

The ŞAHĀBAH



*Clarifying the Stance of the 'Ulama' of Deoband on the
Blessed Companions*



Hakīm ul Islām Qārī Muḥammad Tayyib ﷺ

Adapted & Translated from: 'Ulamā' e Deoband kā Dini Rukh aur Maslakī Mizāj

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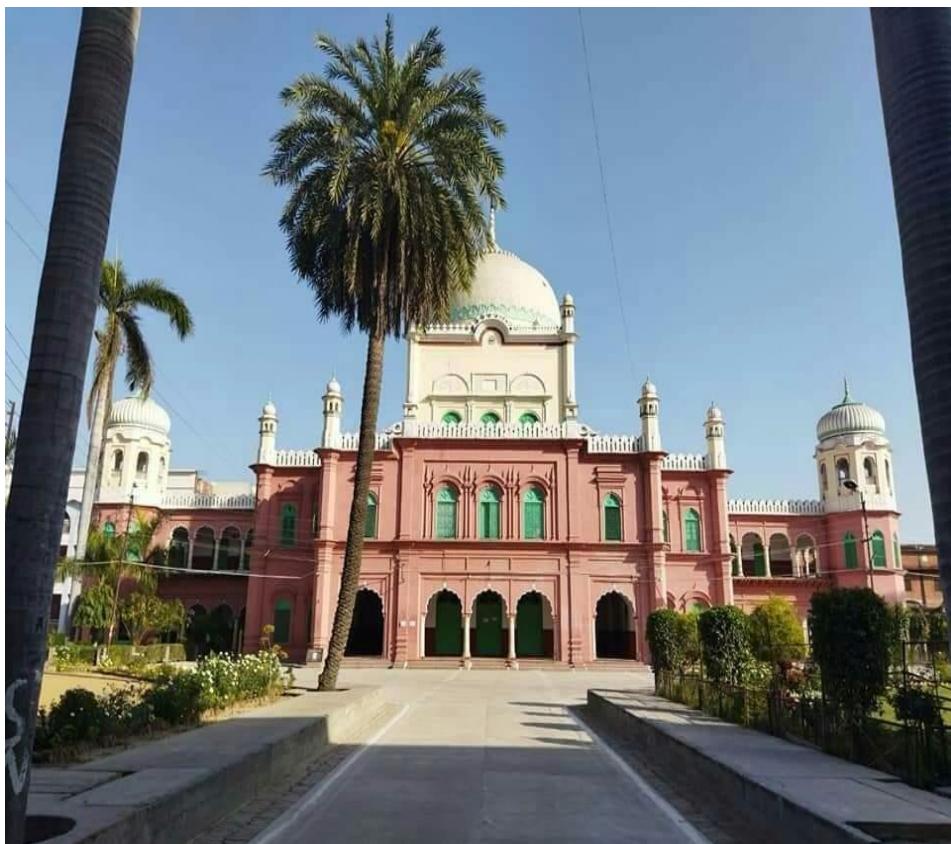
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THE ŞAḤĀBAH

After Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the noblest class of people are those who acquired munificence directly from Rasūlullāh ﷺ and were nurtured and trained by him. They are referred to as the Şaḥābah ﷺ. May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with them all.

In terms of a class or group, if the Noble Qur'ān has stated its nobility and honor, then it has done this only for the class or group of the Şaḥābah ﷺ. The entire group of Şaḥābah ﷺ have been granted a number of titles and honors, like, *rāshid*¹, *murshid*², *rāḍī*³, *marḍā*⁴, pure of heart, always obedient, good-doers, truthful, and above all, Jannah has

¹ Rightly guided

² Guiding others to the straight path

³ They are pleased with Allāh ﷻ

⁴ Allāh ﷻ is pleased with them

been promised for them.⁵ Then, their general acceptance and fame is not specific to any era or time period; but it is general.





