

IN DEFENCE OF THE SUNNĪ CREED AND MANHĀJ

*The Scholars are the Kibar  
The Recent Phenomenon of  
'Shaykh's'*

*Compiled, Translated and Annotated*

Abū Ḥibbān Malak

Abū Khuzaimah Imran Masoom Anṣārī

# SALAFI RESEARCH INSTITUTE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Compiled, Translated & Annotated

Abū Ḥibbān Malak & Abū Khuzaimah ḥImrān Masoom Anṣārī

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'Audhu Billāhi min ash-Shayṭān al-Rajīm

Bismillāh al-Rahman al-Rahīm

*Alhamdullilahi Rabbil A'lamin, Wa salatu Wasalam Ala Rasūlillahil Karīm, Wa Ala*

*Alihi Wa Ashabi Wa Man Tabiahum Bi-Ehsan Ila Yaum al-Din; Wa Ba'd*

*All Praise belongs and is directed to the Rabb of everthing*

*that exists, Praise and Salutations be upon His*

*Final beloved Messenger, his revered family*

*and his noble Companions and upon*

*those who follow them in good*

*until the end of times,*

*To proceed*

## Introduction

Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim and something we should continuously strive for. The scholars – the inheritors of the Prophets, have a lofty status in Islam and Allah has mentioned them with virtue in the Quran. One can read numerous ayahs of the Quran which mention the status of the Ulama and what Allah has given them from al-Ilm.

Therefore, it is important to refer to the Ulama who are grounded and firm in knowledge because Allah said,

“Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge” (al-Mujadilah 58:11)

and

**“Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’ It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah’s Signs and Verses)” (al-Zumar 39:9)**

Seeking knowledge from the younger students of knowledge and also referring to them at the expense of not seeking it from the senior scholars is of great concern, even more so in our times of catastrophic confusion and overwhelming chaos. The definition of a scholar or an alim does not necessarily dictate an age range, there are those whom Allah has blessed and granted them immense knowledge at a young age, undoubtedly they are unique and favoured from the bounties of Allah due to his, The Most Highs, saying

**Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Quran) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).  
(Surah al-Hijr:9)**

It is not hidden from the Muslim that some of the companions were young in age but still mountains of knowledge – possessing vast knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. There were other scholars who were young in age, not reaching the age of 40 but were still considered scholars and righteous servants who dedicated their lives to spreading the clear teachings of Islam but their recognition and testimony in this regard came after their demise, and was not usually common during their lifetime. Furthermore, this is not an absolute principle that a scholar has to always be old in age and that we always have to only ask the major scholars or the kibar as a scholar can be young in age.

Using the generality of the following hadith, it offers an objective recourse to understanding the term ULAMA. Abdullah ibn Abbas (RadhiAllahu Anhuma) said, that Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) said,

*"The blessings are with your elders."*

(*Ibn Hibban* (no.955), *Hakim* (1:62), *Tabarani*, *al-Awsth* from *Majma'a al-Bahrayn* no.261), *al-Bazzar*, *Musnad* (no.1957), *Ibn Abdul Barr*, *Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi* (1:613-614 no.1053), *Abu Nu'aym*, *Hilyah* (8:171-172), *Ibn A'diyy*, *al-Kamil* (2:509), *Khatib al-Baghdadi*, *Tarikh Madinah al-Islam - Tarikh Baghdad* (11:165), *al-Qadha'i*, *Musnad al-Shihab* (no.36-37). The hadith is Sahih with supports.

Shaikh Suleiman al-Ruhaili, May Allah preserve him said in response to a question,

*"There's no doubt, that knowledge indeed should be taken from the Akabir and a person must have a Tazkiyyah. However, who are the Akabir? The Akabir are those whom their knowledge has magnified (their status) and they are known for knowledge, even if they are young in age, even if they are youth. There were Akabir from the Sahabah who were young in age; knowledge was taken from them and their knowledge illuminated the world. This affair is from the important affairs in this issue, and it is, that the one who is young could be magnified (in status) by his knowledge; such that he is known by his profound beneficial knowledge. This (scenario) took place in abundance amongst the Salaf, starting with the Sahabah may Allah be pleased with them (and it took place) after the Imams. A Tazkiyyah (is also) a must; for verily, this knowledge is Din. So it is a must that we carefully look at the one we take our Din from."*

*(Source:<http://www.salafyink.com/tazkiyyahconditionknowledge>)*

## Can a Scholar - “Shaykh,” be Young

However, the condition of who a scholar is has other factors that affect it and the scholars themselves have set out guidelines for the Muslims to ascertain who the real Sunni major scholars are. This is further based on recommendations and recognition by the Ulama of the time and not based on the personal opinion or diminished understanding or the existence of some scholars who were actually young in age, in such cases these scholars were of the times before which is totally different in our times.

