

مَعَالِمُ وَسِمَاتِ الْمَنْهَجِ السَّلَفِيِّ

The Principles and Characteristics of the Salafī Methodology

Al-‘Allāmah Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm al-Bukhārī
— with commentary by Shaykh ‘Ammār ibn Hāshim az-Zūba‘ī —

Introduction by Shaykh ‘Ammār ibn Hāshim az-Zūba‘ī (may Allāh preserve him)¹:

“The eminent scholar, Professor Dr. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Bukhārī² (may Allāh preserve him and prolong his life in obedience to Allāh), mentioned great foundational principles from the Salafī methodology. They are ten principles that every Muslim ought to give attention to, memorize, and study. Indeed, after Allāh (ﷻ) they will be a means of assistance and a means of steadfastness, because Allāh (ﷻ) has obligated us to worship Him through knowledge.

Allāh (ﷻ) said: **{If only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly).}** (4:83) And He (ﷻ) said: **{So ask *Ahl adh-Dhikr* (the people of knowledge) if you do not know.}** (16:43) And He (ﷻ) said: **{And say: “My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”}** (20:114)

Therefore, a person must give great and serious attention to these ten principles—the principles of the Salafī methodology. Whoever memorizes them and masters them, after the success granted by Allāh (ﷻ), they will be for him a guiding light, a path, and a straight way by which he proceeds upon the truth until he reaches Allāh (ﷻ) and the Paradise of Allāh (ﷻ). And Allāh knows best.”

¹ Shaykh ‘Ammār az-Zūba‘ī is from the students of Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Bukhārī. Whoever wishes to contact Shaykh ‘Ammār or ask him questions can join this telegram group: <https://t.me/RectifyingOurUnderstandingOfDawa>

² Biography of Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Bukhārī: https://t.me/yasin_ibn_jamal/164

Al-‘Allāmah Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm al-Bukhārī (may Allāh preserve him), said³:

Among the landmarks and characteristics of this methodology, or this Salafī da‘wah, are:

Firstly: Actualizing true servitude to Allāh (ﷻ).

Secondly: Actualizing pure and exclusive adherence to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

Thirdly: Adhering to the understanding of *as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ* (may Allāh be pleased with them) regarding the legislative evidences, and not departing from that.

Fourthly: Exercising caution and warning against innovation (*bid‘ah*) and innovators.

Fifthly: Adopting moderation (*wasatiyyah*) between extremism and negligence.

Sixthly: Remaining steadfast upon the truth.

Seventhly: Being keen on unity and harmony upon the truth and with the truth.

Eighthly: Rejecting division and disagreement.

Ninthly: Being keen to acquire beneficial knowledge, to spread it among the people, and to call them to it, while exercising patience upon the harm encountered therein.

Tenthly: Acting upon knowledge.

³ Source: Treatise titled “*Mā hiya as-Salafiyyah*” (What Is Salafiyyah), pg. 50–51

Commentary by Shaykh ‘Ammār ibn Hāshim az-Zūba‘ī (may Allāh preserve him):

Firstly: Actualizing true servitude to Allāh (ﷻ)

Actualizing servitude (‘ubūdiyyah) to Allāh (ﷻ) means that no type of worship is directed to anyone other than Allāh (ﷻ)—such as fear (*khawf*), love (*maḥabbah*), hope (*raghbah*), awe (*rahbah*), turning in repentance (*inābah*), reliance (*tawakkul*), seeking aid (*isti‘ānah*), seeking help in times of need (*istighāthah*), seeking refuge (*isti‘ādhah*), asking for support and assistance (*ṭalab al-madad wa-l-‘awn*), prostration (*sujūd*), bowing (*rukū‘*), humility (*khushū‘*), and circumambulation (*ṭawāf*).

Likewise, acts of worship include prayer (*ṣalāh*), fasting (*ṣawm*), *zakāh*, and *ḥajj*; as well as belief in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, belief in the Last Day, and belief in divine decree (*qadar*)—its good and its bad—as well as *iḥsān*.

