

FORMS OF ADVISING

If it is understood from someone, that he intends with his refutation of the scholars, to advise sincerely towards Allaah and His Messenger, then it is obligatory that he be treated with kindness, respect and veneration, just as was done by all the Muslim Imaams whose mention and examples were stated (previously), as well as those who followed them in goodness.

And if it is understood from someone that he desires, with his refuting of them, to defame, slander and expose (their) faults, then he deserves to be confronted with disciplinary action so that he and his likes will be prevented from these grotesque forbidden actions.

This intention can be recognized at times by the (own) affirmation and acknowledgment of the one refuting and at times by hints that are given in his actions and statements. So whosoever is known for his knowledge, religious characteristics, respect and esteem for the Imaams of the Muslims, he will not state a refutation nor a clarification of an error except in the manner in which other scholars see it proper.

With regard to books and works of research, it is an obligation for one to understand the author's words as having the intention mentioned in the first case.²³ And whoever takes his words to mean something other than that – while his condition is like that which has been stated (of good) – then he is from those who think evil and suspicious thoughts about one who is innocent. And this is from the types of suspicion that Allaah and His Messenger, *sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, have forbidden. So he falls under the saying of Allaah, the Most Perfect:

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

“And whoever earns a fault or a sin and then throws it onto someone innocent, he has indeed burdened himself with falsehood and a manifest sin.”²⁴

This is because having suspicious thoughts about someone that did not manifest any signs of evil is from the things that Allaah and His Messenger have forbidden, since the one holding the suspicious thoughts combines two things: 1) Earning a fault and sin, and 2) accusing an innocent person of it.

²³ Meaning: That he desires to guide and bring about good

²⁴ Surat-un-Nisaa: 112

And his entering into the severe threat found in this *ayah* becomes even greater if there should appear from him – I mean the one who holds suspicious thoughts – signs of evil, such as much injustice, enmity, little piety, a loose tongue, excessive backbiting and slandering, jealousy of people for what Allaah has given them from His bounty²⁵ and blessing, and rushing to compete to gain a position of authority before due time.

So if these attributes, of which the people of knowledge and faith are not pleased with, are recognized in someone, then indeed he only thinks sickly of the scholars. And if one's refutation of them is based according to the second case mentioned,²⁶ then he deserves to be countered with contempt and degradation.

And whoever does not have any signs show from him that indicate a specific matter, in the total sense, then it is an obligation to take and accept his words according to the best manner (of understanding), and it is not permissible to take them in a negative way.

‘Umar, *rady>Allaahu' anhu*, said:

“Do not suspect evil thoughts due to a word that has come out of the mouth of your Muslim brother. Rather, you should find that it is only filled with good.”²⁷

²⁵ See the treatise *Dhamm-ul-Hasad wa Ahlihi* (In Dispraise of Jealousy and its Adherents) of Ibn Al-Qayyim with my checking.

²⁶ Meaning: That he desires to only expose faults and to disparage

²⁷ Reported by Ahmad in *Az-Zuhd* as has been stated by As-Suyootee in *Ad-Durr-ul-Manthoor* (6/92).