It is well circulated about Imam Malik that he was 17 years old when he first started to issue Fatawa, only after 70 scholars had testified to his ability to do so. (Nawawi, *Adab al-Fatwa wal Mufti wal Mustafti* (p.18), Qadi A'yadh, *Tartib al-Madarik* (1:127).

Although there is contention whether Imam Malik was actually 17 when he first started to teach and issue legal edicts (Abu Zahra, *Imam Malik* (p.53). It was nonetheless, when he was of young age.

Imam Shafi'i likewise was in his teens when he started to issue legal edicts. (Ibn Abi Hatim, *Adab al-Shafi'i* (p.39).

Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah was 17 when he began to issue legal edicts and became a Mufti. There are numerous other exceptions to the normal rule of reaching an old age with white beards before a person is understood to be a scholar and therefore it is highly questionable to make this as the main asal or fundamental to define and describe who a scholar is.

In our times using the criteria of the existence of scholars who were young in age to say we have scholars in our era who are also young in age needs serious

reevaluation. This understanding, although it is purely the personal opinion of some people, and at times formed due to obstinacy, it opens the doors to great trials and tribulations which will lead to further misguidance and disastrous consequences. Abdullah ibn Amr (RadhiAllahu Anhu) reported, The Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) said,

*"Verily, Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the people but rather he takes away knowledge with the death of the scholars until he leaves no scholar behind and the people turn to the ignorant as their leaders. They are asked to give religious judgments without knowledge, thus they are led astray and lead others astray." (Bukhari no.100, Muslim no.2673)*

It is also known that people attend the various universities or madaris and after studying for approximately 8 years or so, they graduate and are often given honouary. If all of them were understood to be scholars, it would degrade the station and rank of sacred knowledge achieved by the senior scholars who Allah has described in the Quran as

**"Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving."**  
**(Surah Fatir:28)**

And

**"But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord." And no one will be reminded except those of understanding."** (Surah Ale-Imran:7)

The scholars of earlier times who were young in age continued to seek knowledge from other scholars and this continued until they died. The very same senior scholars testified to their rank in ilm. In our times after graduating from a university after 8 years, using the title of Shaikh for someone or anyone who has just reached the age of 30-35 is gross negligence of the sacred knowledge. This is opening the doors to major problems just for the sake of personalities.

### **Seeking Knowledge from the Kibar (the senior) Scholars as opposed to the Sighar (the younger ones)**

Returning and referring back the major scholars ie Ulama and the elders of this Ummah, old in age, has some precedence from a statement of the illustrious companion Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu) who said,

*“The people will not cease to be upon good as long as they take knowledge from their senior ones and from their trustworthy ones and from their scholars. So if they take it from their younger ones and their evil ones, they will be destroyed.”*

(Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf* (no.20446, 20483), Tabarani in *Mu'jam al-Kabir* (Vol.9 no. 8089, 8590-8592), *Mu'jam al-Awsth* (1:135), Ibn Mubarak, *al-Zuhd* (p.281 no.815), Ibn A'diyy, *al-Kamil* (1:164), Ibn Abdul Barr, *Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi* (1:616 no.1057-1058), Khatib al-Baghdadi, *al-Faqih wa'l Mutafaqih* (2:79) and in *Nasihah Ahl al-Hadith* (p.28-29 no.7) and in *Mukhtasar Nasihah Ahl al-Hadith* (p.93). Abu Ubayd, *Gharib al-Hadith* (3:369), al-Daylami, *Musnad al-Firdaws* (5:230 no.7710). The latter transmits it from Ibn Umar (RadhiAllahu Anhu) which is a mistake as it is the well known statement of Ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu). Shaikh al-Albani graded the chain to be authentic.

