10124 - Is it possible to seek knowledge by using tapes?

the question

Some seekers of knowledge content themselves with listening to tapes of the scholars giving their lessons. Is this sufficient for gaining knowledge? Can they be considered to be seekers of knowledge? Will that affect their belief?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly these tapes spare them the need to be present with the scholars if they cannot be present, but being present with the scholars is preferable, and is better for the purpose of understanding and discussing. But if they cannot be present then this is good enough.

But can they be seekers of knowledge when they are restricted to this?

We say, yes, that is possible if a person strives hard, just as it is possible for man to become a scholar by taking knowledge from books. But the difference between taking knowledge from books and tapes, and learning directly from the scholars, is that learning directly from the scholars is a more effective way of gaining knowledge, because it is an easy way which enables one to discuss matters, unlike listening or reading, which needs a great deal of care in order to gather and gain knowledge.

With regard to the question, will limiting oneself to tapes have any effect on their belief?

Our response is: yes, it will have an effect on their belief if they listen to tapes of bid’ah and follow them. But if they listen to tapes of trustworthy scholars, that will not have any effect on their belief, rather it will increase them in faith and steadfastness, and in following the correct belief.