

TEXT OF THE BOOK

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

All praise is for Allaah, Lord of the universe. And may His peace and blessings be upon the foremost of those who fear Allaah and the seal of the prophets (Muhammad), as well as his family, his companions and (all) those who follow them in righteousness, until the Day of Recompense.

As for what follows, then:

These are some brief, yet comprehensive words concerning the difference between advising and condemning, for indeed they are counterparts in the sense that they both consist of mentioning something about a people that they hate to have mentioned. However, the distinction between the two is something that is not understood by many people. Thus, Allaah is the One who grants correctness.

Know that mentioning something about a person that he hates to have mentioned (about him) is forbidden, **if** the objective behind that is for nothing else but to dispraise and declare (his) faults and defects.¹

However, if there is found in this mentioning, a beneficial good for the general masses of Muslims – specifically for some of them – and the objective behind it is to accomplish this beneficial good, then it is not forbidden, but rather recommended.

The scholars of Hadeeth have agreed with this (principle) in their books on the subject of *Al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel*,² and they have mentioned that there is a difference between criticizing hadeeth

¹ This is an important restricting condition, so memorize it.

² See *Al-Kifaayah* (pg. 88) of Al-Khateeb, *I'laan bit-Tawbeekh Liman dhamma At-Taareekh* (pg. 461) of As-Sakhaawee, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim* (16/144) of An-Nawawee, *Majmoo' Ar-Rasaa'il wal-Masaa'il* (4/110) of Ibn Taimiyyah and *Raf'a-ur-Raibah* (pg. 24-27) of Ash-Shaukaanee. [Translator's Note: *Al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel* is the Islaamic science of determining whose reports and testimonies are to be accepted and whose are not. Those who fall under the category of *Al-Jarh* are the ones who are criticized and discredited, such as weak narrators, liars, etc. Those who fall under the category of *At-Ta'deel* are those whom the scholars have approved of and considered reliable in speech and trustworthy in narration.]

reporters and backbiting them. And they further refuted those who placed these two (categories) at the same level, such as those constantly engulfed in worship (all the time) as well as others who do not possess sufficient knowledge.³

Furthermore, there is no difference between 1) criticizing narrators of one of the hadeeth scholars (*huffaadh*) and distinguishing whose reports are to be accepted from them and whose reports are not, and between 2) clarifying the mistake of one who has erred with regard to understanding the meanings of the Book and the Sunnah, interpreted some aspect of it incorrectly, and who has adhered to something false. This (clarifying) was done so that this individual would not be followed in that which he erred in. The scholars have also unanimously agreed upon the permissibility of doing this (clarification).⁴

This is why we find that the books they authored concerning the various sciences of the religion - such as tafseer, explanation of hadeeth, Fiqh, the difference of opinions amongst the scholars, and so on - are filled with arguments⁵ and refutations of the statements of those who voiced weak opinions from the scholars of the past and present, such as the Sahaabah, the Taabi'een and those after them.

Not one of the people of knowledge abandoned (doing) this (clarification). Nor would he claim in his (refutation) to disparage, dispraise or defame the individual whose saying he was refuting, unless the author (he was refuting) was from those whose speech consisted of wickedness and who displayed vile manners when expressing himself. In this circumstance, his wickedness and vileness were forsaken apart from the original state of refuting and opposing him. And this (refutation) was based upon sound arguments and stable proofs. The reason for all this was due to the unanimous agreement of the scholars of this Religion that the truth which Allaah sent His Messenger, *sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, with must be made known, and so that all of the Religion can be purely for Allaah (alone) and so that His word can be the highest.

³ [Translator's Note: This is not a criticism against those who are constantly engulfed in worship. Rather it is a warning for those who may be deceived by their appearance. For indeed it is common that many people when they see someone who exceeds in performing worship, they automatically assume that he is knowledgeable. But most of the times this is not the case. So one must be careful because there does exist a difference between the 'Aalim (scholar) and the 'Aabid (worshipper), as the Prophet, *sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: "**The virtue of the scholar over the worshipper is like the virtue of the moon over the all the stars.**" (Abu Dawood: 3641, At-Tirmidhee: 2683 and others)]

⁴ Consider these great words, O reader and may Allaah have mercy on you, and apply them to the condition of the Muslims today!

⁵ So therefore, these matters are not from the fabrications of some "people" but rather they are nothing more than the actions of the scholars of the past!