"Once Hadrat Ali took Kumail ibn Ziyad to a graveyard; when it was deserted, he heaved a deep sigh and said, 'Kumail, these hearts are containers, and the best of them are the most heedful of them."

So remember what I am going to tell you.

There are three kinds of people.

One is the learned one who is godly, another is the learner who is on the road to deliverance.

And then there are the uncultivated riffraff who follow every cawing, bending with every wind; they do not seek enlightenment by the light of knowledge, and do not resort to a reliable support.

Kumail, knowledge is better than wealth.

Knowledge protects you, while you protect wealth.

Wealth is diminished by spending, while knowledge grows by use.

Kumail, knowledge is a religion to which one is indebted;

by it humanity acquires strength in life

and beauty in speech when it has been fulfilled.

Knowledge is the ruler, while wealth is the ruled.

Kumail, those who accumulate wealth have perished even though they are alive,

while those with knowledge last as long as time;

their individualities may be gone, but their example exists in hearts.

Here (and he pointed to his heart) I have abundant knowledge, if only I could find people to bear it.
Unfortunately, I have found learners who are not faithful to it, applying it to the devices of belief in the world, gaining the upper hand over God’s servants by means of the bounty of God, domineering God’s friends by its authority; or those who find fault with bearers of truth without having any insight of their own. Doubt sparks in their hearts at the first sign of uncertainty.

Indeed, there is neither this nor that!

Either they are greedy for enjoyment, submitting to the fetters of craving, or they are infatuated with collecting a hoard; neither type cares at all for religion, resembling freely grazing cattle in their ways. Thus does knowledge die out with the passing of its bearers.

O God! Certainly the earth is not devoid of those who rise in honour of God for good reason, either openly and notably or in fear and obscurity, so that the proof and clarifications of God may not be in vain.

But how many are they, and where are they? They are, by God, fewest in number but greatest in rank with God. By them God preserves the divine proofs and clarifications until they entrust them to others like them and plant them in the hearts of others like them. By them knowledge enters into real insight, and they are imbued with the spirit of certainty. They consider easy what seems hard to those who lead a life of comfort, and they take to what the ignorant are averse to.

They are physically in the world, yet their spirits are suspended in the highest liberation. They are the deputies of God on earth, and are those who invite people to the religion of God. Oh, how I long to see them!"
-- Hazrat Ali

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References

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