The Noble Qur'ān informs us that the previous divine scriptures also discussed and spoke about the Şaĥābah ﷺ and explained that they were an elite group introduced to bygone nations. The Noble Qur'ān further praised them and detailed their lofty position, informing that they will continue to be known by future nations until the Day of Qiyāmah, i.e., as long as the Noble Qur'ān remains on the tongues and in the hearts, as long as it is recited during the five times daily prayers, they will be spoken about in lectures and discourses in Masājid, Madāris, Khānqahs and places of worship, by individuals and in gatherings. In essence, wherever and whenever the Noble Qur'ān is recited – in whatever setting, they will be spoken about and their lofty standing over the rest of the Ummah will be clear and distinctly illustrated. In terms of praise, they are exclusive and unique. One will not find this for anyone or any group after the Ambiyā'. At the same time, the 'Ulamā' of Deoband held on firmly to a position of balance and moderation regarding the Şaĥābah ﷺ. They did not allow any form of extremism or remissness to set in with regards to them, i.e., the Şaĥābah ﷺ.




Based on this great and lofty standard, the 'Ulamā' of Deoband do not hold the view of dividing and differentiating amongst the Şaĥābah ﷺ. They do not understand some of the Şaĥābah ﷺ to be worthy of love and others – we seek the protection of Allāh ﷻ – to be worthy of enmity. They do not resort to continuous praise for one or some of the



⁵ See Sūrah Al-Ĥujurāt 7, Sūrah At-Taubah: 100


Şaĥābah ﷺ, whilst becoming extreme in denouncing and criticizing others. The ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband are not like some who leave no stone unturned in speaking ill of the illustrious Şaĥābah ﷺ, neither do they allocate a position to some, higher than that of Nubuwwah. They do not take the Şaĥābah ﷺ to be infallible, nor do they believe and accept divine ĥulūl into some Şaĥābah ﷺ.

The track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband is that all the blessed and noble Şaĥābah ﷺ are upon a very lofty and important position. However, they are not divine. The Şaĥābah ﷺ are human beings, have human qualities and are bound to human necessities. Despite this, they are higher than the level of normal human beings and possess great specialties that are beyond the reach of any normal person. In fact, even all the Auliyā’ of the entire Ummah cannot reach their ranks. This is the point of balance and moderation that the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband have adopted regarding the Şaĥābah ﷺ. According to them, all the Şaĥābah ﷺ, male and female, are equal in terms of the nobility of Şaĥābiyyat, i.e., companionship. Hence, they are equal in terms of love and honor. However, they have varying ranks and degrees between them, so, it necessarily follows that there will be a variance in the degree of honor for them. This variance is not based upon the Şaĥābiyyat position itself. This is because no difference arises or could arise in terms of love and honor based on Şaĥābiyyat itself. In this variance, the principle of ‘all the Şaĥābah ﷺ are just’ will be applicable. This principle plays a foundational role with regards to the Şaĥābah ﷺ. Moreover, the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband is truly and fully the track of the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā’ah.

Similarly, due to the general honor and grandeur of the Ṣaḥābah , the 'Ulamā' of Deoband believe and accept the Ṣaḥābah  to be stars of guidance – each one of them, without exception. They also understand that the salvation of all those who come later is restricted to following the Ṣaḥābah  in knowledge and practice. However, they do not accept the Ṣaḥābah  as lawmakers, i.e., *shāri'*. This would then give the right of *tashrī'* to them and would permit them to make things permissible and forbidden. In this case, there would remain no difference between Nubuwwah and Ṣaḥābiyyat.

The Ṣaḥābah  were Ummatīs, but they were also sincere die-hearts of Nubuwwah. Due to this, *dīn* stood up on its foundation and was established firmly in the world. Therefore, the Ṣaḥābah  - on the whole - deserve the praise and service of the world and they are the best of the creation after the *Ambiyā'*. Then, in line with this track, although the Ṣaḥābah  are not lawmakers, but they were definitely a group who finished themselves in the *sharī'ah*. The *sharī'ah* became their life – to the fullest extent. They adhered to the *sharī'ah* fully and thereby reached the level of perfection. This level of perfection is acquired through fully engaging and dissolving one's self in obedience.

