



The General Presidency for the Affairs of
the Grand Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Holy Mosque

Translation of the Two Holy Mosques Khutbahs
A Joint Project



Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
College of Languages and Translation

[19/01/1435– A – Al-Shuraim] -1435-01-19 المسجد الحرام الشريم

The Difference between Advising and Reviling

Khutbah Topic

His Eminence Sheikh Saud Al-Shuraim—may Allah protect him— delivered this Friday Khutbah titled “*The Difference between Advising and Reviling*”. He spoke about one of the most important values that Muslims should try hard to embrace in their social interaction, especially among Islamic Theology students, Muslim scholars, and people at large. This value is namely advising, and particularly the difference between advising, reviling and defaming.

Part One

Praise be to Allah, the Unique in Majesty with perfect Beauty; praise be to Him by way of glorification and exaltation. He is exclusively in control of all affairs in the Universe, in the minute details as well as in the overall design, and in measurement as well as in disposal. He is Supreme in Might and Glory alike. He revealed the Holy Qur’ān unto His Servant, Prophet Muhammad (may Allah’s Salāt and Peace be upon him) and sent him as Warner to al-ālamēen (the Worlds).

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, alone with no associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s Servant and Messenger who is sent by Allah to the *thaqalain* (the two major species: mankind and Jinn), as Bringer of glad tidings and Warner, as Caller to the Path of Allah, with His Will and Permission, and a radiant lamp. May Allah’s bounteous *Salāt* (Graces, Honours, Mercy) and peace be upon him, his pious and immaculate family, his wives—Mothers of the believers— his Companions, his *tābiīn* (the contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet [may Allah’s Salāt and Peace be upon him] after his death), and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgement.

Now then, O servants of Allah!

The best advice ever offered to all of us is *taqwā* (fear of disobeying Allah). I mean *taqwā* vis-à-vis Allah (may He be extolled) in all states of affairs: in private and in public, in discontentment and in satisfaction, in sound health and in sickness: **(And whosoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger (SAW), fears Allāh, and keeps his duty (to Him), such are the successful ones.)** [Al-Noor: 52]



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O servants of Allah!

Purity inside-out is a trait hardly achievable by so many people. Such are precious things; they are rare to come by and their prices keep rising. Thus, whoever wishes to look for such a precious metal in an era where egotism prevails and meanness controls individuals will at first sight notice the presence of many people but he will see none save those endowed with Allah's blessing; and these are very few indeed.

Outer appearance should normally be a faithful reflection of the inner self, because appearances are worthless if they merely serve as screenshiding disgraceful intentions. This resembles the state of water whose surface may look crystal clear but whose taste is muddy. Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Salât and Peace be upon him) said, "**Allah certainly looks neither at your bodies nor at your outer appearance; He rather looks at your hearts and deeds.**" [Narrated by Imam Muslim]

In time of parsimony when most people become selfishly opinionated, our Ummah is in dire need of friendly concord whereby people express reciprocal apologies and deliberately ignore slight inadvertencies, caused either by *ijtihād*¹, that is approved by *sharia* and supported by valid evidence, or by error provided that it is based on permissible *ijtihād*, where utmost capacity has been made. Therefore, we should not lose sight of the *ajr* (reward) which Allah (the Great and Almighty) grants to the mistaken *mujtahid*² for his sincere effort in making *ijtihād*, though erroneous, and forgives him for his involuntary error.

Truth is as clear as daybreak no matter how thick the blurring curtains of falsehood might be and no matter how facts are overturned to conceal it, whereas falsehood is stammering, no matter how many ornamented expressions and resonant arguments have been made at its disposal: **«Verily, they had plotted sedition before, and had upset matters for you, -until the truth (victory) came and the Decree of Allâh (His Religion, Islâm) became manifest though they hated it.»** [Al-Tawbah: 48]. Thus, whoever mistakenly believes that he is able to conceal truth is actually like someone who tries in vain to hide sunrises with a sieve.

