## 2071 - When can a young man make ijtihaad and issue fatwas?

**the question**

When can a young man make ijtihaad and issue fatwas? Some of the young people, when they become religious, indulge in examining and discussing the evidence (daleel) and speak about the rulings on events and issues that happen, in terms of what is halaal and what is haraam. They give their opinions on the rulings of fiqh on some new matters that have arisen in modern times.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

There are conditions attached to making ijtihaad. Not every individual has the right to issue fatwas and make pronouncements on matters, unless he has knowledge and is qualified. He has to be able to know the daleel; the wording and apparent meaning of the texts; what is saheeh (sound) and what is da'eef (weak); al-naasikh wa'l-mansookh (what abrogates what); wording and interpretation of texts; what is specific in application and what is general; what is stated in brief and what is mentioned in detail. This needs lengthy experience and practice, knowledge of the various branches of fiqh and where to look for information; knowledge of the opinions of the 'ulamaa' and fuqahaa', and memorization or knowledge of the texts. Undoubtedly issuing fatwas without being qualified to do so is a grave sin, and means that one is speaking without knowledge. Allaah has warned us against that, when He said (interpretation of the meaning):

"And say not concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely: "This is lawful and this is forbidden," so as to invent lies against Allaah. Verily, those who invent lies against Allaah will never prosper." [al-Nahl 16:116].

In a hadeeth: "Whoever was given a fatwaa with no proof, his sin will go back on the one who gave him the fatwaa."

(Saheeh; narrated by Imaam Ahmad, 2/321). The seeker of knowledge should not hasten to issue fatwas or to speak on an issue until he has found the source and daleel for what he is saying, and who has spoken about it previously. If he is not qualified to deal with the matter, he should pass it on to someone who is better able to deal with it, and he should limit himself to that which he knows, and continue learning and studying until he is qualified to make ijtihaad. And Allaah is the Guide to the Straight Path.