Any type of worship must be directed to Allāh (ﷻ) alone, with the belief that none deserves worship except Allāh (ﷻ).

Whoever directs any type of worship—even if it is small—to other than Allāh (ﷻ) is a polytheist and a disbeliever, because Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{Indeed, Allāh does not forgive that partners be associated with Him (in worship), but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.}** (4:48)

And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And the mosques are for Allāh (Alone): so invoke not anyone along with Allāh.}** (72:18)

And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{Indeed, whoever associates partners with Allāh (in worship)—Allāh has forbidden Paradise for him, and his abode is the Fire. And for the *Zālimūn* (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers.}** (5:72)

Thus, all types of worship must be directed to Allāh (ﷻ) alone and must not be directed to anyone other than Him. And Allāh knows best.

Secondly: Actualizing pure and exclusive adherence to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)

Pure and exclusive adherence to the Prophet (ﷺ) means that a person does not perform any action except that he has an example for it in the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), due to the statement of Allāh (ﻋﻠﯿﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ): **{Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh you have an excellent example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allāh and the Last Day, and remembers Allāh much.}** (33:21)

This excellent example and role model to be followed—by which a person is required to worship Allāh (ﻋﻠﯿﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ) and by which it is not permissible for him to worship Allāh (ﻋﻠﯿﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ) except in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)—constitutes the second condition for the acceptance of deeds. For the acceptance of deeds requires two conditions:

1. The first condition is sincerity of worship (*ikhhlāṣ*) for Allāh (ﻋﻠﯿﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ) alone.
2. The second condition is that the worship be in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)—pure adherence to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Just as there is no true deity worthy of worship except Allāh (ﻋﻠﯿﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ), likewise there is no one who is rightfully followed except the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“Whoever performs an action that is not in accordance with our command, it**

is rejected.” Any act of worship that is not in accordance with the Sunnah is rejected.

Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{O you who believe! Answer Allāh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life.}** (8:24) And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{O you who believe, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger.}** (4:59) And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And if you obey him (i.e. the Messenger), you will be guided.}** (24:54)

And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“All of my *Ummah* will enter Paradise except those who refuse.”** It was said: *“Who will refuse, O Messenger of Allāh?”* He said: **“Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has indeed refused.”** And Allāh knows best.

Thirdly: Adhering to the understanding of *as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ* (may Allāh be pleased with them) regarding the legislative evidences, and not departing from that

As-Salaf linguistically refers to everyone who came before you or preceded you from among your fathers and forefathers. Scholars have continued to mention the term *as-Salaf* in their books. As Imām al-Bukhārī said in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, he titled a chapter: “*Chapter: Riding difficult mounts and strong stallions among horses — And Rāshid ibn Sa’d said: «The Salaf used to like strong stallions, because they are faster and braver.»*”

Likewise, Imam al-Bukhārī titled another chapter in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: “*Chapter: What the Salaf used to store in their homes and during their travels, of food, meat, and other things — And ‘Ā’ishah and Asmā’ said: «We prepared provisions for the Prophet ﷺ and for Abū Bakr.»*” The point of evidence here is: “*what the Salaf used to store in their homes...*”

As for *as-Salaf* in the terminological sense: they are the Companions, the *Tabi’ūn* (followers of the Companions), and those who followed them with excellence until the Day of Judgment. So whoever understands the texts of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah according to the understanding of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them — Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar — and the *Tabi’ūn* who came after the Companions, and those who followed them,

and the four Imāms, and so on — these are *as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ* (the pious predecessors).

What is meant by the legislative evidences (*al-adillatu ash-shar‘iyyah*) is that they do not worship Allāh (ﷻ) with acts of worship derived from their own desires—neither from personal taste, nor from intellect, nor from inner feelings—but rather from evidence: *Allāh said, the Messenger of Allāh said*. They worship Allāh (ﷻ) based upon evidence, and when the evidence comes, they worship Allāh (ﷻ) accordingly.

