

Shaykh al-Albānī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ):

Regarding the Matter of Whether to Maintain Silence or Refute an Oppressor

The ‘Allāmah, Imām and Muḥaddith,
Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-
Albānī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:¹

To proceed: One of the greatest calamities of our time is that the Muslim student of knowledge is forced to waste much of his time defending himself and refuting the accusations and falsehoods leveled against him by some people who neither fear Allāh nor feel shame before His servants, in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): “Among the things that people have learned from the words of [wisdom] of the earlier prophethood is: *If you have no shame, then do as you wish.*”

As the poet says:

*If you guard neither your honour nor fear the Creator,
Nor feel shame before [His] creatures, then do whatever you please.
If you approach a man and honour his right,
Yet he ignores your right, then severing ties is the better course.*

Though it is well known that the one who has no shame has no cure and hence, reproaching him will be of no benefit, it might appear obvious therefore, that it is best to turn away from him, and to leave him and his affair (alone), as the poet said:

If a man is endowed with a shameless face,



عما في كلمات أبي غنم من الأدب الطيل والبركات

بقلم

عبدالمعز الزين الألباني

¹ The introduction to his book, *Kashf al-Niqāb ‘ammā Fī Kalimāt Abī Ghuddah min al-Abāṭil wal-Iftirā’āt* (pp. 3-8).

*(And) proceeds through affairs however he pleases,
No medicine nor any other (remedy)
Suffices to cure him of his nature.
So why engage in reproaching one who has no shame
When it brings nothing but trouble?*

However, given that keeping silent about such a one exposes many innocent people to the (danger of) slipping behind him and being affected by his accusations and falsehoods, it becomes necessary to refute him and expose his fabrications, so that **“those who perish [might] perish upon clear evidence and those who live [might] live upon clear evidence.”** (8:42).

There is also another benefit that returns to the slanderer himself, which is: 1) the consideration that he might return to his senses, and 2) lessening his burden of sin by limiting the number of people who become entangled and misled by him—whose burdens he would otherwise have to bear in addition to his own, as the Exalted said: **“But they will surely carry their own burdens and [other] burdens along with their own, and they will surely be questioned on the Day of Resurrection about what they used to fabricate.”** (29:13). And in another verse: **“That they may bear their own burdens in full on the Day of Resurrection and some of the burdens of those whom they misguide without knowledge. Unquestionably, evil is that which they bear.”** (16:25).

Maybe this will remind and persuade those (people) for whom these refutations are not appealing at all, who wish instead, that such efforts be directed toward pursuits of knowledge without debating and back-and-forth refutations.

Most of them do not possess the scholarly spirit which aids in discerning the truth in what people have differed over, and thereafter, to uphold and call to that truth.

Although we are with them in what they wish for, they must remember that winds often blow contrary to the sailor's wishes, as the poet said:

*Not everything that a person desires is (always) attained,
Winds blow contrary to what the ships desire.*

Also, it is not from the characteristics of believers to remain silent in the face of aggression, injustice, slander and lies leveled against them when they have legislated means (at their disposal) to repel and refute such things against the perpetrator.

This stands in contrast to the teaching attributed to our master (*sayyid*), 'Eisā (عيسى السلام) which Christians call the "Golden Verse": "Whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also; whoever asks for your coat, give him your cloak; and whoever asks you to walk a mile with him, walk two miles with him!"

There is no such teaching in Islām.

Rather, if taken absolutely, it contradicts the Noble Qur'an's description of the characteristics of the believing servants of the Most Merciful as afforded by the noble verse: **"And those who, when tyranny strikes them, defend themselves. The recompense for an evil deed is an evil the like thereof; but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allāh. Indeed, He does not love the wrongdoers. And whoever defends himself after having been wronged, there is no blame upon them. Blame lies only upon those who wrong people and act unjustly in the land without right; for them, there is a painful punishment."** (42:39-42).

If everything that has been presented does not convince those people, then at the very least, let it serve as an excuse for me, for it is said: "Hasty rebuke is unjust." As the poet said:

*Be patient, do not rush to blame a companion,
Perhaps he has an excuse, yet you blame (him).*

Indeed, their duty was to turn their blame and condemnation to the unjust oppressor, to prevent him from his oppression, and to come to the aid of the oppressed, due to the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): *“Aid your brother, whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed.”* It was asked: *“How do I aid him if he is an oppressor?”* He replied: *“Prevent him from oppression, for that is aiding him.”*

In another narration: *“Let a man aid his brother, whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed: if he is an oppressor, let him forbid him [from wrongdoing], for that is aiding him; and if he is the oppressed, let him come to his aid.”*

And his saying: *“There is no person who abandons a fellow Muslim in a situation where his honour is being disparaged and his sanctity violated, save that Allah the Exalted will abandon him in a situation where he desires His support. And there is no one who supports a Muslim in a situation where his honour is being disparaged and his sanctity violated, but that Allah will support him in a situation where he desires His support.”*²

In any case, it is known that pleasing everyone is an unreachable goal, as some proverbs state: *“Whenever a stick is struck against another, some people are saddened, and others are pleased.”*

As the poet said:

*I shall not escape the words of a defamer,
Even were I to be in a cave atop a rugged mountain peak.
And who among men escapes unscathed,
Even were he to be hidden beneath a vulture's wing?*

This being the case, it suffices me to adhere to the limits of the Sharī‘ah in this response. I shall not meet the aggressor with aggression, nor the slanderer with slander. Rather, I shall describe him as he truly is, so that people may beware of him and not be led astray by his misguidance, nor become deviated by his deviation from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr (no. 5566).

This is especially important for those newly acquainted with him, who might be deceived by his outer appearance while remaining ignorant of his true nature—as the poet said:

*Let no friend ever deceive you,
With his outward look until you put him to the test.
How many a friend have I been blind to,
His appearance deceived me for a time.
He would meet me with a cheerful face.
And express words scattered like pearls.
Yet when I probed the depths of his inner self,
I found no trace of the affection he seemed to harbour.
So leave all the brothers, save for the one,
Who harbours the same affection he outwardly displays.
And if you find one who embodies this,
Make him a treasure you cherish and keep.
And in old times, the scholars said:
Criticism does not constitute backbiting in six cases.
The one aggrieved (by oppression),
the one identifying a person,
and the one issuing a warning.
The one who sins openly,
the one seeking a legal ruling,
and the one seeking assistance to remove an evil.*

Any one of these traits (mentioned) suffices to justify the likes of this refutation. Yet how much more so when others are combined with it, especially the first of them (seeking redress for oppression). Its evidence lies in the words of Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى): **“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”** (4:148).

And the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “*Delay [in repayment] by one who has the means makes his honour and his punishment lawful.*”³

The poet said:

*Placing kindness where the sword belongs, in matters of high regard,
Is as harmful as placing the sword where kindness belongs.*

I ask Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) to protect us from injustice and from unjustly disparaging others, and to make what I write a defence of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the way of the Salaf. Indeed, He is All-Hearing and Responsive.

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Translated by Abu ‘Iyaad

<https://abuiyaad.com/q/albani-silence-refutations>

³ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr (no. 5363).