



The Base Rule Concerning Muslims is That They are Oppressive, Ignorant

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaykh Rabee' ibn Haadee al-Madkhalee

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullaah) said:

وأما قول من يقول : الأصل في المسلمين العدالة فهو باطل ؛ بل الأصل في بني آدم الظلم والجهل، كما قال تعالى: (وحملها الإنسان إنه كان ظلوما جهولا) و مجرد التكلم بالشهادتين لا يوجب إنتقال الإنسان عن الظلم والجهل إلى العدل (مجموع الفتاوى ٣٥٧/١٥)

“As for the saying of the one who says, “The base rule (asl) concerning Muslims is al’adaalah (uprightness, trustworthiness, integrity, honesty), then it is baatil (false, futile). Rather, the base rule concerning the Son of Aadam is dhulm (oppression) and jahl (ignorance), just as the Most High has said, “...But man took it upon himself (i.e. the trust that was refused by the Heavens and Earth). Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).” (Ahzaab 33:70). And the mere utterance of the two testimonies of faith does not necessitate that a person has moved from oppression and ignorance into al’adl (integrity, justice, honesty).” (Majmoo’ al-Fataawaa 15/357).

Then a few lines later, Shaykh ul-Islam explains that that al’adl (justice, uprightness) in the view of the Fuquhaa (Jurists) is when a person is free from major sins and does not persist upon minor sins. This is in the context of explaining that sidq (truthfulness) is linked to birr (righteousness) and leads to it, and that kadhīb (lying) is linked to fujoor (sin) and leads to it.

Shaykh Rabee' bin Haadee al-Madkhalee (hafidhahullaah), the Imaam of al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel, the one praised by all the scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, and especially for being amongst those with great skill in this subject stated, in response to the question, “Is the origin with respect to the people that they are upon the Sunnah?”

So he answered:

“How can the base rule concerning the people be that they are upon the Sunnah, when we have with us the Rawaafid (Shites) and we have with us the Baatiniyyah, and we have with us the Communists, and we have with us the Hizbiyyoon (Partisans), and we have with us every type of group (of people)? How can the base rule concerning them be that they are upon the Sunnah? Who said these words? And Ibn Taymiyyah, rahimahullaah, refutes the one who says that the base rule concerning a Muslim is that he is upright, just, honest (al’adaalah). He says that this is “false speech”, because Allaah the Most High has said concerning humankind that he is dhaloom (oppressive) jahool (ignorant), **“Truly, We did offer Al-Amânah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allâh has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allâh’s Torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).”**

Hence, the base rule is that he is upon dhulm and jahl (oppression and ignorance), meaning that his entry into Islaam does not confer integrity, honesty, justice, upon him, or as he (Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah) said.

So how can the base rule concerning the people in the various places (towns etc.) - where there is great confusion and where most people are upon other than the Sunnah - how can [the base rule be that] they are upon the Sunnah? However, if you know a person coming from a specific Salafi school (i.e. teaching place), then there is good opinion to be made of him (ihsaan udh-dhann), so we think the best of him.

However, as for the whole world becoming a place of great confusion, and you do not know one person from another (as to what they are upon), then you should know the person upon the truth. And it is for this reason that they (the Salaf) used to say, “Verily, this knowledge is the deen, so look at whom you take it from”.

As for the opinion of the one who says that the base rule concerning the people is that they are upon the Sunnah, then in that case you should take it from every person and his brother (i.e. every Tom, Dick and Harry).

And Ibn Seereen said, “Verily the people did not used to ask about the isnaad, then when the fitnah (tribulation) occurred...” and the fitnah was not like that of the current times, it was actually less than it, “... they began to say: Name us

your men. So if they were from Ahl us-Sunnah, his speech would be accepted and if he was from the people of Innovation, his speech would be rejected”.

So we ask Allaah that he grants to you and to us success, and that Ahl us-Sunnah increase, however statements that are sent without any restraint, then it is not desirable for them to be uttered.”

End Quote. From the Cassette, “Meeting With the People of Yemen”, as related by Abul-Abbaas, posted on Sahab.