

Lesson 13

Point Number 10

***Al-kalaam* (theological rhetoric), arguing, debating and disputing are newly introduced affairs. They cast doubt into the heart, even if the person happens to attain the Truth and the Sunnah.**

The Explanation:

These matters, *al-kalaam* (theological rhetoric), debating and disputing which occurred between all of the sects, these are newly introduced matters. And the reason for them is the following of desires. And whoever is such that his desires follow that which the Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* came with, then he will not have doubt.; and he will not be a person of disputing nor arguing nor quarrelling, because he is one who submits and complies. He, the Most High, said:

﴿ فَأَمَّا يَا تِئْتِكُمْ مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ

يَحْزَنُونَ ﴾

(Explanation)

So if Guidance comes to you from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance, then there will be no fear upon them and they will not grieve.

(Sooratul-Baqarah (2), *ayah* 38)

﴿ فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ﴾

(Explanation)

So whoever follows My Guidance, then he will not go astray and he will not be wretched.

(Soorah Taa Haa (20), *ayah* 123)

So the matter is a question of following, *ittibaa`*, and complying, *inqiyaad*, and submitting, *tasleem*, to the command of Allaah and His Messenger without debating and without argumentation. And the people of misguidance did not fall into argumentation and debates except on account of the fact that they did not submit to Allaah and to His Messenger in the way that the *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah* submitted. And therefore you will find the *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah*, and all Praise is for Allaah, united with no difference between them in the matter of *`aqeedah*, creed and belief; rather disagreement is found with the misguided sects. He, the Most High, said:

﴿ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾

(Explanation)

So if they turn away then they are the ones who will have split away and opposed. So Allaah will suffice you against them. And He is the all Hearing the all Knowing.

(Sooratul-Baqarah (2), *aayah* 137)

And the confirmation of this occurs in another *aayah*:

﴿ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السَّبِيلَ فَتَنفَرُوا بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّكُمْ بِهِ

﴿ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

(Explanation)

And do not follow the other paths for they will cause you to split away and separate from His path. This He has commanded you with so that you may be dutiful to Him.

(Sooratul-An `aam (6), *aayah* 153)

His saying, “(Theological rhetoric, arguing, debating, disputing are all newly introduced affairs. They cast doubt into the heart) **even if the person involved in them happens to attain the Truth and the Sunnah.**” Meaning, he will still be in error, because he has attained these two (the Truth and Sunnah) through other than the correct path. Because the correct path is submission and not delving and debating and arguing which just causes the hearts to become bitter and produces grudges. And it also brings about

something worse than that which is *at-takfeer*, people declaring others to be disbelievers, because the misguided sects they declare each other to be disbelievers and they declare each other to be misguided.

﴿ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴾

(Explanation)

Every sect rejoicing at what they themselves are upon.

(Sooratur-Room (30), *ayah* 32)

Everyone thinking that what *he* is upon is what is correct. As for the *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah*, the people of Sunnah and the United Body upon the Truth, who submitted to the command and complied, then disagreements did not occur between them, and all Praise is for Allaah. And they do not declare each other to be disbelievers, and they do not declare each other to be misguided; rather they praise each other. And some of them follow others, because they are upon a correct path. Indeed hatred and grudges and declarations of others being disbelievers and being misguided only comes about on account of contradicting the Truth and taking hold of opinions and ideas.

And there is no doubt that everyone wants to defend his own opinion. So he will not accept that it will be said to him, "You are wrong," for this will mean that you are accusing his intellect of being deficient and he will not be pleased with this. However, if you say to a person of Truth when he has made a mistake, "You have erred with regard to the evidence in this matter, you have missed out on the Sunnah," then he will accept it, because his intent is the Truth and his intent is not just to support his own opinion. So if you say, "O so and so, you have missed out on the Sunnah, you have missed out on the correct evidence," then he will accept and return. But if you say to a person who is a follower of desires, "You are in error," then he will become angry and become worse. And this is the sign of the people of desires, that everyone just wants to aid and support that which he desires. But as for the person of the Truth, then what he wants is that the Truth should be aided, and he seeks after the Truth. And the wise word is the lost property of the believer; wherever he finds it, he takes hold of it.¹

Point Number 11

And know, may Allaah have mercy upon you, that speculative speech, *kalaam*, about the Lord, the Most High, is a newly introduced matter and it is an

¹ Translator's side point: (Refer to pages 58-59 of Shaykh Ahmad an-Najmee's Explanation of Sharḥus-Sunnah [Irshaadus-Saaree fee Sharḥis-Sunnati lil-Barbahaaree])

innovation and misguidance. Nothing is to be said about the Lord except what He, the Mighty and Majestic, described Himself with in the Qur'aan and what the Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* explained to his Companions. So He, the Majestic in Renown, is One.