And the condition is that the evidence must be authentic and that its understanding be correct, because at times one may find something presented as evidence—“*the Messenger of Allāh said*”—yet the ḥadīth is weak. It is not permissible to worship Allāh (ﷻ) on the basis of a weak ḥadīth. Thus, this is the second foundational principle: evidence from the Book of Allāh or from the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

As for the understanding of *as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ*, it is the decisive criterion that distinguishes acting upon the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) from worshipping Allāh (ﷻ) based on desires and innovations. This is because the Qur’ān and the Sunnah are — as is said — *ḥammālat wujūh* (i.e. they can bear multiple interpretations); meaning that a person of falsehood may come and use the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the

Prophet (ﷺ) as evidence for his falsehood. Therefore, the understanding of the *Salaf* is a foundational principle (*aṣl*). It has been reported from the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them) that there were understandings which the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) corrected for them. An example of this is the statement of Allāh (ﻋﺎﻟﯩﻤﯩﻦ): **{Those who believe and do not mix their faith with wrongdoing}** (6:82) — This was difficult for the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), and they said: “Which of us has not wronged himself?” So the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “**It is not as you think. Rather, it is as Luqmān said to his son: {O my son, do not associate partners with Allāh. Indeed, associating partners with Allāh is great wrongdoing.} (31:13)**” — Thus, the wrongdoing mentioned here means *shirk*.

Likewise, when the verse of *tayammum* was revealed — **{... and you do not find water, then perform *tayammum* with clean earth}** (4:43) — ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: “So I rolled in the dust just as an animal rolls.” Meaning, he thought that *tayammum* was like *ghusl* and that the dust had to cover the entire body, so he rolled in the dust. When he mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “**It would have been sufficient for you to do like this.**” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) struck the ground with his palms, blew into them, and then wiped his face and his hands with them.

This, then, is the understanding of the *Salaf*. Likewise is the case of the Companions who went out on an expedition, during which one of them was injured—he suffered a head wound on a cold night. He then experienced a wet dream and asked them, saying: “Do you find any concession (*rukḥṣah*) for me?” They said: “We do not find for you anything except water,” meaning that he must use water in order to pray. So he performed *ghusl* and died. Thereupon, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“They killed him—may Allāh (ﷻ) kill them. Why did they not ask when they did not know? Indeed, the cure for ignorance is to ask. It would have been sufficient for him to perform *tayammum*, bind a cloth over his wound, wipe over it, and wash the rest of his body.”**

These, then, are examples of the understanding of the *Salaf* (may Allāh be pleased with them). So look at the understanding of the *Salaf*: they understood the Qur’ān and the Sunnah directly from the Prophet (ﷺ). When they made a mistake in a particular understanding, they would ask, and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would inform them, and they would then convey that to those who came after them.

Another proof for the authority of the understanding of the *Salaf* is the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers.}** (4:115) “Other than the way of the believers” —

meaning the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them).

Likewise, the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{And the foremost to embrace Islām of the *Muhājirūn* (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madīnah) and the *Anṣār* (the citizens of Al-Madīnah who helped and gave aid to the *Muhājirūn*) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allāh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him.}** (9:100) And Allāh knows best.

Fourthly: Exercising caution and warning against innovation (*bid'ah*) and innovators.

Warning against innovations (*bida'*) and innovators, because an innovation is to perform an act of worship for which there is no evidence—neither from the Book nor from the Sunnah. Acts of worship are *tawqīfiyyah* (restricted to revealed evidence). An innovation (*bid'ah*) is introducing something into the religion without any prior precedent.

