



An Analytical Viewpoint of the Divine Sciences in Contemporary Times

Shaykh Sa'īd Foudah¹

Translated by Ibn Aḥmad²

Released by www.marifah.net 1429 H

There has recently appeared in this age a group, new in their appearance, archaic in their principles, not following any one of the scholars except Ibn Taymīyah. They sanctify his words and claim they are not imitating disciples of any one of the four schools of Islamic Law nor of any one of the known scholars of Islam who are sound and straight in belief. They claim independence (from strict adherence to the four schools). And they are truly not following any one of these great scholars, nay they are at opposition to them, and they utter things which none of those scholars have ever uttered. Every one of these individuals harbors a hidden (and illegitimate) school of Islamic law within himself. They are more ignorant than a goat in his barn. They are dysfunctional in their minds. They possess not the ability to form sound opinions regardless of how simple the issue may be. And they consider themselves as upon clear guidance and truth and they exclude anyone who disagrees with them from Ahl al-Sunnah, while it is they who are excluded from this group.

You see one of them claiming that he doesn't take a matter from religious affairs except by evidence. And when you ask them (questions) about the principles of evidence you see that

¹ For his biography see: <http://www.marifah.net/articles/saidfoudah.pdf>

² Translated from: <http://www.aslein.net/showthread.php?p=2635#post2635> . Brother Firas Yusuf was also kind enough to review the translation and suggest some changes.

they are dumber than a rock; no, they have never had a single principle of (legitimate) Arabic linguistics, and they do not respect the scholars (of Islam), and that is only because they are ignoramuses.

And above all, you see one from them addicted to his inner desires and he does not have knowledge equal to a mustard (seed).

And they appeared during this era (of ours) and increased their circulation and they enveloped upon mankind the vulture-culture of name-calling while they wore white *thawbs* and carried *sawāks* in the pockets. Therefore, the community believed them to be people of knowledge and piety. But they were not such, because they are the people of ignorance and corruption. And their ignorance is a complex ignorance, for they do not know (anything which actually counts) and fancy that they know such.

These people are those who have nicknamed themselves as “*salafīyah*”, and no doubt the *salaf* are innocent of their atrocities, and only the Ḥashawīyah, Karāmīyah, and the ignorance of the Jews are their intellectual predecessors. These people are (the ones) supported by the Saudi regime.

They haven't propagated by the means of their (supposed) knowledge nor of their righteous actions, but only by the support of the tyrannical Saudi regime, and this support is known to everyone who is informed of the *salafīs*.

And in their expansion and in the spread of their calamity is a story (which) I will attempt to clarify here, in addition to clarifying the organization of their corrupt school of Islamic law, so that perhaps those minds of foremost intelligence will be on their guard (against this movement) and therefore guide the majority of the people (away from this movement).

With that said, I begin my discourse:

It is well known that there is no essence of religion in the hearts and minds of mankind except in (what has come to them) by the existence of scholars who practice what they preach and are well known for their (properly acquired) knowledge and their (sincere) piety. And the scholars are the protectors of the religion, for in their vanishing, the religion is seized from

every aspect by its enemies, and when the scholars are corrupt, mankind becomes corrupt, because in that instance, the leaders (of mankind) will (unabashedly) spread corruption. And when some of the claimants to knowledge take control of matters pertaining to religious edicts, and when that knowledge is (full of) misguidance, corruption, or triviality, bearing no distinction or penetrating insight, and when that knowledge facilitates the incrustation of evil propaganda upon it, then it is (all too) possible from this caveat that the evil propaganda of this (cursed) knowledge will have a certain (negative) impact upon the majority of mankind.

And the Muslims, since their (humble) beginnings, have not imitated (in any matter) except by the (approval) of the scholars and they have not secured fealty to the leaders except when the scholars have approved of them; and the tribulations in history are an authentic testament to what I say. And the condition of the people has been such since the time of RasūlAllāh ﷺ.

And in the previous eras, the people were in complete agreement with the leadership of the scholars and the jurists of the four schools of Islamic Law and all of those who followed them and even the one who disagreed with them on the condition that his advocated disagreement was established upon strong evidence, not quasi-academic punditry and its like. And it was rare that an individual had this power (of analysis) in specific issues (of Islamic Law) but lacked this analytical reasoning with respect to the complete prospectus (of Islamic Law).

