

The Great Scholar Allama Anwar Shah al Kashmiri (ra)

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Imam Allama Anwar Shah Al Kashmiri (ra) was amazing. One of the phrases that some of the Ulama used to use about him was that one of things that didn't work in his favour is that he came in the last century, and therefore people weren't able to appreciate him. Had he been one of the earlier scholars, he would have been without doubt regarded as one of the greatest classical scholars of Islam. He had an amazing memory, a photographic memory. He wouldn't forget. Many Ulama would ask Imam Allam shah al-Kashimiri (ra) about his memory. And this was his consistent reply: **"If I read a book by skimming through it, I probably wont forget that book, or what I have read, for a good thirty years. But if I ever read a book properly, no skimming through it, but actually reading it, insha'Allah I will never forget it for the rest of my life."**

He also had a piercing insight and a brilliant scientific and analytical mind. A lot of people have good minds, but they don't have good memories. Those who possess both, a good memory as well as piercing insight and brilliant analytical skills, that is a lethal combination. Very few people have that. Imam Allama Anwar Shah al Kashmiri (ra) possessed both. He would comment on issues of philosophy, dialectics, history, and all manner of other subjects. When he was talking about Bukhari, just by passing he would say things like – 'This narrator, in this chain, is one of the students of Imam Zufar, but his position is such and such. He is also the same narrator who has been declared weak by such and such Imam on this occasion, but declared authentic by the same Imam on another occasion.' Purely out of memory. He could quote absolutely anything.

But the same Allama anwar shah al kashmiri (ra) says, and this is the point I'm trying to get at, he said: **"There is no science or discipline of learning in which I do not have an opinion, except in Fiqh. I am, in fiqh, a pure Muqallid. I do not entertain my own individual opinions, I am a follower of the Hanafi Fiqh."**

Of course roles are reversed now, those were the old days. Now we all have our own 'opinions'. When it comes to the Qur'an and Sunnah we have an opinion on every verse of the Qur'an, every hadith of the Messenger (saw), and every law of fiqh! Let us not delude ourselves, we are not experts by any stretch of the imagination. There is indeed 'safety in following one madhab.'

[Excerpt from a lecture by Shaykh Riyadh Ul Haq, with a few additions/changes]