

Furthermore, all of them acknowledge that grasping the entirety of the knowledge, without neglecting any part of it, is not a level that has been reached by any of them, nor has anyone from the scholars of the past or those of the present claimed to have reached it. For this reason, the Imaams of the *Salaf* – those whose knowledge and merits are widely and unanimously agreed upon – used to accept the truth from anyone that disclosed it to them, even if that person was young.⁶ And they would advise their companions and followers to accept the truth, even if it appeared in someone else's statements.

An example of this is found in 'Umar's, *radhy Allaahu 'anhw*, saying when he stated his opinion concerning the dowry of women. A woman responded to him by reciting Allaah's statement:

وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا
فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بِهْتَانًا وَإِنَّمَا مُبِينًا ﴿٢٠﴾

"But if you intend to replace a wife with another, and you have given one of them a *qintaar* (large amount of gold in dowry), take not the least bit of it back."⁷

Upon this, 'Umar went back on his opinion and said: "A woman has spoken correctly and a man has erred."⁸ And it has also been reported that he said: "Everyone is more understanding of Fiqh than 'Umar."⁹

Some of the famous (scholars) used to say, upon having formed an opinion concerning a matter: "This is the opinion that we have derived, so anyone that brings an opinion better than it, we shall accept it (from him)."

Imaam Ash-Shaafi'ee used to go to great extents with regard to this understanding, for he would advise his companions to follow the truth and accept the Sunnah, even if it should appear to them in contradiction to their (own) opinions. And he encouraged them to, at that point, throw his

⁶ See the story of Al-Haafidh Ad-Daaraqutnee who corrected the Haafidh, the Imaam Ibn Al-Anbaaree when he was young. And he (Ibn Al-Anbaaree) was an elder and respected Imaam, but yet he still accepted the correction from him. The story is found in *Taareekh Baghdaad* (3/183)

⁷ Surat-un-Nisaa: 20

⁸ Reported by Abu Ya'laa in his *Musnad-ul-Kabeer* from the path of Mujaalid Ibn Sa'eed and he is very weak. Al-Baihaqee also reported it and its chain or narration is broken. 'Abd-ur-Razzaaq reported it and in its chain is Abul-'Ujfaa As-Sulamee and he is weak also. See *Al-Maqaasid-ul-Hasanah* (pg. 320).

⁹ It is found in the previous story itself.

opinion against the wall (i.e. throw it away).¹⁰ He would say in his books¹¹: "There is no doubt that you will find in them (my opinions) that which contradicts the Book and the Sunnah, for Allaah, the Most High, says:

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“And if it (the Qur'aan) were from someone other than Allaah, they would have found many contradictions in it.”¹²

And what is more profound than this is his saying: "No one ever debated me except that I noticed: either the truth was manifested on his tongue or on my tongue."

This indicates that his intention was for nothing else but to manifest the truth, even if it were found on the tongue of someone other than him, such as those who debated or differed with him.

Whoever possesses this type of condition, then indeed he will not hate having his opinion rejected, nor having his contradiction of the Sunnah clarified, whether during his lifetime or after his death.

This was the way the scholars of Islaam from past and present – those who are the protectors of it and who rise to support it – used to think about others. They would also not detest the opposition they received from those that contradicted them with a proof that was made known to them. This was even if the proof that these individuals (who opposed them) used was not strong according to them, such that they would accept it and abandon their proof in place of it.

This is why Imaam Ahmad (*rahimahullaah*) would mention Ishaq Ibn Raahawaih (*rahimahullaah*) while praising and commending him. And he would say: “Even if he does contradict (me with regard to the Sunnah) in some matters, then indeed, the people will never cease to differ with one another.” Or it is as he said.

And many times he (*rahimahullaah*) was presented with the words of Ishaq and other Imaams, and their sources from where they derived their opinions, and he would not agree with them in

¹⁰ See *I'laam-ul-Muwaqqi'een* (2/363) and *Iqaadh Himam Uleel-Absaar* (pg. 100)

¹¹ See his book *Ar-Risaalah* (no. 598-599) and *Al-Maqaasid-ul-Hasanah* (pg. 15).

¹² Surat-un-Nisaa: 82