The 'Ulamā' of Deoband – we seek the protection of Allāh  - do not ever say that the Ṣaḥābah  were irreligious and treacherous regarding the *sharī'ah*, or that they were prisoners in the clutches of love for wealth and love for fame. Such views and understandings are part of the *Sabā'iyyah* religion.

According to the 'Ulamā' of Deoband, this blessed and honorable group of Ṣaḥābah  were the first narrators of *dīn*, they were the first ones

to understand and grasp *dīnī* teachings, they understood the realities of *dīn* the first. In terms of nurturing, they were the first to nurture and train the Ummah. In terms of the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, they were the truthful standard and yardstick to gauge the truth or falsehood of any grouping or sect in Islām. In the light of this, if a grouping has love and honor for the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم in their hearts, without differentiation and exception, then that grouping will be classified to be upon the truth. If there is a slight decrease in honor and faith for them in the heart by a grouping, or, they have ill-feeling for any of the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم, then based on this issue, this grouping will no longer be part of the saved group, but it will become part and parcel of the grouping doomed for failure.

The first gauge of truth and falsehood is love and honor for the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم; admittance of their religiosity and piety and to announce this particular link to them from the heart. This is because the group that believes and accepts the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم to be just and upright, they will be the group upon truth – in the light of the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Alĥamdulillāh, the group that has this is the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā'ah. The truthful bearers of this are the 'Ulamā' of Deoband.

The grouping or sect that has fallen prey to thinking bad of the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم, speaking ill of them or showing disrespect to them are far removed from the truth. This is because the slightest disregard for the Şaĥābah رضي الله عنهم or the minutest dissociation from them is synonymous with losing reliance upon the entire structure of *dīn*. If they, we seek the protection of Allāh ﷻ, were to depart from the path of *dīn*, then there would be no question at all of those coming later to remain upon

the straight path. The entire Ummah, from start to end, would be rendered unreliable. Therefore, according to the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband, each and every individual amongst the Şaĥābah ﷺ are regarded as pious, pure, reliable and trustworthy. In the same way, the salvation of the Ummah lies in following the Şaĥābah ﷺ as a group on the whole. The verses of the Noble Qur’ān testify to this. In terms of a generation and people of an era, they are the best generation and class. They stand as the yardstick and gauge to differentiate between truth and falsehood for the entire Ummah standing as substitute - in place of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Going ahead, just as a denier of Nubuwwah is rendered out of the fold of Islām, the person who denies the *ijmā’*, i.e., consensus, of the Şaĥābah ﷺ will be rendered out of the fold of Islām. The same applies to the one who denies the practices of the Şaĥābah ﷺ according to some of the leading scholars of guidance. Therefore, logic and intelligence does not call for elevating them or degrading them. In the same way, the comprehensive track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband – combining logic and narration- does not accept the same. Based on the great and magnificent status and honor of the Şaĥābah ﷺ in *dīn*, the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband accept them to be the crown of the pious. However, they do not hold the view that the Şaĥābah ﷺ are infallible. They believe and accept the Şaĥābah ﷺ to be *maĥfūz min Allāh*, i.e., protected by Allāh ﷻ. This is the highest level of *wilāyat*, in which a person reaches the peak of *taqwā* and acquires the deep essence of *īmān*. According to the system of Allāh ﷻ, sin cannot come forth from such a person by way of habit. At their lofty stage, the demand of their inner selves and the *taqwā* in them always reminds them.