O servants of Allah! Once this is known, every Muslim should foster good intentions vis-à-vis his Lord and vis-à-vis people in general. He should behave in good faith and patiently tolerate people's flaws rather than mistrust them, for whoever commits a fault while giving

¹ In Islamic Law, *ijtihād* (اجتهاد) is independent judgement in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the four *usūl* (أصول الفقه) the four foundations of Islamic jurisprudence: the Holy *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah*, *al-qiyās* [analogy], and *al-ijmā'* [consensus]), as opposed to *al-taqlīd* (التقليد) convention, tradition, custom).

² A *mujtahid* (مجتهد) is a legist formulating independent decisions in legal or theological matters, based on the interpretation and application of the four *usūl*, as opposed to *muqallid* (مقلد) he who follows convention, tradition or custom).



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people the benefit of doubt will certainly have committed a much less serious sin than someone who commits a fault due to constantly mistrusting people.

Accordingly, any sincere person should by now be able to perform self-evaluation as regards the optimal way of dealing with people's faults in accordance with religious guidelines. Such self-assessment is meant to help the Muslim individual firmly curb his own whims lest he should fall in the quagmire of fault-finding behaviour which violates others' privacy. His main guide in all that is religious knowledge and fairness.

Nonetheless, a distinction still has to be made between fault-finding and fault-mending. While the former represents a form of reviling, defaming, and avenging oneself, the latter consists in offering people advice on Truth and calling them up to embrace it. Difference is then so big between reviling and advising as it is between personal desire and aspiration to divine satisfaction: ***Whatever is with you, will be exhausted, and whatever with Allâh (of good deeds) will remain...*** [Al-Nah]: 96]

In addition, it is learnt from witnessed experience that revilers who defame others for their faults will eventually be overtaken by their very defamation and will end up falling in the traps they set for the reviled. This is because reviling is an equitable disease which catches the revilers in the same way it does with the reviled, and punishment is indeed from the same kind.

In the *hadith* narrated by Al-Tirmithi, Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Salât and Peace be upon him) said, ***"Whoever reviles his Muslim brother for a sin the latter has committed will not die until he commits the same sin."*** Because there is conspicuous malicious joy in reviling others that takes the Muslim away from noble, high standing matters into despicable trivialities, Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Salât and Peace be upon him) is reported to have said in another *hadith* narrated by Al-Tirmithi and considered by some Muslim scholars to be good: ***"Do not show malicious joy in your brother's affliction, for Allah may have mercy on him and send an affliction on you."***

Undoubtedly, every individual who claims to have minimal common sense – be he a TV viewer, a radio listener or a social networks user – would clearly recognise the dire need for the rules of discussion and conversation, preserving people's rights and privacy, abstaining from fault-finding, malicious joy (over other peoples' afflictions) and obscene language.

Such channels and sites might have great advantages in promoting good and knowingly calling people to the Truth. The reward of kind words addressed to a thousand ears and read by a thousand eyes is greater than that of words directed to a fewer audience. By the same token, vicious words yield a greater sin and a heavier burden if the number of their readers and listeners is big. That is because the tongue is the mirror of the heart and the pen is the mirror of the tongue.



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Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Salât and Peace be upon him) indeed spoke the truth when he said, ***“There is nothing else that throws people in Hellfire with their faces down—or with their noses down) except the harvest of their tongues.”*** [Narrated by Al-Tirmithi]. Thus, no rational mature person would doubt the fact that one's tongue and pen mirror one's true nature and inner self. Just as humans can have truthful, honest, and poised tongues, they can equally have lying, intrusive, and garrulous tongues. This is why Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Salât and Peace be upon him) said, ***“Human organs will find fault with the tongue and say to it: ‘Fear Allah and spare us torment; for if you mend your ways, we will mend ours; and if you deviate, so will we.’”*** [Narrated by Abu Yâla via a good chain of reporters]

Servants of Allah!

It has been proved by factual evidence that fault-finding is the result of wrong information or ill intention. If it results from the former, it reflects a deficient perception but if it results from the latter, it reflects a corrupt heart, which is more serious and yields a greater sin. Certainly, ill intention is irreparable by the tongue, but good intention can repair slips of the tongue. (The Sheikh cites a line of poetry):

*Many a faultfinder finding flaws with correct speech
While his blight is poor understanding.*

O people!

