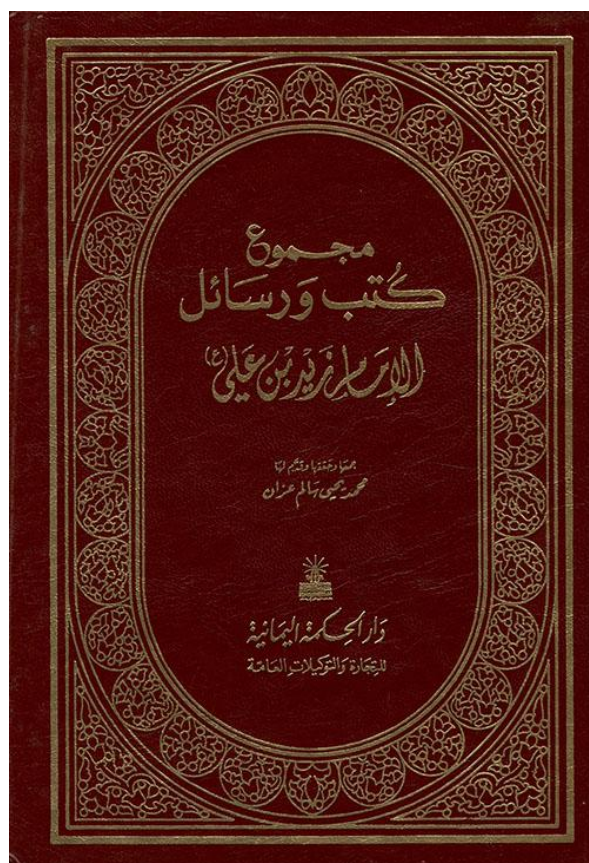


**The Letter of al-Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī, upon them be peace,
to the Scholars of the Ummah**



al-Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

~ Muḥammad al-Sharīfī

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In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

Peace be upon the people of Allāh's guardianship and His party.

I earnestly advise you, O assembly of scholars, to treasure your share of piety and obedience to Allāh. Do not sell it for the meager price of worldly gains, the paltry offerings of this life, or the small compensations it may offer. For everything you prefer and work for in this world cannot compare to the honor bestowed by Allāh upon the knowledgeable servants who diligently safeguard His commandments and prohibitions. This is because the ultimate reward belongs to the God-fearing, while regret, remorse, and eternal damnation await the unjust and sinful transgressors.

[Reflection on the State of the Scholars and Monks]

Consider, O servants of Allāh, and reflect upon the admonition that Allāh has given this Ummah regarding the condemnation of the scholars and monks. Contemplate and ponder over the warning Allāh has issued against the wrongdoing of the religious leaders and ascetics.

Allāh says: **{Why do the rabbis and monks not forbid them from saying what is sinful and devouring what is unlawful? How wretched is what they have been practicing} (al-Ma'idah).**

This reprimand is directed at them because they used to witness the transgressors among them, who openly commanded evil and committed corruption, and yet they did not prevent them from doing so. They saw the rights of Allāh being violated, and the wealth of Allāh being consumed unjustly among them. There was a clear distinction between the rich and the poor, yet they did not intervene, all in pursuit of their own fleeting prestige and temporary worldly gains, while they deceived themselves in the process.

And indeed, Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, has said to you: **{O you who have believed, indeed many of the scholars and monks devour the wealth of people unjustly and avert [them] from the way of Allāh. And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allāh - give them tidings of a painful punishment} (At-Tawbah),** so that you may be warned.

When you see a scholar in such a state and position, you should place him in a position commensurate with his involvement in the misappropriation, deception, and continuous connivance to support the injustices of his contemporaries and the elite of his people. They did not prohibit them from their wrongful deeds, all while remaining silent about it. Their silence was driven by their desire for the illicit gains they received.

Their hindrance from the path of Allāh was due to following them, being beguiled by their status, and aligning themselves with the unjust oppressors who caused corruption in the land. This is because the followers of scholars often choose what their scholars choose for themselves. So, beware of the scholars of evil who have trodden the path that incurs Allāh's disapproval and who have compromised obedience to Allāh in favor of the unjust.

Indeed, Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, has said in His Book: **{Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The prophets who submitted [to Allāh] judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of Allāh, and they were witnesses thereto. So do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not exchange My verses for a small price. And whoever does not judge by what Allāh has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers} (al-Ma'idah).**

So, the scholars of the Torah and the Gospel were reproached for leaving aside what they had been entrusted with from their Scripture, which Allāh made them witnesses to, for the sake of appeasing the people and living in harmony with the wrongdoers. They did not prioritize Allāh due to their fear of the people, and they accepted the actions of the corrupt as acceptable. They did not prefer Allāh out of fear, and thus Allāh's displeasure was incurred upon them when they sold His verses for a meager price and worldly pleasures.

