

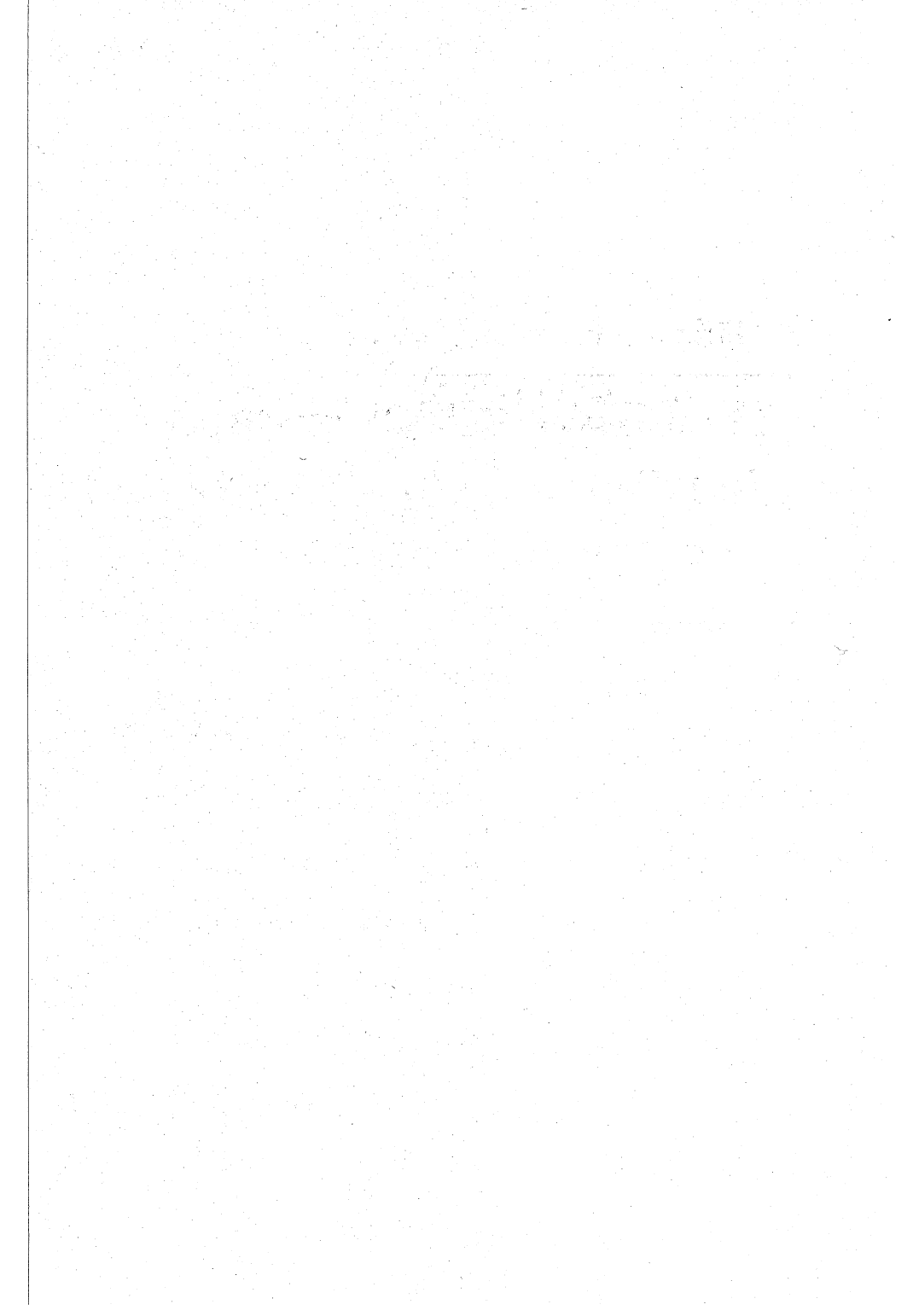
Difference Between Advising and Shaming



IBN RAJAB AL-ḤANBALĪ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



al-Hāfız ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī

The DIFFERENCE between
ADVISING and SHAMING

being a translation of his *Al-Farq baynan al-Naṣīḥah wa-
Ta'yīr*



The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“The *dīn* (religion) is *nasīḥah* (advice, sincerity)” We said “To whom?” He (ﷺ) said “To Allāh, His Book, His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.”

MUSLIM

The Difference between Advising and Shaming

by Imām Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī

Accompanied with commentary of
Dr. Šāliḥ ibn Ša'd al-Suḥaymī



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CONTENT

Forward	11
THE AUTHOR	
Hāfīz Abū'l-Faraj ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī	12
THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION	15
CHAPTER ONE	41
Kinds of Advice	
CHAPTER TWO	46
The Correct Manner of Advising	
CHAPTER THREE	54
The Punishment of Shaming Others	
CHAPTER FOUR	59
Shaming and Dishonoring	

CHAPTER FIVE	68
The Remedy	
APPENDIX ONE	73
Refuting Falsehood	
APPENDIX TWO	77
<i>Hajr</i> : Boycotting a Muslim	
APPENDIX THREE	82
Countering the Innovators	
INDEX OF SECTS	92
INDEX OF ARABIC WORDS	94-96

FORWARD

In this short work, the author discusses some of the manners and etiquettes of differing amongst People of Sunnah, explaining the difference between advising and shaming. These two matters are often confused for one another. Hence the author goes into depth explaining the characteristics of sincere advice and censure.

This work also lays down some guiding principles for People of Sunnah in their criticisms and refutations. It should be noted, as the author states, that this only applies to People of Sunnah, and as for the innovators and people of desires are concerned, then these guiding principles do not apply to them.

Dr. Šāliḥ ibn Ša'd al-Suhaymī has provided useful explanation for some of the important points covered in this book. And finally three beneficial appendices are included; *Refuting Falsehood*, *Boycotting a Muslim* and *Countering the Innovators*.

THE AUTHOR

Hāfiz Abū'l-Faraj ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī

He is the Imām and Hāfiz, Zaynu'l-Dīn 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdir-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū-l-Barakāt Mas'ūd al-Sulamī al-Ḥanbalī al-Dimashqī. His agnomen was Abū'l-Faraj, and his nickname was Ibn Rajab, which was the nickname of his grandfather who was born in that month.

He was born in Baghdād in 736H and was raised by a knowledgeable and pious family. He died on a Monday night, the fourth of Ramaḍān, 795H in al-Ḥumariyyah, Damascus.

He learned and took knowledge from the greatest scholars of his time. In Damascus, he studied under Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Zaynu'l-Dīn al-'Irāqī, ibn al-Naqīb, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Khabbāz, Dāwūd ibn Ibrāhīm al-'Attār, ibn Qāṭī al-Jabal and Aḥmad ibn 'Abdu-l-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī. In Makkah, he heard from al-Fakhr 'Uthmān ibn Yūsuf al-Nuwayrī. In Jerusalem, he heard from al-Ḥāfiz al-'Alā'ī. In Egypt, he heard from Ṣadru'l-Dīn Abū'l-Faṭḥ al-Maydūmī and Nāṣiru'l-Dīn ibn al-Mulūk.

Many students of knowledge came to him to study under him. Amongst the most famous of his students were: Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanbalī; Abū'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Naṣr ibn Aḥmad; Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Mawsilī; 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqri'; Zaynū'l-Dīn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān ibn Abū'l-Karam; Abū Dharr al-Zarkashī; al-Qāḍī 'Alā'ū'l-Dīn ibn al-Lahām al-Ba'li; and Aḥmad ibn Ṣayfū'l-Dīn al-Ḥamawī.

Ibn Rajab devoted himself to knowledge and spent the vast majority of his time researching, writing, authoring, teaching, and giving legal rulings.

Many scholars praised him for his vast knowledge, asceticism and expertise in the Ḥanbalī school of thought. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah said of him, 'He read and became proficient in the various fields of science. He engrossed himself with the issues of the madhhab until he mastered it. He devoted himself to the occupation of knowledge of the texts, defects and meanings of the ḥadīth.'¹

Ibn Ḥajr said of him, 'He was highly proficient in the science of ḥadīth in terms of the names of reporters, their biographies, their paths of narration and awareness of their meanings.'²

Ibn Muflīḥ said of him, 'He is the Shaykh, the great scholar, the Ḥāfiz, the ascetic, the Shaykh of the Ḥanbalī madhhab and he authored many beneficial works.'³

¹ Ibn Qāḍī al-Shuhbah, *Tārikh*, vol. 3, p. 195.

² Ibn Ḥajr, *Inbā' u'l-Ghamr*, vol. 1, p. 460.

³ *al-Maqṣad al-Arsbad*, vol. 2, p. 81.

He wrote many beneficial works, some of them outstanding such as *al-Qawā'id al-Kubrā fī'l-Furū'* about which it was said, 'It is one of the wonders of this age.'⁴ His commentary to at-Tirmidhī is said to be the most extensive and best ever written so much so that al-'Irāqī; about whom ibn Ḥajr said, 'He was the wonder of his age'; would ask for his help when compiling his own commentary to the same book.

- Moreover he has many valuable monographs explaining various aḥādīth such as: *Sharḥ Ḥadīth Mā Dhī' bāni Jā' ān Ursilā fī Ghanam*, *Ikhtiyār al-Awlā Sharḥ Ḥadīth Ikhtisām al-Mala' al-A'lā*, *Nūr al-Iqtibās fī Sharḥ Waṣiyyah al-Nabi li ibn 'Abbās*, and *Kashfū'l-Kurbah fī Wasfī Ḥālī Ahli'l-Ghurbah*.
- In exegesis his works include: *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Ikhlās*; *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*; *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Naṣr*, and *al-Istighnā' bi'l-Qur'ān*.
- In ḥadīth his works include: *Sharḥ 'Ilal al-Tirmidbī*, *Fathū'l-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa'l-Hikam*.
- In fiqh his works include: *al-Istikhrāj fī Ahkām al-Kharāj*, and *al-Qawā'id al-Fiqḥiyyah*.
- In biographies his works include the monumental *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqātī'l-Ḥanābilah*.
- In exhortation his works include: *Latā'if al-Ma'ārif* and *al-Takhwif min al-Nār*.

⁴ ibn 'Abdu'l-Hādī, *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt ibn Rajab*, p. 38.

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

The Imām, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, said:

All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all worlds, Abundant peace and blessings be upon the leader of the God-fearing people; the seal of all the Prophets Muḥammad (ﷺ), and upon his family, his Companions and all those who follow them with goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

As for what follows, then:^[1]

The following are concise, yet comprehensive words detailing the difference between advising and shaming,^[2] as even though both are different, yet they both denote mentioning about a person that which he dislikes to be mentioned about himself.^[3]

Due to the ambiguity of the differences between both acts, many people may become confused about differentiating between both acts; and Allāh is the Facilitator of reaching correctness.^[4]

You should know that to mention about a person that which he

dislikes to be mentioned about himself is unlawful if the objective of it is merely to censure, find fault, belittle and criticise his deficiency and shortcomings.^[5]

However, when this is undertaken to benefit the Muslim masses in general,^[6] or some of them in particular,^[7] as when the purpose of it is to bring forth this benefit, then it is not unlawful; rather it is preferable.^[8]

This core principle has been established and well documented by the Scholars of ḥadīth and documented in their books of (*al-Jarḥ wal-Ta'dīl*) 'disparagement and praising of narrators of ḥadīth' wherein they have also mentioned the difference between criticising narrators and backbiting, and have also rebutted unlearned worshippers and others whose knowledge does not extend to these issues, who have deemed the two to be equal.

Further, there is no difference between criticising narrators of one of the ḥadīth scholars and distinguishing those whose narrations are accepted and whose are not, and between calling attention to the mistakes and misconceptions of a person who has erred with regard to understanding of the meanings of Book and Sunnah, interpreted some aspect of it incorrectly, or one who adhered to something false. This clarification was done so that this person would not be followed in that which he erred in. The scholars and people of knowledge are in agreement upon the permissibility of warning others [via this clarification].^[9]

For this reason, it is common to find in their authored works in all of the various sciences of the religion - such as *tafsīr*, explanation of ḥadīth, Jurisprudence, differences of opinions between the scholars (on religious matters) and so forth, are filled with

arguments as well as refutations of any odd or weak views that were held by scholars from the righteous predecessors and those who succeeded them; from amongst the companions, *tabi'in* and their successors.

This practice has never been abandoned by any of the people of knowledge, nor would he claim in his (refutation) to disparage, dispraise or defame the person whose sayings he was refuting were criticised except in [rare] cases where the author (he was refuting) was amongst those from whose speech consisted of wickedness and displayed vile manners when expressing himself. In this situation, his wickedness and vileness is denounced apart from his original refutation and criticism against the opposing opinion, so that legislative religious evidences and established proofs be established and upheld.^[10]

This is because scholars of Islām are unanimous on disclosing the truth with which Allāh has sent His Messenger with, and so that religion in its entirety may be Allāh's alone, and so that His Word may be the loftiest and most supreme.

Furthermore, all scholars admit and acknowledge that encompassing entirety of knowledge without making errors and mistakes is neither a rank they could reach nor within their reach nor has this status ever been claimed by either earlier or later scholars. Therefore, highly ranked scholars from the righteous predecessors whose merits and knowledge is indisputably agreed upon used to admit the truth of whoever presented it to them, even if this person was a minor ; and they always maintained advising their companions and followers to accept the truth when it is found in someone else's statements.