Shaikh Abdul Salam ibn Burjis, may Allah have mercy on him said,

*"And indeed the phenomenon of taking knowledge from the younger ones amongst the students of knowledge has become widespread in this era. And in reality this phenomenon is a chronic disease, an enduring sickness, preventing the (true) student from what he intends and something by which he twists away from the correct path which would lead to knowledge. And that is because taking knowledge from the younger people - those whose feet have not become firmly grounded in knowledge and whose beards have not become white in it (seeking knowledge), despite the presence of a person who is greater than them in age and one whose feet are more firmly grounded - then this weakens the foundation of the beginner and prevents him from taking benefit from the knowledge of the senior scholars, and from acquiring their manners which knowledge and time have made good - and other than that from the justifications that are suggested by the narration of ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu) when he said: "The people will not cease to be upon good as long as they take knowledge from their senior ones and from their trustworthy ones and from their scholars. So if they take it from their younger ones and their evil ones, they will be destroyed." ('Awa'iq al-Talab (p.23)*

### **The Position of Imam Ibn Qutaybah (d.276H)**

Shaikh Abdul Salam ibn Burjis, May Allah have mercy on him said that Imam Ibn Qutaybah, may Allah have mercy on him, held the opinion that the *sighar* (lesser ones) were the ones who were lesser in age. Imam Ibn Qutaybah was

asked about the statement of Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu) to which he replied,

*“He (ibn Mas’ud) intended – that the people will not cease to be upon good as long as their scholars are the elders, and their scholars are not the youthful ones, because for the old man, the pleasure of youthfulness, and its self containment and its foolishness have disappeared from him. And he has taken on experience and knowledge as his companions. So doubt does not come upon him in his knowledge; nor does desire get the better of him; nor does greed make him turn away and nor does Shaytan make him slip up with the errors of the young person. Thus with age there is dignity and honour and reverence. And it may be these matters- matters which the old person is secure from – enter upon the youth; so when they enter upon him, and he gives fatawa (Islamic rulings), he is destroyed and he destroys (others).” (Imam Khatib al-Baghdadi, Nasihah Ahl al-Hadith (p.29-30 no.8), Mukhtasar Nasihah Ahl al-Hadith (p.93), Shaikh Abdul Salam ibn Burjis, Awa’iq al-Talab (p.24)*

So when this is the affair with the people adopting this with some of the companions, one could only imagine the invalidity of referring to very young students in our era. Allahul Musta’an.

It is appropriate here that we define the correct understanding of those whom it is proper to apply the term scholar to. And this is extremely important due to the fact that many people do not comprehend this issue, they have mixed individuals into the ranks of the scholars that do not belong there. The end result of this is the intellectual disorder that we are living in today. Many people in general, and students of knowledge in particular, have begun to

think that everyone who writes a book, verifies a manuscript, gives a khutbah, or delivers a lecture is a scholar.

Indeed, those who deserve the term "scholar" be applied to them in these times of ours are few. They are fewer than the few - in fact they are very few. This is because the scholar has special characteristics, many of which cannot be found in a majority of those who ascribe to knowledge today. A scholar is not someone who is prolific or eloquent in his [Islamic] speeches and lectures and so on. A scholar is not someone who authors a book or provides verification and referencing for a book or manuscript. Determining who is a scholar according to these standards is unfortunately the criterion in the minds of many of the youth and common folk today.

al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d.795H) – May Allah have mercy on him – said,

*"We have been put to trial by a group of ignoramuses amongst the people who believe that some modern-day individuals that are prolific in speech are more knowledgeable than those who came before them. Among them is he who thinks that a certain individual is more knowledgably than everyone that came in the past, including the Companions and those that succeeded them, due to the large amount of his clarifications and statements." He went on to say: "Many of the latter day people have been affected by this, and so they feel that whoever has a great amount of speech, debates and arguments on issues of the Religion, is more knowledgeable than someone who isn't like this!" ..... Ibn Rajab went on to say: "So it is an obligation to believe that not everyone who excels in his display of speech and words on knowledge is more knowledgeable than one who is not like this." (Bayan Fadl Ilm al-Salaf A'la Ilm al-Khalaf (p.38-40)*

This was at the time of Ibn Rajab, rahimahullaah, so what if he were to observe the fake ‘scholars’ of our time who fill tapes and books with their speech. The people become deceived by them because of the great amount of books they publish every month. So they think that they are scholars!