And the people continued to gather around the scholars as long as the scholars persevered in applying their teachings into practice, guiding the people (thereby), and teaching them (of beneficial knowledge). (This was so) until (the time) when the relations between the people and the scholars were weakened during the final years of the reign of the Ottomans and the ignorance of the people in their religion increased due to negligence of the scholars, and the colonization of the Islamic countries spread, and the Muslims were subdued under the reign of the disbelievers. And all of that, alongside the assistance of the disbelievers (amongst the Muslims) added to the corruption of the people and their condition.

And the disbelievers had certain knowledge that they cannot control the Muslim Nation, except when the people are estranged from their religion, and the most effective means to establish this is for the people to forget the commands of their religion. And (the disbelievers) knew that they were not able to prevent the people from their religion, because

this results in an inclination towards the religion itself and the disbelievers fail and are not able to execute what they intend. So they worked (expeditiously) on the planning of the execution (of this endeavor), (of which) one plan was fooling the people (into believing) that the (interpretation of) the religion was according to what certain personages deemed it to be. Thus, they highlighted some of the religion's non-basic subdivisions (*furū'*) to dilute the basic principles (*usūl*), and they employed some of the corrupt opinions of some Muslims, and they strived to avert the spread of the opinions of the righteous (Muslims). However, (this was done) in incremental measures, so that (the changes) would appear imperceptible to that populace (of Muslims exposed to this conspiracy). And the example of this is what Napoleon did in Egypt when he attempted to create a rift between the scholars of Al-Azhar and the people, and also when he attempted to dictate upon the people their religious affairs.

The people were, until the dusk of the Ottoman regime (and even) before its inception, for years or even decades, recipients of their religious affairs from the scholars affiliated with Ahl al-Sunna and the (jurists) of the four Sunni schools of Islamic Law. And none would speak of a religious matter except the scholar specialized in that matter, and such was a serious matter to the scholars. It is correct that they were (at times) negligent and we cannot deny that; however, they were upon the straight path and they were not astray.

And the people trusted them except that they (the people) used to censure them (the scholars) for their (the scholars) negligence and the lack of circulation of their knowledge amongst the people, and the people would further blame them for their isolation from public life. And the enemies of this religion have worked in this endeavor of gradually estranging the people from their scholars, until this endeavor reached Al-Azhar Al-Sharīf in some cases rendering the institution a prisoner to external and internal conspiracies, and the severest blow to the institution was that it became a subsidiary of the tyrannical Egyptian government, and that government came to consider it (merely) a university amongst Egyptian universities. The university is no longer distinguished from other universities except by its history, and the Egyptian government forced the trustees of the university to abandon their teaching traditions virtually in their entirety, all according to what was compatible with the plan to alienate the people from their scholars. Thus, the relationship deteriorated between the Al-Azhar scholars and the people up to the present condition where the people regard the scholars of the institution as scholars of the sultan. And with the death of Al-Azhar came the death of Islamic Sciences which Al-Azhar used to inculcate in the hearts and minds of

mankind, and the death of the glory and prestige which the Muslim scholars always possessed before then.

And at the same time that the shining ray of Al-Azhar and other centers for the education of the divine sciences (sought to be extinguished), there appeared foreign substitutes for Islamic sciences, schools, and ideas. Specifically, such are the schools and the universities whose affairs are supervised by the Arab governments and those which mix falsehood with Islam.

And with this appearance, the people's understanding of the divine sciences vanished, and with it decreased the connection (of the people) with the religion itself, because one cannot believe (in the religion) without knowledge, and he is reinforced (ideologically) with the scholars; and at the same time the titles of the scholars began to change, and after that the scholars who used to teach mankind, the custodians of the Qur'an, the exegetes, jurists, and legal experts who were the leaders of the people, became "doctors," who thought that on account of their credentials of ostentation they were experts and scholars (of Islam). Yet they did not possess more knowledge than the infant scholars of past times who were able to compose short compendiums.

And we do not want to forget the mentioning of the curriculum of learning and education, and there is no doubt that (this) curriculum is that which leads to judgments and (there is no doubt) that (these) specific judgments do not come to fruition except through a specific curriculum, and when the curriculum changes, then no doubt, judgments absolutely change and the converse (also) holds true, and whatsoever leads to a change in curriculum, then it is categorically necessary upon that, that the rulings and judgments change (with it). And since the curriculums were unauthentic fabrications, the existing rulings were also spurious, namely they are not based on a correct and sound basis.

And in this day and age in which we live, the people have sometimes become doubtful as to whether it is permissible that we judge by Islam the entirety of mankind, or whether it is permissible that we say: the principle regarding the people here in this country is that they are Muslim except when the opposite of that is proven to be true, or the reverse holds true.