As example of this is found in ‘Umar’s ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) saying, when he stated his opinion concerning the dowry of women (the *mahr*). A woman responded to him by reciting Allāh’s statement,

وَأِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ
 إِحْدَهُنَّ قِنطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَ
 بِهِ تَنَاوِثًا مُمِينًا ﴿٢٠﴾

“But if you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a great amount [in gifts], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin?”

[*Surah al-Nisā’* (4): 20]

Upon which ‘Umar went back on his opinion and said, ‘A woman has spoken correctly and a man has erred.’ And it has also been reported that he said: ‘Everyone has a better comprehension of the religion than ‘Umar.’

Some of the famously renowned scholars used to say, when they would give their opinion on a matter, ‘This is our opinion but whomsoever comes with a better opinion than this, we shall accept it from him.’^[11]

Imām al-Shāfi‘ī used to go to great lengths to draw attention to this principle and always advised his companions to follow the truth and accept the Sunnah whenever it came in contradiction to their own opinions, and to cast aside one’s personal view in such cases. He used to say in his book, ‘There must be views contradicting the Qur’ān and the Sunnah within my books because Allāh says,

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا
فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur’ān? If it had been from [any] other than Allāh, they would have found within it much contradiction.”

[*Surah al-Nisā’* (4): 82]

And he also articulately stated, ‘I have not debated or discussed a matter with someone except that I cared for the truth to appear, whether it was said by me or by my opponent.’ This statement is evident that his sole objective was to bring forth the truth, even if it came from his opponent.

Whosoever’s attitude and mentality resembles this, will never dislike having his opinions refuted and remonstrated when they appear in contradiction to the Sunnah, neither during his lifetime nor after his death. This is the image we have of adept scholars of Islām from amongst the righteous predecessors and their successors, and hence we assume the same attitude of them particularly as they are the defenders of the religion.

They never disliked the opposition of whoever adopted a view other than theirs when such opposition was based on a proof even in cases where they did not view this proof as a strong enough proof to the extent that they would uphold it and leave their own opinions for it. That is why Imām Aḥmad, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, used to cite, praise, appreciate and commend Ishāq bin Rāhawayah by saying, ‘Though he adopted some views different to mine, [rather it is a common occurrence] for people still, and will continue to, differ in their views’, or as he said.^[12]

In many cases, the views and proofs (upon which such views are concluded) of Ishāq and other scholars used to be presented to Imām Aḥmad but he would neither agree to their views nor disavow their understanding of the proof, in spite of his disagreement with them regarding these views that they had adopted.^[13]

Imām Aḥmad liked and appreciated what was related to him about Ḥatim al-Asam to whom it was said, ‘You are a non-Arab and are not eloquent [in language] but despite all that you win every debate you enter. What is your secret that enables you to overcome your opponents?’ He replied: ‘overcome my opponents with three traits; I feel pleased when my opponent is right about a matter, I feel saddened when my opponent makes mistakes and I safeguard my tongue from uttering a word against my opponent that he may dislikes.’ Or some statement to this effect to which Imām Aḥmad said, ‘What an intelligent man he is!’^[14]

That said, rejecting and refuting weak views, and explaining that truth lies in views in contradiction to them with the support of legislative evidence is not a disliked act by those scholars, rather it is something they like, appreciate and commend the one who does so.

Hence, this act does not fall into the category of backbiting because if we hypothetically suppose there is a person who dislikes his mistakes that oppose the truth being exposed, his dislike of that does not count or carry any weight. This is because disliking the revelation of the truth when it is contrary to the views of a person is not a praiseworthy characteristic.

On the contrary, it is incumbent upon a Muslim to desire the truth be manifest as well as having all Muslims be aware of it,

regardless of whether it be in his favour or opposition to his view.

For indeed, this is from the aspects of sincerity (*nasībah*) towards “Allāh, His Book, His Messenger, His religion, the leaders of the Muslims and their laypeople.”¹ And this, in fact, is the religion itself, as the Prophet (ﷺ) has informed us.^[15]

As for pointing out and clarifying the mistakes and errors of scholars it is permissible and there is no harm upon him nor is there any blame that he can be accused of, when he observes good manners in his speech and does well in his refutation and response. And if it turns out, that he was misled by this scholar's opinion, then there is no harm on him.

When a statement would reach some of the righteous predecessors that they rejected, they would say: ‘This person has not spoken the truth’ In a similar context, when the news reached the Prophet (ﷺ) that Abū al-Sanabil said, ‘The *Iddah* (waiting period) of a woman whose husband passed away while being pregnant does not end by delivering the child, rather she is required to wait for four lunar months and ten days.’ He (ﷺ) said: “Abū al-Sanabil has not spoken the truth [i.e. was mistaken].”²

¹ More than one of the companions have reported this ḥadīth, among them Tamīmī al-Dārī. It is transmitted by Muslim #55, Abū Dāwūd #944, al-Nasā'ī 7/156, Aḥmad 4/102, Abū 'Uwānah 1/36-37, al-Humaydī #837, al-Baghawī #3514, al-Tabarānī in *al-Kabīr* #1260-1262, Ibn Hibbān in *Raudat ul-'Uqalā* #194, Ibn al-Najjār in *Dbail Tārikh Baghdād* 2/193-301. Al-Shihāb al-Qadā'ī in his *Musnad* #17-18, Wakī' in *al-Zuhd* #346-621, Abū 'Ubaid in *al-Awwāl* #9 and al-Bukhārī in *al-Tārikh ul-Saghīr* 2/35.

² With this wording, the ḥadīth has been reported by Aḥmad 1/447, al-Bagawī #2388 and al-Ḥaythamī in *al-Majmā'* 5/ and he said that its narrators are of the standard of the Ṣaḥīḥ. The source of this story occurs in al-Bukhārī 9/415 and in Muslim #1484.

The righteous scholars have gone to great lengths to reject and amply refute [very] weak views that were held by some other scholars such as how Imām Aḥmad used to condemn Abū Thawr and others for some odd weak views that only they themselves adopted as they deduced their views based on perceived meanings.

Furthermore, when the purpose of criticising someone's mistakes and errors is only to elucidate the truth and so that people do not act upon these mistakes, there is no doubt that a person with such intention is rewarded as this is part of giving advice in regard to Allāh, His Messenger, Muslim leaders and the general Muslim masses. Thus, when a person whether he is lesser or higher in rank comes forward to refute and revoke someone's mistake and error, he surely follows the example of scholars as when they refuted the very odd views of Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*) about *Mutah* (temporary marriage), *Sarf* (bartering) and performing two '*Umrab* (in one trip) and other than that (these are well known issues of *fiqh*).

And similar to the manner in which scholars refuted the opinion of Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib³ who said that a woman becomes lawful again for her husband who divorced her three times after she marries someone else who afterward divorces her even if they did not consummate the marriage and other opinion that explicitly oppose the Sunnah. Also, scholars refuted al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: who said a woman whose husband passes away is not required to

³ Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib Abū Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī: The great Imam and scholar of Madīnah and the best of the Tabi'īn in his time (d. 73). Al-Dhahabī said (*al-Siyar*, 4/219): 'He had outstanding knowledge and application of it.' For his biography, refer to: *Ḥīyah al-Anbiyā'*, 2/161, *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, 4/217, 246, *Tathkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 1/51, Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt* 5/119. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a two volume book for his life and virtues as mentioned in *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, 21/369, and *al-Thail*, 1/418.

mourn for him, and refuted 'Atā for his (weak) opinions, and Tāwūs in the many issues in which he differed from the scholars, and so many other scholars whose virtue, vast knowledge and respect are acknowledged by all Muslims.

Despite all these refutations, those scholars never conceived in revocation of others statements, in matters related to religion, disparagement or belittlement of these respected scholars.

These responses and refutations are easily found in the books of great scholars, from amongst the righteous predecessors and successors, in which they clarify the errors of others' statements as can be noted in books of al-Shafi'i, Ishāq, Abū 'Ubaid, Abū Thawr and all succeeding scholars of *fiqh*, ḥadīth and other Islāmī sciences. The number of examples are too numerous to mention in this book.

As for when the purpose of refuting others is to defame or belittle or to expose the shortcomings and ignorance of the one who refuted him in first place and such similar intentions, it is prohibited whether it takes place in the presence of the one being refuted or in his absence, or in his lifetime or after his death, as this is an act that Allāh condemned and warned against, whether it was said indirectly or ambiguously.

And this act is also included in the warning mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ) when he said, "O you group of people, that believe with their tongues while, in fact, belief did not enter their hearts, do not harm Muslims, and do not seek after their faults. For indeed, he who seeks after their faults, Allāh will seek after his faults. And whoever has Allāh seek after his faults, He will expose them, even if he may have committed them in the privacy of his own

home.”⁴

All this is limited to the respected people of knowledge whom people follow. As for people of innovation and deviation and those who imitate the scholars but are not from them,⁵ then it is permissible to point out their ignorance and expose their shortcomings and faults to warn others against them in order that they do not then follow them.

Our words however are not related to that at this stage, and Allāh knows best.^[16]



Explanation

[1] This introduction has always been accepted and used by our righteous predecessors at the beginning of their composed works, as it is derived from the guidance of Qur’ān and Sunnah. This introduction is comprised of two parts;

- Praising Allāh, Most High, and glorifying Him with all that befits Him.

⁴ Abū Ya’lā in his *Musnad* #1675 and Abū Nu’aym in *al-Dalā’il* #356 on the authority of al-Barā’ (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*). al-Haythamī said in *al-Majma’* 8/93 : ‘Abū Laylā reported it and its narrators are all reliable. It has also been reported from the ḥadīth of Abū Baziah (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) with a strong chain of narration in Aḥmad 4/421-424 and Abū Dāwūd #4880.’ And in this section occurs the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Umar (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) with a hasan chain of narration in al-Tirmidhī #20033, al-Baghawī #3526 and Ibn Hibbān #1494 of the *Mawāriḍ*. See also *al-Targhib wal-Tarhib* 3/177 al-Mundhirī.

⁵ Nowadays, how many people who try to resemble the scholars yet are not from them. They deceive the people by making stunning speeches and using elegant words.

Following this comes the second part, which is:

- Invoking Allāh to send His peace and blessings upon His Messenger, his noble esteemed Family and Companions, and all those who follow their path.

Then 'to proceed with' (*amma ba'd*) are two well-known words that Arabs use to indicate the end of the introduction and the beginning of the body of the statement.

[2] The reason for referring to this treatise as 'concise and comprehensive words' is because this book is small in size; nonetheless the achieved benefit generated from it is immense, particularly as this topic is introduced in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

The linguistic meaning of the Arabic word (*nasīḥah*) [which means (advice)] is refining an object of its impurity. The Islāmic meaning of this word is to benefit people by informing them of either a good deed to perform or an evil deed to avoid. In other words, it means, directing people to perform good deeds or warning them against evil deeds.

The meaning of (*ta'yīr*) is to disgrace i.e. belittle someone due to, their lineage, profession, appearance, complexion, or so forth. This act is prohibited, however, when there is a [accepted and valid] need and necessity requiring a person to mention someone else's shortcomings and faults, it is only lawful to mention what the necessity and need calls for, such as in the case when the Prophet (ﷺ) described Abū Jahm and Mu'awīyyah to the female companion who consulted him after both of them had proposed to her.¹

¹ The ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays (*radīy Allāhu 'anha*), when the Prophet (ﷺ) said to her (with regard to her accepting marriage proposals from two suitors): "As for Mu'awīyyah, then he is utterly poor. And as for Abū Jahm, then he does not cease to remove the stick from his shoulder (i.e. he beats his wives)." Muslim #1480.

Advice is to endorse good deeds and prevent wrongdoings in the light of Islāmic Law; without exaggeration or indulgence through following the legislated methods in accordance with what the situation enforces and requires and taking into consideration the following factors;

- The condition of the one being advised.
- The strength of relation between he who advises and the one who is being advised.
- Is the wickedness committed in public or in secret?
- Does the evil of the wrongdoing extend to others or does it only affect the wrongdoer only?

[3] Giving advice to someone necessitates mentioning the faults of the one being advised. Similarly, shaming a person or intending to defame him includes mentioning this person's faults and deficiency. The former is lawful while the latter is prohibited.

However, in some cases and certain circumstances calling a person an innovator or a sinner is acceptable given that certain conditions are met. Thus, it is vital to take into consideration the circumstances of the incident, and the condition of the advised so that the advice given does not transform into shaming or belittling.

[4] Many people may confuse advising with shaming and belittling due to their own lack of direction which they can follow in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For this reason, it is often that we find people who intend to advise but their advice turns into taunting and belittling, also many people sometimes wrongfully deem advising as shaming or belittling, and many people intend to advise but, due to their lack of knowledge of the rightful ways of advising, they end up shaming others instead of advising them and still some others may take the advice given to them as an attempt at belittling or shaming them on behalf of the advisor.

[5] The principle rule states that it is prohibited for a person to mention

about his Muslim brother with that which he would dislike to be mentioned about him; because if he encounters him with it, it is reprehensible, and if he says it behind his back then it is backbiting, be what he says correct or incorrect.

This is based on the ḥadīth that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once said (to his Companions), "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said, "Allāh and His Messenger know best." He said, "Your mentioning something about your brother (in his absence) that he hates (to have mentioned)." It was said: "What if there exists in my brother, that which I say (of him)?" He (ﷺ) said, "If there is found in him what you say, then you have backbitten him. And if there is not found in him what you say, then you have slandered him."²

Allāh, Exalted is He, said,

وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُّبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ
لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ

"And do not backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest that (so detest the other)!"³

[6] The previous rule has some exceptions such as when mentioning about a person that which he dislikes being mentioned about him in order to benefit the general Muslims and avert his evil, such as when this person happens to be a criminal whose crimes damage and harm others, nevertheless he never listens to anyone's advice. Thus, in this case it is incumbent upon Muslims to report him, refute him and warn others against him according to what the situation necessitates.

