21576 - Slandering callers and reformers

the question

In recent days there has been a lot of slander against those who call people to Islam (daa'iyahs) and dividing them into groups and categories. What is your opinion on that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allah has enjoined justice and good treatment of others, and He has forbidden wrongdoing, hatred and enmity. Allah sent His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the same message as He sent all the Messengers, namely the call to Tawheed and to worship of Allah alone. He commanded him to establish justice and forbade him to do the opposite, i.e., to worship anything other than Allah, to cause division and to transgress against the rights of others.

In these days it has become very common that people who claim to have knowledge and to be calling people to good slander many of their brothers among the well-known daa'iyahs, and they talk about the seekers of knowledge, daa'iyahs and lecturers. They do that in secret in their own gatherings, but it may be recorded on tapes that are distributed among the people, and they may do it openly in public lectures in the mosques. This behaviour goes against the commands of Allah and His Messenger in several ways.

1 – It is a transgression against the rights of the Muslims, and against the elite of the people, namely the seekers of knowledge and daa'iyahs who are striving to make the people aware and to teach them and correct their beliefs and practices, and to organize lessons and lectures, and to write beneficial books.

2 – It splits the Muslims and causes division in their ranks. They are the most in need of unity and they need to keep away from division, discord and too much gossip amongst themselves,

especially when the daa'iyahs who are being slandered are from among the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah who are well known for their opposition to bid'ah (innovation) and myth, and for standing up against those who promote such things, and for exposing their plots and tricks. We see no benefit to be gained by such actions, except for the enemies who lie in wait for opportunities to harm the Muslims, such as the kaafirs, hypocrites and followers of bid'ah and misguidance.

3 – This action offers support and help for the self-serving among the secularists, westernizers and other heretics who are well known for stirring up trouble among the daa'iyahs and telling lies against them, and inciting people against them in their writings and recordings. It is contrary to Islamic brotherhood for those who are too hasty to help their enemies against their brothers among the seekers of knowledge, daa'iyahs and others.

4 – This spreads corrupts ideas in the hearts and minds of the common folk and elite; it spreads and propagates lies and false rumours, and causes a great deal of backbiting and slander. It leaves the door wide open to evil people who persist in spreading doubts and stirring up fitnah, and who are keen to cause harm to the believers by accusing them of things that they did not do.

5 – Much of what is being said has no basis in reality; rather these are illusions which the Shaytaan has made attractive to them, through which he has tempted them. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another…"[al-Hujuraat 49:12]

The believer should interpret what his Muslim brother says in the best possible way. One of the salaf said: Never think of something that is said by your brother as being bad when you still find room for a good interpretation.

6 – Whatever ijtihaad is produced by some scholars or seekers of knowledge, in areas where ijtihaad is permitted, the author of said ijtihaad cannot be blamed or rebuked for it, so long as he is qualified to engage in ijtihaad. If someone else has a different opinion, it is better for him to debate with him in a proper manner, striving to reach the truth via the shortest route and leaving

no room for the insinuating whispers of the Shaytaan or for him to cause trouble among the believers. If that is not possible, and someone thinks that he has no choice but to explain what is wrong with his ijtihaad, then he should choose the best wording and the most subtle way of explaining, and not resort to attacking, slandering or going to extremes in criticizing him, which may cause others to reject the truth or to turn away from it. He should also avoid criticizing specific people, casting aspersions upon their intentions or saying unnecessary or irrelevant things about them. In such cases the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would say, “What is the matter with some people who say such and such…?”

The advice I offer to these brothers who have fallen into the sin of slandering the daa’iyahs is to repent to Allah for the things that they have written or said that may have corrupted the hearts of some youth and filled them with hatred and grudges, and kept them from seeking beneficial knowledge or from calling people to Allah by making them preoccupied with gossip and talking about this one and that one, and seeking out faults for which they could criticize people, and going to extremes in doing that.

I also advise them to offer expiation for the things that they have done by writing and other means that they think they should not have done, and to remove from people’s minds the wrong ideas they may have given them. They should focus on fruitful actions which will bring them closer to Allah and will be beneficial to people, and they should beware of being too hasty to accuse people of kufr, fisq and bid’ah without any clear evidence or proof. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever says to his brother ‘O kaafir!’ one of them will be deserving of that description.” (Saheeh, agreed upon).

It is prescribed for those who call others to the truth and for seekers of knowledge, if they are uncertain about something said by a scholar or anyone else, to refer to the prominent scholars and to ask them, so that they can explain the facts of the matter to them and remove the confusion and doubt from their minds, in accordance with the words of Allah in Soorat al-Nisaa’ (interpretatiuon of the meaning):

“When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known

(among the people); if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah upon you, you would have followed Shaytaan (Satan), save a few of you"[al-Nisaa' 4:83]

And Allah is the One Whom we ask to reform all the Muslims and to unite their hearts in taqwa and to bring the scholars of the Muslims and those who call to the truth together in doing that which pleases Him and will benefit His slaves. May He unite them in following guidance and protect them against all the causes of division and dissent; may He support the truth through them and humiliate falsehood through them, for He is the One Who is able to do that. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and those who follow his guidance until the Day of Resurrection.