And this confusion that has arisen is (nothing more than a result) of the extreme ignorance of the people in the religion; and their plight is a severe plight. Thus, the people struggled (against) their ignorance – (no doubt) a complex ignorance – until you saw one from amongst the common people who knows that he does not know and is (even) content with that, yet considering this to be a blessed condition and the path of truth.

And if you partake in a forum in which a talk regarding matters of jurisprudence or the religion takes place; all who are present will see that such an individual suddenly becomes a scholar, (disingenuously) speaking in the style of a seasoned scholar, yet in reality, this individual is the most ignorant of the ignoramuses.

And as Allāh is my witness, I have seen the one who did not devote himself to the commitments of the religion expect (half-heartedly) and transiently, and he is not cultivated under the tutelage of a righteous scholar and he is not amongst those who understands how to read books and benefit from the rulings therein. Despite (all of) that, this individual proceeds to talk about (specialized matters of theology) such as creedal matters related to prophethood and miracles. Thus, he fools the (innocent and ignorant) who see him into believing that he is an experienced scholar, and what do those poor souls know about which sea it is in which they will drown? And (his cohorts) assemble forums (conducted by scholars of popular culture); finally I spoke with them and clarified for them the contradictions in this purported scholar's (speech and ideology) and this purported scholar was notified of the gravity of these topics and the gravity of the one who delves into them without knowledge.

And this is a major issue pertaining to the religion; for these individuals do not refrain from labeling (casting aspersions upon) some of the scholars of whom arises agreement (and good will) between the people so that they are righteous; (these youth) label such scholars as innovators or misguided and they expel the scholars from Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'.

And thus we return to my original point, I say:

And while the carpet (of respect and honor) was being pulled from under the scholars of the four accepted schools of law, others, (unqualified for the task of scholarship) took their place upon that carpet.

At the same time, these (new quasi-scholars) assumed command of the Muslim public, and proceeded to control their actions, minds, and hearts.

And their technique was such:

In order to estrange the people from their religion, these quasi-scholars sought to implement gradual, imperceptible changes therein – so as to not appear sudden and unusual to the people – thereby making those changes appear to be a part of the religion.

And the first of (their) errors was the tarnishing of the (four) legal schools (of Islam):

Beneath the surface (of this propaganda) lies the defilement of traditional adherence to the four schools of Islamic Law, the encouragement and facilitation of legal reasoning – meaning the suggestion that it is an easy task for all to partake in; the smearing of the reputation of scholars and their loyal followers, portraying them in such a manner as if they only concern themselves with strange and anomalous issues which have no practical benefit for the life of this world or the next, and the misrepresentation of the scholars' statements in order to lead others to believe that they interpret prophetic traditions in ways that strictly conform to the doctrinal lines of their imams.

(This occurred) until some destitute loafers emerged saying, “we are men and (likewise the legal jurists) are men”.

And they are nothing, save like the foolish children who don't find anything useful for themselves, and thereby waste their time, (and do nothing) except attack the Divine Law with their wretched manners. Regarding their innovated opinions; you as a possessor of sound intellect will hardly find amongst them success. I say: these ill-tempered folk have attacked the Divine Science of the Shari'ah, nay, they have attacked the very letter and spirit of the Shari'ah. They seek to understand the Shari'ah according to their sick tastes and they have busied themselves in the science of ḥadīth, which happens to be the most difficult of the Divine Sciences. The one who pursues this illustrious science will hardly find in it significant achievement, except for he whom Allāh supplies with His Success and he whose assistance is strengthened by Allāh. And they came to ask the question: What is the most preferable that

we take directly from the Tongue of the Rasūl ﷺ or from Abū Ḥanīfa, Shāfi'ī, Mālik, Aḥmad, and others amongst the Jurists?

And as soon as one is caught unawares of the inherent deception in this question, he responds to them by saying, “Nay, without a doubt, the most preferred path is to take directly from the Rasūl ﷺ”.

And he forgets that these learned jurists did not take except from the Rasūl ﷺ, and that not everyone is permitted to make determinations about the Ruling of Allāh within the Injunctions of the Deen. Rather, *ijtihād* has conditions which are obligatory upon everyone that takes up studies therein; that they fulfill these conditions, and if these conditions are not met, then his words deserve no attention, no matter how these words are filled with shouting and screaming.

And thusly, he came to consider it amongst the wrongdoings and grievous errors that he be affiliated with the schools of Shafi'ī or Abū Hanīfa. And they (i.e., the Salafīs) tell him that rather, affiliation to Islām (alone) is that which counts, deceiving him into believing that any other affiliation is at opposition to Islām, whereas in reality, affiliation to the Madhāhib is the fountainhead of Divine Law.

