

### MISUNDERSTANDING HIKMAH

In this age of decadence where the moral fabric of the society is being ripped apart, there are some deluded people, sadly “scholars” too, who remain silent about falsehood and wrongdoings that surround them. In some cases, they endorse it, for whatever reason. And in many other cases, they conflate refutation and rejection of falsehood with “bad-adab”. As if *Adab* (propriety) entails accepting falsehood and wrongdoings and not speaking against them; handing out chocolates and gifts to the one who has slapped you; and overemphasising the Prophetic Jamal while neglecting the Prophetic Jalal.

Allah says in the Qur’an:

“[Believers] you are the best community singled out for mankind: you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah...” [Surah Aali ‘Imran 3:110]

‘Good’ in the Arabic language is ‘*Khayr*’ and ‘Bad/Evil’ in the Arabic language is ‘*Sharr*’. Why then are the words

*Ma’rūf*

and

*Munkar*

used?

*Ma’rūf*

literally refers to that which is known, because it is what the heart is familiar with.

*Munkar*

literally refers to that which is not known, as it is not known to the heart but the heart learns it.

We don’t have the idea of ‘original sin’ or that children are inherently evil. They have to be taught that as their hearts are originally pure. The reason they begin doing bad things is because they are being taught that by humans or

*Shayātīn*.

[R Nsour,

*Sharh al-Akhdari*

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It is interesting that Allah mentions “you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong” first and then mentions “and believe in Allah”. Whereas belief in Allah should come first and our actions should then follow. But if we look at the testimony of faith: “There is none worthy of worship except Allah”, we see, as our scholars have mentioned, it is negation (‘There is none worthy of worship...’) followed by affirmation (‘...except Allah’). So, we are negating all deities and refuting all types of falsehood before confirming the Truth; Godhood and Oneness of Allah. One enters the religion with a refutation because falsehood must first be obliterated and only then will true belief manifest. It is also evident from the biography of our Master Muhammad ﷺ that he preached Tawhid (monotheism) for a decade, before conveying anything else, for it is necessary to know the One we are submitting to, before knowing what it is he has commanded us to submit to.

Having said that, to now believe that one must be harsh in preserving the religious boundaries or that we must have a “soft spiritual approach” where transgressions are tolerated, is far from the truth. We discipline our ego, put it aside and love and hate for the sake of Allah only, as that is how our Master Muhammad ﷺ taught us to be. He placed his love and anger appropriately and never got angry for the sake of his own self but only when the rights of Allah were violated.

The conditions for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong are mentioned by Ibn Rushd in *al-Bayan wa'l-Tahsil*

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Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is obligatory upon every Muslim, subject to three conditions:

1. He should know what ‘right’ is and what ‘wrong’ is. If he is ignorant of the ruling then there is a possibility that he will forbid something that is right and enjoin something that is wrong.

2. The denunciation of wrong should not lead to a greater evil, such as if he tells people not to drink alcohol and that may result in murder and the like. In that case, it is not permissible for him to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.

3. He should know or think it most likely that his denunciation of evil will put a stop to it, and that his enjoining good will be effective and beneficial. If he doesn’t know that or doesn’t think it (will be effective), then it not obligatory upon him to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.

## Misunderstanding Hikmah

Written by Abdul Samad Ali  
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The first two conditions are essential for it to be permissible, and the third condition is essential for it to be obligatory. If the first and second conditions are not met, then it is not permissible to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. If the third condition is not met, but the first and second ones are, then it is permissible for him to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, but it is not obligatory.

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abdur Rahman bin Qudamah says in *Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin*:

Knowing that there is a certain evil in a market that can be reformed, one should rectify it. Every Muslim should reform himself first, keeping obligations and deserting sins. He should then do the same to his household and relatives, then comes his neighbours, then his fellows of his hometown, then citizens of his country. Finally come people of the world.

Lastly, Ustadh Amjid Mahmood mentions that Shaykh M.S. Ramadan al-Bouti said during a *Dar*  
*s*  
he delivered on  
*Jami' al-Iman*,  
almost a decade ago:

People often confuse using *Hikma* (wisdom) as being soft and gentle. But *Hikma* is rather to use the most effective method and treatment, which can sometimes be harsh and other times soft.

May Allah grant us the right understanding of our religion; forgive us for our shortcomings; and grant us *'Afiyah* (wellbeing) in religion, in our life in this world and in the world to come. Amin!

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