

THE MANNERS OF ADVISING

And from this discussion is: when it is said to a man in his face that which he hates to hear. So if this is done with the intention of sincerely advising him, then it is good. Some of the *Salaf* would say to their brothers: “Do not advise me until you tell me in my face what I hate (to hear).” So when an individual informs his brother about a defect (found in him) in order that he may avoid it, it is good for the one being informed about one of his defects to make an excuse for it, if an excuse for it exists.

But if this advising is done with the intention of (only) blaming him due to a sin (he committed), then it is reprehensible and condemned. It was said to one of the *Salaf*: “Would you love that someone inform you about your faults?” So he replied: “If he does so with the intention of blaming me, then no.”

So blaming and condemning someone for a sin he committed is detested. The Prophet, *sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, forbade that a fornicating woman be condemned, even though he commanded that she be lashed with a whip.²⁸ So she was whipped according to the legal limits (*hudood*), but she was not condemned for her sin, nor was she blamed for it.

It is reported in At-Tirmidhee²⁹ and other collections in *marfoo'* form [i.e. that the Prophet said]:

من عير أخاه بذنب لم يمته حتى يعمله

“Whosoever condemns his brother for a sin (he committed) will not die until he has committed it (i.e. the same sin) himself.”

The hadeeth is referring to a sin, of which the person who committed it has repented from. Al-Fudail (*rahimahullaah*) said: “The believer conceals (the sin of his brother) and advises (him), while the evildoer disgraces and condemns (him).”

²⁸ It is reported in Al-Bukhaaree (4/350) and Muslim (1704) on the authority of Abu Hurairah, *radhy-Allaahu 'anh*. See *Sharh-us-Sunnah* (10/298) of Imaam Al-Baghawee.

²⁹ Under no. (2507) on the authority of Mu'aadh, *radhy-Allaahu 'anh*. Ibn 'Adiyy also reported it in *Al-Kaamil* (6/2181), Al-Khateeb in *Taareekh Baghdaad* (2/339) and Az-Zabeedee added that it was also found in Ibn Abee Ad-Duniyaa's *As-Samat* and *Al-Gheebah* as well as in Al-Baghawee. There are two defects with its chain of narration. The first is that Khaalid Ibn Ma'daan never met Mu'aadh. And the second is that Muhammad Ibn Al-Hasan Ibn Yazeed is very weak. This has been mentioned by Adh-Dhahabee in *Al-Meezaan* (3/515) and he listed this hadeeth as an example. As-Saghaanee also mentioned this hadeeth in his *Al-Mawdoo'at* (no. 58).

This is what Al-Fudail has mentioned as being from the signs of advising and condemning - and it is that advising is linked to secrecy while condemning is linked to publicizing.

It used to be said: “Whosoever commands his brother (towards doing good) at the head of a gathering, then he has condemned him.” Or it is something with this meaning.

The *Salaf* used to hate that commanding good and forbidding evil be done in this manner. Instead, they loved that it be done privately between the one commanding and the one being commanded, for indeed, this is from the signs of sincere advice. This is since it is not the goal of the one who is advising to spread and publicize the faults of the person he is advising, rather his goal is only to put an end to the evil that he has fallen into.

As for spreading and exposing someone's faults, then that is from the things that Allaah and His Messenger, *sall'Allaahu' alayhi wa sallam*, have forbidden. Allaah, may He be Exalted, says:

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 رَعُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Verily, those who love that the evil and indecent actions of those who believe should be propagated (and spread), they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allaah knows and you know not. And had it not been for the grace of Allaah and His mercy on you, (Allaah would have hastened the punishment on you) and that Allaah is full of kindness, Most Merciful.”³⁰

The *ahaadeeth* concerning the virtue of keeping the faults of others secret are many.³¹

Some of the scholars would say to those who were commanding towards good: “Strive hard to conceal the faults of the sinners, for indeed, exposing their faults shows a weakness in Islaam. The thing that deserves the most to be concealed is ones faults.”

³⁰ Surat-un-Noor: 19-20

³¹ See *Fath-ul-Baaree* (5/97) and *Saheeh Muslim* (4/1996)