On account of not being infallible, there remains the possibility of sin in them, but in terms of them being protected by Allāh ﷻ, sin did not come forth from them and they did not take any step towards sin. Even if this possibility of sin coming from them was plausible, then it remained restricted to outer temporary factors. It did not reach the level where their hearts called for it. This is because the Noble Qur’ān testifies to the purity of their hearts and the level of their piety, i.e., taqwā. Therefore, during the initial stages, if some natural slip or mistake happened to come from the general Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, then it did not occur on the basis of the heart calling for it or because of some sinful ability that had taken root in their hearts. In the same way, this did not affect their condition or inner taqwā in any way. Hence, their inner piety and purity – which Allāh ﷻ testified to – cannot be tainted whatsoever by this co-incident slip.

The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ had the highest levels of taqwā and foresight. Due to this, the inherent capacity to sin was incapacitated in them and the avenues of obedience was enlivened in them. They had fully turned away from disobedience and were engaged all the time in obedience to Allāh ﷻ. Īmān and taqwā was beautified and made beloved in their hearts, whilst disbelief and sin were made hated to them. This is the reason why the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband do not refer to them as infallible, but at the same time say that they cannot be criticized or maligned because they have been protected regarding matters of *dīn*. In fact, the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband feel that it is not permitted to narrate the criticism that occurred between the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ (which they had the right to do) except with the highest levels of respect and decorum. If this is not permitted, then it stands to reason that those who come later on

cannot criticize or malign the Şaḥābah ﷺ for the differences or criticism that ensued between themselves at all. After the texts have clarified their inner purity and piety, their slips in matters of *dīn* will remain restricted to a slip or mistake. There is no question of sin whatsoever. Therefore, in their mutual differences, it is possible to draw a comparison of a mistake and that which is correct and it can never be assumed to be a clash between truth and falsehood. Everyone knows that a mujtahid can slip and he gets reward for it too. He does not get reprimanded.

In terms of their internal matters (which was based on pure intentions and pure souls), according to the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband, it is not permissible to think bad of the Şaḥābah ﷺ, nor can one speak bad of them. In cases like this, one must search for a suitable interpretation or reason and never criticize or malign them. ‘Allāh ﷻ has kept our hands clean from their blood, so we shall never taint our tongues with it.’⁶



⁶ Ḥilyat-ul-Auliya' vol.9 p.114

THE GRANDEUR OF THE ŞAĤĀBAH ﷺ

The summary of the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband regarding the grandeur of the Şaĥābah ﷺ is presented hereunder:

1. The group of the Şaĥābah ﷺ is the most virtuous group of this Ummah. They are the noblest of the Ummah. They have pure hearts. They were pleased with Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ was pleased with them. Therefore, without exception, all of them are pious, just, upright and pure of heart. The greatest pious person of the Ummah can never reach their rank and position.
2. They are the gauge and yardstick for the truth or falsehood position of any grouping or sect. This is because they hold the position of criticizing the Ummah and they cannot be criticized or maligned. The gauge is with the one who analyzes and fault finding is not done of the gauge, otherwise, there will be no gauge left. Hence, regarding matters of *dīn*, they are beyond any criticism. ‘Whichever one of them you follow, you will be guided.’⁷
3. The first sign of giving them this lofty rank and most virtuous position is that one has unquestioned love and faith in all of them, without making any exception. The link of the Ummah to the Şaĥābah ﷺ is not a historical or narrated one, but it based on intense love – which is the nature and demand of the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.
4. To delve into the mutual differences amongst the Şaĥābah ﷺ and to voice one’s view about it is a sign of a crooked heart.




⁷ Mishkāt-ul-Masābiḥ


5. The mutual differences amongst the Şaĥābah ﷺ is not a clash of truth and falsehood, but it was a matter of a slip and being correct. In matters of ijtiḥād, there is reward even in the case of being incorrect. Therefore, the word ‘sin’ cannot be applied for them.

