

their opinion, nor would he reject their views or their evidences for it, even though he would not agree with any of that.<sup>13</sup>

Imaam Ahmad (*rahimahullaah*) approved of what was related from Haatim Al-Asam, when it was said to him: "You are a non-Arab and do not speak eloquently, yet no one debates you, except that you silence him. So with what do you gain victory over your opponents?" So he responded: "By three things: I become happy when my opponent speaks correctly (on a point). I become grieved when he errs. And I withhold my tongue from him, lest I should say something that would harm him" - or something with this meaning - so Ahmad (*rahimahullaah*) said: "How wise of a man he is."

Therefore, refuting weak (erroneous) opinions and clarifying the truth with regard to what opposes it, based upon sound evidences, is not from what these scholars detested. Rather, it was from that which they loved and for which they commended and praised those who did it.

So it does not enter into the realm of backbiting at all. But suppose there is someone that hates to have his error, which contradicts the Sunnah, exposed. In this case, there is no consideration given to his hatred for that, because hating to manifest the truth - if it is in opposition to the opinion of a man - is not from those matters that are praiseworthy.

Rather it is an obligation on the Muslim to love that the truth be made manifest and that the Muslims (in general) are aware of it, regardless of whether it is in conformity or in opposition to his (personal) view.<sup>14</sup>

This is from the aspects of sincerity (*naseehah*) towards "**Allaah, His Book, His Messenger, His Religion, the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.**" And this is, in fact, the Religion itself, as the Prophet, *sall-Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, has informed us.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is not in the unrestricted sense. See the great scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim's refutation of those who say, "There is no rejection to be done on the issues in which there is difference of opinion" included in *I'laam-ul-Muwaqqi'een* (3/288), for it is very important.

<sup>14</sup> **These words ought to be written in gold ink, so consider them!!**

<sup>15</sup> More than one of the Companions have reported this hadeeth, among them Tameem Ad-Daaree. It is transmitted by Muslim (55), Abu Dawood (4944), An-Nasaa'ee (7/156), Ahmad (4/102), Abu 'Uwaanah (1/36-37), Al-Humaidee (837), Al-Baghawee (3514), At-Tabaraanee in *Al-Kabeer* (1260-1262), Ibn Hibbaan in *Raudat-ul-'Uqalaa* (194), Ibn An-Najaar in *Dhail Taareekh Baghdaad* (2/193 & 301) Ash-Shihaab Al-Qadaa'ee in his *Musnad* (17-18), Wakee' in *Az-Zuhd* (346 & 621), Abu 'Ubaid in *Al-Amwaaal* (9) and Al-Bukhaaree in *At-Tareekh-us-Sagheer* (2/35)

As for clarifying the mistake of one of the scholars who erred in the past, then if one observes good manners in his speech and does well in his refutation and response, then there is no harm upon him nor is there any blame that he can be accused of. And if it turns out, that he was misled by this (past) scholar's (erroneous) opinion, then there is (also) no harm (i.e. sin) on him.

When a statement would reach some of the *Salaf* that they rejected, they would say: "This person has not spoken the truth." This example is taken from the saying of the Prophet, *sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*: "كذب أبو السناويل" **"Abu As-Sanaabil has not spoken the truth."**<sup>16</sup> when news reached him, *sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, that he issued a ruling that a woman whose husband passed away, while she was pregnant, was not permitted to remarry upon delivering her child, but instead had to wait until four months and ten days had passed.<sup>17</sup>

The righteous Imaams went to great lengths in forsaking the weak sayings (opinions) of some of the scholars. And they refuted them with the highest degree of refutation, as Imaam Ahmad (*rahimahullaah*) used to censure Abu Thawr and others in their opinions that they were alone in saying. And he went to great extremes in refuting them in these opinions.

All of this relates to the outer and apparent matters. As for the inner affairs, then if one's intention in doing that (criticism) is to just clarify the truth and so that the people will not be deceived by the sayings of someone who erred in his opinions, then there is no doubt that this individual will be rewarded for his intention. And by doing this with this intention, he falls into the category of being from those who show sincerity to Allaah, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk. And it is the same whether the one who clarifies the mistake is young or old. So he has a good example in those scholars who refuted the (weak) opinions of Ibn 'Abbaas, *rady-Allaahu 'anhuma*, which have been declared irregular, and which have been rejected by the scholars, such as (his opinion) regarding *mut'ah* (temporary divorce), *sarf* (bartering), *'umratain* and other than that.<sup>18</sup>

And he has a good example in those who refuted the opinion of Sa'eed Ibn Al-Musayyib (*rahimahullaah*) concerning his allowing the woman that was divorced three times (to remarry

<sup>16</sup> With this wording, the hadeeth has been reported by Ahmad (1/447), Al-Baghawee (2388) and Al-Haithamee in *Al-Majma'* (5/3) and he said that its narrators were of the standard of the *Saheeh*. The source of this story occurs in *Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree* (9/415) and in *Saheeh Muslim* (1484).

<sup>17</sup> [Translator's Note: The *'iddah* (waiting period) before a woman can remarry is 4 months and ten days. But if she is pregnant, then the her waiting period is whichever of the two comes first - either the four months and ten days or the day of her delivery. So if she delivers before the four months pass by, then the time of delivery take precedence and she is allowed to remarry from this point on.]

<sup>18</sup> These are well known Fiqh issues.