This group of people includes innovators known for their innova-

² Muslim #2589.

³ *Surah al-Hujurat* (49): 12

tions, whose methodology is established upon innovation and have influenced people. This group of people must be warned against and their errors exposed in order that people do not be deceived, for indeed this is not considered a form of backbiting.⁴

It is important to understand the condition of the advisor by knowing:

- What does he mean?
- What does he intend to achieve through his advice?
- What is the situation for which advice will be offered?
- How serious is the situation?
- Does the situation require an explicit explanation? Or an inexplicit statement? Or an intimation? Or the use of a general statement such as 'What is wrong with some people who...?' Or the use of a direct statement such as 'You are indeed a bad speaker.'

[7] The author here refers to situations when such advice is offered to avert harm or bring forth benefit to particular people or individuals.

[8] The ruling of mentioning about a person that which he dislikes being mentioned about him varies depending on the case and the circumstances, therefore sometimes it can be prohibited, sometimes it can be lawful, and at some other times it can be obligatory.

When evil and harm can be prevented by mentioning a person indirectly then doing so is preferable. However, when such harm cannot be precluded except by mentioning him directly in an explicit manner then its ruling may reach the level of obligation. For this reason, the righteous predecessors used to perform *Tawāf* around the Ka'bah while saying such things as, '*so and so are innovators*', '*so and so have bad memory*', '*so and so are liars*', '*so and so are fabricators*', '*so and so are the accused*', '*so and so are weak*' etc, as known and established in the science of ḥadīth.

[9] The author, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, explains that

⁴ For further reading, cf. Imām al-Nawāwī '*Riyāḍ al-Sāliḥīn*'.

acclaimed exegetes, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon them, have always, and continue to, clarify the status of narrators upon which they resolve the approval or rejection of the statements of narrators.

This approach has never been criticised or refuted by the people of knowledge who mentioned the condition of narrators by pointing out the innovations and sins of innovators and sinners only as per the requirements of the situation, and only to decide a standard by which the accuracy and authenticity of narrations could be decided. Despite criticism of scholars against some narrators, they assured objectivity and moderation in their statements so their judgment would remain in conformity with the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

This science examines aspects of the chains of narrators i.e. the connectivity of chains and the status of narrators, therefore scholars are unanimous about its significance as it assists in identifying weak and authentic narrations. That said, whomsoever maligns this science is, in fact, belittling all scholars of Islām. However, this science should neither be handled by nor be addressed to common people or novices, rather inquiries about it should be presented to the scholars of this Ummah. Allāh, Exalted is He, said,

وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ

“But if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them.”⁵

And, He, Most High, said,

فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

“Ask the people of the remembrance [i.e. people of knowledge] if you know not!”⁶

⁵ *Surah Nisā'* (4): 83

⁶ *Surah al-Nabl* (16): 43

[10] The author, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, explains that acclaimed exegetes, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon them, have always, and continue to, clarify the status of narrators upon which they resolve the approval or rejection of the statements of narrators.

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[11] The author explained in this section the method by which scholars offer their advice⁷ to others in a manner that is far from shaming, belittling and taunting. Thus, they refute the innovation of innovators and point out the truth underpinned with evidence, and they only refute their opponents in order to clarify the truth and not to shame others. This is because scholars aim to raise the word of Allāh in a moderate objective manner, therefore they refuted the like of Jahmiyyah, Shī'a, Khawārij, Mu'tazilah and other deviated groups⁸ in explicit compiled texts, without hesitation.

The author also explains though scholars aim to distinguish accepted narrators from rejected narrators so that they can in turn distinguish accepted narrations from rejected ones, they have never claimed exclusive truthfulness or that they have comprehended all aspects of knowl-

⁷ See the story of Imām al-Dāraqūṭnī who corrected the Imām ibn al-Anbārī when he was young, and Ibn al-Anbār was an elder and respected Imām, but yet he still accepted the correction from him. The story is found in *Tārikh Baḡhdād* 3/183.

⁸ See the index of the Sects pp.94

edge for they keep in mind the saying, 'A person is still viewed as knowledgeable so long as he seeks knowledge until he thinks he knows, as then he will be an ignorant'.

For this reason, they used to refer every questioner to another scholar, though they had minor disagreements on some aspects of jurisprudence as in fact they agreed on all fundamentals and established principles, but they always questioned their views and reminded themselves of their innate human deficiency because they understand that their views are not infallible and hence, could be wrong sometimes, therefore they emphasized their willingness to accept the truth even if it opposes what they have said and even if it was presented by a novice, so long as this novice was a really a well-versed student of knowledge. That is why it is common to see their answers beginning with, 'This is the view I find to be correct' or concluding with 'If what I said is correct then this is from Allāh, and if it was wrong then it is because of me (my own deficiency) or because of Satan'.

Despite the authenticity⁹ of the story of 'Umar¹⁰ with the woman, its meaning is correct because this was the manner of all Companions who always followed the truth whenever they found it.¹¹

And the examples of similar incidents are too numerous to list al-

⁹ Reported by Abū Ya'lā in his *Musnad ul-Kabir* from the path of Mujālid ibn Sa'īd who is very weak. Al-Bayhāqī also reported it and its chain or narration is broken. 'Abdul Razzāq reported it and in its chain is Abū'l-'Ujfā al-Sulamī and he is weak. See *al-Maqāsīd ul-Hasanah* p.320.

¹⁰ 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb: Abū Ḥafs 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb bin Nufayl al-Qurashī al-'Adawī, the second Rightly Guided *Khalifah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām five years before the *Hijrah* and his acceptance was a great victory for the Muslims. He witnessed every battle that the Prophet (ﷺ) witnessed. He was martyred in the year 23H.

¹¹ It is found in the previous story itself

though one of the most famous incidents is when Abū Bakr¹² was asked about the meaning of the word “*Abā*” in *ayah* 31 of *Surah ‘Abasa*. He did not answer the question but said instead, ‘What sky would shade me and what earth would carry me if I said about the Book of Allāh that which I did not have knowledge of?’¹³

Therefore, students of knowledge, particularly learners and beginners, should humble themselves and understand that they are not yet qualified therefore they still need to refer to the scholars of this Ummah because if even the Companions and qualified scholars used to refer people to other scholars other than themselves in order to avoid giving a verdict on a matter out of their piety, then it befits us to follow in their footsteps because resembling the pious is an honour though we lack their knowledge and have not reached their level. Thus, when someone asks you a question that you do know the answer to then you should say; ‘I do not know’ or refer the questioner to a scholar because you should not delve into topics of which you have no knowledge.

For this reason, I truly wonder at those who have studied religion for a short period of time, or joined some group for some time, then claim themselves knowledgeable so they start issuing *fatwā* and stand on pulpits and place themselves in the position of the actual respected scholars! I say to them, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon he who knows his rank.

¹² Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq: ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Uthmān bin Āmir al-Qurayshī. The first *Khalīfah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), his companion in the cave, his closest friend and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was the first man to accept Islām and died in the year 13H.

¹³ cf. *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr* under *Surah ‘Abasa*

Imām Mālik¹⁴ was once asked forty questions, he only answered two of them and replied to the rest with 'I do not know'. The questioner became surprised and said, 'You are the Imām Mālik ibn Anas who people travel to, to ask and learn from and you say I do not know!' Imām Mālik's response was: 'Then travel to all countries and inform them that Mālik ibn Anas does not know the answer to these questions!'

This is Imām Mālik, who people said regarding him, "No man should give *fatwa* when Malik is in the Madīnah."

The real problem we face today is that we have some people who claim a rank they do not deserve and claim knowledge when they are still at the beginning of the road. That said, everyone should keep in mind that every word that is uttered will be judged, therefore one should not criticise or analyse the work of people of knowledge until acquiring the correct instruments through which such criticism and analysis can be performed. Allāh says,

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٧﴾

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [ones] will be questioned."¹⁵

¹⁴ Mālik bin Anas: ibn Mālik ibn Abū 'Amr al-Asbāhī. The Imām of Madīnah in his time, one of the great Imāms of Islām and author of the famous Muwaṭṭa'a. His virtues are many and the scholar's praise of him is abundant. He died in the year 179H.

¹⁵ *Surah Isra'* (17): 36

[12] The author used the statement of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī¹⁶ in order to emphasize that absolute correctness is only guaranteed in the book of Allāh and that infallibility is only ensured for Allāh and His Messenger. For this reason, Imām al-Shāfi‘ī said his famous statement, ‘Whenever you find that any of my statements oppose the statement of the Messenger of Allāh, disregard mine’¹⁷ and even went to great lengths to

¹⁶ Al-Shāfi‘ī: Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs Ibn al-‘Abbās Ibn Shāfi‘ī al-Hāshimī al-Qurayshī, Abū ‘Abdullāh, the *Mujaddid* of his era and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He died in the year 204H.

¹⁷ The quotations from him are most numerous and beautiful, and his followers were the best in sticking to them: ‘The Sunnahs of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) reach, as well as escape from, every one of us. So whenever I voice my opinion, or formulate a principle, where something contrary to my view exists on the authority of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then the correct view is what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has said, and it is my view.’ Related by Ḥākīm, and he said: ‘The Muslims are unanimously agreed that if a Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) is made clear to someone, it is not permitted (*ḥalāl*) for him to leave it for the saying of anyone else.’ Ibn al-Qayyim 2/361 and Fulānī p. 68, and he said: ‘If you find in my writings something different to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then speak on the basis of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and leave what I have said.’ In one narration: ‘... then follow it (the Sunnah), and do not look sideways at anyone else’s saying.’ Harāwī in *Dhām al-Kalām* 3/47/1, and he said: ‘When a ḥadīth is found to be ṣaḥīḥ, then that is my *madbhab*.’ Nawāwī in *Al-Majmū‘* 1/63, and he said: ‘In every issue where the people of narration find a report from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to be ṣaḥīḥ which is contrary to what I have said, then I take my saying back, whether during my life or after my death.’ Ibn al-Qayyim in *l‘ām ul-Muwaqq‘in* 2/363, and he said: ‘If you see me saying something, and contrary to it is authentically-reported from the Prophet (ﷺ), then know that my intelligence has departed.’ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in *al-‘Adāb* p. 93, and he said: ‘For everything I say, if there is something authentic from the Prophet (ﷺ) contrary to my saying, then the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) comes first, so do not follow my opinion.’ Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abū Nu‘aym and Ibn ‘Asākir 15/9/2, and he said: ‘Every statement on the authority of the Prophet (ﷺ) is also my view, even if you do not hear it from me.’ Ibn Abī Ḥātim pp. 93-4. See *l‘ām ul-Muwaqq‘in* 2/363 and *Iqādh Himām Ulil-Absār* p. 100.

prove that no compiled book is free of error, particularly in matters that are judged based on mere *Ijtihād*, therefore he who claims perfection of his work is a falsifier because Allāh, Exalted is He, said,

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا
فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

“If it had been from [any] other than Allāh, they would have found within it much contradiction.”¹⁸

The reasons for which Imām al-Shāfi‘ī and all other righteous predecessors used to be glad whenever they found the truth with their opponent are;

1. Great humbleness to Allāh.
2. Knowing that he will follow the truth and that is a rewarding trait.
3. Having benefited by knowing a matter he did not know before.
4. Being glad that his brother was guided to the truth.

This is also why Imām al-Shāfi‘ī changed his views when he travelled to Egypt as during his trip he met many scholars from whom he learnt new things and hence this effected his previous positions. This is indeed an implication of the famous statement, ‘Wisdom is the believer’s lost belonging; he is the most worthy of it wherever he finds it’.¹⁹

[13] The author then mentions the nature of the relationship between Imām Aḥmad²⁰ and Ishāq²¹ and explains how disagreement does not

¹⁸ *Surah al-Nisā’* (4): 82

¹⁹ For further readings on how scholars excused each other when they disputed over rulings, cf. Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah, *Raf’ al-Malām ‘an al-A’imma al-A’lām’*.

²⁰ Aḥmad: bin Muḥammad bin Hanbal bin Hilāl ash-Shaybānī, Abū ‘Abdullāh,

affect the good ties between the people of knowledge as they all search for the truth.

[14] This is indeed one marvellous and interesting story!

Hatim al-Asam was a Shāfi'ī scholar, who I presume lived in the third generation, if I am not mistaken, because there was another Shāfi'ī scholar named al-Asam although he was Abū al-'Abbas al-Asam. Also there was another person known as al-Asam, he was Ibrahīm ibn Isma'īl but he was rejected by scholars and he was called al-Asam (deaf) because scholars said about him, 'He is deaf (in his heart) and hence cannot know the truth'.

The moral of this story is that the traits that Hatim al-Asam enjoyed made him excel and dignified him because being glad when his opponent was correct indicates that he neither wished to harm his opponent with his tongue nor envy him, and that he loved for him what he loved for himself. In contrast, today we find people who refer to themselves as people of knowledge who cannot conceal their happiness when they discover others errors and envy others when they are correct, forget-

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the Imām of the Sunnah and author of the famous *Musnad*. Born in Baghdad 164H. He was from the few who at his time preserved the way of the Companions, fighting away the innovations of the deviant sects and upholding the way of the Salaf. He was put to test in the days of Caliph al-Ma'mūn concerning the calamity of Qur'ān's creation. He stood firm and did not answer the way he was told to, and by this earned a high position in this world and the Hereafter. From amongst his students were Abū Dāwūd, 'Alī bin al-Madanī, Abū Zu'arah and Abū Hātim and many more famous scholars of *Ahl-Sunnah wal-Jama'ab*. He died 241H. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a volume to his life and virtues, so refer to it.