From the factors that should be used to distinguish who it is proper to apply the term "scholar" to in these times is: seniority in age and that taking knowledge from the senior scholars is a condition for the acquirement of knowledge. This is especially so in these times, since the senior scholar is most likely possesses more knowledge, has a more complete intellect, and is farther removed from the overwhelming desires, and so on as the narration of Ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu) is a testament to this. (from the words of the compiler, Jamal bin Furayhan al-Harithi from Shaikh Saleh al-Fawzan's, *al-Ajwibah al-Mufidah An Asilah al-Manahij al-Jadidah* (p.130-131), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn. (Dar al-Mehaj, Cairo, 2003)

Abu Umayyah narrates the Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) was asked concerning the signs of the hour. To which he replied,

*“When knowledge is taken from the younger ones (Asaghir)”*

(Tabarani, *Mu'ajam al-Kabir* (22/362), Haithami, *al-Majma'a* (1:135), Ibn Mubarak, *al-Zuhd* (no,61), Lalika'i, *Sharh Usul al-Ei'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah* (1:102), Abu Amr al-Dani, *al-Fitan* (2:62), Ibn Abdul Barr, *Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi* (1:612 no.1051-1052), al-Harawi, *Dhamm al-Kalam* (2:137), Abd al-Ghani al-Maqdisi, *al-Ilm* (2:16), Ibn Mandah, *al-Ma'rifah* (2:220). The Hadith is Hasan.

## The Asaghirs – Younger ones, are the People of Innovation

Nu'aym said I said to Ibn al-Mubarak,

*"Who are the younger ones (Asaghir)." He replied, "Those who speak with their opinions (ie in the Shari'ah) or either the young narrating from the elders but not narrating from the younger ones." And Abu Ubayd (Qasim bin Salam) mentioned in explanation of this report of Ibn al-Mubarak that by the younger ones – the asaghirs, he means the people of innovation and not the people of Sunnah." (Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi (1:612), Gharib al-Hadith (3:369)*

Imam Abu Ubayd (d.224H) further explains, based on his understanding, this means giving precedence and preference to the opinions of the later people over that of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), this is what is meant by taking knowledge from the younger ones –asaghir. (Gharib al-Hadith (3:369-370), Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi (1:612).

Umar (RadhiAllahu Anhu) said,

*"The most truthful speech is the speech of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam). The worst of the affairs are the newly invented matters – innovations. "The people will not cease to be upon good as long as they take knowledge from their senior ones." (Jam'e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi (1:615 no.1054). Its chain authentic and its narrators are trustworthy.*

It is also transmitted from Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (RadhiAllahu Anhu) who said,

*“The people will not cease to be upon good as long as they take knowledge from the companions of the Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), they are their seniors/elders. As for those who seek knowledge from their younger ones - asaghir then they will be destroyed.” (Jam’e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi (1:617 no.1060). It is authentic.*

Imam Ibn Abdul Barr (d.463H) summarises the statements and says the statements of Ibn al-Mubarak and Abu Ubayd have preceded in explanation of the younger ones - asaghir. Some people of knowledge were of the view that asaghir - the younger ones refers to when fatawa are sought from the ignorant ones. He mentions, it is because every scholar thinks he is a senior one according to his own understanding whatever his age may be. He then goes onto mention the various companions, who although young in age, would still issue legal edicts. This being said, the status of the most virtuous people from amongst mankind – the companions after the Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) have indeed been blessed by Allah the Exalted, the Sublime. (Jam’e Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fadlihi (1:617-618)

### General Narration Revering the Scholars and the Elders

Imam Nawawi (d.676H) established the following chapter in his *Riyadh al-Salihiin*, **Chapter 44 - Revering the Scholars and Elders, Preferring them to others and raising their Status.** And then brings over 10 Ahadith in reverence of the Scholars and older people. Although this does not directly refer to the older Scholar, it does however show the lofty status of the older people, with maturity, with ilm and those who accepted Islam first. Such general narrations do however indicate looking at the older ones for guidance and help, who are firm and grounded in the principles. As an example

