

Advice

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“Religion is pure truth and sincerity.” He was asked: 'To whom should this be addressed?' He replied: 'To Allah, His Messenger, Muslim leaders (Imams), and to all Muslim communities.’¹

The Messenger of Allah (s), through this hadith, explains the importance of giving advice to others and shows us how a Muslim can be a good advisor in the cause of Allah and His Messenger. The meaning of giving good advice is to preserve the Islamic religion and convey its Divine Message to all people in order to guide them to the right path.

Surely the Muslim who maintains and guards the Book of Allah against distortions and forgery is a good advisor for Allah, the Almighty. The Muslim who protects the Prophet's traditions against innovation and falsities is also a good advisor for the Holy Prophet (s).

It is obligatory for Muslims to be characterised by good Islamic morals including giving sound advice to others for the sake of Allah and His Messenger.

Our Holy Prophet, Muhammad (s), emphasizes to Muslims that our religion is giving advice to others. He himself came to guide people towards what is right and forbid them from what is wrong. In fact, all prophets (peace be upon them) came with their Scriptures to advise and guide people towards righteousness and goodness in this world and the Hereafter. This is the real meaning of giving advice for Muslims and their leaders, *Imams*.

The leaders of religion are those scholars *ulama*¹ of the Muslims, and their rulers, who govern the people according to Islamic laws, *shari'ah*.

Therefore every Muslim should advise leaders if they make mistakes, do not rule with justice or if they are not familiar with, or misinterpret some Islamic obligations.

Giving advice to other Muslims has two aspects:

1. Guiding Muslim rulers to govern with truth, justice and equality, and not to oppress the people, not to refuse to correct their actions, or to supply services to society such as building universities, schools, hospitals, industries, mosques, etc.

2. If those rulers are not familiar with Islamic laws, or disagree with them, or do not rule according to Islamic laws, Muslims should explain to them the right way of Islam and its laws. They should guide the leaders towards righteousness and should not fear any unjust authority, because Allah has already authorised the ruler to do his job, including giving advice, enjoining what is right and good and forbidding what is wrong and bad.

It is also obligatory for a Muslim to give advice to Muslim scholars *ulama'* if they do not enjoin good and forbid evil, or if these scholars give verdicts (legal opinions) which contradict Allah's instructions in order to please the oppressors or seek the pleasure of the unjust for worldly gain.

Among the benefits of giving advice for the rest of the Muslims is to keep them united. Without dividing them we should direct them towards acting according to Islamic laws and co-operating with each other. This also preserves their interests.

A Muslim advisor to his nation is the one who loves doing good and is covetous of the interest of Muslims. He is the one who, when given responsibility, practising a profession, or assuming leadership, preserves Muslim property and interests, and guides the Muslims towards good acts and obedience to Allah, the Almighty.

Giving advice can be done through a good speech, sermon or lecture. It can be done through publications and broadcasting.

In the event that our good and Islamic advice falls on deaf ears of unjust rulers or deviated scholars, in that case, Muslims should cut their relations with them and not cooperate with them. They should strive to replace them with good and righteous persons.

1. Al-Hurr al-Amili, vol. 6, Abwab fil al-Ma'roof, Bab wujub nasihat al-Mu'min.