In the sight of Allāh, the worldly life and all its attractions are insignificant, as Allāh is the Knower of the unseen. He knows that engaging in sin and compliance with His commandments, and aligning with the oppressors in His commandments and prohibitions, are ultimately futile. This is why He warns scholars out of reverence and caution, as they are knowledgeable about Allāh, His Book, and the Sunnah of His Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.

By my life, had it not been for the severity, harshness, and enmity that the scholars of the times face from the gloomy, elite, and corrupt elements of their era, Allāh the Most High would not have advised and warned them as He did. This is because they would not attain what is with Allāh through ease, nor would they be granted eternal residence in His paradise through indulgence in worldly desires.

Allāh the Most High has encouraged the scholars, those who safeguard His books, His Sunnah, and His laws, to abandon what they have preserved, desiring the reward of those other than themselves and fearing the punishment of others.

[The Obligation of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil]

Indeed, Allāh, the Most High, has distinguished you with a rightful distinction and has marked you with a sign that cannot be hidden from those with understanding. He did so when He said to you: **{The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allāh and His Messenger. Those - Allāh will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise}** (At-Tawbah).

He began with the virtue of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, then the virtue of those who command what is right and forbid what is wrong with them, and their position among His servants.

By my life, this verse inaugurated the description of the believers with the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. So, contemplate, O servants of Allāh, and benefit from this admonition.

And He, the Most High, says about others: **{The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right}** (At-Tawbah).

By my life, this verse inaugurated their condemnation for commanding what is wrong and forbidding what is right. So, contemplate, O servants of Allāh, and benefit. And know that the duty of Allāh, the Most High, in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, when established, encompasses all other obligations, both easy and difficult. This is because enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong entails inviting to Islām, opposing injustice, repelling the oppressor, distributing war bounties and spoils in their proper places, collecting alms and placing them where they belong, establishing legal punishments, maintaining family ties, honoring covenants, showing kindness, avoiding forbidden acts—all of this falls under enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

Allāh, the Most High, says to you: **{And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty}** (al-Ma'idah).

The duty of Allāh, the Most High, is established, so remember the covenant of Allāh that you have undertaken and the pact with which He has bound you when you said: **{We hear and we obey; [we seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination}** (al-Ma'idah).

[The Station of the Scholars and what is Obligated of them]

O servants of Allāh, indeed, the affairs are set right by the hands of the scholars, and they are corrupted when they compromise Allāh's commands and prohibitions by assisting the unjust oppressors. Similarly, when the ignorant and foolish are in charge, they can only establish affairs through ignorance and foolishness. At that time, the rightful heirs cry out, judgments become chaotic, and the Muslims are confounded.

You, O scholars, are a renowned group, associated with piety, dedicated to worshipping Allāh, well-versed in the study of the Qur'ān. In the eyes of the people, you hold reverence, and in cities and markets, you are honored. The noble respect you, and the weak honor you. Those who have no favor from you look up to you when it comes to supplication and gifts. You are referred to in gatherings, and you mediate in matters when petitioners are denied.

Your actions are followed, and your paths are trodden. All of this is due to the hope that those inferior to you in recognizing Allāh's rights expect from you. So, do not be heedless in prioritizing Allāh's rights when making choices. Do not be negligent in fulfilling His commands, lest you become like physicians who charge for medicine and harm the patients, or like shepherds who receive wages but lead their flock astray. This is the likeness of scholars of evil.

You do not spend wealth for the sake of Allāh, nor do you risk your souls in the path of Allāh. You do not repair what you have broken, nor do you reconcile with what you have separated, nor do you oppose those you have wronged.

Do not desire what is with Allāh when you have opposed it. Do not think that you are walking in the light and that the angels will greet you with glad tidings from Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, on the Day of Resurrection. How can you hope for safety on the Day of Judgment when you have betrayed the trust, abandoned knowledge, compromised the religion, and witnessed the covenant of Allāh being violated and His religion being loathed? And yet you show no concern, and from Allāh, you do not fear. If you had endured harm and borne the burden for the sake of Allāh, Allāh's command would have emanated from you and flowed to you.

