

Prejudice Toward Any School

http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/584_19-11-2010/prejudice-toward-any-school.html

'Allama Sha'rani (rahmatullahi alaih) writes in his book Al-Mizan, **'If you view it with an impartial eye, you will clearly realize that all the four Imams and their followers are on the path of divine guidance. Once you have studied this carefully, you will not have objections against the followers of any of the Imams. It will be firmly impressed on your mind that all the four schools of thought are part and parcel of the Shari'a, and that the contradictory statements of the various Imams are a source of divine mercy. Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise and His expediency demanded that things should turn out as they have become, if Allah abhorred this difference of opinion, then He would have forbidden it as He had forbidden debating on the fundamental teachings of the Shan'a. If you regard the subsidiary differences of opinion as the same as fundamental differences in religion [deen], you will land yourself in an abyss of destruction because Allah's Messenger (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) concluded that differences in subsidiary issues of religion are a source of divine mercy.**

In actual fact, the various opinions of the Imams are all extracted from the hadeeths. The only difference between the opinions of the Imams is that, where one Imam considers a certain juridical [shar'i] injunction as compulsory, another would consider the same as optional. By this statement, I am in no way implying that one is at liberty so select the opinion of whichever Imam one fancies—either the compulsory or the optional. Some students were duped into believing that this is what I meant. This is most definitely not what I mean, as it would render the entire religion a plaything. What I am saying is that each of the Imams has selected one of the two options before him.

However, whichever one they select, their followers are bound to adhere to it. Whatever I have mentioned about the Imams I have not said simply because I cherish favorable thoughts about them. On the contrary, I have established good thoughts toward them as a result of extensive research into their opinions, deductions, inferences, and corroborating statements. Whoever does not believe me should study my book, Al-Manhaj al-mubin fi adillat al-mujtahidin [Clear Way in the Proofs of the Mujtahids]. I have assembled all the corroborating statements of the various Imams in that book and, consequently, established that they were all divinely guided. The fact of the matter is that as long as one does not cross all the stations of the spiritual path (suluk) through the companionship and direction of an accomplished spiritual guide [shaykh kamil], the complete reality of this, as it should be understood, will not be exposed to him. Hence, if you wish to savor its taste, you should also proceed to an accomplished spiritual guide and exert yourself in order to acquire the reality of these matters. This is not a fabrication from myself, but an established reality confirmed by the statements of the learned elders [masha'ikh].'

This priceless treatise of Imam Sha'rani (rahmatullahi alaih), which runs into almost a hundred pages, is worth writing in gold. His topic is extremely beneficial in fact; the entire work is worth translating.

In short, what I wish to say is that the differences of opinion found among the Imams which appear

to be disunity are in actual fact not disunity. Whatever their stages of differences, they are indispensable and their absence would have been a burden on the Umma.