

Dealing with differences: two scholars give different Fatwas, how does one handle it?

Article taken and slightly adapted from: shaikhalbaani.wordpress.com
Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 375, [2/5/440].

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Host: A questioner says, ‘These days, alhamdulillah, we see a good resurgence in knowledge, especially among the upcoming youth, but it faces a number of problems, the most important of which is the differing of the people of knowledge in their fatwas which leads to some people becoming confused and mixed up. What should the stance of the Muslim youth be towards this? Provide us [with an answer], may Allaah bless you.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)¹: Without doubt this [now] is a spontaneous question [but in fact] we heard it on our previous journey time and time again, and in reality this problem only occurs with the youth in whom the correct, knowledge-based methodology is not firmly established. What I mean [by methodology] is that which has been reported from some of the Salaf like Ibn ‘Abbaas and the Imaams who followed him like Mujaahid, Maalik and others, “There is no-one except that his statements are accepted and rejected, apart from the occupant of this grave,” and he pointed to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)². This is a reality which the Muslim youth, the student of correct knowledge must bring to mind—it being nothing except, “Allaah said and Allaah’s Messenger said,” in addition to what we say over and over again, “... on the methodology of the Pious Predecessors.”

And they must also call to mind another reality, a Qur’aanic reality, Allaah (تبارك وتعالى)³ said, “**And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one Ummah, but they will not cease to disagree, except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy and for that did He create them,**”⁴. So there is no escape or salvation from differing, this is the way of Allaah (عز وجل)⁵ with His creation, and you will not find any change to Allaah’s Way.

But there is [that type of] differing which people have an excuse for and [another which they] do not have an excuse for. They have an excuse for that differing which is inescapable, the one indicated in the aforementioned aayah, “**And if your Lord had so willed, He could**

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

³ (تبارك وتعالى) (Tabaraka wa Ta’ala) The Blessed and the Most High

⁴ سورة هود – Soorah Hood [11:118-119]

⁵ (عز وجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

Dealing with differences: two scholars give different Fatwas, how does one handle it?

surely have made mankind one Ummah ...” so our Lord did not will for mankind to be on one manhaj, upon one understanding, and if it were to have been like that then the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would have been the most worthy of the people to have been as such, those who were the best of mankind as is openly mentioned in the well-known, mutawaatir hadeeth, but Allaah (عزوجل) willed, out of His Perfect Wisdom, [Wisdom] which some people who understand it may perceive whilst most of man does not, but that does not harm us ... so differing is a natural thing as we have mentioned ... as for differing and arguing due to misunderstanding one issue, this is what has been banned and this is what is not allowed and this is what the Salaf were saved from and the Khalaf fell into.

When the youth bear this reality in mind, they should not then find it strange that some scholars differ, especially when they are those who embrace the one methodology, and it is the true methodology: [that of] the Book, the Sunnah and what the Pious Predecessors were upon. They should not condemn it and find it strange because it is the Way of Allaah (عزوجل) with His Creation, and if they want to be delivered from it then they must tread the path of the people of knowledge, and it is what has been laid down in the Noble Qur’aan, **“Say, ‘Produce your proof if you are truthful.’”**⁶

So when two or more different statements come to a student of knowledge from two venerable scholars, and it is believed that both are equal in knowledge and excellence and he thus becomes confused—and he may be entitled to be confused initially but it is not allowed for him to continue in that [state of confusion]: [so then] he must ask for proof, [he must] seek the proof from both of the scholars, whether he is speaking to them directly or through correspondence or on the phone or through other methods of communication of that sort which are used nowadays.

So after he listens to the proof from all of them, he is not then charged with having to prefer Zaid [for example] over ‘Amr or ‘Amr over Zaid—rather he follows the one who has the proof which his soul finds ease in, and his breast opens up to, and maybe this ... and the answer will end with this ... is one of the meanings of his statement (عليه الصلاة والسلام)⁷, **“Consult your heart even if you are given fatwas by those who deliver religious verdicts.”**

Two statements come to you from two great scholars: consult your heart—after you have asked for a clarification of the proofs—then whichever of the two your heart leans towards and is the one you take then you will have an excuse before Allaah (تبارك وتعالى).

But as for you becoming bigoted for one [scholar] over the other, then this is the way of the blind-followers who Allaah (عزوجل) has saved us [from being] and whose way He took us out of and [Who then led us] to the Straight Path.

Wal-Hamdulillaahi rabbil-‘Aalameen.

⁶ سورة البقرة – Soorah al-Baqarah [2:111]

⁷ (عليه الصلاة والسلام) (alayhi as-Salaat wa Salaam) Upon him prayer and peace

For more works of Shaykh al-Albaanee please go to albaanee.com