97732 - Ruling on Arab nationalism and undermining the position of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

the question

What is your opinion of one who is asked, “Which is better in your view, your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or your language?” and he answers. “My language”? Is he an apostate if he says that, whether in jest or out of ignorance?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We do not see how you can compare between something tangible and something intangible, so how can the person say that the language – which is an intangible thing – is better than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) – who is a tangible thing, i.e., a person?

If we think about it we will realize that the matter may be taken in two ways, one that has to do with the questioner and one that has to do with the respondent.

With regard to the respondent: it may be that he understands “language” as referring to Arab nationalism – as it seems that they are Arabs and are talking about the Arabic language – and that he understands the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as referring to Islam. In this case it is possible to compare the two things and ask questions about them.

With regard to the questioner, he wants to draw attention to his exaggerated respect for his language by comparing it to something that is venerated by the Muslims, namely the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so he asks him if his language is greater than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Secondly:

If the first interpretation is correct, then the respondent has fallen into kufr, because Arab nationalism is a jaahili call that involves kufr, criticizes Islamic sharee'ah and divides Muslims, joining Muslims to non-Muslims on the basis of the Arabic language. In their view an Arab kaafir is closer and dearer to them than a non-Arab Muslim. This is clearly kufr and disbelief in Islam and its laws.

The nationalist poet Fakhri al-Baroodi said:

The Arab lands are my homeland, from Damascus to Baghdad

From Najd to Yemen to Egypt to Tetouan (Morocco)

No border separates us and no religion divides us

The language of al-daad (i.e., Arabic) unites us with Ghassaan and 'Adnaan.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is your opinion on the call for nationalism which believes that belonging to a race or language takes precedence over belonging to a religion, and these groups claim that they do not oppose religion, but they give nationalism precedence over it. What is your opinion of this call?

He replied:

This is a jaahili call, and it is not permissible to join it or encourage those who promote it. Rather it must be put an end to, because Islamic sharee'ah opposes it and rejects it. We should refute their specious arguments and claims with that which makes the truth clear to those who seek it. Islam is the only thing that preserved Arabness in language, literature and culture. Rejecting Islam leads to destroying Arabness in language, literature and culture. Hence the daa'iyahs should strive their utmost to call people to Islam just as the colonialists are striving their utmost to destroy it.

It is a well known principle of Islam, that no Muslim has any excuse for not knowing, that the call for Arab nationalism or any other kind of nationalism, is a false call, grave error and blatant evil; it is a bad jaahili attitude and a plot against Islam and its followers. That is due to many reasons that

we have explained in a separate book entitled Naqd al-Qawmiyyah al-‘Arabiyyah ‘ala Daw’ al-Islam wa’l-Waaqi’ (Criticism of Arab Nationalism in the Light of Islam and Reality).

Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (4/173).

This book is published in its entirety in Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (1/280-318).

The Shaykh (may Allaah have mercy on him) also said:

One of the greatest of evils and follies is to compare Islam to Arab nationalism. Does nationalism that is devoid of Islam have any characteristics that qualify it to be counted among the ranks of Islam? Can there be any comparison between the two? Undoubtedly this is the gravest insult to Islam and a denial of its principles and wise teachings. How can any sound mind compare between nationalism and Islam when, if Abu Jahl, ‘Utbah ibn Rabee’ah, Shaybah ibn Rabee’ah and other enemies of Islam were alive, they would be among the most prominent supporters and greatest proponents of nationalism, whereas the proponents and supporters of Islam in every time and place are Muhammad the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan, ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib and other Sahaabah, the supporters and heroes of Islam, and those righteous people who followed their path? No one would justify comparing nationalism of this ilk, with these men as its supporters, and a religion of such standing, with such supporters and proponents, except one who is deranged, or is a blind follower, or a bitter enemy of Islam. The one who makes such a comparison is like one who compares dung and pearls, or Prophets and devils. The one with insight who ponders this and examines the facts closely, will clearly see that comparing nationalism and Islam is more dangerous to Islam that the comparisons mentioned above. Moreover, how can it be valid to compare nationalism, the fate of one who dies following which is Hell, and Islam, the destiny of one who dies following which is the victory of abiding close to the Lord in an abode of honour?

O Allaah, guide us and our people to the Straight Path, for You are able to do all things.

Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (1/320, 321).

These are two useful answers from the Shaykh (may Allaah have mercy on him) about the comparison between Arab nationalism and Islam. The second answer contains the ruling on one who compares between them, and says that he is deranged or a blind follower or a bitter enemy of Islam.

The one who knows nothing about the status of nationalism may be excused, But if a person is ignorant of Islam and believes that some other religion, system or principle is better than it, he is undoubtedly a kaafir.

Thirdly:

If we examine the second scenario, then we will see that the questioner has spoken ill of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by making this comparison, and the respondent has spoken worse ill by answering this foolishness, which is kufr in and of itself, because it is undermining the status of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and speaking ill of him.

What the Muslim must do is venerate his Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and support him, and protect him against everything that may offend him; he must also honour him and respect him. Allaah has stated that this is one of the characteristics of the believers, and He has enjoined it on the Muslims.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So those who believe in him (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur’aan) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful”

[al-A’raaf 7:157]

“Verily, We have sent you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner.

9. In order that you (O mankind) may believe in Allaah and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and

that you assist and honour him (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and (that you) glorify (Allaah's) praises morning and afternoon"

[al-Fath 48:8,9]

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Allaah has enjoined assisting him, as He says "and that you assist and honour him". Ta'zeer (assisting) means helping him, supporting him and protecting him against everything that may offend him.

