

The Correct Way in which to React to the Differences and Mistakes of our Fellow

Adapted from a lecture given by Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo entitled 'Sticking

<http://www.iisca.org/articles/document.jsp?id=34>

Thabit al Bunani (rahimahullaah) said: "A lad who was trailing his garment (i.e. below his ankles) passed by Sila Ibn Ashyam (rahimahullaah) and his companions, and his companions wanted to harshly rebuke him. Sila said, 'Leave him be, I will deal with him for you.' He said to him, 'Nephew, I need something from you.' He asked, 'What do you need?' He (Sila) replied, 'I want you to raise your wrapper (i.e. ezaar).' He (the lad) said, 'Yes, and may your eye be blessed.' He raised his wrapper, and Sila (rahimahullaah) remarked to his companions, 'This is the same as what you wanted; [and yet] if you had abused him, and injured him, he would have vilified you.'

...And we must fulfill all of our rights towards these people; these righteous people, [even though] we might differ with [them] in some opinions, and we might believe [that they] are mistaken [concerning certain issues]. And they might even be mistaken in some big issues, but all that we know of them [says] that they are righteous people, and that they are people of Knowledge.

And since they have established themselves as righteous people, and people of Knowledge, then we must have good suspicions... we must have good thoughts about them. We should not try to interpret everything they do in the worst possible manner; [for] we don't have the right to do that... instead we should think [that] they are pious people, and therefore, when we hear anything [bad, or negative] about them, we should think... or try to think of it in the best way possible.

We should be kind and gentle with them, [and] we should try to down-play their faults, and conceal their faults for them. Ya'nee we should try to conceal the faults of every Brother, but especially with respect to the 'Ulamaa and those people of respect, as the Prophet has mentioned in the [well-known] Hadeeth.

And we should give them their due respect and honour... we should not treat them like we treat some... we should not treat them [in a manner which is less than that which they are deserving of]; Ya'nee, [because] they are in a place [deserving] of [great] respect. And we should not treat them like we treat each other, or like we treat young people, or like we treat children... we should not talk about them in that manner.

Allaah says [in the Qur'aan]:

"Allaah will raise up in degrees those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge." Surah al-Mujaadalah 58:11

Allaah has given them special rank; those people whom Allaah has given Knowledge.

And Ibn 'Uthaymeen (hafidhahullaah) has explained to us why it is so important that we take a cautious approach to the 'Ulamaa; [that] we [should] not attack them, [nor] criticize them; but [that] we [should] give them naseeha (sincere advice) whenever we feel that they are wrong:

"There is no doubt, that the scholars disparaging, and putting one another down, is a deed that is forbidden. It is forbidden for a person to back-bite his Brother Muslim - even if he is not a scholar - so how is it permissible for him to back-bite his Brother scholars from among the Believers?

The one who is afflicted with this disease must realise that when he puts a scholar down, it will be a

cause for what the scholar says of Truth to also be rejected.

He must realise that when he puts down a scholar, he is not just putting him down personally, but he is putting down one of the heirs of the Prophet ; as the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. [He must also realise that] if he puts down and criticises the scholars, the people will no longer trust the Knowledge that they have, which is passed on from the Prophet . Therefore, they will not trust anything from the Sharee'ah that is presented by that scholar who is being criticised."

He continues:

"I do not say that every scholar is free from committing errors; [for] every human is apt to commit mistakes. If you see a scholar making a mistake, according to your belief, then contact him and try to discuss it with him - If it becomes clear [to you] that the Truth is with him, then it becomes obligatory upon you to follow him. [But] if you find that his statement is wrong, then it is obligatory upon you to refute it, and make his mistake clear.

[And] this is because it is not correct to accept a mistake.

But do not disparage him, and put him down while he is a scholar, who is well-known to have a good intention. If you are able to say, 'Some people say such and such, and that is a weak opinion.', and then you explain why it is weak - without mentioning the scholar - [then] that is good, and that is best."

And then he makes a very important point at the end,

"If we wanted to disparage the scholars who are well-known for having good intentions, due to the mistakes that they fell into regarding questions of the Religion, then we would disparage even the greatest of scholars. Even if a scholar should follow an opinion, that goes against what the majority of the scholars are following - or what the leading scholars are following - this [in] itself, does not mean that we have the right to attack him."

And in fact Ibn 'Uthaymeen (hafidhahullaah) again... in another Fatwa, he said,

"If a person differs from the majority of the scholars in an issue in which there is established evidence for the correctness of what he is saying, it is not allowed to abuse him, and it is not allowed to be harsh against him. [As well], it is not allowed to gather the people against him; instead one should debate with that person, and contact him.

And how many topics are there that are strange for the people to understand, and they think that there has been ijmaa' (concensus of agreement) on that question, however when they study, they will find that the person has evidence that will lead even his opponents to follow him, and accept it.

