

Testing people in issues of criticism

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Question: What is your opinion about testing people and imposing scholars' opinions regarding criticising persons on learners of [religious] knowledge or regarding other controversial issues that caused divergence of opinions between the Sunni scholars?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Know that among the Muslim's features is the fact of taking interest in noble deeds that concern necessities of his life here below and his safety in the hereafter. The Muslim should be interested in: educating himself, purifying his soul from meanness and vice and getting rid of things that are useless and unnecessary.

Knowledge is, indeed, the way to reach these points; so, the Muslim has to seek it and provide himself with it as much as possible. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ says: "**Part of the excellence of a man's Islaam is that he leaves what does not concern him.**"¹ And among things that does not concern him is: testing people in what is not ordered by Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ and His Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Also, forcing them to take positions that are in accordance with his positions by gathering them around one person, sticking fanatically to his opinions and calling to his way; a way on which depends their alliance and disavowal other than the way of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Moreover, anyone who takes a position that differs from the position of those who test people will be accused of being compromised and heretic.

In fact, such a behaviour will cause roughness, discord and harshness [between Muslims]. It will give rise to attitudes that are forbidden by Sharee'ah as hostility, enmity and hatred between brothers in belief. Therefore, the nation will be divided and disunited and its groups will disband because of the evil effects that result from those attitudes.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that we do not reject heresy and heretics, and warn Muslims against it and those who call towards it, after the heresy is determined and the evidences are established. Certainly, fighting religious heresies is one of the most obvious features of the Salafee Way, because heresy goes against one of the two conditions of

¹ Reported by At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Asceticism" (hadeeth 2487) and by Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Trials" (hadeeth 4111) according to Aboo Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. It is also reported by Maalik in Al-Muwatta' (hadeeth 1638) and by Ahmad (hadeeth 1758) according to Al-Hussayn Ibn `Alee رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا. This hadeeth is judged Hassan (good) by An-Nawawee in Al-Adhkaar (hadeeth 509). However, it is judged authentic by Ahmad Shaakir his recension of Musnad Ahmad (3/177) and by Al-Albaanee in Saheeh Al-Jaami` (hadeeth 5911).

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worship, which is the fact of following the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Besides, the issue of warning [against heresy] and abandoning [those who practice it] is included within the creed of Loyalty and Enmity, knowing that abandoning [heretics] must be kept within the religious limits in order to use it in a well-balanced manner avoiding either negligence or exaggeration².

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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² See: the conditions of abandonment in Majaalis Tadhkeeriyya `Alaa Masaa'il Manhajiyya (page: 73).