

Shaykh Saalim bin Sa'd at-Taweel
(hafidhahullaah)
**ON PRINCIPLES FOR
CRITICISMS AND REFUTATIONS¹**

All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and may prayers and peace be upon the seal of the Messengers, his family and all of his companions, to proceed:

Errors and shortcomings are from the characteristics of Bani Adam and everyone refutes and can be refuted as no one is infallible after the Prophets and Messengers. However, certain principles and manners have to be maintained for all who want to critique or refute the one who fell into error or fell into that which is incorrect. I remind myself first and then all those who come across this article of mine, and this is what I have to say and I seek Allaah's help.

FIRST:

Sincerity to Allaah, it is obligatory for every Muslim to make his refutations and criticisms only for the Face of Allaah and not for showing off, for fame, revenge, envy or for any other intent or reason, this is whether he intends to show the truth or invalid falsehood, seeking the Countenance of Allaah in all of this.

SECOND

That the refutation should be based on knowledge and insight, the realm of error, the deductions from terms and how they oppose the Shari' texts all has to be known. This is so as to neither make evil that which is good nor command to evil; also to neither deem that which is correct as being wrong nor deem that which is wrong as being correct. So refuting and criticising is not permissible except with knowledge and understanding.

THIRD

Justice, for the refutation and criticism is a ruling from the critic and the refuter, Allaah has said,

¹ From: <http://www.alwatan.com.kw/Default.aspx?MgDid=452070&pageId=310> and dated 25/12/2006

“...and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allāh instructs you. Indeed, Allāh is ever Hearing and Seeing.”

{an-Nisaa (4): 58}

So oppression, excessiveness, accusations and understanding speech in a way which is inadequate - is not permissible.

FOURTH

Good opinion, however with balance and without transgressing having good opinion to the extent that we make a way out for every invalid thing. In the same way we do not have bad opinion about a speaker to the extent that we distort his words to carry the worst intents. However, we have to be between the two as the matter is detailed and whoever has not perfected this field should leave to those who have.

FIFTH

Kindness, kindness! For “kindness is not found within a thing except that it beautifies it”, yes in some instances a matter can require, when refuting some individuals, harshness as some of the Salaf did, however the basis is kindness especially when the one being refuted is senior, has a following or is referred back to. The saying of Allaah suffices us here,

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allāh].”

{Taa Haa (20): 44}

SIXTH

The ruling has to be based on what is apparent in terms of statements and actions without making a judgement on intentions and hidden factors which only Allaah knows about.

SEVENTH

That the refutation at times be in secret and open at other times, this is so that the critic has wisdom and seeks the most appropriate way for the one being refuted which takes into account the size of the error. Also (the critic) has to take into consideration if the error was committed openly as in this case the refutation of the error should likewise be

open. Or the mistake could be personal and then in this case the refutation should be made privately between the critic and the one who made the error without it being open and made public.

EIGHTH

Non-compliance with the conditions and the principles which have no basis, no evidence and no proof for and of the people are those who say that **“whoever errs then the truth is not to be accepted from him, no justice (shown) to him and should not be listened to, even if he recites a verse of the Qur’aan”**. From the people are those who say **“we have to mention the person’s good points along with mentioning their bad points and counter-balance between the two (Muwaazanaah) when refuting and critiquing”**. Both this and the other are incorrect. The truth is accepted and the error is rejected from everyone and no one is above the level of criticism and refutation except for the Prophets and Messengers.

NINTH

Making a ruling upon a saying but not on the person, for example by saying that **“this saying is kufr”**, **“this saying is fisq”**, **“this saying is baatil”**, **“this saying is bid’a”**, **“this opposes the Sunnah”**, **“this saying is an error”** or the likes depends on the level of the mistake made in the saying yet without saying **“such and such is a kaafir”**, **“such and such is a murtad”**, **“such and such is a faasiq”** or **“such and such is an innovator”**, why? Because the ruling on specific people has other principles and the *’Ulama* and judges make rulings on this. The position of refuting and critiquing differs from the station of making rulings on specific individuals. An example of this is: as some of the Salaf said **“whoever says the Qur’aan is created has disbelieved”**, the saying that the Qur’aan is created is kufr yet with this they did not make *takfeer* of specific people who made such statements, so we have to pay attention to this as it is important.

TENTH

That the intent of the critic is advice so as to hope that the mistaken person retracts from his errors and returns to that which is correct or repents from his sin and returns to the truth.

ELEVENTH

Refuting and critiquing is a collective responsibility and it does not necessitate that every single Muslim to try and refute the opposers and memorise the realms of error that the opposers fall into.

So dear reader this is what I wanted to remind myself of first and then you secondly and I ask Allaah to grant every Muslim success towards the truth and that which is correct and,

*All praise is due to Allaah firstly and finally and prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad,
his family and all of his companions.*