348. Abu Mas'ud 'Uqbah bin 'Amr Al-Badri Al-Ansari (RadhiAllahu Anhu) reported: Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) said, "The person who is best versed in the recitation of the Book of Allah, should lead the prayer; but if all those present are equally versed in it, then the one who has most knowledge of the Sunnah; if they are equal in that respect too, then the one who has emigrated (to Al-Madinah) first, if they are equal in this respect also, then the oldest of them. No man should lead another in prayer where the latter has authority, or sit in his house, without his permission". (Muslim no.673]. In another narration in Muslim (no.673): Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) said, "One who is senior most in accepting Islam, should lead the Salat (prayer)". Yet another narration is: Messenger of Allah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) said, "A man who is well versed in the Book of Allah and can recite it better, should lead the Salat (prayer); if (all those present) are equal in this respect, then the man who is senior most in respect of emigration, if they are equal in that respect too, then the oldest of them should lead the prayer." [Muslim no.291]. (Riyadh al-Salihin (2:211-212)

The avid reader can refer to the various explanations of the Riyadh al-Salihin, that of Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saleh al-Uthaymin, *Dalil al-Falihin Sharh Riyadh al-Salihin* (2:210+) of Shaikh Muhammad bin E'lan Siddiqui, *Bahjatul al-Nazirin Sharh Riyadh al-Salihin* (1:326+) of Shaikh Salim bin Eid al-Hilali.

## The Need for Returning to the Senior Scholars with regard to the Important Issues

The researcher Ahmad al-Shihhi said,

*"The scholars are the ones to be referred to and turned to regarding the important issues, especially in matters that concern the welfare of the Muslim ummah. If you look at the condition of the first generations from the Salaf as-Saalih, you would find that they were strict with regard to returning back to the senior scholars that were alive in their time, especially in getting rulings that resulted in making tabdee' (declaring someone an innovator) or takfeer (declaring someone a disbeliever)."*

*Look at the example of Yahyaa bin Ya'mar Al-Basree and Humaid bin 'Abdir-Rahmaan Al-Himayree Al-Basree, when the Qadariyyah appeared in their time and they began to manifest contradictions to the Fundamentals of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, which necessitated that they be declared disbelievers or that they be pronounced innovators and removed from the fold of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. However, they did not rush into making a ruling against them. Rather, they went to those who held the position of being referred to with regard to issues of knowledge, from the scholars.*

*And he was 'Abdullaah bin 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (radyAllaahu 'anhuma). So they informed him of what occurred to them and he issued a ruling to them stating the misguidance and deviation of (this group of) the Qadariyyah. Yahyaa bin Ya'mar said: "The first*

person who spoke (deviant views) with regard to Al-Qadar in Basrah was Ma'bad Al-Juhnee. Humaid bin 'Abdir-Rahmaan Al-Himayri and I set out to make Hajj or 'Umrah, and we said to each other: "If only we could meet one of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger so that we could ask him about what these people are saying about Al-Qadar. So Allaah granted us that 'Abdullaah bin 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (radyAllaahu 'anhuu) enter the masjid So I and my companion gathered around him - one of us on his right and the other on his left. I felt as if my companion entrusted me with speaking to him, so I said: "Abu 'Abdur-Rahmaan, a people have appeared in our land that recite the Qur'aan and pursue knowledge...[and he mentioned some other points about them]...and they claim that there is no such thing as Al-Qadar (Divine Pre-Decree) and that it is rejected." He responded: "If you meet these people, inform them that I am free from them and thy are free from me. By the One whom 'Abdullaah bin 'Umar swears by, if one of them had the likes of Mount Uhud in gold and he were to give it away in charity, Allaah would not accept it from him, until he believes in Al-Qadar." Then he said: "My father reported to me..." Sahih Muslim (no. 93)

And look at the example of Zubayd ibn Al-Harith Al-Yami when the Murji'ah appeared in his time and he saw that they had oppositions to the Fundamentals of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, which necessitated that they be ousted from the fold of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. Yet, he did not rush into making a ruling against them. Instead, he went to one who had the position of being referenced in religious matters in his time from the people of knowledge and fatwaa, those who took their knowledge from the Seniors amongst the Companions, who in this case was Abu Waa'il

