

## Writing off scholars who fall into mistakes in 'Aqeedah\*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Questioner:** O Shaykh! One more question, and it's the last: there is someone who is vicious in speaking about the scholars, not concerned whether they are major or not, I'll give you an example, whoever has been described as being Ash'aree or about whom it has been said that his 'Aqeedah is Ash'aree, then you will find that this person speaks about him in the most despicable manner, so we want you to advise him, especially since a lot of people have been deceived by him and they say that, 'He has the characteristics of the righteous.'

So we want you to advise him, O Shaykh!

**Shaykh al-Albaanee** (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ)<sup>1</sup>: Yes. May Allaah reward you with good.

I believe that justice is that every Muslim is mentioned with the goodness and correctness that he has, and that he is mentioned with the mistakes that he has—and I [say 'mistakes' and] not, 'evil' because evil is more specific than a mistake.

I believe that this person mentioned in the question is not a Faqeeh; it may be that he is righteous, but righteousness is something and understanding in the religion [fiqh] is something else.

And maybe it is pertinent [here] for me to remind you that the result of righteousness which is not coupled with knowledge is that such a righteous person will end up giving himself the death penalty.

As he (عليه الصلاة والسلام)<sup>2</sup> narrated to us in an authentic hadeeth, agreed upon by Bukhaaree and Muslim, on the authority of Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه)<sup>3</sup> who said, "Allaah's Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)<sup>4</sup> said, 'Amongst those before you was a man who killed ninety-nine people and he wanted to repent so he asked about the most knowledgeable people on the face of the earth? And so he was directed to a raahib ...' i.e., a righteous slave who had secluded himself from the people to worship Allaah according to their way of monasticism in those times, "... so he came to him and said, 'I have killed ninety-nine people, is there a chance for me to repent?' He said, 'You have killed ninety-nine people and now you're asking if you can repent?' There is no chance for you to repent,'—and so he killed him and completed a hundred ..."

And it seems from the many versions of the story and its context that the man [i.e., the murderer] really was sincere in wanting to repent, but he wanted a scholar who could show him the path that he should undertake, "... so he carried on asking until he was directed to a scholar and so went to him and said, 'I have killed one hundred people unlawfully, is there a chance for me to repent?' So he replied, 'And

\* Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 635.

<sup>1</sup> (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

<sup>2</sup> (عليه الصلاة والسلام) (alayhi as-Salaat wa Salaam) Upon him prayer and peace

<sup>3</sup> (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him (One male companion)

<sup>4</sup> (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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**who can come between you and repentance? But you are in an evil land ...' this is the answer of a scholar, '... so leave it and go to such and such a place whose inhabitants are righteous.'"**

So he left, walking, and on his way there his appointed time came and so the angels started to contend over him, the Angels of Mercy and the Angels of Punishment, each one claiming that the man was rightfully theirs to take. So Allaah sent an angel to them to judge between them, and so he said, **'Measure the distance between him and both towns, the one he left and the one he was going to, and cause him to join the people of whichever of the two he is closest.'**

So they measured and found him to be closer to the town he was going to and so the Angels of Mercy took his soul. [Transl. note: so the Shaykh was trying to show that even though the first person the murderer asked may have been righteous, he was not a scholar and gave the wrong answer, telling the murderer that there was no way for him to repent, and thus the result of his incorrect ruling was that he was also killed. Whereas the second person was a true scholar, someone who is righteous and has knowledge too, and based upon his knowledge did give the correct answer.]

The point is that this man [you mentioned in the question], if he is righteous, as we hope he is, then [we still say that] he is not a Faqeeh.

He does not picture, and he is not alone in this—and I think this is a very important point—many people differentiate between mistakes in the subsidiary issues [furoo'] and those in the fundamentals [usool], saying, 'Mistakes in the subsidiary issues are forgiven if they emanate from ijtihaad, but as for those which occur in the fundamentals then they are not forgiven,'—this is incorrect.

The first reason [for this being incorrect] is that there is no proof for this categorisation, i.e., splitting the Sharee'ah into fundamentals and subsidiary issues and then basing judgements on this categorization has no basis.

The second is that the proofs, or some of them at the very least, confirm that even if a person makes a mistake in things connected to 'Aqeedah he is also excused.

The greatest proofs for that are the two hadeeths which I will quote now. The first is the one of that man who gathered his children when he was about to die and said to them, 'What kind of a father have I been to you?' They said, 'The best father.' He said, 'Verily, I have sinned against my Lord. After my death, burn me and then crush me, and scatter half the powder in the air and half in the sea, for by Allaah, if Allaah has control over me, He will give me such a punishment as He has never given to anyone else.'