In terms of a group on the whole, after the Şaĥābah ﷺ, there is no group or generation that can be classified as pure, pious and just, without any exception. Despite this, there will be no generation or era that passes, except that there will be pious ones, guides, reformers and revivers. There has never been a shortage of masters in the different fields of study, esoteric and exoteric. According to the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband, all of these valuable gems and luminaries are viewed with the same level of honor and nobility, whether it be the Mujtahid Muṭlaq, the Mujtahid fil Madh-hab, those who possess deep knowledge, the imāms of the various sciences, the Muĥaddithīn, Mutakallimīn, Auliya’ or wise men. It is necessary to value and appreciate all of them. This is because these heirs of Nubuwwah were such that one group guarded the link of imān and Islām, whilst another group guarded iḥsān and ‘irfān, i.e., recognition of Allāh ﷻ.

In other words, one group of ‘Ulamā’ protected the actions and deeds and one group reformed the character, hearts and thoughts. Both groups will remain until Qiyāmah working in their respective spheres.

Therefore, in line with the track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband, this balanced way of belief and drawing benefit will remain with all the groups of people and generations that will follow. The only difference is that the honor and grandeur is established with the Şaĥābah ﷺ as a

whole group and class, each and every one of them. They are all just and upright. As for those who come later, there will be pious ones amongst them as well as impious ones. This is why when it comes to the Şaĥābah , there is no question of opposition or difference with them, but in the generations that follow, there can be harmony, opposition, as well as differences because they do not possess the general goodness like with the Şaĥābah . There can be just and unjust, pious and impious in the later generations. Despite this, the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband held onto this case of harmony and differences with balance and moderation. They did not fall into extremism when in harmony and agreement, nor did they fall into extremism in opposition. They did not make anyone an independent target of opposition without reason or cause, nor did they make themselves into a sect in which one of the Şaĥābah  were adopted for extreme praise. Together with displaying honor for luminaries, what was correct from them has been declared as such and a slip has been declared a slip. In addition, the slip has been presented with a suitable reason and excuse, as is done with the slip of a noble person. As the poet says beautifully, ‘this slip is better than a thousand reforms.’

Moreover, the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband did not declare entire the life of the one who slipped as a life of error. However, if this reason or excuse cannot be understood from their lives, then instead of criticizing and maligning a personality, this slip has been kept within its limit and the matter has been handed over to Allāh . In this way, a person will be at ease and in comfort in his heart and mind. The ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband have not made anyone a target for no suitable reason, placing the people onto the path of criticizing and maligning, as has been the way

of the extremists. This is especially important during this time of trials and tribulations in which knowledge, understanding and forbearance has been replaced by extremism. This is a result of pride or pressure – which is the height of ignorance. All three are branches of oppression, not of knowledge and justice. The track of the ‘Ulamā’ of Deoband is based on knowledge and justice, not on ignorance and oppression. Hence, is it brimming with justice, balance and consideration of limits, not extremism and its corollaries.

May Allāh ﷻ bless us all with the ability to defend the honor of the Şaḥābah ﷺ at all times. May Allāh ﷻ bless us with the company of the Şaḥābah ﷺ, the Ahl-ul-Bayt and all the blessed luminaries of the Ummah in Jannah. Āmīn



TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

By the grace of Allāh ﷻ, translation completed on 22 Dhul-Ḥijjah 1442/2 August 2021. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ for blessing us with the opportunity to translate this work. May Allāh ﷻ accept from the author and translator and take this work worldwide for the guidance of humanity, Āmīn.

As with all endeavors, there are bound to be perfections and shortcomings. The perfections are from Allāh and the shortcomings from us.

O Allāh, bless the reward of this work to the souls of my mentors and guides;

1. The magnificent scholar and outstanding Ḥadīth teacher, Mufti Muḥammad Patel ﷻ, who passed into Your mercy whilst in my hands on Wednesday 4 Rabī-ul-Akhir 1440/12 December 2018.

2. The legendary translator, prolific orator and exemplary scholar, who passed into Your mercy on Wednesday 8 Sha'bān 1439/25 April 2018, Mufti Afzal Hoosen Elias ﷻ

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