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

(Explanation)

There is nothing like Him; and He is The All Hearing The All Seeing.

(Sooratush-Shooraa (42), *aaayah* 11)

Our Lord is the First without any when, and the Last without any end. He knows whatever is secret and whatever is most hidden. He has ascended over His Throne, and His Knowledge is in every place. And no place is free of His Knowledge.

The Explanation:

His saying, "***Kalaam*, speech/rhetorical theology/theological rhetoric, with regard to the Lord, the Most High, is something new and it is an innovation and misguidance.**" Meaning, theological rhetoric, *kalaam*, with regard to the Self of the Lord, the Perfect and Most High, and with regard to His Names and His Attributes, is a newly introduced affair. It was introduced by the people of misguidance, those who do not submit to the texts and who do not have fear of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic. So therefore they speak about the Self of the Lord, and they speak about His Names and His Attributes, and they deny and they negate that which Allaah affirmed for Himself or that which His Messenger affirmed for Him. And they bring opinions from themselves. (And they say) "This is what is correct." They speak in explanation of the texts with other than their correct explanation, or they say, "We don't understand them." They say, "We leave and entrust them to Allaah." And the Speech of Allaah and the speech of His Messenger becomes just like foreign/non-Arabic speech which the Arabs do not understand.

So what is obligatory upon the Muslims is that they continue upon the correct path, upon the way of the *Salaf* and that they do not give any attention to those people who mislead others, those who argue about Allaah without any proof which He has given them. They dispute about the Qur'aan and they dispute about the Sunnah. Their affair is just argumentation. So it is obligatory to beware of those people. Those people are

not people who are followers (of the Truth); rather they are innovators who are just following their desires.²

His saying, **“And nothing is to be said about the Lord except that which He described Himself with, He the Mighty and Majestic, in the Qur·aan.”** Having forbidden argumentation about Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, and arguments/debates about the Names of Allaah and His Attributes, he now explains what is obligatory. And it is that we affirm the Qur·aan and the Sunnah just as they came upon their meaning, the meaning taken from the Arabic language with which the Qur·aan and the Sunnah came down. So *al`ilm*, knowledge, its meaning is well known in the language. Likewise *al-wajh*, the face, is well known. And *al-`ayn*, eyes, and *al-yad*, hands, and *al-istiwaah*, ascending, and *al-`uloow*, being high above, all of these and their like, their meaning is well known in the Arabic language in which the Qur·aan came down. Whereas the people of misguidance, they say “This speech is not in accordance with what is apparent from it.” And then they divide into two categories:

- A category who say, “We stop and withhold. And we say what is apparent is not what is meant; but then we do not understand what is actually meant by it.” And they are the Mufowwidah the people of *tafweed*.
- And the second category are the Mu-owwillah, the people of *ta-weel*, who give false interpretations. And they are more in number; they are the majority out of these two groups. They interpret with other than their correct meaning.

So they went astray and they lead others astray and they preoccupy the people. And they fill up books with these debates, with arguments and disputations which lead to nothing.

So what is obligatory is to submit to what occurs in the Book and in the Sunnah with regard to the Names of Allaah and His Attributes as was meant by Allaah and His Messenger, because Allaah knows best about Himself, He the Perfect and Most High, and He knows best about other than Himself. And the most knowledgeable one from the creation about Allaah is the Messenger of Allaah *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*. As for us, then our knowledge falls short. There are many things that we do not know related to our own selves with regard to the details of our bodies and the veins and the senses. There are things which we do not know. Do you know the *rooh*, about the soul? What exactly is it? The intellect, what is it? If you do not know something from your own body, nor something about your own self, then how can you speak about the Self of Allaah the Perfect and Most High, which is not known, except to Him, He, the Perfect.

