

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Disappearance of Knowledge:
On the Death of *Shaykh* Zayd al-Madkhalī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

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IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING the terrorist attack of September 11th, there was considerable misinformation being spread against the religion of *al-Islām* and, more specifically, the *Da'wah al-Salafiyyah*. Sadly, many ignorant talking heads and irresponsible journalists—taking their leads from the *Sūfis* and *Ikhwānis* to a large extent—indicted the “Salafists” for the horrific actions of the followers of the *Takfīrī Jihadist* Usāmah bin Laden.

Times of great *fitnah*, such as those, call for reliance upon the noble scholars of the Religion for insight and correct understanding. So by Allāh’s (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) permission, in those days of tribulation, we were able to turn to the great work of one of the esteemed people of knowledge: *Al-Irhāb wa Āthāruhā al-Sayī'ah ala al-Afrād wa al-Umam* (Terrorism and its Evil Effects on Individuals and Nations) by our *Shaykh* Zayd al-Madkhalī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ). This book is not only a forceful repudiation of the true architects of these terrorist acts, the people of *Takfīr*—the present day inheritors of the ideology of the *Khawārij*, but it is also a defense of the people of *Salafiyyah* and a clarification of their true methodology. It clarifies that the Muslim lands and leaders, well before anyone else, were targets of the ruthless tactics of these extremists. It also prescribes the remedy for the malady of terror and murder: the remedy of adherence to the Book of Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) and the Prophetic *Sunnah* in accordance with the methodology of the Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ). And as it is with the book *al-Irhāb*, so it is with the other writings, lessons, and exhortations of *Shaykh* Zayd. They are indeed an invaluable inheritance.

We woke this morning to discover that Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) had called back our *Shaykh*. We are deeply saddened by this news, for the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

((إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَالًا، فَسُئِلُوا فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا))

“Indeed Allāh will not [snatch] away knowledge from the worshippers, but He will remove it by removing the scholars. Until no scholar will remain, and the people will take the ignorant as their leaders. They (i.e. the ignorant) will be questioned and give verdicts without knowledge. They will be misguided and misguide others.”¹

¹ Collected by al-Bukhārī in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 100) on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ).

The death of the scholar, therefore, means the disappearance of knowledge, until Yaḥyā al-Bāriqī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said that if he could have taken from his lifespan to give to *Imām* al-Bukhārī, he would have done so, for his was merely the death of an individual, but as for al-Bukhārī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), his death meant the disappearance of knowledge.

In light of this, we are reminded of the *Shaykh* Zayd's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) immense body of work, a great bequest of scholarship. From these works:

- *Sharḥ al-Qasīdah al-Ha'iyah* (Explanation of the *Ha'iyah* Poem) by *al-'Allāmah* Ḥāfiẓ ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥakamī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)
- *Wujūb Satr al-Wajh wa al-Kaffayn wa Shurūṭ Hijāb al-Mar'at al-Muslimah* (The Obligation of Covering the Face and Hands and the Conditions of the Muslim Woman's Dress)
- *Fiqh al-Da'wah ilā Allāh wa Nu'ūt al-Dā'iyah* (The Fiqh of the Call to Allāh and the Characteristics of the Caller)
- *Al-Irhāb wa Āthāruhā al-Say'i'ah ala al-Afrād wa al-Umam* (Terrorism and its Evil Effects on Individuals and Nations)
- *Sharḥ al-Adab al-Mufrad* by *Imām* al-Bukhārī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

And many more titles, too many to name in these brief lines.

Before concluding, I remind myself, before others, to strive to benefit from those who remain from the scholars of the *Sunnah*, visiting them in their lands—if Allāh wills—as well as studying their writings and listening to their recordings with all due diligence, mindful that their deaths mean the disappearance of knowledge. And how much learning has disappeared before our eyes? Little more than a decade ago, we witnessed the deaths of *al-Imām*, *al-Faqīh* 'Abd al-Azīz ibn Bāz; *al-Imām*, *al-Muḥaddith* Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī; *al-Imām*, *al-Faqīh* Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn and *al-Imām*, Muḥaddith of Yemen, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wadī'ī — رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ — in close succession. More recently, we were witnesses to the deaths of *al-Muḥaddith* Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Najmī and *al-'Allāmah* 'Abd Allāh al-Ghudayān — رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ — and now, today, *al-'Allāmah* Zayd ibn Muḥammad al-Madkhalī. It was once said: “The death of the scholar is a breach that nothing can fill as long as the day turns to night.” We ask Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) by His Lofty Attributes and Beautiful Names to have Mercy on our *Shaykh* and continue to make his works a benefit to *Islām* and the Muslims. Indeed Allāh has Power over all things.