O servants of Allāh, do not empower the wrongdoers by coveting the fleeting treasures they hold in their hands, their decaying inheritance, and their transient worldly gains. O servants of Allāh, come to death with the testimony in religion, cling to the unchanging Book, and do not marvel at the ephemeral life. What is with Allāh is better for you, and the Hereafter is the abode of permanence.

O servants of Allāh, lament over your faith and mourn for the Qur'ān. By the One in Whose hand Zayd b. 'Alī's soul is, you will not attain a goodness that the people of your Prophet's household, peace be upon him and his family, have not attained. You will not attain a favor that they have not attained.

[Address to the Evil Scholars]

O scholars of evil, you have pursued the worldly life, though it warns you and admonishes you to be cautious. The world advised you on how to handle it, but you concealed your intentions. It showed you its true nature, yet you found beauty in it. It spoke the truth about itself, but you denied it.

O scholars of evil, this is the cradle you prepared for the oppressors, and this is the sanctuary you entrusted to the traitors. This is your testimony for the nullifiers of truth. You will be with them in the Fire tomorrow, enduring forever: **{That is because you used to exult on the earth without right and you used to behave insolently} (Ghafir)**. If you had delivered the rights to the people of truth and affirmed the excellence of those deserving it, you would have been the friends of Allāh. You would have been the true scholars praised by Allāh in His Book, known for their fear of Him.

You did not educate the ignorant, guide the astray, or help the weak escape. You did not uphold the conditions set by Allāh upon you, nor did you free the necks from their burdens, nor did you restore what was taken unjustly. O scholars of evil, reflect on your state, ponder your affairs, and remember what I am saying to you.

O scholars of evil, you secured your position among the tyrants through flattery. You gained wealth through collaboration, and you drew near to them through compliance. You undermined the religion and disrupted the Qur'ān. Your actions have become an argument against you, and you will realize this when hearts are filled with remorse, calamities befall, and the reckoning begins.

O scholars of evil, you are the greatest affliction upon the creation, and your punishment will be severe if you understand. This is because Allāh has indicted you with what you have concealed. You have been made responsible for the affairs, and judgments are sought from your side.

Sunnahs are examined through you, and the followers say, "You are our intermediaries between us and our Lord." So, in what position have you been placed among the people? I swear by the One in Whose hand is Zayd b. 'Alī's soul that if you had clarified to the people what you know and called them to the truth you recognize, the oppressive would crumble, and the foundation of the unjust would collapse. However, you sold Allāh's signs for a meager price, corrupted His religion, and deviated from His Book.

This is what Allāh has taken upon you in terms of covenants and agreements, so that you may cooperate in righteousness and piety and not cooperate in sin and aggression. You enabled the oppressors to commit injustice, beautified their tyranny, and strengthened their dominion through your cooperation and alignment. This is your state.

O scholars of evil, you have erased the Book of Allāh, dealt a blow to the face of the religion, and caused a rupture. I swear by Allāh, your resemblance is like that of a lost camel. You fled from them due to your evil deeds. With your wrongdoing, the blood of those who uphold the call to the truth from the progeny of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was shed. They raised their heads above the spears, were shackled in chains, tasted humiliation, sensed hardship, and experienced sorrows.

They inhaled distress and exhaled sighs of grief, struggling in adversity. This is what you have brought upon yourselves, and this is what you have carried on your shoulders. Allāh is the One whose help is sought, and He is the best of judges between us and you. He judges with the truth, and He is the best of judges.

[His Call, upon him be peace, to Uphold the Truth]

I have written to you a letter outlining what I desire from your actions. It is the adherence to the Book of Allāh and the revival of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him and his family. Through the Book, faith stands firm, and through the Sunnah, the religion is preserved. Innovations are nothing but falsehoods invented, and desires pursued. Men have adopted them, leading others astray from the path of Allāh. When a believer corrects and condemns them, the wrongdoers say, "This one calls us to an innovation!"

I swear by Allāh, innovations are only introduced by the unjust, and corruption is enacted by the oppressors. I called you to the Book, so respond to the caller of Allāh and support him.

By the One who by His permission I called you, and by His command I admonished you. I do not seek to harm a believer, nor oppress a non-Muslim. I wished to protect you from paths leading to destruction and guide you from misguidance. If I were to kindle a fire and throw myself into it, it would not absolve me of Allāh's wrath. I seek to detach myself from this

worldly life, desiring your salvation and deliverance. If you respond to our call, you will be the fortunate and successful ones.