²¹ Ishāq bin Rāhawayah: al-Ḥanzalī at-Tamīmī al-Marwazī, Abū Ya'qūb, the scholar of Kurasān of his time and one of the *Mujtabid Imāms*. He taught Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī and others. He died in the year 238H.

ting that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The believer is he who does not harm believers with his hand or his tongue."²²

This indicates the serious damage that a tongue may cause, which caused the Prophet (ﷺ) to advise us by saying, "Whosoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, then let him speak good or remain silent."²³

[15] Scholars have always happily accepted criticism and advocated it when refuting innovators and opponents lest others follow their mistakes. However, their purpose is never personal, rather it is to explain the truth and point out falsehood as this is the type of advice that the Prophet (ﷺ) advocated. On the other hand, if the purpose is to belittle someone or degrade him then it is impermissible.

That said, Muslims in general and students of knowledge in particular, need to understand this truth so they do not think that refuting innovators is a form of slander and backbiting. Yet, this type of public refutation should only take place after endeavouring at attempts to advise directly and inform the opponents of their mistakes. If such opponents insist on their stance despite all these attempts and their errors and mistakes have spread and caused harm, then public refutation is required.

[16] The author intended with these lines to point out that the refutation of odd or weak opinions of previous respected scholars is permissible. There are numerous examples demonstrating this process such as when some scholars refuted some of the opinions that were adopted by some Companions and Tabi'īn with the intention to point out the truth, as they viewed this act with the intention that sincere advice is among the acts that Muslims are obligated to perform.

²² Bukhārī 1/54 of *al-Fath* and Muslim #42.

²³ Bukhārī 11/308 of *al-Fath* and Muslim #47.

That said, he who intends with his refutation to insult or belittle the scholars then the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) applies to him, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, narrating from his Lord: “Allāh says, ‘whosoever has mutual animosity with a friend (*Wali*) of Mine, then he has declared war on Me - or I declare war on him.’”²⁴

And that is why al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ‘Āsākir - *rahimabullāh* - used to say, ‘The flesh of the Scholars is poisonous.’²⁵

Refuting and replying to others errors and mistakes should be accompanied with good manners as this is the only correct approach while addressing scholars and people of knowledge.

However, if the one refuted is an innovator whose religion is established upon innovation then though one might be harsh while dealing with him one should still abstain from abusing him because the purpose of replying to him is to guide him as well others. This can be noted in scholars complied works in response to innovators such as the works of ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd, Ibn Mandah, al-Suyutī, Imām Aḥmad ibn

²⁴ Bukhārī and ibn Ḥibbān #347. The wording of Bukhārī is, “Allāh says, ‘Whosoever has mutual animosity with a friend (*wali*) of Mine, then I declare war on him.’”

Similar *ahādīth* have also been reported from ‘Ā’ishah by Aḥmad 6/256; Abū Umāmah by at-Ṭabarānī; ‘Alī by al-Isma‘īlī, *Musnad ‘Alī*; Ibn ‘Abbās by at-Ṭabarānī; Anas by at-Ṭabarānī; and Maymūnah by Abū Ya‘lā.

The wording, ‘*then he has declared war on Me,*’ has not been reported by al-Bukhārī, rather it is reported by at-Ṭabarānī from Abū Umāmah and al-Bayhaqī from Abū Hurayrah.

²⁵ “Know, O my brother - may Allāh awaken you and I to His pleasure and make us of those who have deep fear and piety in Him as we should have - that the flesh of the Scholars is poisonous. It is well known that Allāh will expose those who seek to revile and belittle them and that whosoever lets loose his tongue by insulting and belittling the Scholars, then Allāh will cause his heart to die before he actually dies.” See *Tabyīnu Kadhabūl-Muṣṭafī* p.29.

Hanbal and others.

In summary, it is important to differentiate between refuting a mistake stated by an respected scholar and one stated by an innovator. The former is replied to cautiously and with respect and the invocation to Allāh to bestow His Mercy upon them while the latter his incorrectness should be exposed and refuted and it is worthy to refer to the six exceptions of backbiting that Imām al-Nawāwī mentioned in his book, *Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*.²⁶

²⁶ Although backbiting is forbidden, it becomes permissible under certain circumstances when done for a beneficial reason. The authorisation (making backbiting allowable) can be any one of the following six reasons:

1. Oppression - It is permissible for the one who is oppressed to complain about his situation to the ruler or the judge or anyone else who holds authority or has the ability to grant him justice against his oppressor. He should say: '*Such and such person wronged me*' and '*he did such thing to me*', and '*he coerced me in this manner*' and so on.
2. Seeking assistance in changing an evil and in returning a sinner back to what is correct - One should say to the individual whom he expects has the capability of putting a stop to the evil: '*Such and such person did this, so I prevented him from it*' or something to that effect. His objective should be to look for a way to ultimately put an end to the evil. If he does not intend that as his goal, then it is forbidden (for him to mention it).
3. Seeking a religious ruling - One should do this by saying to the scholar: '*My father*' or '*my brother*' or '*such and such person wronged me in this way.*' '*Does he have the right to do so?*' '*How shall I go about putting an end to it and obtain my right while repelling oppression from myself?*' and so on. Likewise, one may say: '*My wife did such and such to me*' or '*my husband did such and such a thing*' and so on. This is permissible due to the necessity for it, however, to be more cautious, it is better for one to say: '*What do you say about a man who has done such and such thing?*' or '*concerning a husband*' or '*concerning a wife who did such and such*' (without saying "my"), etc.
4. Warning and Advising the Muslims against Evil - There are several perspectives to this, of which one is: Declaring someone unreliable in the field of narrating ḥadīth and giving testimony. This is permissible to do, according to the consensus of the Muslim scholars. Rather, it becomes obligatory due

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to its necessity. Another case is when an individual desires to enter into a relationship with another person either through marriage, business, the consignment of property, the consigning of something to him or any other of the daily affairs. It is obligatory on you to mention to that individual what you know about the person he wants to get involved with, with the intention of advising him. Another case is when you see a student going to an innovator or a deviant, seeking to attain knowledge from him, and you fear that may affect the student. In that situation, you must advise him about the condition of that innovator, on the condition that your intention only be for the sake of advising.

5. When one openly exposes his acts of evil or his innovation - An example of this is when someone has openly exposed his consumption of alcohol, or his illegal confiscation of people's money and raising of their taxes unjustly and his usurping command wrongfully. It is thus permissible for one to talk about what that individual has made public. But it is forbidden to mention any of his other defects, unless they fall under one of the categories, which we have mentioned that backbiting is permissible.
6. Defining someone - If someone is known to the people by his nickname, such as "*the bleary eyed one*", "*the one who limps*", "*the deaf guy*", "*the blind guy*", "*crosseyed*", "*flat-nosed*", and other than that, then it is permissible to particularize him as such, with the aim of identifying him. However, it is forbidden to apply that to him, when one's intention is to degrade him. If he can be identified with another (more appropriate) type of name, then that is more preferable. These are the six cases, in which the scholars have stated that backbiting is permissible, if it is done in accordance to the guidelines we mentioned above.

The evidences for the permissibility of backbiting can be found in authentic and well-known aḥādīth.

Furthermore, there is an agreement of the scholars concerning the allowance of backbiting in these six cases. See Guarding the tongue from the book *al-Adhkār* pp-21-24 and *Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*. (Chapter 256: Some cases where it is permissible to backbite) of al-Nawāwī.

CHAPTER ONE

Kinds of Advice¹

If it is understood from someone, that the purpose of correcting and refuting scholars, is to offer sincere advice towards Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ), then it is obligatory that he should be treated with kindness, respect and veneration, just as was done by all the proficient scholars whose mention and example were previously stated and those who followed them in goodness.

As for someone whose purpose for criticising scholars is known or understood to be to belittle or defame them or only to expose their faults, then he deserves punishment so that he and those similar to him will be prevented from these transgressions and forbidden actions.^[1]

The intention and the purpose of people in such cases can be

¹ The word *nasīḥab* and *nush* are synonyms in the Arabic language. They have very deep and broad meanings as a result of which they are difficult to understand from a straight single-word translation or even an Arabic synonym. Sincerity, in a very broad sense, is probably the closest English word that can be used. This is because the ḥadīth commentators say that the underlying basis of *nasīḥab* is *ikhlāṣ* i.e. sincerity and, in short, it can be interpreted as 'wishing the good welfare of another person.' cf. *al-Niḥayab* of Ibn Āthīr

discerned sometimes through the acknowledgment and confession of the person or through indicative signs surrounding his words and actions. Hence, when someone possesses knowledge and a righteous character and has high respect for scholars, he will mention his refutation and point out his opponent's errors in conformity with scholarly manners and attitude.

As for written words in compiled and authored books, they should be understood and assumed in the best possible manner (desiring to guide and bring about good). Thus, when someone assumes otherwise in the work of someone whose knowledge and good character are recognised, he becomes similar to one who assumes evil in an innocent person, which is from the types of suspicion that Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) forbade. So he falls under the saying Allāh, the Most Perfect,

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا
ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾

“But whoever earns an offense or a sin and then blames it on an innocent [person] has taken upon himself a slander and manifest sin.”

[*Surah al-Nisā'* (4): 112]

Indeed, having suspicious thoughts about someone whose character does not indicate or show signs of evil is a prohibited act by Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ), as holding such evil suspicion comprises of earning a sin and as well as accusing an innocent of it.

The severe warning against such an unlawful act, as mentioned in the *ayah*, becomes even greater when there appear from the person who holds suspicious thoughts - signs of evil such as:

excessive transgression, lack of piety, often speaking against others, backbiting and slandering others, envying others for what they have been blessed with, and vigilance to be in position of authority.²

In this case, he whose character is known with these or similar, attributes that people of knowledge and believers condemn and are displeased with is a person who only thinks badly of scholars. And, in this case his refutation was only for the sake of exposing the faults and shortcomings of scholars (desiring to guide and bring about good), he then deserves to be countered with contempt and degradation.

As for when there are no signs of evil appearing from the refuter then his words should be taken in the best manner (of understanding), and it is not permissible to take them in a negative way.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said, ‘Do not suspect evil thoughts due to a word that has come out of the mouth of a Muslim brother. Rather, you should find that it is only filled with good.’^[2]



Explanation

[1] This chapter deals with an important topic, that is, the difference between he who advises the people of knowledge and one who belittles and defames them.

² See the treatise *Dhamm ul-Hasad wa Ahlibi* (Dispraise of Jealousy and its Adherents) of ibn al-Qayyim.

The famous authentic ḥadīth, “The *dīn* (religion) is *nasīḥah* (advice, sincerity).”¹ includes the leaders of the Muslims who are scholars and rulers, and advising them should be by lawful means such as, correcting them when they err, invoking Allāh for them, advising them in a manner that pleases Allāh, loving them and defending their honour, uniting Muslims around them to refer their affairs to them because scholars take their views from the book of Allāh and the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ), learning from them and following them without fanaticism and radicalism, and believing that only Allāh is Perfect and that His Prophets are infallible.

These purposes and intentions make the given advice sincere unlike those who aim to belittle and defame the people of knowledge.

[2] This text carries great meaning; for he who refutes or opposes the people of knowledge in matters he finds wrong or objectionable and that evidence is established against their stated opinions, he does so either:

1. To clarify the mistakes so that the truth may be known although his approach must be in conformity with noble manners i.e. extremely polite, giving the people of the knowledge their due respect and esteemed rank, and never taking their words out of context, and giving them the benefit of the doubt. This method is praised and required, given that this person is known that he has no evil intention against the people of knowledge, as there is no person after the Prophet (ﷺ) except that he was refuting and refuted. The righteous predecessors used to reply to each other’s opinions within the boundaries of good manners.
2. His enviousness, hatred, ill-heart, evil suspicion, and eagerness to

¹ On the authority of Tamīm ibn Aus al-Darī (*raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu*): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The *dīn* (religion) is *nasīḥah* (advice, sincerity)” We said “To whom?” He (ﷺ) said “To Allāh, His Book, His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.” Muslim

defame and belittle the people of the knowledge so that he will be seen as a learned person are what drive his attempts to refute and reply to them. Whomsoever follows this way, has walked onto a dangerous path as he has collected four grievous sins;

- a. Refuting the people of knowledge without right.
- b. Taking their words out of context.
- c. Committing a sin and a wrongdoing.
- d. Slandering and making false claims against the people of knowledge, Allāh said,

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا
ثُمَّ يَرْمِي بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا

“But whoever earns an offense or a sin and then blames it on an innocent [person] has taken upon himself a slander and manifest sin.”²

These kinds of people deserve punishment lest they do not harm or defame the people of knowledge as they attempt to gain fame or publicity through their opposition of known and esteemed persons, therefore people should be warned against them because they are many. However, as only Allāh knows of what lies in the hearts and of the intentions of people, we cannot accuse those who refute or correct some views put forth by the people of knowledge with automatically being from these deviated kind of people without a proof and such a proof has to be a clear sign indicating so.

For example, if the refuter is known to be from those who holds onto the Sunnah, and known for his truthfulness in his words and deeds, and always seeks the truth and evidence in all their affairs, and always asks Allāh to bestow His mercy upon the people of knowledge, and

² *Surah al-Nisā'* (4): 112

gives them their due respect and rank, it becomes evident that he is from the first kind of people. However, if he is from the second deviated kind then he will be exposed sooner or later because as has been said, 'Allāh reveals the intentions of people through their facial expressions and through the slips of their tongues.'

