

Difference in debating between Ahl-us-Sunnah and Innovators

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question: Are there any differences between (1) the disputes that take place between Ahl-us-Sunnah themselves and (2) the talk that is directed from a person of Ahl-us-Sunnah to an innovator? And what are they?

Answer: Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ)¹: There is no doubt that there are differences between the two at times and at other times there aren't any. The area of distinction between what occurs amongst the Ahl-us-Sunnah themselves from disputes and debates and between what occurs amongst Ahl-us-Sunnah on one side and the innovators on the other side, is clear and evident. This is because the obligation is that when there occurs a debate and refutation between the Ahl-us-Sunnah themselves, then it must be from the aspect of Allaah's saying:

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكْفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

By Al-'Asr (the time). Verily! Man is in loss, except those who believe (in Islaamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (al-Ma'rûf) which Allaah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (al-Munkar) which Allaah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter In Allaah's Cause during preaching His religion of Islaamic Monotheism or Jihaad, etc.)²

So any debate or dispute that occurs between the Ahl-us-Sunnah, then it must be based on the likes of this part of the verse:

وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience

This is also how it must be when the Ahl-us-Sunnah debate from one side and those who oppose them with regard to the Sunnah – and they are the innovators – debate from the other side. However, the manners of conduct may differ between the Ahl-us-Sunnah versus themselves and between the Ahl-us-Sunnah versus the innovators. So what is obligatory when there occurs a dispute between the Ahl-us-Sunnah themselves, is that they take into account the saying of Allaah: "Merciful to one another"³ when doing that. As for when there occurs a dispute between these Muslims from Ahl-us-Sunnah and the people of innovation, then there may be some harshness and severity in the manners of conduct, which is suitable for this innovation and goes well against their innovation. This is one difference between Ahl-us-Sunnah versus themselves from one perspective and Ahl-us-Sunnah when they are debating or refuting the innovators from another perspective.

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² Soorah al-Asr [103:1-3]

³ Soorah al-Fat'h [48:29]

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However, we must consider something with regard to each side, by which we do not exalt one group over another nor criticise one group over another, and it is that we do not violate the principle found in Allaah's saying: **"Call unto the Way of your Lord with wisdom."**

So many times when a person of the Sunnah refutes another person of the Sunnah, the refutation does not just require wisdom, but rather it requires what is more important than that, from what has been stated in the likes of Allaah's saying:

"And do not let your hatred of a people cause you to be unjust. Be just! That is closer to Taqwaa."⁴

But many times, there occurs vile manners when they are refuting one other. And unfortunately, this has now become manifest recently in current times in such a way as we would love for it not to be present within the Sunni community, which we call the Salafee community. This is what I was able to say in response to this question.

⁴ Soorah Al-Maa'idah [5:8]