*Shaqq bin Salamah Al-Asadi Al-Kufi (rahimahullaah). So Zubayd went to him informing him of what had occurred, and Abu Wa'il issued a fatwaa to him based on a text from Allaah's Messenger, which indicated the falsehood of the misconceptions of the Murji'ah and their deviating from Ahlus-Sunnah. Zubayd said: "When the Murji'ah appeared, I went to Abu Wa'il and mentioned that to him, so he said: 'Abdullaah narrated to me that the Prophet (sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: 'Reviling a Muslim is sinfulness and fighting against him is disbelief.'" (Bukhari (no.48) and Muslim (no.218)*

*So if you were to compare between the condition of these people with regard to how they looked toward the people of knowledge in their time and between the condition of many of those who have become unstable in their repentance in this time of ours, you would find a huge difference between the two examples. Those people (in the first example) strove hard to implement this rule, and they did not rush to make a ruling against those people of their time whose deviation became apparent, until they first presented their case to the people of knowledge, those capable of issuing rulings (fatwaa) from Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah.*

*So when they heard the ruling, they bit onto it with their molar teeth and distanced themselves from those deviants who were in opposition to Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. But as for today, then it is very rare that you can find those who strive hard to implement this rule. Rather, you will find those who have no concern for the words of the people of knowledge and fatwa with regard to warning against the people of desires and innovation. So they wage war against the fataawa (religious rulings) of the scholars and they*

*distort their (intended) meanings. We ask Allaah to save and protect us!" (al-Wasayah al-Saniyyah Li-Ta'ibina Ilas Salafiyah (p.34-39), The book was read to Shaikh Rabi bin Hadi al-Madkhali and Shaikh Abdul Malik Ramadani)*

## **On The Knowledge, Status and Recognition of Who a Scholar is**

Imam Khatib al-Baghdadi (d.463H) said,

*"The Imam (leader of the Muslims) must screen the state of the muftis, he must look at the one who is most qualified and must endorse his rank; and the one who is not qualified, he must stop him from giving fatwa and warn him with punishment if he gives fatwa (without qualification). How can the Imam (leader of the Muslims) judge who is qualified or not for this status of a mufti? It is by asking the Ulama of his time and those who are known as the truthful people of his time." (Nawawi, Adab al-Fatwa wal Mufti wal Mustafti (p.17-18)*

We clearly find from this that a scholar, an Alim or the Ulama are recognized to be from amongst the Ulama when other Ulama of their time recognise, acknowledge and testify to their knowledge. This overwhelmingly excludes the modern day celebs for whom the titles "Shaikhs/Shaykhs" are grossly used for; it most certainly is a practice that has to be seriously abolished. This grand title only belongs to the real, major and established scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah.

Imam Malik said,

*"A person should not claim by himself to be qualified for this rank (Mufti/Scholar) until someone who is more knowledgable than him*

*does not endorse (or disqualify) this (status).” (Adab al-Fatwa wal Mufti wal Mustafti (p.18), Tartib al-Madarik (1:127)*

Shaikh Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah ibn Baz said,

*“It is binding upon the society to give the scholars their true worth and to act upon their guidance and advise, and to work hard in defending them, abstain from backbiting them and to preserve their honour.” (Majmu’ al-Fatawa (7:127)*

Imam Ibn Abdul Barr (d.463H) included a chapter in his book *Jami Bayan al-Ilm wa Fadlihi* under the heading: *Who has the right to be called a Faqeeh or a Scholar in Reality and not Figuratively? And who is allowed to issue fatwa according to the scholars?* The avid reader may refer to this book, for it is filled with narrations mentioning returning the older ones and senior scholars.

*All complete praise and glory belongs to Allāh, the sustainer and controller of the universe. May there be abundant salutations, peace and blessings upon the Noble Prophet, the best of mankind Muhammad (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), his family and his companions.*

By the weak slaves of Allāh,  
 Abū Ḥibbān Malak  
 Abū Khuzaimah Imran Masoom Anṣārī  
 4<sup>th</sup> Rabi al-Thani 1438/ Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Janury 2017  
 Birmingham, England.