CHAPTER TWO

The Correct Manner of Advising

When the purpose of saying to a person that which he dislikes to hear about himself is to advise, that is a praiseworthy deed; some of the righteous predecessors said to some of their companions, 'You shall never advise me until you say it directly to me even though I may dislike it.' Thus, it is commended when a person tells his fellow Muslim of his fault or shortcoming so that he may avoid it and abstain from it in the future, and he who has been informed of his shortcoming and fault should excuse himself from such fault, if he has a justification. Then it is a detested and despised deed when the purpose of it is to shame the other person.

Some of the righteous predecessors were asked: 'Do you like someone to inform you of your shortcomings and faults?' So he replied, '[I do not mind] unless his aim is to insult me.'

As mocking and shaming others for sins they may have committed is also detested. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade condemning of a fornicating woman even though he commanded the punish-

ment (*hadd*) be carried out on her for her crime of fornication.¹

It has been reported by Imām al-Tirmidhī and others that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘Whosoever shames his brother for a sin (he committed), will not die until he also has committed (the same sin) himself.’²

And this ḥadīth refers to sins from which the person has not repented from.

Al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Ayād³ said: ‘The believer veils (the sin of his brother) and gives sincere good counsel. While the wicked person rends open (the sin of his brother) and condemns him.’

This is what al-Fuḍayl has mentioned some of the signs by which advising and shaming can be discerned; sincere advice is always accompanied by concealing others’ faults while shaming is always accompanied by exposing others’ faults.

¹ Bukhārī 4/350 and Muslim #1704 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. See *Sbarḥ al-Sunnah* 10/298 of al-Baghawī.

² al-Tirmidhī #2507) on the authority of Mu’adh. Ibn ‘Adiyy also reported it in *al-Kāmil* 6/2181, Al-Khatīb in *Tārikh Baghdād* 2/339 and al-Zabīdī added that it was also found Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s *al-Ṣamat* and *al-Ghibāb* as well as in al-Baghawī. There are two defects with its chain of narration. The first is that Khālīd ibn Ma’dān never meet Mu’adh. And second is that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Yazīd is very weak. This has been mentioned by al-Dhahabī in *al-Miẓān* 3/515 and he listed this ḥadīth as an example. Al-Saghānī also mentioned this ḥadīth in his *al-Mawdu’āt* #58.

³ Al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Ayād: bin Mas‘ūd at-Tamīmī, Abū ‘Alī, the *shaykh* of Makkah and one of the righteous worshippers. He was trustworthy and precise, noble, having *wara’* and narrated many *aḥādīth*. He died in the year 187H.

It was said, ‘He who orders his brother (towards doing good) in front of people, has shamed him’ Or something to that effect.

The righteous predecessors used to despise commanding good deeds and forbidding wrongdoings publicly as they cared to do so in secret as they wished no one to know of it other than the one they advised. For indeed informing someone of his mistake in secret is a sign of sincere advice because the advisor does not seek to expose or reveal the faults of the one he advises, rather he only aims to remove a harm in which the one he advises has fallen into.

As for revealing and exposing others’ faults to others, it is amongst what Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) have forbidden, Allāh, Most High, said,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَوْلَا
فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicised] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allāh knows and you do not know. And if it had not been for the favor of Allāh upon you and His mercy... and because Allāh is Kind and Merciful”

[Surah al-Nūr (24): 19-20]

And the aḥādīth which praise advising others in secrets are nu-

merous.⁴

Some scholars counseled those who order and advise others to good deeds, ‘Try your best to conceal the sins of sinners for exposing their faults to the public, would weaken in Islām the thing which most deserves to be covered and concealed.’ For this reason, the *ayab* linked spreading immorality to shaming for both acts are amongst the traits of arrogant evildoers who care not for removing harm and averting Muslims from being involved in wrongdoings and immoral acts. Rather their only intention is to spread and publicise the faults of their fellow believers and belittle them so that people may mock them and some harm can fall upon them in this world.

But as for the person that is sincerely advising, his only cares is to eradicate the faults found in his fellow Muslim and to help him avoid it. This is what Allāh, the Most High, described His Messenger (ﷺ) by saying,

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ
عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.”

[*Surah al-Tawbah* (9): 128]

And He also described the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) saying,

⁴ Bukhārī 5/97 and Muslim 4/1996.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رِحْمَاءٌ بَيْنَهُمْ
 تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ
 فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مُثَلَّهِمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ
 فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزَعٍ أُخْرِجَ سَطْعُهُ فَنَازَرَهُ فَاسْتَعْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى
 عَلَى سَوْفِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزَّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that Allāh may enrage by them the disbelievers. Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”

[Surah al-Fath (48): 29]

And also He described the believers as enjoying the traits of patience and of advising one another to compassion.⁵

The driving force of the evildoers for spreading evil and expos-

⁵ As is found in Allāh’s saying: “Then he became from among those who believed and recommended one another towards patience and recommended one another towards compassion.” [Surah al-Balad (90): 17]

ing others' faults is harshness, cruelty and the desire to disgrace his Muslim brother, which is exactly the characteristics of the Satan - who beautifies disbelief, sins and disobedience in the eyes of believers so they may become amongst the dwellers of Hellfire, as Allāh said,

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ
عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَّا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

“Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze.”

[*Surah Fāṭir* (35): 6]

Also, after narrating for us the story of the Prophet of Allāh; Adam and Satan, and how the evil plot that he unleashed on him, such that it brought him to be cast out from Paradise, He, Most High, said:

يَبْنَىءِ آدَمَ لَا يَفْنَدَنَّكُمْ
الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ آبَائَكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يُزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا

“O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts.”

[*Surah al-'Araf* (7): 27]

So what is the difference between a person who intends to advise (*nasībah*) and a person who intends to make a disgrace (*faḍīlah*), therefore only a fool would confuse one of these with

the other.^[1]



Explanation

[1] How resplendent are these words that they require no further elaboration or explanation. However, the following are some matters I would like to point out with a brief explanation that, without doubt, shall reach the level of the author's words.

It is important to know the correct method to advise one's Muslim brother. The following are the steps that should be followed when intending to advise someone:

Sincere intention: The purpose of advising should be for the sake of Allāh alone because giving advice to others when they ask for it is one of the commandments of Allāh as reported in the ḥadīth.¹

Also, occasionally giving advice is required even if none asked for it such as when you see a person committing a wrongdoing and your intention in such case is not to defame or belittle him, rather it is to save your Muslim brother from falling into sins.

The advice should be given with kindness and good manners and in secret for "he who covers the faults of a Muslim, Allāh shall cover his faults in this life and hereafter."² That said, one should follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) when giving advice to others, for Allāh, Exalted is He, said describing His Prophet (ﷺ);

¹ Muslim #2162.

² Bukhārī #2442 and Muslim #2580.

فِيمَا رَحِمْتَهُمْ مِنْ
 اللَّهُ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ لَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

“So by mercy from Allāh, [O Muḥammad (ﷺ)], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you.”³

And

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ
 عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.”⁴

And

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”⁵

However, when the advised is a person whose sin or innovation are advocated in public, the advice should be given in public and people should be warned about him lest they fall for him.

³ *Surah Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 159

⁴ *Surah Tawbah* (9): 128

⁵ *Surah Qalam* (68): 4

It was reported that a man advised the Caliph al-Ma'mūn in a harsh abusive way. The Caliph said to the man, 'Allāh has sent someone better than you to advise someone who is more evil than me, Allāh said to Moses and Harun,

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى ﴿٤٤﴾

“And speak to him (Pharaoh) with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allāh].”⁶

It is also important to differentiate between someone whose intention it is to advise (*naṣīḥah*) and someone whose intention it is to shame (*faḍīlah*). And no one confuses one of these with the other, except someone who does not possess sound intellect.

⁶ *Surah Taha* (20): 44

CHAPTER THREE

The Punishment of Shaming Others

The punishment of one who spreads and searches for the faults of his Muslim brother and exposes his mistakes, is that Allāh shall disgrace him even if he is inside his house, as reported from various routes from the Prophet (ﷺ) of which Imām Aḥmad reported in his *Musnad*, Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan*, and al-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*.¹

Al-Tirmidhī transmitted from the ḥadīth of Wāthilah ibn al-‘Asqā’ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Do not express joy at your brother’s misfortune or else Allāh will pardon him for it and test you with it.”²

¹ The checking for this has been previously mentioned.

² Tirmidhī #2507 and in its chain al-Qāsim ibn Umayyah al-Hidhā. Ibn Ḥibbān mentioned him in *al-Majrūbīn* 2/213 and said: ‘He was shaykh who reported from Ḥafs ibn Gayyath many strange and weak narrations. It is not permissible to use him as a support when he is alone (in his narration).’ Then he reported this ḥadīth from him and commented upon it, saying: ‘There is no source for this found in the sayings of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). I say: ‘This ḥadīth has also been reported by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* 22/53, *Musnad al-Shāmiyīn* #384, Al-Qadā’ī in *Musnad al-Shihāb* #917-918 and Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Fihyah* 5/186.

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Mu'adh³ (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever shames his brother for a sin, will not die until he also does it."⁴

Al-Ḥasan⁵ said: 'It used to be said, he who shames his brother for a sin from which he repented, will not die until Allāh tests him with it. (i.e. the same sin)⁶

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And it is also succeeded by 'Umar ibn Isma'īl ibn Mujālid found in al-Tirmidhī, Abū'l-Shaykh in *Al-Ambāl* #202 and Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Tārikh* 9/95-96. However, there is no point in that, since 'Umar is rejected.

³ Mu'adh bin Jabal: bin 'Amr bin Aws al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān, one of the foremost Companions known for his knowledge of legal rulings and the Qur'ān. He was present at the pledge of *'Uqbah* and witnessed *Badr* and the following battles and was martyred due to a plague in the year 17H or 18H.

⁴ Reported by Tirmidhī #2505.

⁵ Al-Ḥasan ibn Abī al-Ḥasan Yasar al-Baṣrī Abū Sa'īd, the freed slave of Zaid ibn Thābit, the example of ascetic scholars and one of the great characters of the Tabi'īn. He died in 110. Ayyūb al-Ṣakhtīyānī said: "Had you seen him you would have said that you have never sat with a scholar of jurisprudence." Abu Ja'far al-Bāqir said: "That is the person whose speech resembles that of the Prophets." Refer to his biography: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/156, *Hibyatul-'Auliya'*, 2/131, Aḥmad: *al-Zuhd*, 2/225, *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, 4/563, *Tathkirat al-Huffāz*, 1/66. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a book for the life and virtues of this Imam which is printed and available.

⁶ The discussion of this has been stated previously in detail.

And it is reported from the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd⁷ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) with a chain of narration that has weakness in it that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Trials are consequences of uttered words, for if a man shamed another man for being breastfed by a female dog, then that man (who said that) will indeed breastfeed from one.”⁸

And this meaning has been reported from a group from amongst the righteous predecessors.

When Ibn Sīrīn⁹ was in great debt and was imprisoned due to his inability to pay off his debts, he said: ‘I am aware of the sin which brought me into this hardship, I shamed a man forty years

⁷ ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd: bin Ghāfil bin Ḥabīb al-Hadhli Abū ‘Abdur-Raḥmān. One of the scholars amongst the Companions and he witnessed *Badr* and the following battles. He had many virtues and died in the year 32H.

⁸ Reported by Abū Nu‘aym in *Akbbār Asbabān* 1//161, al-Khāṭib in his *Tārikh* 13/279 and Ibn al-Jawzi mentioned it in *Al-Mawdū‘āt* 2/83. Al-‘Ālūnī in *Kashf ul-Khufā* 2/343 added to that by attributing it to al-Daylamī. The ḥadīth is reported through other paths from ‘Alī and Hudayfah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*), however they have severe weakness in them. See *al-Lāli al-Masnū‘ah* 2/293-295 of al-Suyuṭī and *Mukhtasar Maqāṣid ul-Hasanah* p.830 of al-Zurqānī and *al-Durr al-Multaqitt* p. 22 of al-Saghānī.

⁹ Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, the Imām and Shaikh al-Islām, Abū Bakr al-Anṣārī al-Anasī al-Baṣrī, the freed slave of Anas ibn Mālik, the companion and servant of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). He died in 110. Abū ‘Uwana said: ‘I saw Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn in the marketplace, and nobody saw him without him mentioning Allāh.’ For his biography, refer to: Ibn Sa’d: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/193, *Ḥiḥyatul-Auliyyā’*, 2/263, *Tārikh Baghdād*, 5/331, *Tathkirat al-Huffāz*, 1/73, *Siyar al-A‘lām al-Nubulā’*, 4/606, *al-Ibar*, 1/135, *Mir‘āt al-Janān*, 1/232, *al-Bidāyah wa’l-Nihāyah*, 9/267, *Shatharāt al-Thabab*, 1/138.

ago, I said to him: ‘O bankrupt one.’”^[1]



Explanation

[1] This chapter is relevant to the previous one as it shows that when a person shames or belittles someone else, he will be afflicted by what he shamed others with.

Though the narrations mentioned by the author in regard to shaming others are slightly weak, it is proven that shaming or belittling someone else is prohibited. The righteous predecessors understood this prohibition as much as they understood that shaming or belittling others over a sin or a wrongdoing or an act, may result in them being afflicted by that afterward as a punishment.