Innovation, as the scholars have said, is the termite of the Sunnah—meaning the insect that eats wood and is called *al-irḍah*. This insect gnaws at the wood from the inside until you see it and think it is standing firm, but when you come to it, you find it to be nothing. Likewise, innovation is the termite that eats away at the Sunnah, hollowing it out and stripping it of its value. The scholars also say: No innovation appears except that a Sunnah is erased.

Innovation is the most dangerous door by which Iblīs enters upon the servants after *shirk* (associating partners with Allāh in worship). Innovations are of two types: those that constitute disbelief (*mukaffirah*) and those that constitute sinfulness (*mufasssiqah*).

Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said in *al-Fawā'id*: “The sinful ones among Ahl as-Sunnah are the allies of Allāh, while the worshippers among the people of innovation are the enemies of Allāh.”

He also said: “*The graves of the sinful ones among Ahl as-Sunnah are gardens from the gardens of Paradise, while the graves of the worshippers among the people of innovation are pits from the pits of the Fire.*”

As for the innovator, he is among the most severe enemies of Allāh (ﷻ) after the polytheists. The scholars say: whoever gives his female relative—meaning his sister, his daughter, or one under his guardianship—in marriage to an innovator has severed her ties of kinship.

The scholars also say: whoever smiles in the face of a person of innovation has aided in the demolition of Islām. Thus, innovations and innovators are like the axes that strike at the body of the Islamic *Ummah* and destroy Islām from within.

And the innovator—as the scholars have said—is like a traitor who opens the door from the inside for the enemy, allowing him to enter and occupy the land. The person of innovation is a traitor who betrays the religion of Allāh (ﷻ). The person of innovation is more dangerous to the Islamic *Ummah* than an enemy armed with swords, spears, bombs, tanks, and aircraft. Therefore, it is necessary to warn against innovations and innovators so that the religion remains upright. And Allāh knows best.

Fifthly: Adopting moderation (*wasāṭiyyah*) between extremism and negligence.

Moderation (*wasāṭiyyah*) is the middle path between extremism and negligence. Extremism is exceeding the proper limits in worship—going to excess, delving too deeply, setting aside the evidences, and imposing undue hardship upon oneself in worship. Negligence, on the other hand, is watering down (*tamyīʿ*)—watering down the religion and falling into laxity and moral decay.

The side of extremism is represented by the Khawārij, who went to excess in the religion of Allāh (ﷻ), elevated subsidiary matters (*furūʿ*) to the level of foundational principles (*uṣūl*), and declared the one who commits a major sin to be a disbeliever. The side of laxity and watering down is represented by the Murjiʿah, who removed actions from the definition of *īmān* (faith) and said that *īmān* is merely affirmation (belief) alone.

Wasāṭiyyah is the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{And thus We have made you (Muslims) a justly balanced nation so that you may be witnesses over mankind and that the Messenger may be a witness over you.} (2:143)**

Wasāṭiyyah is the religion of Muḥammad (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) informed us, saying: **“I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray after me: the Book of Allāh and my Sunnah.”**

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, when Ḥudhayfah asked him about trials (*fitan*): **“Adhere to the *Jamāʿah* of the**

Muslims and their leader.” They are the people of moderation and balance—those who hold firmly to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), even if some accuse them of fanaticism or extremism. Whoever accuses them of fanaticism and extremism is a *mumayyi‘* (one who waters down the religion). And whoever accuses them of *irjā'* (having the belief of the Murji'ah) is a Khārijī. Thus, *wasāṭiyyah* is the religion of Allāh (ﷻ). And Allāh knows best.

Sixthly: Remaining steadfast upon the truth.

Steadfastness upon the truth means adhering to it and never abandoning it, regardless of changing circumstances, regardless of being exposed to trials (*fitan*), no matter how intense or overwhelming those trials become. He remains firm upon the truth and never departs from it, no matter how constricted life becomes or how conditions change. He never departs from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) upon the understanding of the Salaf of the Ummah—never departing from it at all.

He remains steadfast upon it whether matters seem great or small, and whether circumstances change or situations shift. He remains firm upon a single principle.

