

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وَلَدِ آدَمَ 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 family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

The Brilliance of the Scholars

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. He then searched his entire court. He finally decided that the person who will represent him would be the famous Muhaddith, Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him*.

When this famous scholar entered 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, he also became jealous secretly. The reason for this jealousy was because there were such high quality intellectuals in the court of the Muslims and 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 also 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. However Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - replied that he had no idea. When the Khalifah read this letter, he was completely shocked. He then 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 actually 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 actually 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. Sultan Harun Rashid then asked Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him* - 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 Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him* - to listen to him. However, he wanted this to happen in a private room without the other students being present. The great Imam 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."

He 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.