

When Someone Brings You Hadīth, Don't Respond With “But Akhī, There Is A Difference Of Opinion” Without Bringing A Hadīth To Support Your Position! Here Is A Lesson From Ibn Al-Mubārak's Rebuke Of Those Who Tried To Argue With Him...

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.

Al-Imām Ash-Shātibī (رحمته الله) stated: It has been reported from Ibn Al-Mubārak (d. 181H) that he said: “We were in Kufah and they debated with me concerning it—meaning the issue of consuming [alcoholic] nabīdh and the different views surrounding it.

So, I said to them, **‘Let one of you come and bring forth the proof from whomever you wish among the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) for its allowance. [Let us see] if we cannot explain our refutation against the claimant with its opposite authentically narrated from that same Companion.’** So they brought their evidences—but they did not bring a narration from any of the Sahābah making an allowance except that we came back with an opposite position [from the same Companion]. So there remained nothing in the hand of a single one of them except [a saying of] Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) and there was no proof for them showing the permissibility of nabīdh with anything that is authentic from him.

So I said to the one who brought forth the proofs: **‘O idiot! If Ibn Mas'ūd was sitting here and he said to you it is halāl, then what we have ascribed to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions regarding its prohibition would make it necessary for you to avoid it, or give you doubt, or make you afraid.’”**

Then a person from among them said: **“O Abu Abdur-Rahmān! Did An-Nakhaṭī and Ash-Sha’bī—and he named others along with them—drink what is harām?!”**¹

So, Ibn Mubārak (رحمته الله) said to them: **“Leave off the naming of men as evidence. A man may have a noble station in Islam, and perhaps he makes a mistake, so is it allowed for anyone to use that as proof? And if you refuse to accept that, then what do you say about ‘Atā, Tāwūs, Jābir ibn Zayd, Sa’īd ibn Jubayr and ‘Ikrimah?”** They replied: **“They were fine men.”** Then Ibn Mubārak asked: **“And what do you say concerning the hand-to-hand exchange of one dirham for two dirhams?”** They responded: **“It is harām.”** So, he said to them: **“They took the view that it was permissible. So did they die while consuming harām (ribā)?”** Ibn Al-Mubārak (رحمته الله) said: **“They persisted, and I cut off their arguments.”** This is what was narrated from him.²

Al-Imām Ash-Shātibī commented: “What Ibn Al-Mubārak said is the truth for indeed Allāh, the Most High, said:

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ

“And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger.” (An-Nisā: 59)

So if it is apparent and clear that the saying of a person is in opposition to the Qurān or the Sunnah then it is not correct to judge according to it or to build a ruling upon it...³

¹ Meaning: Your position necessitates that these scholars were drinking what has been made harām.

² Al-Muwafaqāt of Ash-Shātibī, (d. 790H), 5/137-138. Al-Bayhaqī mentioned this debate of Ibn Al-Mubārak with the people of Kufah in summarised form with his chain of narration in As-Sunan Al-Kubrā, 8/298-299.

³ Al-Muwafaqāt of Ash-Shātibī, 5/138.

A Note On Nabīdh:

The intent of Nabīdh is dates or raisins that are steeped in water until the water becomes sweet—however, if they are left in that state for a long time, the drink changes and becomes alcoholic and intoxicating when drunk. Ibn Mandhūr stated in Lisān al-Arab: “Nabīdh which does not intoxicate is halāl and if it intoxicates, it is harām. There are numerous ahādīth that mention nabīdh—it is a drink that is made from dates, or raisins, or honey, or wheat, or barley, etc. It is said: Dates and grapes were steeped (nabadhat) in water and if they are left, it becomes nabīdh... Whether it intoxicates or does not intoxicate, it is called nabīdh.”

The intoxicated form is prohibited, and the Prophet (ﷺ) would command that it be poured away. Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: **“Nabīdh was prepared for Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) in the beginning of the night and he would drink it in the morning and the following night and the following day and the night after that up to the afternoon. If anything was left after that, he gave it to his servant, or gave orders for it to be poured away.”** (Muslim, no 2004)

An-Nawawī (رحمهُ اللهُ) stated: “In these narrations, there is proof for the preparation and drinking of nabīdh that has not altered and has not become an intoxicant. This is allowed according to the ijmā’ of the Ummah. As for the Prophet (ﷺ) giving it to his servant after the third day and commanding that it be poured away, then that was because he could not be certain that it had not altered after three days. So, the Prophet (ﷺ) would be cautious and stay safe from its possibly changing [to an intoxicant] after three days. As for the saying of Ibn ‘Abbās that he would give it to his servant or commanded for it to be poured away, then it means that sometimes the servant would drink it, and sometimes he’d pour it away [without drinking it]. And that was dependant on the condition of the nabīdh. So if no apparent changes had taken place that would indicate that it had become an intoxicant, the servant would drink it and not pour it away because it would soon reach the point of becoming an intoxicant so

that is why he (ﷺ) left it out of care and self-preservation. However, if it is apparent that there is something in it that indicates that it is intoxicating and it has changed to that state, the servant would pour it away because if it intoxicates it becomes harām, and impure, and is poured away and the servant would not drink it because it is not allowed for him to drink intoxicants. As for the Prophet (ﷺ) drinking it before the third day then was due to the fact that the nabīdh had not altered and there were no signs that it had changed, and there is no doubt in that, and Allah knows best.”

When this is understood, one can clearly see why Al-Imām Ibn Al-Mubārak (رحمهُ اللهُ) was correct in his rebuke of them through use of the ahādīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the āthār (narrations) of the Companions and his rejection of their using the opinions of the scholars as proof over the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Point Of benefit:

So those who oppose us after they are shown the ahādīth of the Messenger (ﷺ) with the excuse, “but there is a difference of opinion among the scholars in this issue,” yet they cannot substantiate their positions through the ahādīth of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), then they are deluded. And we say to them just as Ibn Al-Mubārak said: **“Leave off the naming of men as evidence. A man may have a noble station in Islam, and perhaps he makes a mistake, so is it allowed for anyone to use that as proof?”**

This is the madhhab and path of the Salaf, it is safer, wiser and the truth.

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