It is correct, and most likely, [that] the correct view will be with the majority - that is the normal case - however, that does not mean that the correct view is definitively with the majority."

"O you who Believe! Stand firmly for Allaah as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you swerve away from justice. But be just; that is closer to piety." Surah al-Maa'idah 5:8
...Stand up firm for the sake of Allaah, testifying to what is True. And you should not allow the hatred of a people to let you swerve from what is just, instead you must be just; for that is closer to Taqwa - that is a part of Taqwa - And you must fear Allaah. And Allaah is aware of everything you do. }

...Ibn ul-Qayyim (rahimahullaah) said, "We love Shaykh ul-Islam (i.e. Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullaah), but the Truth is more beloved to us."

...Ibn 'Uthaymeen (hafidhahullaah) was asked about the Ikhwaan and the Salafiyyeen and the Tableegh, and after saying that they should all come together as one group, he then said:

The Correct Way in which to React to the Differences and Mistakes of our Fellow

"...however, for those groups to make people flee from one another, and to curse one another, and to declare one another [as] faasiqeen..." ...even he said faasiqeen, not even muftadi'een [as this group, for the most part, says today]... "...this goes against what Islaam has brought."

Help one another in what is Righteousness and Piety. And do not test one another in sinfulness and transgression by calling your Brothers for which you have no proof that they are Muftadi'een, and have left the Path. Wa Taqq Allaah! And have Fear of Allaah! And Allaah is severe in punishment.

What are you gonna do?! Even a non-Muslim... [concerning] even a kaafir, you have the right to work with him, if what he is doing is correct and True. The Prophet joined an oath before Islaam, during the time of Jahiliyyah - the oath of Al-Kudhoor - and he said in Islaam, "If they called me to it, I would respond to it."

Al-Haqq, Al-Haqq! We are after the Truth, and what is Righteousness, and we [should] help one another for that goal.

And we have no excuse!... we have no excuse whatsoever not to co-operate with any Muslim who is doing what is right, when even if a non-Muslim is doing what is right; we can assist him.

"Have no co-operation with them whatsoever."!...[He is quoting from a fatwa put out from a Jordanian sheikh, encouraging non-co-operation with Muslims who have fallen into bid'ah]

Let us go back to the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and what the people of 'Ilm... the people of Knowledge have said. And let us, Insha Allaah, disregard such nonsense. Let us ask Allaah to forgive those Shaykhs, and all of those who joined [them] in [spreading] that [Fatwa]. May Allaah forgive them, but let us ignore and not follow the nonsense that they put forth.

And let us ask Allaah to forgive all of us...

The Prophet said that:

"You should not be envious of one another, you should not turn your backs on one another, and boycott one another. Instead you should be Brethren; Servants of Allaah... and helping one another towards that cause." [Sahih Muslim]

And the Prophet [also] said that:

"It is enough of a sin for a person that he belittle his Brother Muslim." [Sahih Muslim]

And, [as well he said]:

"All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim, his blood, his wealth and his honour." [Sahih Muslim]

However, I would like to quote from Ibn 'Uthaymeen. In this Fatwa, Ibn 'Uthaymeen is telling us who it is, who is benefitting from our behaviour, and who it is who is happy with what is going on between us; He was asked about the kind of division that exists among the different groups today, and he said:

"By Allaah, my position is that this is very painful and sorrowful. [For] it is feared that this Islaamic revival and re-awakening will become dry, and lose it's force. Because when people differ they become - as Allaah has said:

"And do not dispute with one another lest you fail and your moral strength deserts you" Surah al-Anfaal, 8:46

When you dispute [amongst yourselves] then you become weak, and your energy, your strength, leaves you."

The Correct Way in which to React to the Differences and Mistakes of our Fellow

And then he (i.e. Ibn 'Uthaymeen) said - and please listen to what this person of Knowledge that everyone, Insha Allaah, accepts as a person of Knowledge. He said:

"The enemies of Islaam - those who openly attach themselves to Islaam, and those who openly and inwardly are enemies to Islaam - are very happy with this division. In fact, they are the ones who stoke its fire; they come to this person and they say, 'This person has said such and such, and he has done such and such.', and they spread hatred and enmity among those Brothers who are calling to Allaah "

Then he continued:

"It is obligatory upon us to stand against the plots of those enemies of Allaah and His Messenger, and His Religion. And we must be one Ummah, and we must gather together and benefit from one another. We must make ourselves like we are one caller to Islaam - even if we differ in our Manhaaj in calling to Allaah, [for] that is not of importance. What is important is that we come together as Brothers, our hearts together on the Truth, and loving one another."

And Allaah has told us:

Truly! This, your Ummah is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone). Surah al-Anbiyaa, 21:92.