Ask Those Who Know

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Translated by Jami`at Ihyaa Minhaaj as-Sunnah

Question: Some who are seeking knowledge are very hasty in giving rulings in matters of halaal and haraam, and this is a common noticeable defect. What is your advice to such people?

Al-Albaanee's reply: "We have spoken on this issue long before, and we said that Allaah the Wise has divided the Muslim community into two types of people: the Ahl adh-Dhikr, and those that depend on the Ahl adh-Dhikr. As Allaah says to the ordinary people: "then ask those who possess the Message (Ahl adh-Dhikr) if you do not know." (Soorah 21:7 and 16:43)

The Ahl adh-Dhikr are, as we all know, are the Ahl al-Qur'aan and the Ahl al-Hadeeth, those who know the authentic from the unauthentic, the general from the specific, the abrogating from the abrogated, and other such principles of Fiqh and Hadeeth.

Hence, it is not allowed for a Muslim to begin giving fatwaas on the basis of some hadeeth, simply because he came across it in some book, although he does not know if it is saheeh according to the criteria of the scholars of hadeeth. On the other hand, he knows that he is not sufficiently well-versed in knowledge and competence in the Arabic language to explain the meanings and ideas behind the Kitaab and Sunnah. Therefore, anyone who has not decided to undertake acquiring knowledge and persevere in it for many years, until the people of knowledge testify that he can guide the people and direct them towads good, it is not permissible for him to thank that he is an alim (scholar) simply because he has read some ahadeeth and memorized some aayaat. We often hear of some of them who cannot even read the Qur'aan properly, nor the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam). This is why I advise the seekers of knowledge to study two fundamentals: a) the principles of fiqh and b) the principles of hadeeth.

I have mentioned before that it is not easy for one to deduce the intended aim of the Lawgiver from any text unless he consults as far as possible, all the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. I will give a clear example: Allaah says: "Forbidden for you are dead meat, blood…" (5:4). If a beginner who is studying the Qur'aan and has no knowledge of hadeeth is asked regarding dead fish, he will immediately bring this aayah as proof to clearly forbid it since it prohibits dead meat. But were he to look into the ahaadeeth, he would know that the Prophet, sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam, excepted two types of animals, fish and locusts, from this prohibition, so he could rule accordingly.

Briefly, the student must learn these two fundamental branches of learning to help to understand the Qur'aan and Sunnah as correctly as possible."