² Translator’s side point: Shaykh Saalih as-Suḥaymee *hafizahullaah* said regarding this point, “Meaning by that, speech which was introduced by the Jahmiyyah with regard to delving into speaking about Attributes of Allaah without knowledge. But as for describing (giving as an Attribute) that which Allaah described Himself with or which His Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* described Him with, then this is something required.”

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ ۚ عَلَمًا ﴿١١٠﴾

(Explanation)

He (Allaah) knows whatever is in front of them and whatever is behind them and they do not encompass Him with knowledge

(Soorah TaaHaa (20), *ayah* 110)

This is outside what they know and outside what they can imagine. And no analogy can be made between Allaah, the Perfect and Most High, and His creation. This would be a belittlement of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic. So He knows best about His Self and about other than Himself. And He is the One who is truest in saying and better in speech than His creation, as Shaykhul-Islam *rahimahullaah* said in al-Waasiṭiyyah³.

His saying, “**and what Allaah’s Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* explained to his Companions.**” The issue of the Names and Attributes hinges upon the Book and the Sunnah. And their explanation is also in the Book and the Sunnah, and the language of the Arabs in which the Legislation came down. And we do not go to the logic of Aristotle and Plato, or so and so, or such and such. This is a crime against the Legislation of Allaah, the Perfect and Most High, and it is a case of replacing the Revelation with logic and *ilmul-kalaam*, theological rhetoric. And what fruit did theological rhetoric and argumentation produce for those people with regard to misguidance and ruin and loss. And they did not reach any result. And this is by their own admission.

They expended their whole lives in debating and disputations, and in the end they acknowledged that they did not reach any result. And if only they had submitted to Allaah and to His Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*, they would have found relaxation.

And therefore one of them said:

“The result of using the intellects is just that the mind is tied in knots

And most of the striving of the people is just misguidance

And our spirits are forlorn strangers within our bodies

And all the results that come about in this world for us are just harm and an evil climate

³ This occurs in al-`Aqeedah Al-Waasiṭiyyah.

*And we did not benefit from our studies through our whole lives
except that we just gathered they said and such and such said (idle speech)."*⁴

So they came to a state of doubt and uncertainty. And as for those who submitted to Allaah and to His Messenger, then they were saved and at peace from this.

And the people of misguidance say also:

*"Upon my life, I have gone around all of the institutions of learning
And I have looked upon all those places
And I did not see except one who is putting his palm
upon his chin in confusion or one who is striking his teeth in regret."*⁵

He went around all the institutes of learning, institutes of theological rhetoric and logic and debating and he examined them and did not find in them that which could remedy the need to know. And he said⁶:

"I have carefully considered the different paths of theological rhetoric and the ways of the philosophers. And I did not see them remedying the sick⁷ nor quenching the thirst of the person with extreme thirst. And I saw that the closest path was the way of the Qur·aan. Read with regard to affirmation.

﴿ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ ﴾

(Explanation)

The good word ascends to Him.

(Soorah Faaṭir (35), *ayah* 10)

⁴ These lines of poetry are by al-Fakhrur-Raazee. You can refer back to Dar· Ta`aarud al-Aql wan-Naql and Minhaajus-Sunnah (of Shaykhul-Islaam ibn Taymeeyah).

⁵ These lines of poetry are by ash-Shahristaanee, the author of the book al-Milal wan-Nahl. You can refer back to Dar· Ta`aarud al-Aql wan-Naql and Minhaajus-Sunnah (of Shaykhul-Islaam ibn Taymeeyah).

⁶ This is a quote from ar-Raazee quoted from him in the book an-Nuboowaat of Shaykhul-Islaam (ibn Taymeeyah)

⁷ Translator's note: curing the one who has a need for knowledge

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾

(Explanation)

The Most Merciful ascended upon the Throne.

(Soorah TaaḤaa (20), *ayah* 5)

And read with regard to negation:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

(Explanation)

There is nothing like Him

(Sooratush-Shooraa (42), *ayah* 11)

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا﴾

(Explanation)

And they do not encompass Him with knowledge.