And many people have rallied behind this whimsical notion, not knowing the grievous error into which they have plunged. Initially, they abandoned the immense treasures amongst the works of the great scholars (of the past) and their (newfound) doctrines did not even bind them to the time-tested etiquette of taking and receiving (from the scholars), and (thereafter) they proceeded to claim that “no doubt, this path is sufficient so that we may be delivered onto eternal salvation.”

This wretched mob have spent the (greater) portion of their lives hair splitting over minute issues of jurisprudence which have been firmly established by jurists from the most ancient era of our (blessed) history, such as the movement of the fingers in the prayer, or the dawning the *dishdasha*, or doffing the *kūfī* from the head, and so forth from issues which are (clearly) amongst the most specialized subdivisions of Islamic Law. And like (psychopaths) without discernment, (they paid no heed to the major issues) and took to killing the Ummah, yet they

(disingenuously) deem slaughter and killing therein illegal, either understanding or not understanding (the full ramifications of their actions).

And in their state of confusion, they have left the Ummah, neither adhering to any (meaningful principles) nor caring (enough about) anything.

To Illustrate:

These people have proceeded forth based on a set of principles they have inherited from their forefathers, and the errors of these principles have piled up to the clouds, yet the vast majority of the people are unable to discern them.

Yet the established principles upon which the vast majority of the people adhere to are correct in their totality, but have only been polluted by perversion (in recent times).

And when these partisans emerged in (our) era, they desired to improve the “state of this Ummah,” but by strictly opposing the verdicts and rulings which the people had come to rely upon in the past.

Not likely; for the first action of their agenda was to disregard the fact that the “Golden Fundamental” (meaning *taqlīd*) is amongst the primary matters of importance in the Religion. They regarded this notion as falsehood and impermissible to follow, and they came to reject it, thereby rejecting the time-tested tradition that the people had come to accept over the centuries. The most important tradition of all being the systematic following of qualified scholars who possess the requisite knowledge of Ahl al-Sunna Wa al-Jamā’. This, in addition to the principle that is impermissible to delve into a branch of the Divine Sciences except for the one who has obtained the requisite skills therein. And thus, these fools came to strike a sword and revile every legislated decree to which the people had become accustomed.

And when they encountered one who adhered to one of the four imams, they told him that this is blind-following to other than the Messenger ﷺ, and thus it is following misguidance.

And when they saw the public not especially concerned about the finer points of legal evidence, they came to disparage the people on account thereof, and they sought from every individual that he investigate from whom a legal ruling was derived based on the rules of evidence, and to not suffice with the ruling of an established scholar specialized in the field of jurisprudence.

And they made the sciences of ḥadīth the most important priority in the religion, and they assaulted this science a most unusual assaulting, until the most common of people saw themselves fit to grade a particular ḥadīth as sound or weak, and they proceeded to interpret firsthand the words of the Messenger ﷺ without the aid of an intermediary scholar of a past era.

And in this manner, they brought the people down to a state of extreme confusion and they have made the people doubt everything that pertains to the Religion, even if that thing is authentically part of the religion.

Yet, everything they authored of the religion fell from grace, as though their works are completely lacking credibility, and likewise that which they held firmly to was nothing but an absurdity solely characteristic of them and them only laying testament to the dearth of their intellectual power.

And likewise, they began a campaign geared towards refuting the established matters to which the people held fast to, and thus it became inevitable that they would create an alternative to the those traditions and rulings to which the people held fast.

Consequently, they created a spurious legal methodology of their own with all of its accompanying pseudo-rulings, and they took to insisting that theirs was a path upon the truth. While all of this was taking place, the actual people of truth remained oblivious, or perhaps they indeed knew what was happening.

But they were like the one whose finger nails had been pulled from their nail beds, and his two eyes blinded, while those partisans came to speak with venomous tongues about the rights of mankind and about the majority of the most knowledgeable scholars. Those partisans started inflicting the charge of innovation against anyone who disagreed with them,

even if the issue be that of *ijtihād* in the field of jurisprudence, or any other field of knowledge for that matter. They may never desist in making *takfīr* upon some of those who oppose them for no valid reason.

And all of this resulted in atrocious consequences, and these ignoramuses did not possess enough intellect to reach the correct doctrine, and the end result of their discourse was an unusual mixture of fabrications and ideological breakdown at which even the smallest of children would laugh.

