

Imām al-Albānī (rahimahullāh)

ON THE MANNERS OF AHL US-SUNNAH IN REFUTING, DEBATING AND DISCUSSING¹

Question:

“Are there any differences between the debate that takes place between Ahl us-Sunnah and the address between a person of sunnah to a person of bid’ah? If so, what are they?”

Answer from Imām al-Albānī (rahimahullāh):

It is without doubt that the differences are sometimes manifest and sometimes not. The differences between the debate that takes place within the people of *sunnah* amongst themselves and that which takes place between the people of the *sunnah* on one hand and the people of *bid’ah* on the other are plain and clear. It is incumbent that the debate, discussion and rebuttals that take place within the ranks of the people of the *sunnah* are derived from the saying of The Most High

“By Al-‘Asr (the time). Verily man is in loss. Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience.”

{*Surat al ‘Asr: 103*}

So, any debate or discussion that takes place between *Ahlus Sunnah* has to be founded upon the ayah “...and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience...” and others like it. This is also true for such affairs between *ahlus sunnah*, on the one

¹ Questions posed to Imām al-Albānī and relayed in the Jordanian Salafi journal *al-Asālah*, issue no.18, 15th Muharram 1419 AH/May 11 1998 CE, pp.69-70.

Translated by Akeel Ahmed.

hand, and those who differ from them, and they are *ablul bid'ah*, on the other. However, the manner *ablus sunnah* adopt when discussing matters within their ranks and when discussing matters with *ablul bid'ah* could be different. What is obligatory when the debate takes place between *ablus sunnah* amongst themselves is to take note of the ayah, in which Allāh has mentioned the Muslims in general that they are “...merciful towards one another”. As for when the debate takes place between *ablus sunnah* and *ablul bid'ah*, it could have an element of harshness or coarseness in it in accordance to the *bid'ah*. This is the factor that distinguishes the manner in which *ablus sunnah* debate amongst themselves on the one hand and the manner they adopt when they debate with or rebutting *ablul bid'ah*.

However, we should take note of something when discussing these people and those [*ablus sunnah* and *ablul bid'ah*] – we do not favour one group over the other, nor do we disparage one to the exclusion of the other due to a mistake - due to the saying of the Most High “...call to the way of your Lord with wisdom”. And this often happens when a *sunni* rebuts another *sunni* – they do not do so with wisdom, rather they do so with something graver [than not using wisdom], which is indicated in the saying of the Most High:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا
اَعْدِلُوْا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allāh, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allāh...”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 8}

It is often the case that a bad manner is adopted when *ahlus sunnah* rebut one another. And with great sorrow, this has surfaced at the present time in a way in which we would have hoped never to see within the *sunni* community – the community that we call the *salafi* community. This is what appears to me in response to the question.