Life is shorter than any of us may wish for, and one would do oneself much injustice by taking out a big portion of one's time to track down others in ways that would do more harm than good; ‘cripple the game short of killing it’, scale up one's sins and bring down one's merits. One would then start ‘looking back too often while walking’. He who does so will make it there only late; he who goes after the game will be distracted into negligence; and he who gazes at others' flaws will not be able to see his own; hence his sin will be twofold.

After all, people will be people and none of them is infallible or angel-like. They certainly eat food in order to stay alive and walk around in markets, running their errands. Sometimes, they are right; sometimes they are wrong, but often enough, they are more right than wrong. Why do some people then seem to prefer to pick on open wounds, just like flies, or to live on others' blood, just like mosquitoes? A mosquito may cause the lion's eyeball to bleed.

Why would some of us seek affability solely in backbiting, calumny, tattling, innuendoes, accusing others of having bad faith and pretending to know what lies in their hearts?

Why would some people choose to live in bankruptcy, rather than in opulence, with their tongues and hearts? Such people are thus portrayed through the following line of poetry:



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*Were a tattletale's home in Yamamah³ and mine at the farther
End of Hadhramaut⁴, still he would find his way to me.*

Addressing his Companions, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Salāt and Peace be upon him) said: ***"Do you know who the bankrupt is?" They said: 'The bankrupt among us is he who has neither money nor property.' He said, "The real bankrupt of my Ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with Salat, Saum (fasting) and Sadaqah (charity), but he will find himself bankrupt on that day as he will have exhausted the good deeds because he reviled others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully devoured the wealth of others, shed the blood of others and beat others; so his good deeds would be credited to the account of those (who suffered at his hand). If his good deeds fall short to clear the account, their sins would be entered in his account and he would (eventually) be thrown in the (Hell) Fire."*** [Narrated by Imam Muslim]

O Allah! How numerous the bankrupt are! How wretched they are in this life and how big their retribution will be in the Hereafter! Allah Almighty says: ***﴿Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them). (199). And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitan (Satan) then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower.﴾*** [Al-A'rāf: 199-200]

May Allah bless you and me by the Glorious *Qur'ān* and make its verses and wise sayings beneficial to you and me! This is what I have said. If it is correct, it is so thanks to Allah, but if it is wrong, it is my own fault and Satan's. I ask Allah to forgive my sins, yours, and those of all the Muslims, so ask Him for forgiveness, for He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful!

³Al-Yamamah is an ancient district lying to the east of the plateau of Najd in modern-day Saudi Arabia.

⁴Hadhramaut is the name of the region currently retained in Hadhramaut Governorate of the Republic of Yemen.



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Part Two

Praise be to Allah for His blessings, and thanks are due to Him for His guidance and bounty.

Now then,

Observe *taqwa*, O servants of Allah, and you should know that the obligation to control one's tongue, to keep others' flaws from being exposed and refrain from pursuing their faults does not –obviously– mean to refrain from giving them advice in case they make mistakes. This must be carried out in proper ways that are free of reviling and defamation.

There is no good in those who never give advice and those who never show the will to accept it; for ***“all the sons of Adam are sinners, but the best of sinners are those who repent often.”*** There is nothing wrong with making mistakes as this is only human. Perfection is proper to Allah alone, and infallibility is limited to His messengers. However, it is all too shameful not to accept advising after erring.

Likewise, a simple human error should not warrant recourse to assault the errant person and sharpen the 'swords' of advice for him under the pretext of giving counsel, as though fighting an enemy. Verily, the presence of leniency in any matter brings about grace and propriety while its absence therein only brings about disgrace. Allah Almighty says: ***“Then, as for the foam it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is for the good of mankind remains in the earth.”*** [Al- Ra'd: 17]

Beware of always standing for yourself even though you might be right for it annihilates goodwill and eats it away as fire does firewood. Beware of shunning sincere advising and sincere advisors, for such is the path of the Messengers' enemies.

