likes of Shaikh Rabī bin Hādī حفظه الله himself, and Shaikh Sālih al-Fawzān حفظه الله, and Shaikh ‘Abdul-Muhsin al-‘Abbād حفظه الله, and Shaikh ‘Alī Nāsir al-Faqīhī حفظه الله, and Shaikh ‘Ubayd al-Jābirī حفظه الله, and Shaikh ‘Abdullāh al-Bukhārī حفظه الله ~ that is just to mention a few, and there are many more from our Salafi Scholars حفظهم الله -, and so the opportunities to sit with the Scholars remain, such opportunities must be firmly grasped when and where they arise, especially for the students living in their lands, and for others whenever possible through ‘Umra trips and the like when visiting.

The translated document with the advice of the Shaikh follows, the original Arabic version can be found on the Shaikh’s website: [فتاوى في العقيدة والمنهج \(الحلقة\)](http://rabee.net) (rabee.net) الثالثة) - موقع الشيخ أ.د. ربيع بن هادي عمير المدخلي

Abū Mu’ādh Taqweem

26th October, 2022

1/4/1444h

Question: “What is the optimal method in your opinion for studying books of ‘Aqīdah and taking from them, and what is your advice you direct to beginner students of knowledge?”

Answer: “The optimal method in studying books of ‘Aqīdah and other than them...the first thing I do: memorise the book that the Scholar we wish to take knowledge from directs us to. So if he directs you to “3 Fundamental Principles” then memorise it, or “Exposition of the Doubts كشف الشبهات”, (then memorise it).

Memorisation has value, it aids you upon understanding, and upon managing the complexities in ‘Aqīdah. So the first step you should take is to memorise this book (whichever one he directs you to) regarding Tawhīd in worship, either start with “Kitāb at-Tawhīd - The Book of Tawhīd”, or “3 Fundamental Principles”, or “Exposition of the Doubts كشف الشبهات”, depending on what the Scholar you are going to study under considers suitable.

Do not study by yourself, rather kneel upon your knees in humbleness for Allāh the Most High (in the circles of knowledge), for indeed the Angels lower their wings for the student of knowledge in pleasure at what he does (by way of seeking knowledge), so how can you not lower your wing (of humbleness) before the Scholar, and (sit down) kneeling in front of him to take (knowledge) from him?

We do not have sanctification of people, nor excessiveness or exaggeration in praise for anyone, but we have etiquette, and respect, and a recognition of the level of the Scholars especially, for indeed the *scholars* of the people of innovation are not scholars, the (true) scholars are the scholars of the Book of Allāh, and scholars of Tawhīd & Sunnah - even if they do not have the chatter, ring, and style, as others besides them do (common among the deviated speakers who seek to entertain or beguile their audiences), so sit with the Scholar and learn from him.

Therefore, the optimal method is that you study under a Scholar, for he will draw close for you that which is distant, and give you the summary of his lengthy experience, and you may gain in one sitting with him that which you may not gain otherwise all your life, or not gain except after many years.

This is the optimal method, in my opinion, pick out a book, then learn from him (the Scholar), learn from him as was the way of the righteous predecessors (Salaf us-Sālih), for indeed they did not used to acquire knowledge except by way of the Scholars. If someone did not receive knowledge and (study) Qur-ān from the Scholars, they would call him a “*Suhufi*” or “*Mus-hafī*” - the one who recites Qur-ān upon other than the teachers (i.e. by himself) is known as a “*Mus-hafī*”, and the one who does not read Hadīth & Fiqh and other than that upon the Scholars is known

as a “*Suhufi*”, because he learns from the papers (i.e. books independently), and does not learn from the Scholars.

The Scholars, indeed if you sit with them, firstly you learn mannerisms & etiquette; al-Imām Mālik for example, people used to travel to him from all over the World, and from among those who travelled to him was Yahyā bin Yahyā an-Naysābūrī - the great Scholar, the one who al-Imām Ahmad رحمه الله said that he had “not seen the likes of him”, - this Imām read the Muwatta (the book of al-Imām Mālik) upon al-Imām Mālik, and after finishing it, he remained sitting. Al-Imām Mālik noticed he had remained sitting, why was he still sitting there? He remained patient, but then eventually after a while asked him, “Why are you still sitting here?”, he said, “I am learning from your manners, I am learning from your manners.”

With regret through, you see many people refusing to attend with the People of Knowledge and take from them in disdain, and they refuse to sit before the Scholars in disdain - the reason for this, and Allāh knows best - is due to self-conceit and poor manners. That is why you find that these types have self-conceit, ignorance, haughtiness, isolation (from the Scholars), and poor manners, the likes of what you do not see from other than them!

So if a person withdraws within himself, and a teacher does not teach him, (instead) he teaches himself, this is a proof upon an illness!

Therefore, the optimal method is that you take knowledge from the mouths of the Scholars, they will direct you to the book that is suitable for your level of intelligence and what you have from ability, and he will know because he is experienced.

This is the optimal method, and I refer you to the books that I have mentioned in this statement.”

Translation: Abū Mu’ādh Taqweem
26th October, 2022
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