However, as has been mentioned previously, exposing public sinners and innovators whose sins and innovations threaten the Muslims is exempted from this general ruling. Further, there are other cases that are exempted from the general prohibition; the following cases are some of them:

When someone asks your advice about a man who proposed in marriage to his daughter or his sister, you need to mention his shortcomings, if he has any, with the intention to warn and not to shame. This exemption has been established in the authentic ḥadīth, when a woman asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about two men (Abū Jahm and Mu’awiyah) who proposed to her, so he said, ‘As for Abū Jahm, he always carry his stick on his shoulder (i.e. it either means that he always travels or that he hits his women) and Mu’awiyah is a poor man. I suggest to you to marry Usamah’.¹⁰

¹⁰ Muslim #1480.

CHAPTER FOUR

Shaming and Dishonoring

From amongst the most obvious kinds of shaming is: disclosing and spreading the faults of others under the pretense of advising, then laying claim that this person's motive is these faults, general or specific while, in fact, this person's actual intention and hidden aim is to shame and cause harm.¹

This is because such a person is from the brothers of the hypocrites whom Allāh condemned and dispraised in His Book in many places for Allāh dispraised he who outwardly exhibits a good action or a good word whilst his intention is to achieve a corrupted and evil goal. Thus, He, Exalted is He, deemed this attribute from the characteristics of hypocrites, as such in the *Surah al-Barā'*,² wherein He debunked and exposed the hypocrites and their vile characteristics; He said,

¹ This is from the actions of the heart which no one has knowledge of except Allāh, the Most High.

² An alternative name for *Surah al-Tawbah* (9).

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
 وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا أَلْحُسْنَى وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ أَنَّهُمْ لَكَذِبُونَ

“And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a masjid for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allāh and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, “We intended only the best.” And Allāh testifies that indeed they are liars.”

[Surah al-Tawbah (9): 107]

He, Exalted is He, also said,

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ
 بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ
 بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“And never think that those who rejoice in what they have perpetrated and like to be praised for what they did not do - never think them [to be] in safety from the punishment, and for them is a painful punishment.”

[Surah Al-Imrān (3): 188]

This *ayah* was revealed to address the incident wherein the Jews were asked by the Prophet (ﷺ) about something but they concealed their knowledge of it and informing him something else. Yet they showed to him that they had indeed informed him about what he had asked. And they sought praise from him (ﷺ) because

of it and became pleased and delighted at what they gained by concealing it - about what he (ﷺ) had asked them. This is what Ibn ‘Abbās³ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) stated and his ḥadīth concerning that is transmitted in two Ṣaḥīḥ collections.⁴

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī⁵ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) related, ‘During the time of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), when the Messenger (ﷺ) would go to fight in the (military) expeditions, group of men among the hypocrites would remain behind and rejoice with opposing the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) with their sitting (instead of fighting). So when the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would arrive, they would make excuses for themselves and swear to him. And they wanted to be praised for that which they did not do, so Allāh revealed this *ayah*.⁶

³ ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās: bin ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim bin ‘Abd Munāf al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the interpreter of the Qur’ān. He was born three years before the *Hijrah* and was called the ‘Ocean of knowledge’ due to his vast knowledge. He took part in the *Jihād* in North Africa in the year 27H and died in the year 68H.

⁴ Bukhārī 9/301, Muslim 17/123, Aḥmad 1/298 and Ibn Jarīr 4/207.

⁵ Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī: Sa‘īd bin Mālik bin Sinān bin ‘Ubayd al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. He and his father were both Companions and he witnessed all the battles that followed *Uhud*. He was one of the scholars amongst the Companions and reported many *aḥādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ). He died in the year 74H.

⁶ Bukhārī 8/233, Muslim 17/123 and Ibn Jarīr 4/205. It must be noted here that Ibn Hajr mentioned in *al-Fath* 9/301 that it is possible to combine these two causes for the *ayah*’s revelation found in the two ḥadeeths by saying that it was revealed with regard to both of these groups (Jews and hypocrites). Shaykh Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādī’ī said in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad* p.35: ‘If the ḥadīth of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī is more established then that takes more precedence because the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās is from that which the two Shaykhs have been

These are the characteristics of hypocrites and others - outwardly displays a saying or an action which appears to be upon something good while, in fact, their purpose is to endorse a mischievous goal so that they are praised for the deeds they displayed and simultaneously achieve their hidden deviated goal through this form of deception. Thus, the *ayah* is applicable to he whose intentions and deeds are as such, and hence this type of person will face severe punishment.

The example of this is when a person would like to shame and criticise another person to show others his faults with the aim of keeping people away from him, or for the pleasure of harming him, or due to existing enmity, or because he fears him due to a rivalry that exist between them with regard to wealth, leadership, or other blameworthy causes. However, these vile purposes cannot be reached except by defaming him, in public, due to a religious deficiency or a mistake such as knowing that someone [from the people of knowledge] has rejected a weak opinion of a well-known scholar, so he spreads amongst those who dignify and highly respect this well-known scholar that this person dislikes their scholar and belittles him.

Then, he deceives those who hold the scholar in high regard, making them believe that his act of dispraise and harm against that person is from the noble manners as he defends the scholar and that is by itself an act of obedience by which one draws near to Allāh. He, therefore, becomes involved in two disgusting and

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criticised by, as has been stated in *Muqaddimah ul-Fath* 20/132 and as is stated in *Fath ul-Bārī* 9/302. And there is no point in restricting it to only the People of the Book...'

forbidden acts;

First: The insinuation that this scholar's refutation of the other opinion was done out of mere hatred, seeking to belittle the other scholar, and as a result of following his desires. While in reality the purpose of that person is to advise the believers and inform them of a knowledge that cannot be concealed.

Second: He manifests and magnifies the scholar's criticism for the other scholar, so that he can fulfill his desire and achieve his deviated corrupted goal, while disguising it in the form of advice and defense of scholars of Islām.

This type of deceiving scheme corresponds to the injustice of Marwān and their followers who won people's affection and turned these people's hearts away from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib⁷, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and their offspring, (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*).

When 'Uthmān bin 'Affān⁸ (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) was assassinated, all Muslims did not see anyone having more right than 'Alī ibn

⁷ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the fourth Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām at the age of thirteen and was famous for his chivalry, bravery and knowledge. He married Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred in the year 40H.

⁸ 'Uthmān bin 'Affān: *Dhu an-Nurayn* 'Uthmān bin 'Affān bin Abū al-'Ās bin Umayyah al-Qurashī al-Amawī, the third Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was known for his generosity and freely giving in the Way of Allāh. He was married to two daughters of the Prophet (ﷺ), Ruqayyah and after her death, Umm Kulthūm. He was martyred in the year 35H.

Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) to succeed him [as the caliph of Muslims and the leader of the believers], therefore they all pledged allegiance to him. However, a group of [deviated] people succeeded to alienate some Muslims [from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib] when they manifested the seriousness and scandalous murder of ‘Uthmān, which was indeed so, and falsely accused ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib of plotting his murder and carrying it out. This was a lie and a slander against him.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) negated this false accusation so he swore by Allāh, and He is indeed the truthful who fulfills His vows and oaths, that he was not responsible for this crime. Despite all that, this group initiated a campaign against him, thinking that they were drawing near to Allāh, and then they continued their fight against his sons may Allāh be pleased with them. This group of people then propagated their enmity against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and his progeny in Friday speeches and at the grand gatherings of Muslims until those following this group became convinced of their distorted belief and that the tribe of Marwān were more entitled to take leadership than ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and his sons since they were closer in relation to ‘Uthmān (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and they are who should avenge his murder. Through these methods, they were able to untie the hearts of the people against ‘Alī and his sons and to turn the people to fight against him and his children after him. This asserted the kingship for them and their rule became established as a result of that.

Some of this [deviated] group used to say in privacy to one whom he trusted, something similar to this effect, ‘There was no companion more entitled to assume authority after ‘Uthmān than ‘Alī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*)’, so people would ask, ‘Then why do they

abuse him [‘Alī]?’ They would say, ‘Assuming leadership cannot be achieved except through this manner.’

The meaning of their statement is, that they could never have people’s support without alienating them from ‘Alī and his sons and accusing them of the murder of ‘Uthmān, particularly when ‘Alī and his sons are known for their noble characteristics and lofty traits, for which will make people hasten to follow and pledge allegiance to them, and hence will put an end to the leadership of the Umayyad dynasty⁹ as people would no longer obey them. [1]



Explanation

[1] The author wanted to point out a matter that not many may be aware of, that is, it is most deviated to speak good about something or someone while, in fact, intending to reach an evil goal as it is a kind of hypocrisy. Allāh described hypocrites as those who speak nicely but they only do that so they excuse themselves from an obligation or to receive what they are not entitled to.

However, this does not necessitate that he who does so is a hypocrite because one may possess one or some of the characteristics of hypocrisy but not be from amongst them, as established in the famous authentic ḥadīth: “There are four (qualities), whosoever has them is a hypocrite and whosoever has a characteristic of these four possesses a characteristic of hypocrisy until he leaves it: when he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks it, when he makes a covenant he proves treacherous, and when he argues he behaves in an imprudent and uncouth

⁹ cf. *al-‘Awāsim min al-Qawāsim* of Qāḍi ibn Al-‘Arabī al-Mālikī (*rahimabullāh*) for it contains what is sufficient for the one who seeks the truth about this issue, Allāh willing.

manner.”¹

The main intended meaning of the author in this chapter is to state that ends do not justify the means. Thus, when the goal is noble and good then the means to reach it should also be noble and good. The following are some practical examples about this aspect:

- Speaking eloquently so that others’ speech will be overlooked.
- Informing others of a mistake of a scholar with the intention to defame him even though he might be abiding by the set conditions.
- Accusing a scholar of innovation just because he opposes the view of another known scholar.
- Taking the words of scholars out of context when they reply to each other and assuming the intention of it is to shame scholars.
- Taking advantage of situations and circumstances to defame and shame others such as some deviated people do today, taking advantage of the *fitnah* between ‘Alī and others to defame the Companions and the entire Umayyad rulers.

Though, this *fitnah* was a result of the plot of ‘Abdullāh ibn Sabā’ - the Jew and his followers. Due to this plot some companions fell into it and hence, they were mistaken. Nevertheless, we need to believe that all the Companions were trustworthy in religion and character and hence we should ask Allāh to be pleased with them and to bestow His Mercy upon them for they are the best people after the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh says,

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ
 اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ
 لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
 ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

¹ Bukhārī (Eng. Trans. 1/31 no. 33, 3/382 no. 639, 4/269 no. 403] and Muslim [Eng. Trans. 1/40 no. 111].

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the *Muhajirin* and the *Anṣār* and those who followed them with good conduct - Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”²

And

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يَبَايَعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ

“Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree.”³

And there are numerous other verses [regarding the merits and virtues of the Companions].

That said, we should refrain from delving into the disputes that took place between the Companions and stop accusing and stereotyping the Umayyad rulers in such an evil way.

As ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz said about them, “Those from whose blood Allāh has kept our swords pure, we shall not soil our tongues with their slander.”⁴

² *Surah Tawbah* (9):100

³ *Surah al-Fath* (48):18

⁴ The most reliable book written on the disagreement of the Companions is Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Mālikī’s (d. 543) *al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim fī Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Sababah Ba‘da Wāfati al-Nabī Sall’Allāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam*.

For this reason, scholars consider defaming or belittling the Companions amongst the clearest signs of people of deviation and those who follow their own desires because only a deviated person or a misguided one would do such a horrible act.

History has been distorted in some history books, particularly the reports documented by al-Kalbī, al-Waqīdī, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Ya'qūbī and others. Therefore, one should be extremely careful while reading history books because such books are neither taken as a proof to establish a ruling nor is their content deemed as correct as they include in these books all reports despite their correctness or incorrectness.

Scholars agree that all the Companions were trustworthy persons who sought the truth by all means yet some of them made mistakes despite their striving, nonetheless we should abstain from delving into the disputes and *fitnah* that took place during their time because all of them were either correct and hence, received two rewards or mistaken and hence, received one reward.

For this reason, stereotyping a mistake in an entire generation is an awful mistake as we sometimes see made by some Muslim apologists who condemn the Umayyad or the Abbasids rulers in general. We do not claim anyone is infallible but we need to understand that the goodness and benefit that these two dynasties brought to Islām are great and

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Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said in his book *Al-'Aqīdab-ul-Wāsiṭiyyah*: 'Among the Principles of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is maintaining pure hearts and tongues towards the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ).

Al-Nawāwī said in *At-Taqrīb*, which al-Suyūṭī explained in *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*: 'All of the Companions are trustworthy - those who were involved in the *fitan* [the war which took place between them] and those other than them - according to the consensus of the scholars.'

Ibn Hajr said in *Al-Iṣābah*: '*Ahl-us-Sunnah* have unanimously agreed that all of them (the Sahabah) are trustworthy, and no one opposed this except some deviants amongst the innovators.'

hence the mistakes made by some of their rulers should not negate all their goodness.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Remedy

He who was afflicted with such type of intentions and deceptions (at the hands of someone else) should fear Allāh and seek His assistance and be patient, for a good end is for those who fear Allāh.

This is as Allāh, the Most High says in the Qur'an, after He narrates for us the tribulations and deception which befell Yūsuf,

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

“And thus, We established Yūsuf in the land.”

[*Surah Yūsuf* (12): 21]

And Allāh also narrates for us what Yūsuf said to his brothers:

قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا

“He said: ‘I am Yūsuf and this is my brother. Allāh has certainly favored us’”

[*Surah Yūsuf* (12): 90]

And Allāh tells us of the story of Mūsā and what befell him

and his nation from the harm they received at the hands of Pharaoh and his evil plotting, and that Mūsā said to his followers:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ
 اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا ۗ إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ
 يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

“Said Mūsā to his people, ‘Seek help through Allāh and be patient. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allāh. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.’”