Honouring refers to everything in which there is tranquillity and peace of mind, such as honour and respect, and dealing with him with the utmost respect and dignity

Al-Saarim al-Maslool (1/425).

Respecting and honouring him is not limited to his lifetime (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), rather it is also required after his death.

Al-Qaadi 'Iyaad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It should be noted that revering, respecting and venerating the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is required after his death, just as it was required during his lifetime, by showing respect when his name, is mentioned, (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), when you hear his hadeeth and Sunnah, when reading his seerah (biography); it also includes showing respect to the members of his household and his companions.

Al-Shifa fi Ahwaal al-Mustafa (2/40).

Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted, has forbidden the Muslims to call the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by his name only, as they do with one another; this is by way of venerating him (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Make not the calling of the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) among you as your calling one of another. Allaah knows those of you who slip away under shelter (of some excuse without taking the permission to leave, from the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم). And let those who oppose the Messenger’s (Muhammad’s) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them”

[al-Noor 24:63]

al-Dahhaak narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas said: They used to say “Ya Muhammad (O Muhammad); Ya Aba’l-Qaasim (O Abu Qaasim)”, but Allaah forbade them to do that out of respect for His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said: So they said: “Ya rasool Allaah (O Messenger of Allaah); Ya Nabi Allaah (O Prophet of Allaah).” This was also stated by Mujaahid and Sa’eed ibn Jubayr.

Qataadah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Allaah enjoined that his Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) should be respected, honoured and venerated.

Muqaatil ibn Hayyaan said: Do not call him by name when you call him, by saying: O Muhammad; and do not say O son of ‘Abd-Allaah; rather honour him by saying “Ya Nabi Allaah (O Prophet of Allaah); Ya rasool Allaah (O Messenger of Allaah).”

Maalik said, narrating from Zayd ibn Aslam: Allaah commanded them to honour him.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Say not (to the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم) Raa‘ina [In Arabic it means ‘Be careful; Listen to us, and we listen to you’ but in Hebrew it is an insult] but say Unzurna (make us understand) and hear”

[al-Baqarah 2:104]

“O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not.

3. Verily, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allaah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), they are the ones whose hearts Allaah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

4. Verily, those who call you from behind the dwellings, most of them have no sense.

5. And if they had patience till you could come out to them, it would have been better for them”

[al-Hujuraat 49:2-5]

All of this has to do with proper etiquette in addressing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), speaking with him and in his presence. They were also enjoined to offer charity before speaking to him.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (6/88, 89).

Allaah has warned the one who raises his voice in the presence of His Prophet that he may lose his good deeds, which may be rendered invalid.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not.

[al-Hujuraat 49:2]

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sa’di (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

This is etiquette to be observed with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be

upon him) when addressing him, i.e., the one who is addressing him should not raise his voice above (the Prophet's) voice, and he should not speak loudly to him, rather he should lower his voice and address him in a polite and gentle manner, with veneration, respect, honour and esteem. The Messenger is not like one of them, rather they should address him differently as he is different from anyone else with regard to his rights over the ummah and the obligation to believe in him and love him, without which faith is not complete. Not observing that etiquette may lead to serious consequences, and there is the fear that a person's good deeds may be rendered invalid without him realizing it. Observing proper etiquette with him is also a means of attaining reward and having one's good deeds accepted.

Tafseer al-Sa'di (p. 799).

The scholars are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to execute the one who reviles the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or criticizes him, or speaks of him with disrespect, whether that is explicit or implicit.

Al-Qaadi 'Iyaad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It should be noted that everyone who reviles the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or criticizes him, or attributes to him any shortcoming in his character, lineage, religious commitment or any other attribute, or undermines his position by means of hints, or likens him to something in a way that implies reviling him, scorning him, belittling him, finding fault with him or criticizing him, comes under the ruling on one who reviles him, and is to be executed. Capital punishment also applies to the one who curses the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or prays against him or wishes for harm to befall him, or attributes to him something that does not befit his status by way of criticism, or says anything foolish about him, or says something bad and false about him, or criticizes him for some calamities and trials that befell him, or tries to undermine his position because of some human trait that is possible for a Prophet.

There is scholarly consensus on this point, from the time of the companions of the Messenger of

Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) until how, and until Allaah inherits the earth and everything on it.

Al-Shifa’ bi Ta’reef Huqooq al-Mustafa (2/214).

Fourthly:

The words and deeds which put a person beyond the pale of Islam come under the same ruling whether they are said in jest or in earnest, or as a mockery. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“If you ask them (about this), they declare: ‘We were only talking idly and joking.’ Say: ‘Was it at Allaah (عز و جل), and His Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you were mocking?’

66. Make no excuse; you disbelieved after you had believed. If We pardon some of you, We will punish others amongst you because they were Mujrimoon (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, criminals)”

[al-Tawbah 9:65-66]

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

This is a clear statement that mocking Allaah, His Signs and His Messenger is kufr, so it applies even more so to deliberate reviling. This verse indicates that everyone who denigrates the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), whether in earnest or in jest has committed an act of kufr.

Al-Saarim al-Maslool (1/37).

So you should advise this man and remind him to fear Allaah, and explain to him how abhorrent his words are. The religion of Allaah, may He be exalted, is not something to be debated and argued, or to be mocked and made fun of. Tell him that what he must do is repent sincerely to Allaah and regret what he has done, and do a lot of good deeds, in the hope that Allaah might

guide him and forgive him.

And Allaah knows best.