Servants of Allāh, advise the caller to truth and support him when he invites you to what brings you to life. The Book invites to Allāh, justice, and righteousness, and it prohibits evil. We have considered you, wanting your welfare. We are the closest of people to you: the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him and his family, is our grandfather, and the first to believe in him is our father. His daughter is the leader of women, our mother. So, who among you shares our status? Hurry, O servants of Allāh, to the call of Allāh, and do not be negligent of the truth. Through the truth, your enemies are defeated, your honor is preserved, and your grounds are secure.

This is because we would remove oppressors from power, protect treasuries, cities, fay', and spoils, and establish trustworthy leaders, excluding those who bribe and are bribed, breaking their covenants. If we are victorious, this is our covenant, and if we are martyred, we have fulfilled our obligation to our Lord, and we have delivered the truth from ourselves. Paradise is our abode and our destination. Which one of these would the believer dislike, and in which one would the Muslim not find refuge? Allāh said to His Prophet, peace be upon him and his family: **{And do not argue on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Indeed, Allāh does not like those who are treacherous and sinful} (An-Nisa).**

When betrayal starts and trust is breached, and oppression prevails, the governor becomes apparent. How can such a person be an Imām for the believers, with these attributes and characteristics?

O Allāh, we seek your pardon, and you have informed us that You do not reform the actions of the corrupt. So, O Allāh, be our Guardian, the Judge between us and our people with justice.

This is what we say, and this is what we invite to. Whoever responds to us in the truth, You reward and recompense him. Whoever opposes us out of obstinacy and defiance, You punish him for his obstinacy and defiance.

So, I implore you, O servants of Allāh, respond to the Book of Allāh, hasten towards it, and make it a judge among you for resolving disputes, and a source of justice for disagreements. Make it your Imām in matters you dispute. We are content with it, and to it, we turn, and for what is in it, we submit. The Muslims among us and against us, we do not seek authority in this world, except Yours. We do not seek to harm a believer, a female believer, a free person, or a slave with it.

O servants of Allāh, respond to us with a good response that will bring you the glad tidings from Allāh, as He says in His Book: **{So give good tidings to My servants who listen to speech and follow the best of it} (Az-Zumar).**

And He also says: **{And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allāh and does righteousness and says, 'Indeed, I am of the Muslims} [Fussilat].**

O servants of Allāh, hasten to repentance and offer your sincere advice. We are the most knowledgeable among the nation about Allāh, the most aware of creation regarding wisdom, and the Qur'ān descended upon us. Jibrā'īl, peace be upon him, used to visit us, and the best is extracted from us. Whoever learns goodness, takes it from us, and whoever utters goodness, it originates from us. We are the people of righteousness, the forbidders of evil, and the protectors of Allāh's boundaries.

O servants of Allāh, help us against those who have enslaved our nation, violated our trust, and corrupted our Book. They have arrogantly claimed superiority with our honor, while we are the source of their superiority. We have committed ourselves to uphold our matters and strive in the path of our Creator. We are patient in upholding the truth and do not fear death when our religion is secure. So cooperate with us to achieve victory, as Allāh says in His Book: **{O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet} (Muḥammad).**

And Allāh says: **{Allāh will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allāh is Powerful and Exalted in Might. Those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakah and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allāh belongs the outcome of all matters} (al-Hajj).**

O servants of Allāh, empowerment has been established by upholding the Shariah and completing the religion, as Allāh says: **{So turn away from them; you are not to be blamed} (Az-Zariyat).**

Allāh has perfected the religion, and His blessings are complete. Do not diminish the completeness of Allāh's religion, nor change Allāh's blessings into disbelief, as this would subject you to His wrath and punishment.

O servants of Allāh, the oppressors have shed our blood, driven us from our homes, and used our abandonment as evidence against us in rejecting our call and denying our rights. O servants of Allāh, you are partners with them in our bloodshed and their oppression. They spent all the wealth, gathered their armies, sharpened their swords, and neglected justice. They committed injustices, rejected our rights, and breached their covenants with Allāh.

Every protection was discarded by them. Every Muslim was humiliated, and every book was forsaken. Every divine rule was abandoned. Every covenant with Allāh was violated. So, you have become their assistants in all of this by remaining silent about their prohibitions of evil.

O servants of Allāh, the scholars and the monks from every community are responsible for what they have been entrusted with. So prepare an answer to Allāh's inquiry.

O Allāh, I ask You by our Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his family, for confirmation from You regarding the truth we call to. You are the Witness between us. Judge with the truth in our disputes, for good and evil do not equal.

Peace be upon the one who responded to the truth and was an assistant among our helpers, guiding to it.

Concluded is the letter of al-Imām Zayd to the Scholars, by the grace of Allāh and His blessings.