And they started wasting their time and the people's time in the way of researching certain non-basic religious subdivision issues, to disparage the basic religious principles, and they didn't fail to delegate the responsibility of the scholars to the common man; the scholars who guide the people to the correct doctrine and the straight path. Thus, these time-wasters were content with raising these issues as we have mentioned before and thereafter left the people to preoccupy themselves therein.

And due to the absence of a strong foundation in the divine sciences amongst the common people, they have become content with turning away from the true scholars of the religion, and whoever resorts to this; he has not even the slightest bit of knowledge. So do not bother informing such an individual of the many facets in which they (the *lā-madhhabīya*) have fell from grace; otherwise, such a person will react and be compelled to employ their senseless attacks and their clearly contradictory doctrines, and they will resort to labeling their dissenters as innovators. Rather, one can content himself with his own knowledge, and such knowledge is not protected from the evils of the (*lā-madhhabīya*).

This is the condition of the majority of the people.

And if a group of righteous scholars who act in accordance with their knowledge is found, then they are essentially rendered incapable of influencing the people, because the government is that of the corrupt pseudo-scholars, and the wealth is in their hands. As for the scholars of truth, they have been stripped of their weapons ever since Al-Azhar Al-Sharif was stripped of its glory.

And these partisans affiliate themselves with the school of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (May Allah be Pleased with Him), and they are absolutely the farthest thing away from it. However, necessity obligates them to this affiliation.

And no doubt, when the three other madhhabs were widespread, it was the madhhab of Abū Ḥanīfa that was honored by the Ottoman Sultanate, and the nations of the west honored that of Mālik, and those of the Levant, Egypt honored that of Shāfi'ī, and the majority of Pakistan, India, and the majority of the nations within this geographic periphery (i.e., Jordan) honor the madhhab of Abū Ḥanīfa, with some honoring that of Shāfi'ī.

As for the Ḥanbalī madhhab, it was never prominent amongst the Muslims, and did not gain prominence until the rise of the Wahhābī Madhhab and this spurious ministry of theirs.

And these people lean against the Ḥanbalī Madhhab like a steel claw in the face of the other madhhabs, and in this manner they have been striking a blow to a very important facet of Islam. And the reputation of Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal has been portrayed in such a manner wherein only he is accepted to the sole imam of Ahl al-Sunnah and there is no imam other than him. In all actuality, he has been portrayed as the most sinless and complete imam in comparison to the three other imams. It is as these fools oft-repeat, the legacy of Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal has outlasted those you fell into the misguided path of errors.

Likewise, we have seen the religious leadership depart from Egypt – which used to champion all of the four schools and did not make distinctions between them – to Saudi Arabia – which solely champions the Ḥanbalī School which they claim to be the (solitary) school of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. This is shameless fabrication! Furthermore, Saudi Arabia – the nation which emboldens these foolish youth – has come to support their activities, in addition to providing them with jobs and abundant wealth. And stank hatred for the remaining schools has become apparent on the faces of these so-called Ḥanbalīs. Let us not forget that the other schools were those which primarily undertook the task of resolving the matters of the Muslims in the past.

Here, the illustration of this grand deceit has been provided, for we can now see that Saudi Arabia does not rule by Islam and it is merely another regime amongst the nationalist Arab

regimes, and the only thing that distinguishes it from the others is its abundant wealth with which God Almighty has blessed it in the way of oil.

In light of that, it can safely be said that the laws of Saudi Arabia are purely those that favor the ruling regime, and it presents certain issues to its people in such a manner as to portray them as the essence of Islam whereas they are not only branches (*furū*) of the religion, but they are moreso branches of the branches therein. Yet, the Saudi regime presents these issues as if they are the main branches of the religion wherein no difference of opinion is permitted.

And since the Ka’bah, the Prophet’s ﷺ Mosque, other such holy places are present in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the enormous religious value therein; the ruling regime has come to exploit these matters and employed them as a curtain of deceit in front of the people to such an extent that the expression “Saudi Scholars” has come to express something which is regarded as the source of this religion. In addition, the majority of the people have come to the conclusion that Saudi Arabia is an Islamic State, or at least the closest thing to it.

This is only some of the many issues upon issues of deceit to which the people have fell victim. And we saw the people in an utter state of shock and surprise during the Gulf War when none of them expected the legal opinions (*fatāwa*) that were released at that time. The only ones who saw it coming were those with true knowledge. Therefore, the people were greatly shocked and disenchanted because their entire understanding of Islam was shook before their very eyes due to those who supposedly represent the religion shaking up the very foundations therein.