Imam Abu Abdullah Ibn Battah put it well enough when he said: *“Feeling dejected because someone else has been proven correct is practice of deception on your part and entertainment of bad faith with respect to fellow Muslims. It is important to know that he who hates to hear others speak the truth and seeks to uphold his own errors is liable to be stripped of his knowledge and presence of mind by Allah. Therefore, hearing the truth and then stubbornly denying it is considered an act of arrogance vis-à-vis Allah.”*

In the same vein, Ibn Al-Qayyim pointed out: *“Allah Almighty would vilify those who would resist or accept the truth depending on whether the person reporting it is someone they like or dislike, for such are the morals of those Allah despises.”*

This is particularly applicable –O servants of Allah– to all of those contributing to (religious) learning and *da'wah* (call) as well as those media agents, whether in TV, the press, or the radio. These ought to observe fear of Allah in what they choose to report and not to. They ought to avoid major blunders and overlook excusable ones. Such is indeed the moderation that so exclusively marks our Muslim *Ummah*.



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(The Sheikh includes two lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*Beware, O people of wisdom,
Lest a Muslim scholar among us slips,
For his slip is a major stumble
That could lead a whole world to stumble.*

Ask Allah –may He have mercy on you– to send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace on the best of His creatures and the purest of mankind, Muhammad Ibn `AbdAllāh, who is given *al-Hawdh*⁵ and is vested with intercession; for Allah sent His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace on him and then ordered His angels, that are praising His sanctity, to do likewise and called out to you, O believers, to ask Him to send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace on him. Allah the Almighty says: ***Allāh sends His Salāt (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad, peace be upon him), and also His angels (ask Allāh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salāt (ask Allāh to bless) on him (Muhammad peace be upon him), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islāmīc way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salāmu `Alaikum).*** [Al-Aḥzāb: 56]

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) and Peace on Your Servant and Messenger Muhammad and on his four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, on all the Companions of Your Prophet Muhammad (*may Allah's Salāt and Peace be upon him*), and the *tabi'īn*⁶, and those who righteously followed them till the Day of Judgment. O Allah! Be also pleased with us all, along with them, by Your Pardon and Generosity, O You, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate of all!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Fail polytheism and polytheists (who associate partners with You)! O Allah! Grant victory to Your Religion, Your Holy Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your true servants!

O Allah! Bring an end to the suffering of Muslims! Rescue those in distress, and help those indebted pay back their debts! Cure those of us and those of the Muslims who are ill, O You, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate!

O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! O Allah! Grant them victory over their

⁵This is the Arabic word for the water basin given by Allah (the Great and Almighty) to the Prophet (*may Allah's Salāt and Peace be upon him*) in the Hereafter, from which he **will give the believers to drink and they will never feel thirsty thereafter.**

⁶ The Arabic name given to the contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet (*may Allah's Salāt and Peace be upon him*) after his death.



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oppressors in Syria, Burma, and all over the Muslim world! O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn*(the worlds)!

O Allah! Grant victory to our Muslim brothers in Burma and in Syria, O You the Lord of Majesty and Bounty! O Allah! Fail their enemy and plague their lives and make them disastrous! O You the Ever-Living, the Eternal Guardian! O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn*(the worlds)!

O Allah! Grant us security in our homelands! Make pious our leaders and those responsible for our affairs, and make our leadership from among those who are fearful of Allah, who observe *taqwā*(fear of Allah), and seek your satisfaction. O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn*(the worlds)!

O Allah! Guide our Imam (leader) to do and say whatever you please and accept. O You the Ever-Living, the Eternal Guardian! O Allah! Make his retinue righteous, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!

O Allah! You are Allah; there is no deity worthy of worship except You! You are Self-Sufficient and we are poor! Send down rain upon us and do not make us despondent! O Allah! You are Allah; there is no deity worthy of worship except You! You are Self-Sufficient and we are poor! Send down rain upon us and do not make us despondent! O Allah! We implore You not to make our sins impede Your grace! O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!

﴿... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!﴾[Al-Baqarah: 201]

Glorified be You, our Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from what they attribute unto You! May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon the Messengers! The last of our supplications is all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!