

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْوَلَدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon  
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his exalted family &  
his illustrious companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

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## ‘Ulama of the past were Content

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It is reported that once it became necessary for Khalifah Abdul Malik bin Marwan to send an emissary to the court of the King of Rome. Khalifah Abdul Malik then searched his entire court and finally concluded that the person who will represent him would be the famous Muhaddith, Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him*.

When this famous scholar, Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him*, appeared in the court in Rome and spoke to the Emperor, he spoke about various political aspects in such a manner, that the Emperor was shocked and amazed. As a matter of fact, secretly, he also became jealous. The reason for this jealousy was because there were such high quality intellectuals in the court of the Muslims who were in the service of these Muslim leaders. He then ordered that a letter be written to the Muslim leader in which he wrote, “O Abdul Malik! When I look at the quality of someone like Imam

Shubah and his vast political acumen, I begin to wonder how they actually chose you as the leader of the Muslims.”

Bear in mind that Khalifah Abdul Malik was himself extremely intelligent and clever. When he read the letter of the Emperor, he called Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - to the court and asked him whether he was aware of what the Emperor of Rome had written about him. Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - replied that he had no idea. When the Khalifah read this letter, Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was completely shocked. He replied, “O Ameerul Mo’mineen the Emperor of Rome has only met me and not you. If he had only met you, then he would not have written in this manner.”

However, the Khalifah laughed at this answer and declared, “O Imam Shubah! You did not understand the true message of the Emperor. His actual intention was for me to become angry after reading this and because of my anger, I would kill you. His actual purpose was to rob the Muslim Empire of a jewel such as you.”

It is also reported that when the Emperor finally became aware of what happened when his letter was presented to the Khalifah, he stated that this was actually his real intention. And it was a tribute to the Khalifah that he had understood his hidden (evil) intention. (Tadkiratul Huffaaz, 80)

From this we come to realise that the eminent scholars of the past were great thinkers in all branches of knowledge. As they could debate with someone about religion, in like manner, they could debate with someone on issues of politics. The message is not that you become a slave of any political party or movement, but that your personality should be a symbol of intelligence and true Islamic justice. As for those who keep saying that the ‘Ulama of the past were people who merely attended Jumu’ah and were people who lived on charity, should carefully examine their opinion. These ‘Ulama were some of the greatest thinkers of their era and this incident is just one of many incidents in this regard.

Another quality of their immense stature was the manner in which they displayed equality and justice. It is mentioned that once Sultan Harun Rashid took his two sons Ameen and Mamun to the great Imam, Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be*

*pleased with him.* This was at that time when the great Imam was in classes. He then asked the great Imam to narrate a few Ahadith. The great Imam replied that he had stopped reading for a number of days and now his students used to read the Ahadith and he used to listen to them.

The Khalifah then said that he himself would read a few Ahadith and wanted the great Imam to listen to him. However, he wanted this to happen in a private room without the other students being present. Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him* - replied, "This is not possible. How can I remove the common people from these classes and only keep the elite in my classes? In fact, in this way, even the elite would not be able to benefit from this. This is the knowledge of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - which is equally distributed to everyone whether he is a pauper or a prince."

Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him* - then ordered one of his students, named Esa, to continue reading. The Sultan and his sons could do nothing but merely look at the face of the great Imam. (Tadkiratul Huffaaz, 191)

Can any of the present day leaders of Islam be able to present such examples? In fact, it must be borne in mind that independence from worldly leaders and worldly people is one of the greatest defence for an Islamic scholar.

It is reported that one day, the son of the King of Kuhistan, Duluf, with his entire army and entourage presented themselves at the door of the eminent scholar Qabeesah bin Uqbah. However, this scholar took very long to appear at the front door. The servants of this prince then shouted out, "The son of Malikul Jibaa is at your front door and yet, you do not appear at your front door?"

When he heard this, Qabeesah bin Uqbah appeared with a few pieces of dry bread that were strapped to his waist and replied after pointing at these pieces of dry bread, "When a person is content in this world with merely these few pieces of dry bread, what work or need does he have with someone like Malikul Jibaa. I swear by Allah that I will not speak to him." After saying this, he shut the door on their faces. (Tadkiratul Huffaaz, 240)

Hadrat Sayyiduna Ali - *may Allah be pleased with him* - has stated that, “He who is content, has achieved respect and he who becomes greedy, he is disgraced.”

There is no doubt that contentment with whatever the Allah Almighty has given a person is indeed a very great gift.

Another example of this is when the ruler of the day approached the famous scholar, Imam Khalil Basri, and informed him that the leader, Ameer Sulayman bin Ali, had commanded him to appear in his palace to personally teach his sons. When Imam Khalil Basri heard this demand, the eminent scholar appeared with a piece of dry bread in his hand and showing the people this piece of dry bread, he declared, “As long as I have this is in my possession, I have no need for the company of the Sultan.” (Ulama-e-Salf, 72)

It is mentioned that when the famous scholar of the Arabic language, namely Imam Abu Ghalib, had completed his masterpiece on this subject, then the leader of that locality, Ameer Mujaahid, sent a thousand Ashrafis (gold coins) to him as a gift. He was also requested by the Ameer to write the following words in the preface of the book. The words were, “This treatise was written by Abu Ghalib for Abul Jaysh Ameer Mujaahid”. When Imam Abu Ghalib read this message, he refused to accept these monies and then informed the messenger of the King, “Inform your King that even if he gives me all the wealth in the world, still too, I will never allow myself to write the smallest lie in my book. I have written this book for the benefit of the general masses and not for any king or ruler.” (Ibn Kalakan, 97)

From this incident, we come to understand the honesty of Imam Abu Ghalib and the contentment, steadfastness and the independence that the ‘Ulama of Islam displayed.

Hadrat Sayyiduna Shaikh Awhaddeen Kirmani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - narrates that, “Once I was on a journey for Hajj in the blessed company of Hadrat Shaikh Jalaaludeen Tabrezi - *may Allah be pleased with him*. We also experienced severe difficulty on this trip. In fact, many people and even their camels had died on this journey. Some people had such blisters on their feet that they could not travel further on their own. Some people even gave up hope of travelling further. While we in the bazaar of the Bani Imaam, a person appeared who started to sell his camels. The price

of each camel was twenty Ashrafis. Those in the caravan who could manage to purchase this camel, did so while the poorer members of the caravan could do nothing but merely watch.

“At this moment, Shaikh Jalaaludeen Tabrezi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - approached the owner of these camels and asked him to count how many camels had not yet been purchased. After counting, it was found that nearly five hundred camels had not been purchased. The great Imam then recited “Ya Lateefu” three times and placed his hand in the sand. When he picked up his blessed hands, they were filled with Ashrafi coins. He then handed these coins to the camel owner and made sure that everyone received a camel to travel for Hajj. After doing this, he began to walk himself towards Mecca Shareef.” (Sayrul Aarifeen. 240)