So when he died they carried out his request, a request whose injustice and distance from the legislation may not have an equivalent, So Allaah the Mighty and Majestic said to his particles, **'Be so and so.'** And then Allaah the Mighty and Majestic asked him, **'My servant! What made you do that?'** He said, 'My Lord! I was afraid of You.' So He said, **'Go, for I have forgiven you.'**

So he disbelieved, there is no doubt that he disbelieved, because he made that unjust will thinking that he would be able to get away from his Lord, which reminds us of the Most High's Saying, **"And he presents for Us an example and forgets his [own] creation. He says, "Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?"**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> سورة يس – Soorah Yaseen [36:78]

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So this man, [what] his will [contains] says that Allaah the Mighty and Majestic is unable to resurrect him to be the fully formed man that he was, but Allaah did, saying, **'Be so and so,'** and then addressed him.

But Allaah the Mighty and Majestic who is the One who knows what man's breast conceals, knew that this person in doing that action was not denying the Resurrection and that it was only the fear of the impending punishment [which made him do what he did], and he admitted that it would happen and that he would deserve it, [so it was these things] that blinded his insight and thus he left that unjust will.

The second hadeeth is his saying (عليه السلام)<sup>6</sup> and this is also very important and has a connection to the issue of the Ahlul-Fitrah, and many sittings concerning this topic have preceded—he (عليه السلام) said, **"There is no man from this Ummah, whether Jew or Christian, who hears about me yet does not believe in me except that he will enter the Fire."**

So, these people who did not hear of the Prophet (عليه السلام) and died as disbelievers, as polytheists, will not be punished because of their shirk and misguidance—in fact I will go even further and, taking the understanding from his saying (عليه السلام), **"...who hears about me ..."** say that it means, '... [who hears about] me truly/my true reality ...' because if we picture some of these Europeans, like the British or the Germans and their like, those who have been affected by the call of the Qadyanee and who have believed that there are other Prophets after the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and that one of them was sent to Qadian [in India], the one who was initially well-known as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadyanee, and who then changed his name to Ahmad for a reason well-known ... so the point is that these Germans and British people who were led astray in the name of the call to Islaam, [being led to believe that] Islaam acknowledges the coming of messengers after the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and that one of them was called Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadyanee and that Islaam denies the existence of a creation called the Jinn—which have well-known characteristics in the Book and the Sunnah—there is no doubt that these people have gone astray: but did they really hear about him (عليه السلام) truly? The answer is no.

Thus, this hadeeth teaches us that:

Firstly, those whom the message does not reach at all will not be punished. They will be dealt with in that well-known manner on the Day of Resurrection.

Secondly, if Islaam's message reaches them in a distorted manner, altered, changed, and they believe in it, then they will also not be held to account over that.

So, differentiating between fundamentals [usool] and subsidiary issues [furoo] is a deviance from the Book and the Sunnah, for this reason I say that it is obligatory on this brother [you asked about in the question and] who is righteous Inshaa'allaah, to rectify his knowledge, at the very least to rectify it in his unjust fatwa.

So the fact that a noble scholar erred in an 'Aqeedah issue like [Allaah's] Names and Attributes and other such things which some of the Ash'arees and Matureedees fell into ... then it is possible that that could have been based upon their ijtihaad and not because of any evil intent on their behalf—so it is not allowed to make such a statement [as the one mentioned in the question] unrestrictedly

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<sup>6</sup> (عليه السلام) (alaihissalaam) Peace be upon him

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except with a restriction [like the following]: whoever comes to know the truth and then deviates from it then he is such and such.

[And following on from this] there is no difference between someone who deviates from what is right in the issue of [Allaah's] Names and Attributes or anything [else] connected to 'Aqeedah and someone who deviates in a legislative ruling.

For example, someone who knows that the truth is that bleeding does not break one's ablution but who still goes astray and insists [on the opposite] arrogantly [going against] the proofs [then the case is clear], and you can judge the rest based upon this [example].

And how many subsidiary issues there are which the scholars have differed in and whose effect on the community can be much worse than some issues which are only connected to 'Aqeedah.

I wonder, do you think those who deny the punishment of the grave like some of the groups found in the Islaamic world today, would you say that the harm of denying the punishment of the grave is greater than that fiqh opinion which says that it is permissible for a Muslim girl who reaches the age of discernment to get married herself without her guardians consent, in opposition to the hadeeth?

Which of the two opinions has a greater effect in corrupting the community? Is it the first which denies the punishment of the grave or this one which denies the condition of the guardian's consent?

There is no doubt that this [i.e., denying the guardian's consent] causes more corruption, but this issue is a subsidiary one [furoo] and that other one [i.e., denying the punishment in the grave] is a fundamental [usool], **"They are not but [mere] names you have named—you and your forefathers for which Allaah has sent down no authority."**<sup>7</sup>

**Questioner:** May Allaah reward you with good.

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<sup>7</sup> سورة النجم - Soorah An-Najm [53:23]