

The Scholars On: Conveying Knowledge With Responsibility

The Principle: "Not All That Is Known Should Be Said; Not All That Is Said Should Be Spread"

Imaam al-Bukhaaree, (rahimahullaah) said:

'Chapter: Selecting some people to impart knowledge to, fearing that others will not understand it.' [stated by al Bukhari in his saheeh [1/300]

Anas bin Maalik (radiallaahu 'anhu) relates:

"Once Mu'aadh was riding along with Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when he said to him: 'O Mu'aadh ibn Jabal!' Mu'aadh replied: At your service O Messenger of Allaah. So he said: 'O Mu'aadh.' To which Mu'aadh replied: At Your service O Messenger of Allaah, saying this three times. So the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: 'There is no one who testifies that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah - truthfully from his heart - except that Allaah will forbid the Fire to him.'" Mu'aadh said: O Messenger of Allaah, shall I not inform the people and give them the glad tidings? So he said: 'No! For they will then depend solely upon it.' So Mu'aadh related this at the time of his death, fearing that he would be sinful [if he did not convey this knowledge].
[related by al Bukhari in his saheeh [#28]

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (rahimahullaah) said about the above hadeeth:

"The permissibility of restricting knowledge to some people over others, whereby if some people were to be informed of certain parts of knowledge, it would cause fitnah (trial and discord). Ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said:

"No one relates something to a people which they do not understand, except that it puts some of them into trial and discord (fitnah)."
[related by Muslim in the introduction of his saheeh [1/11]]

And 'Alee radiallaahu 'anhu said:

"Relate knowledge to people according to their level of understanding. Do you wish that Allaah and His Messenger should be disbelieved." [al Bukhari [#197]]

Thus, information should be related to each person according to their levels of ability, comprehension and intellects." [al qawlul mufeed alaa kitabit tawheed [1/54]]

EXAMPLES FROM OUR SALAF-US-SAALIH

The following examples demonstrate the above knowledge-based principle:

[1]: Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said:

"I have two types of knowledge which I memorised from Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam); of which one type I have already conveyed. But if

I were to convey the other, they would cut my throat." [Al-Bukhari 120]

Shaykh Saalih ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez aalush-Shaykh, (hafidhaahullah), said:

'He did not disclose such ahadeeth concerning this fitnah; the hadeeth concerning the censure of Banu Umayyah, and other hadeeth of this nature. He said the [above] saying during the rule of Mu'aawiyah (radiyallaahu anhu), and Mu'aawiyah had just re-unified the people after they had split-up and fought each other, the history of which is known. So why didn't Abu Hurayrah disclose these ahaadeeth? Were they not the ahaadeeth of Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)? Yes! But they were not those ahaadeeth related to Sharee'ah rulings, rather they were of another nature. So why did he not disclose them? Because he did not want to create fitnah amongst the people because of it. That is why he did not say: 'This is a true hadeeth, and it is not permissible for us to hide knowledge.' Since hiding the knowledge in that time in which Abu Hurayrah was speaking was necessary for him, to do, since he did not want to cause splits between the people after they had recently been re-unified in the Year of Unity ('Aamul-Jamaa'ah) - under the leadership of Mu'aawiyah (radiyallaahu 'anhu).' [ad-dawabitush-shar'iyyah li mawqifil-muslim fil fitan (pg. 39)]

[2] Ibn 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu 'anhumaa) said:

"I used to teach the Qur'aan to some of the Muhaajiroon, amongst whom was Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Awf. Whilst I was in his house in Minaa, and he was with 'Umar Ibn al-Khattaab during his last Hajj, 'Abdur-Rahmaan came to me and said: If only you had seen the man who came to the Leader of the Believers, saying: O Leader of the Believers, What do you say about such and such a person who says that if 'Umar should die, I will give the bay'ah to such and such a person, and that - by Allaah - the bay'ah to Abu Bakr was nothing but a reaction, which afterwards became established. So 'Umar became angry and said: If Allaah wills, I will stand before the people tonight and I will warn the people against those who desire to deprive the people of their rights. However, Abdur-Rahmaan said: 'O Leader of the Believers! Do not do this. For the Hajj season gathers the ra'aa (common people) and the ghawghaa (those who incline towards mischief and evil), and it will be those who will gather closest to you when you stand to address the people. I fear that you will rise and address the people, but some of them will spread your words and will not understand them, and some will twist your words and take them out of context. So wait until you reach al-Madeenah, the land of Hijrah and the Sunnah where you will be amongst the people of knowledge and understanding and the noblest of people. So there you may have to say what you wish to say, with confidence. Since the people of knowledge will understand your words and put them their correct context.' So 'Umar said: By Allaah! That is what I shall do in my first address to the people of al-Madeenah - if Allaah wills..." [al-Bukhari # 6830]

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajr, (rahimahullaah), said: "In this is a lesson that knowledge is not to be taken from other than the people of knowledge; nor to relate, except to one who has understanding; and not to relate to one who has little understanding, due to him not being able to comprehend." [Fathul Baree 12/188]

[3] 'Amr ibn Abee Qurrah - (rahimahullaah) - said:

'Hudhayfah was in al-Madaa'in and he mentioned things that Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to say, whilst in a state of anger, to some people from his Companions. The people who heard these things from Hudhayfah would then go to Salmaan and mention to him what Hudhayfah had said. So Salmaan would say: 'Hudhayfah is more knowledgeable about what he

says.' They would then return to Hudhayfah and say: 'We mentioned your saying to Salmaan, and he neither affirmed it nor rejected it.' So Hudhayfah came to Salmaan, who was in his vegetable farm, and said: O Salmaan! What prevents you from affirming what I heard from Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)? So Salmaan said: 'Indeed Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would sometimes become angry, and would say certain things in anger to his Companions. So would you not stop until you create love of certain people in the hearts of some people, and create hatred of others in the hearts of some people, to the extent that it may lead them to differing and splitting up? You know that Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) gave a sermon, saying: 'Any person from my Ummah who I abused or cursed in anger, then I am one of the children of Adam (i.e. human being), and I become angry, as they become angry. However, I have been sent as a mercy to the creation. So (O Allaah) make them (i.e. those abuses or curses) a blessing for them on the Day of judgement.' So by Allaah! Either you stop, or else I will write to 'Umar.'" [related by Abu Dawud # 4657. It was authenticated by Al-Albanee in as-saheeh # 1757]