[*Surah al-'Arāf* (7): 128]

Furthermore, Allāh Most High also informed us that the harm of evil plots effects he who orchestrates them, so He said,

وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ ۗ

“But the evil plot does not encompass except its own people.”

[*Surah Fātir* (35): 43]

And He said,

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا
 فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا
 يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

“And thus We have placed within every city the greatest of its criminals to conspire therein. But they conspire not except against themselves, and they perceive [it] not.”

[*Surah Al-'An'ām* (6): 123]

The events of reality support this fact, for he who observes and sifts through the stories of people and the history of the world will encounter stories of people's evil plots harming only those who orchestrated such evil whereas the one who the evil plot was prepared for is marvelously safe and sound, but I shall not mention these stories because if I mention some of these stories, this book will become (excessively) lengthy.

And Allāh is the Facilitator of success and toward His right path we head, and Allāh suffices for us and excellent disposer of our affair is He.

And may Allāh send Abundant blessing of peace upon Muhammad, upon his Family and his Companions until the Day of Judgment.^[1]

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Explanation

[1] After explaining the difference between advising and shaming and belittling, the author mentioned that a person might be exposed to injustice or be accused of saying something he did not say or described by traits that do not exist in him or have his words taken out of context or be afflicted with some people who only search for his mistakes and shortcomings and etc. Thus, he who can defend himself should do so without exhausting himself, and if this hardship continues then he should be patient for Allāh, Exalted is He, said,

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

“And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”¹

And

وَالْمَعْقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

“And the [best] outcome is for [those of] righteousness.”²

And

إِنَّمَا يُوفَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

“Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.”³

The author mentioned how the end was good for Mūsā and his people and the believers at all times and in all circumstances. Then he mentioned how bad the end was for evil plotters, Allāh said,

وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ

“But the evil plot does not encompass except its own people.”⁴

¹ *Surah al-'Arāf* (7): 128

² *Surah Ṭaba* (20): 132

³ *Surah Zumar* (39):10

⁴ *Surah Fāṭir* (35): 43

APPENDIX ONE

Refuting Falsehood

Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn Bāz - *rahimabullāh* - said: “There is no doubt that it is obligatory upon the Muslims to unify their ranks and to unite their word upon the truth and to co-operate in goodness and piety against the enemies of Islām - as Allāh, the Most Perfect, ordered them with in His saying:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا^٥

“And hold fast altogether to the rope of Allāh and do not become divided.”

[*Surah Al-‘Imrān* (3):102]

And likewise, Allāh has warned the Muslims against splitting-up, as occurs in His - the Most Perfect’s - saying:

وَلَا

تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ^٥

“And do not be like those who differed and split-up after the clear evidences came to them.”

[*Surah Al-‘Imrān* (3):105]

However, the order to unify the Muslims and unite their word

upon the truth and to hold fast to the rope of Allāh, does not necessitate that they should not censure wrong beliefs and practices - whether from the *Sūfis* or other than them. Rather, what the order to hold fast to the rope of Allāh necessitates is: To order the good; forbid the evil; to clarify the truth, with the clear *Sharī'ah* proofs, to whomsoever is misguided or has a mistaken opinion, until they unite upon the truth and turn away from that which opposes it. All of this is included in His - the Most Perfect's - saying:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ

“And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression.”

[*Surat al-Mā'idah* (5): 2]

And His - the Most Perfect's - saying:

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.”

[*Surah Al-Imrān* (3):104]

And when the people of truth withhold from clarifying the mistakes of those who have erred or are mistaken, then they will not have achieved that which Allāh ordered them with, as regards calling to goodness, ordering the good and forbidding the evil. So the person in error will remain upon his error, and the one acting in

opposition to the truth will remain upon his mistake. And this is contrary to what Allāh - the Most Perfect - prescribed, with regards sincere advice, co-operation upon goodness, ordering the good and forbidding the evil - and Allāh alone is the One who grants success.¹

And a number of sayings have come to us about the necessity of censuring falsehood and innovations. From them: Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimabullāh* - said, 'Refuting *ahlul-bid'ah* (the innovators) is a *Jihād*, to the extent that Yahyā ibn Yahyā (d.226H) said: 'Defence of the Sunnah is more excellent than *Jihād* in the path of Allāh.'^{2, 3}

Imām Abū 'Ubayd (d.235H) - *rahimabullāh* - said, 'Following the Sunnah is like holding on to hot coal, and in my view, it is in this time more excellent than fighting with swords in the path of Allāh.'⁴

Imām al-Ḥumaydī (d.218H) - *rahimabullāh* - said, 'By Allāh, that I fight against those who reject the ḥadīth of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) is more beloved to me than fighting the unbelievers.'⁵

Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (d.751 H) - *rahimabullāh* - said, '*Jihād* with the *hujjah* (proofs) and the tongue; Comes before *Jihād* with the sword and the spear.'⁶

¹ *Tanbihāt fir-Radd 'alā man Ta'awallis-Sifāt* pp.31-32.

² *Siyar A'lāmun-Nubalā* 10/518.

³ *Naqdul-Mantaq wal-Kalām* p.12.

⁴ Related by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in *Tarikh Baghdad* 12/410.

⁵ Related by al-Dhahabī in *Siyar A'lāmun-Nubalā* 101619.

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimabullāb* - said, 'When some people asked Imām Aḥmad bin Hanbal (d.241 H) that they felt uneasy about criticising people, he replied: 'If I were to remain silent, how would the ignorant masses know the authentic [narrations] from the inauthentic?' Similarly, the innovators who introduce heretical writings which oppose the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and those who innovate in matters of worship, then explaining their true condition and warning the Ummah against them is an obligation by the unanimous agreement of the Muslim Scholars. In fact, when Imām Aḥmad bin Hanbal was asked whether a person who fasted, prayed and secluded himself in the *masjid* for worship was dearer to him than a person who spoke out against *ahlul-bid'ah* (the innovators), he replied: 'When he fasts and prays and secludes himself, then he does so for the benefit of his own self. However, when he speaks out against the innovators, he does so for the benefit of the Muslims in general, and this is more virtuous.' So it is clear that opposing the Innovators is of general benefit to the Muslims and is considered one of the types of *jihād* in the path of Allāh. Since purifying the Religion of Allāh, and its *minhāj* (methodology), its *Shari'ah*, and defending it from their attacks and that of their enemies is a collective obligation - as is agreed upon by the Scholars. For if Allāh did not raise up some people to repel the harm from such people, then the Religion would become corrupted. Indeed, this type of corruption is even greater than the corruption resulting from the disbelievers conquering the Muslims. Since when the disbelievers conquer the Muslims, they do not corrupt their hearts, nor their religion, except after some time. Whereas the innovators corrupt the hearts from the very outset.'⁷

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⁶ *Qasīdah an-Nūniyyah* 1/12.

⁷ *Majmū' Fatāwā* 28/231-232.

APPENDIX TWO

Countering the Innovators

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimabullāb* - said: ‘The Imāms of the Sunnah and the *Jamā’ah*, and the people of knowledge and *imān* (faith) have in them ‘*adl* (justice), ‘*ilm* (knowledge) and *rahmah* (mercy), and they know the truth which conforms to the Sunnah and which is free from innovations. They do justice to those who depart from the Sunnah and the *Jamā’ah*, even if they have been wronged, just as Allāh - the Most High - said,

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ
شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَيَّ
أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ءَاعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allāh, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.”

[*Surah al-Mā'idah* (5): 8]

Likewise, they are merciful to the creation; desiring for them goodness, guidance and knowledge. They never intend for them any harm or evil. Rather, when they criticise them and explain to them their error, ignorance or wrong-doing, then their purpose in doing so is only to clarify the truth, and to be merciful to the creation, to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and to make the word of Allāh uppermost so that the way of life becomes purely for Allāh.¹

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah also said: “The is why it is necessary for those who have to correct people for their sins, to intend by this, only goodness and mercy towards them; just like a father when disciplining his child, or a doctor when treating his patient ...This is why Allāh the Most High said,

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

“You are the best of people ever raised for mankind, commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil, and believing in Allāh.”

[*Surah Āl-Imrān* (3): 110]

Abū Hurayrah (*radīyAllāhu ‘anhu*) said, “You are the best of mankind for mankind, since you bring them with chains around their necks, until they enter into Islām.”²

So we are informed that this Ummah is the best of all the nations from the Children of Adam. So when they do have to pun-

¹ *Radd ‘ala-Bikerī* p.256.

² Bukhārī #4557.

ish others through fighting or shackles, then they only intend by this goodness towards them, and to steer them towards being honoured by Allāh, and to His Good Pleasure, and to entering Paradise. Likewise, when refuting *ahlul-bid'ah* (the innovators) and other than them; if the intention in doing so is not to clarify the truth, and to guide the creation, and to be merciful and good to them, then it will not be a righteous action. And when there is harshness required in censuring innovations and sins, then the purpose should be to explain what they contain of corruption, in order to warn the people about them - just like the *nusūs ul-wa'id* (textual threats), and their like. And when a person needs to be boycotted, as a form a punishment and discipline, then the purpose in doing so should be to prevent him from [continuing in the sin], and act as a deterrent for the likes of him - with mercy and kindness, not harshness or vindictiveness.³

Shaykhul Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimahullāh* - also said, 'When dealing with the people of sin, one must not exceed the limits prescribed by the *Shari'ah*, neither in hating, censuring, preventing, abandoning or chastising them. Rather, the one who does so should be told: Worry about your ownself. No harm will come to you from those who are misled, if you are truly guided, as Allāh - the Most High - said:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى
اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا اَعْدِلُوْا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى

“And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.”

[*Surah al-Mā'idah* (5): 8]

³ *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* 5/239.

And Allāh said:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

“And fight in the way of Allāh those who fight you,
but do not transgress the limits.”

[*Surah al-Baqarah* (2): 190]

Indeed, many of those who command and forbid overstep the limits set by Allāh, either through ignorance or *dhulm* (injustice). Thus, this issue [of being just] must be firmly maintained, whether it is in regards to censuring the unbelievers, the hypocrites, the sinners or the disobedient ones.⁴

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimahullāh* - said, “The one commanding the good or forbidding the evil should do so in the way prescribed by the *Shari‘ah*; with knowledge, gentleness and patience, and with good intentions, and by following a balanced approach. All of this enters into Allāh’s saying: “*O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided.*” ...there is in this *ayah* another meaning as well, which is that a person must turn towards what will be of benefit to him, both in knowledge and action, and he must avoid what does not concern him - as the con- veyer of the *Shari‘ah* (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ) said, “From the perfec- tion of a person’s Islām is to leave alone that which does not concern him.”⁵

⁴ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* 14/381.

⁵ Reported by Tirmidhī #2318 and others, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. It is authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan ibn Mājah* #3976.

This especially applies to a person delving into that which does not concern him regarding someone's religious or worldly affairs. Thus, such a person may speak out of envy, or desire for position, or he may act either with deliberate oppression, or foolish scorn and sarcasm. How often does Shayṭān make such an act appear to be an act of commanding the good or prohibiting the evil, or *Jihād* in the path of Allāh, whereas it is actually an act of injustice and transgression!⁶

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahīmahullāh* - said, '*And Ablus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* follow the Book and the Sunnah, obey Allāh and His Messenger; so they follow the truth and are merciful to the creation.'⁷

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahīmahullāh* - also said, '*Ablus-Sunnah* are the purest and the finest of the Muslims, and they are the best of mankind to mankind.'⁸

⁶ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* 14/382.

⁷ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* 14/279.

⁸ *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* 5/239.

APPENDIX THREE

Boycotting a Muslim

[Q]: Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - *rahimabullāh* was asked: 'From whom is it obligatory or permissible to show hatred to, or make *hajr* (abandon, boycott and shun someone) from, for the sake of Allāh, the Most High? What are the conditions for hating someone, or making *hajr* from them, for the sake of Allāh, the Most High? Does leaving off giving the greetings of *salām* enter into this or not? When the one that is being shunned gives *salām*, is it obligatory to return it or not? What is the duration of hating someone, or shunning and abandoning them for the sake of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, is it as long as one is certain that those traits which necessitate hatred or shunning are present? Is there a fixed duration for hating or *hajr*, and if so, what are its limits? Please give us a verdict.

[A]: He - *rahimabullāh* - replied,¹

'The *hajr* (act of abandoning or boycotting someone) according to the *Sharī'ah* is of two types:

¹ *Majmū' Fatāwā* 28/203-210.

[i]: With the meaning to abandon evil; and

[ii]: with the meaning of punishing for doing evil.

The first type: It is mentioned in Allāh - the Most High's - saying,

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي
ءَايَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ
الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

“When you see those who rush to mock Our Signs, then turn away from them until they turn to another subject. If Shayṭān makes you forget, then after remembering, do not sit in the company of the wrong-doers.”

[Surah al-An‘ām (6): 68]

Allāh - the Most High - also said,

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي
الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا
تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِثْلَهُمْ

“And it has been revealed in the Book that when you hear Allāh’s Signs being rejected or mocked, then do not sit with them until they turn to a different subject, otherwise you will be like them.”