Among the evidences for steadfastness upon the truth is the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{O you who believe! Endure and be more patient (than your enemy), and guard your territory by stationing army units permanently at the places from where the enemy can attack you, and fear Allāh, so that you may be successful.}** (3:200)

And the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{Allāh will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep on worshipping Allāh Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter.}** (14:27)

And the statement of Allāh (ﷻ): **{And endure you patiently (O Prophet), and your patience is not but from Allāh.}** (16:127)

And the statement of Allāh (جَلَّ): **{Therefore be patient (O Prophet) as did the Messengers of strong will.}** (46:35)

And the supplication of the Prophet (ﷺ): **“O Turner of the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.”**

And his supplication (ﷺ): **“O Allāh, Controller of the hearts, direct our hearts toward Your obedience.”**

And likewise the statement of Allāh (جَلَّ): **{Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning.}** (39:10)

All of these are among the evidences for steadfastness upon the truth. And Allāh knows best.

Seventhly: Being keen on unity and harmony upon the truth and with the truth.

What is meant by this principle is unity, one [united] word, and one methodology. They unite upon one word and upon one methodology, which is the methodology of the *Salaf*, in order to support and uphold the Salafī methodology. They unite upon the methodology of the *Salaf* to support (aid) the methodology of the *Salaf*.

They do not unite upon the methodology of the *Salaf* in order to strike at the methodology of the *Salaf*—to undermine it from within—while outwardly displaying unity, but in reality attacking the Salafī methodology, attacking the scholars, and attacking the Salafis. This is what is meant, may Allāh bless you.

Rather, they unite upon the methodology of the *Salaf* to support the methodology of the *Salaf*—the methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ).

“*Uniting upon the truth and with the truth*” means the unity of the Muslims and the harmony of their hearts upon the correct creed and upon what has come in the Book and the Sunnah (*upon the truth*), using legislated means and being grounded upon the law of Allāh (*with the truth*) in order to reject division. This is among the greatest objectives of the Shari‘ah, whereas division is misguidance and punishment.

The meaning of “*uniting upon the truth and with the truth*”:

Upon the truth: that the gathering of the Muslims and their objective is adherence to the Book and the Sunnah, and the rejection of innovations and desires.

With the truth: that this unity is established upon legislated foundations—obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, and adherence to the *Jamā'ah* and the rulers in matters that do not involve disobedience.

Evidence from the Noble Qur'ān:

Holding fast to the rope of Allāh: Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allāh (i.e. this Qur'ān), and be not divided among yourselves.}** (3:103)

Establishing the religion and rejecting division: Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{You should establish the religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (i.e. various sects in religion).}** (42:13)

Prohibition of resembling the People of the Book: Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them.}** (3:105)

Prohibition of dispute: Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and be patient.}** (8:46)

Evidence from the Prophetic Sunnah:

Adhering to the Jamā'ah: The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“Stick to the *Jamā'ah*, and beware of division.”**

Condemnation of division: In the ḥadīth about the splitting of the nations, he (ﷺ) said: “...and this **Ummah** will split into seventy-three sects; all of them will be in the Fire except one.” It was said: “Who is it, O Messenger of Allāh?” He said: “Those who are upon what I and my Companions are upon today.”

This is evidence that unity upon the truth is the methodology of the *Salaf*.

Causes and manifestations of unity:

Gathering for worship: congregational prayer, the two ‘Eid prayers, and ḥajj.

Gathering to fight the enemies: {O you who believe! Take your precautions, and either go forth (on an expedition) in parties, or go forth all together.} (4:71)

Eighthly: Rejecting division and disagreement.

As for this principle—rejecting division and disagreement—it means rejecting the causes of division and disagreement that scatter the Salafī brothers among themselves. Among the greatest causes of division and disagreement is committing *shirk*. After that come innovations.

Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And do not be among the polytheists — among those who divided their religion and became sects; each party rejoicing in what it has.}** (30:31–32)

Thus, Allāh (ﷻ) has forbidden division. And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allāh (i.e. this Qur’ān), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allāh’s Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brothers.}** (3:103)

The Prophet (ﷺ) was keen to unite the word of the Muslims upon the truth and with the truth. Allāh (ﷻ) likewise commanded them to unite and forbade them from division. For division, as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, is: **“Unity is mercy, and division is punishment.”**

So what that causes the Muslims to become divided is *shirk* and innovations. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“If allegiance is given to two caliphs, then kill the latter of them.”** Why? Because the latter is the one who splits the unity of the Muslims and breaks their cohesion.

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Listen and obey, even if a slave from Abyssinia is appointed over you, whose head looks like a raisin.”** Why? Because it is around the ruler that the unity of the community is established.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“You are to listen and obey the ruler, even if your back is struck and your wealth is taken—then listen and obey.”** Why? Because if you rebel against the ruler, you cause division and create a rupture in the unity and cohesion of the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) also forbade establishing a second congregation in the mosque, so that the unity of the Muslims would not be broken. And Allāh knows best.

Ninthly: Being keen to acquire beneficial knowledge, to spread it among the people and to call them to it, while exercising patience upon the harm encountered therein.

Tenthly: Acting upon knowledge.

Being keen to acquire knowledge, because the rank of knowledge and the scholars is great. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: **“Indeed, the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets. The prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams; rather, they left behind knowledge. Whoever takes it has taken an abundant share.”**

And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{So ask *Ahl adh-Dhikr* if you do not know.}** (16:43) — *Ahl adh-Dhikr* means the people of knowledge.

Allāh (ﷻ) also says: **{Say: “Are those who know equal to those who do not know?”}** (39:9) — There is no doubt that they are not equal.

And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{If only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly).}** (4:83) — meaning the people of knowledge.

And Allāh (ﷻ) says: **{It is only those who have knowledge among His servants that fear Allāh.}** (35:28) — meaning that the people who have the greatest fear of Allāh (ﷻ) are the scholars.

Allāh (ﷻ) also says: **{And say: “My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”}** (20:114) — Allāh did not command him to ask for an increase in anything except knowledge—not wealth, not children, and not worldly matters. Thus, the most precious thing a person can acquire in this world is knowledge.

Knowledge must be accompanied by action, as Allāh (ﷻ) says in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah: **{Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your Grace}** — those upon whom Allāh (ﷻ) has bestowed His Grace are the people of *īmān*, the Muslims who act upon knowledge. **{Not of those who have earned Your Anger}** — they are the Jews, because they have knowledge but do not act upon it. **{Nor of those who went astray}** — and the astray ones are the Christians, who act without knowledge.

Thus, knowledge and action are both necessary. Allāh (ﷻ) says in Sūrah al-‘Aṣr: **{By Al-‘Asr (the time). Indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who believe}** — “*Those who believe*” means those who possess knowledge. **{And do righteous deeds}** — this is acting upon knowledge. **{And enjoin one another to the truth}** — meaning calling to it. **{And enjoin one another to patience}** — meaning patience upon the harm encountered therein.

Imām al-Bukhārī (may Allāh have mercy on him) titled a chapter in his Ṣaḥīḥ: “*Knowledge comes before speech and action.*” He used as evidence the statement of Allāh (ﷻ):

{So know that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, and ask forgiveness for your sin...} (47:19) “So know” — this is knowledge. “And seek forgiveness for your sin” — this is action.

The poet said: “*Knowledge calls out to action; if it responds, it remains, otherwise it departs.*” Meaning: knowledge calls upon action—if action responds to it, knowledge stays; otherwise, knowledge departs. Knowledge without action is of no benefit, and action without knowledge is of no benefit. And Allāh knows best.⁴

⁴ Translated by: Yāsīn ibn Jamāl