[Surah al-Nisā’ (4): 140]

So what this means is that one is not allowed to witness evil, except when necessary; for example, sitting with people who drink intoxicants, or accepting a dinner invitation where intoxicants or music is present. It is not obligatory to respond to the likes of

such invitations. This is contrary to the one who attends such gatherings in order to censure and rebuke them, or by other than his own choice. This is why it is said: ‘One who witnesses an evil, is like the one who does it’ There occurs in the ḥadīth: “Whosoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, let him not sit at a table in which intoxicants are being consumed.”²

Thus, this type of *hajr* (abandoning and shunning) is that in which one removes himself from committing evil; just as he (ﷺ) said: “The *muhājir* is one who migrates from that which Allāh has made forbidden to him.”³

Under this topic comes the issue of *hijrah* (migrating) from the land of *kufir* (unbelief) and sins to the land of Islām and *imān* (faith); a migration from staying amongst the *kāfirs* (unbelievers) and the *munāfiqs* (hypocrites) for whosoever is unable to do that which Allāh has commanded them with; as Allāh said:

وَالرَّجْزَ فَاهْجُرُوا

“And stay away from *al-rujz* (impurities of conduct and beliefs).”

[*Surah al-Muddathtbir* (74): 5]

The second type: This is *hajr* with the aim of *ta’dīb* (discipline and correction). It is abandoning the one who displays evil, until he repents from it; just as the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims abandoned the three who stayed behind and did not participate in a *jihād* for which they were called - without a valid excuse - until Allāh revealed that they had repented. However, *hajr* is not made

² al-Tirmidhī #2801 on the authority of Jābir.

It was authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī in *Irwā’ul-Ghalīl* #190.

³ Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar.

of one who displays good, even if he is a hypocrite. So here *hajr* holds the status of *ta'zīr* (punishment). And *ta'zīr* is for anyone who openly abandons an obligatory duty or does what is prohibited; such as abandoning the Prayer, not giving the *Zakāb*, or openly committing oppression or shameful deeds, or calling to *bid'ah* (innovations) - that which is clearly *bid'ah* - that which opposes the Book and the Sunnah and the *ijmā'* (consensus) of the *Salaf* of this Ummah.

This is the reality of those amongst the *Salaf*, and their Imāms, who said: that the *shahādah* (testimony) of those who invite to *bid'ah* (innovation) is not to be accepted, nor should they be prayed behind, nor should knowledge be taken from them, nor should they be married to. This is a form of punishment to them until they desist. Here they make a differentiation between those who invite to *bid'ah*, and those who do not. This is because the one who invites to it has manifested evil, and thus is deserving of punishment. This is contrary to the one who conceals his innovation, for he is no more harmful than the hypocrites from whom the Prophet (ﷺ) accepted their outward condition (of being Muslim), entrusting their hidden intentions and actions to Allāh; even though he was aware of the true [inner] condition of many of them.

About this there is a ḥadīth: “Indeed when a sin is hidden it does not cause harm, except to its doer. However, when it is publicised and not objected to, then everyone is harmed.”⁴

⁴ Aḥmad 4/192 and at-Ṭabarānī In *al-Kabīr* 917/130, from ‘Adī ibn ‘Adī al-Kindī. Here, Ibn Taymiyyah has indicated that the ḥadīth may be weak, by his designating to it a phrase of uncertainty by saying: “It occurs in a ḥadīth ...” Rather than saying “The Prophet (ﷺ) said.” or “It’s authentically related...”

It was declared weak by al-Albānī in *al-Da‘īfah* #3110. And Allāh know best.

About this also, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Surely, when a people see an evil and they do not change it, then Allāh is quick to send upon them all a punishment from Him.”⁵

So it is obligatory to censure the apparent evils, and this is contrary to those evils that are concealed; for punishment of it is reserved only for its doer.

This *hajr* differs with those who perform it, and depends on their strength or weakness, or the large or small numbers. Indeed, its purpose is to rebuke the one being shunned and to discipline him, and to save the society from a similar situation. Thus, if the *maslahab* (benefit) in doing so is more preponderant - as far as one is able to ascertain - then *hajr* until the evil is weakened or diminishes is prescribed. However, if the one being abandoned does not leave the evil, but instead increases in evil because of being abandoned, or those making the *hajr* are weak - so much so that it is highly probable that the *mafsadah* (harm) will be greater than the *maslahab* - then *hajr* is not prescribed. Rather, being friendly to some people will be more beneficial than making *hajr* from them. Whereas making *hajr* from some people is more beneficial than being friendly towards them.

This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) was friendly to some people, whilst he made *hajr* from others; as was the case of the three who stayed back [from the *jihād*], even though they were better than many others with whom acted with friendliness in order to join the hearts. This was because those people held the reigns of obedience over

⁵ Aḥmad #112 and Abū Dāwūd #4338 on the authority of Abū Bakr.

It was authenticated by an-Nawawī In *Riyāḍbus-Ṣāliḥīn* #202 and by al-Albānī in *as-Sahībah* #1564.

their tribesmen, so the Religion derived the most benefit from softening their hearts. And these people [who stayed behind] were Believers, and there were many other Believers like them, so by making *hajr* from them, the Religion was fortified and this helped them purify themselves from sins. And this is like waging war against the enemy sometimes, and sometimes making treaties of peace with them, and at other times taking the *jizyah* from them. All of this depends upon the prevailing conditions and the expected benefits. The answer of the Scholars; like Aḥmad and others, in this regard, is built upon this fundamental principle. This is why they used to differentiate between those places in which innovations were predominant; such as the [innovation] of *al-Qadr* in Basrah, astrology in Khurasān, and *Shr̄ism* in Kūfah, and between places that were not like them. Likewise, they used to distinguish between those Imāms that were followed and obeyed, and other than them. So when the object of the *Sharī'ah* is known, then one can traverse the path to acquire it, or reach it

So when this is known and understood, then the *hijrah* (fleeing from evil) prescribed in the *Sharī'ah* is from amongst those actions which Allāh and His Messenger have commanded. So obedience in it must definitely be done with *ikhlās* (purity and sincerity) to Allāh, and it must be in agreement with His command. Then, if it is sincere for Allāh it will be correct. However, whosoever makes *hajr* due to his own whims and desires, or makes *hajr* in other than what Allāh ordered, then such a *hajr* is not included [as an act of obedience]. Indeed, the more the soul act according to their own whims and desires, the more doubt there is that it is being done out of obedience to Allāh!

As for *hajr* for the sake of one's own self, then it is not allowed for more than three days; as occurs in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that the

Prophet (ﷺ) said: “It is not lawful for a Muslim to make *hajr* (shun and boycott) his brother Muslim for more than three days, each one turning away from the other. And the best of them is the one who begins the greeting of *salāms* first.”⁶

So permission for this type of *hajr* does not extend beyond three days; just as permission to marry more than three additional wives does not extend beyond three. There also occurs in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The gates of Paradise are opened every Tuesdays and Thursdays, and every servant who does not commit any *shirk* with Allāh will be forgiven, except for person who has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it will be said: Delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled, delay these two until they are reconciled.”⁷

So abandoning giving a person his due rights is prohibited, although there is a concession for certain people; such as the concession given to the husband to make *hajr* from his wife’s bed in cases of disobedience, just as the concession to make *hajr* from someone for three days.

Here, it is essential to distinguish between the *hajr* which involves the right of Allāh, and between the *hajr* that involves one’s own right [The first] is commanded, whereas [the second] is prohibited. This is because the Believers are brothers; just as the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned in an authentic ḥadīth: “Do not cut-off from one another, do not turn away from one another, do not hate one another, and do not envy one another, but be worship-

⁶ Bukhār 8/24 and Muslim #983 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

⁷ Muslim 8/11 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

pers of Allāh and brothers. A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim.”⁸

In another ḥadīth related in the *Sunan* collections, he (ﷺ) said: “Shall I not inform you of something more virtuous than the level of Praying, Fasting, giving charity, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil?” They said: Indeed do! So he said: “Reconciling between each other, for indeed corruption between each other is the shaver. I do not say that it shaves the *hajr*. Rather, it shaves the Religion.”⁹

And he (ﷺ) said in another authentic ḥadīth: “The example of the Believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion, is like that of a single body; when one part of the body suffers, then all of the body suffers with sleeplessness and fever.”¹⁰

This is because *hajr* is amongst the prescribed forms of punishment and it is one of the types of *Jihād* in the Path of Allāh. It is done in order that Allāh’s Word become supreme and uppermost and that the Religion, worship, and whole way of life be made entirely for Allāh. The Believer is required to have *‘adā* (hatred) and *walā* (love and allegiance) for the sake of Allāh, so much so that the Believer is required to maintain this *walā* even if he is oppressed. This is because oppression does not sever *al-mawālātul-imāniyyah* (the love and allegiance of faith). Allāh - the Most High

⁸ Muslim #1986 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

⁹ Abū Dāwūd #4919 on the authority of Abū al-Dardā.

It was authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī in *Ghayātul-Marām* #414.

¹⁰ Muslim #1999 on the authority of al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr.

- said,

وَلِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ
 مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَقْبَلْتُمَا فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا
 عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ
 فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
 ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

“And if two factions of Believers fight each, other, then make peace and reconciliation between them both. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one who oppresses until it complies with Allāh’s Orders. And if it returns, then make a settlement between them with justice; be just. Indeed Allāh loves those who act justly. Indeed the Believers are but brothers.”

[Surah al-Hujurat (49): 9-10]

So Allāh described them as being brothers, even though they are fighting each other and committing oppression against each other. And Allāh ordered reconciliation between them.

So the Believer must reflect upon the distinction between these two types. Which has more doubt in it than the other. Then know that it is obligatory for the Believer to have *walā* [with another Believer] even when [you have been] wronged, oppressed and attacked. Likewise, it is obligatory to have *‘adā* (enmity) towards the unbeliever, even if he is beneficent and kind to you. For Allāh - the Most Perfect - sent the Messengers and revealed the Books and Scriptures so that the entire Religion, worship, and way of life

be for Allāh. So love, honour and reward is for His *awliyā'* (allies and friends); whereas *'adā* (enmity), disgrace and punishment is for His enemies. If, however, both good and evil, obedience and disobedience, righteousness and wickedness, Sunnah and *bid'ab* (innovation) are present in a [Muslim] person; then he is deserving of *walā* and reward in accordance with what he has of good, and he is deserving of *'adā* and punishment in accordance with what he has of evil. So it may be that a person possess what warrents both honour and dishonour, and he possess some of this and some of that; just like the poor thief whose hand is cut off for what he has stolen, but he is given what will satisfy his needs from the storage of charity.

So this is an *'asl* (fundamental principle) that is agreed upon by *Ablus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ab*; which is opposed by the Khawārij, the Mu'tazilah, and those that agree with them. For them, the people are deserving of either absolute reward or absolute punishment.

However, *Ablus-Sunnah* say: Indeed Allāh punishes some of those who committed major sins with the Fire, then they are taken out due to the *shafā'ab* (intercession) of those whom He permits to intercede by His Mercy and Grace - as is elaborated upon in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). And Allāh knows best. And may Allāh extol and send the blessings of peace upon Muḥammad, and upon all of his Companions and followers.'

Index of Sects

Ablu'l-Kalām: Adherents to speculative theology, people seeking to explain the articles and premises of belief and to give evidences for them based on philosophy and logic.

Bāṭiniyyah: A sect of the Shi'a, the followers of Ismā'īl ibn Ja'far. They were of the belief that the legal texts were merely superficial expressions carrying inner meanings that oppose what is outwardly understood of them, examples lie with their explanations of Paradise, Hell and the Last Day.

Hashwiyyah: A term frequently used by the innovators to refer to *Ablu'l-Sunnah*, the *Abl'l-Hadith*, those who affirmed the Attributes of Allāh. The first to use this term was 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid al-Mu'tazilī who said that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was a Hashwī.

Jabariyyah: Followers of the school of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān in his belief that all actions are decreed by Allāh and man has no control over them at all, instead he is forced to do what he does.

Jahmiyyah: Followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān in his denial of the Names and Attributes of Allāh.

Karrāmiyyah: Followers of Muḥammad ibn Karrām (d. 255H), they divided into many sub-sects and were famous for their likening of Allāh to His creation (*tashbīh*).

Mutakallimūn: Speculative Theologians, adherents to *kalām*.

Mu'tazila: Followers of Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' al-Ghazzāl who abandoned the circles of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. They negated the Attributes of Allāh for fear of likening Him to His creation, yet affirmed His Names. From amongst their beliefs was that a person who committed a major sin was neither a believer nor a disbeliever, rather of a station between the two stations, but he would be consigned to Hellfire forever. They were from the rank and file of the Mutakallimūn and gave precedence to their intellects over the divine texts.

Qadariyyah: Those who held the belief that man has complete free will in all that he does and that Allāh has no control over him.

Qarāmiṭa: A sect holding the same belief as the Bāṭiniyyah and followers of Maymūn ibn Daysān.

Falāsifa: Those philosophers who promoted the 'wisdom' of the Greeks, the Greek philosophers who did not believe in the Resurrection as it is mentioned in the Book and Sunnah, nor did they affirm the Names and Attributes of Allāh. From amongst their leaders was Aristotle, the student of Plato and from amongst their latter proponents was al-Fārābī and ibn Sīnā.

Index of Arabic Words

Awliyā': plural of *walī*; friend, ally, loyal companion. From the word *wilāyah* meaning loyalty and closeness, the opposite of enmity.

Bid'ah: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.

Salaf: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi'ūn* and the *Tab' Tābi'ūn* due to the ḥadīth, "The best of people are my generation, then the one that follows, then the one that follows."

Shirk: association, technically referring to directing a right that is due to Allāh Alone to another object of creation, either completely or partially. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Tawḥīd: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.