(Soorah Taahaa (20), *ayah* 110) ”

(End of quote)

His saying, “**So He, the Majestic in Renown, is One. There is nothing like Him; and He is The All Hearing, The All Seeing.**” He is, He the Perfect, One. No one shares with Him with regard to His Self nor with regard to His Names and His Attributes nor with regard to His Creating and His Actions nor with regard to His worship. There is no sharer and no partner for Him. So why therefore tire yourself out? You are a created being and He is the Creator. How can the created being encompass knowledge of the

Creator, the Majestic and Most High? So you, your role is just to submit to Allaah and to His Messenger and not to dispute and not to argue and not to tire yourself out and to tire other people out. This is what is obligatory and binding. And therefore the Companions, they did not engage themselves in these unnecessary matters. And they did not withhold with regard to an *ayaah* or with regard to a *hadeeth*. Rather they affirmed it and submitted to it and held what it contained as their creed and belief, and they never had any problems arise, ever. So the matter is a matter requiring submission and compliance. And that we do not delve into matters of creed and belief in the way which the people of disputation and the people of *kalaam*, theological rhetoric, and people of logic delved into it. Such that the result was, as they themselves admitted regarding themselves, that they ended up in a state of bewilderment and confusion and not reaching any result, as one of them said,

“We didn’t benefit anything from our studies, throughout our whole lives

Except in the end we just gathered idle speech.”

(Meaning), so and so said and so and so said. And if he says such and such then the response is such and such.⁸

Itḥaaful-Qaaree bit-Ta`leeqaat `alaa Sharḥis-Sunnah

by Shaykh Saalih ibn Fowzaan al-Fowzaan *hafizahullaah*

⁸ Shaykh as-Suḥaymee *hafizahullaah* said, “Then he made clear that it is obligatory to describe Allaah with that which He described Himself with, and that which His Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* described Him with, without *tahreef*, distorting the meaning, without *ta`teel*, denying/depriving it of meaning, without *takyeef*, saying how, and without *tamtheel*, likening the Creator to the creation, in accordance with His Saying, He, the Most High:

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴾

(Explanation)

There is nothing like Him (Allaah); and He is The All Hearing, The All Seeing

(Sooratush-Shooraa (42), *ayaah* 11)

So, “**There is nothing like Him;**” this is negation. And, “**and He is The All Hearing, The All Seeing;**” this is affirmation. And it contains a proof for detailed affirmation and for general and concise negation. Because His Saying, “**There is nothing like Him,**” this is a general and concise and negation. It negates everything that can be imagined or can cross the mind. And “**and He is The Hearing, The Seeing,**” this is affirmation in detail. And this *ayaah* is a tremendous principle with regard to affirming the Attributes along with declaring Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, free of whatever does not befit Him.”

Volume 1, Pages 122-131

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Points discussed by Shaykh Saaliḥ al-Fowzaan *hafizahullaah* in this excerpt include:

- theological rhetoric, *kalaam*, and arguing between the sects were newly introduced into the Religion
- *kalaam* and debating occurred due to not submitting to the texts of the Qur·aan and the Sunnah, and due to following desires (proofs from the Qur·aan quoted)
- the People of the Sunnah and the *Jamaa`ah* are united in the matter of creed and belief; they praise and follow each other
- disagreement is found among the misguided sects (proofs quoted)
- debating and arguing causes grudges and leads to declaring others to be disbelievers
- the person of Truth accepts and returns when corrected because his intent is the Truth
- the follower of desires becomes angry when corrected and becomes worse because he just wants to support his desires
- *kalaam* with regard to the Self of Allaah and His Names and Attributes is a religious innovation
- those who introduced it deny what is affirmed in the Qur·aan and the Sunnah, and bring opinions from themselves without proof
- we must affirm what is in the Qur·aan about Allaah because He knows best about Himself
- we must affirm what is in the Sunnah about Allaah because Allaah's Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* was the most knowledgeable one from the creation about Allaah
- what is mentioned about Allaah in the Qur·aan and the Sunnah is to be understood with its apparent meaning in the Arabic language
- the people of misguidance do not accept the apparent meaning; they are of two groups
- one group deny what is apparent and deny knowing what the meaning is
- the other group deny what is apparent and give it a false meaning with no proof
- only Allaah knows about His Self

- people do not even know things about their own selves/bodies so how can they speak about Allaah's Self?
- the debating of the people of *kalaam* reaped no benefits and they ended up in confusion, by their own admission
- the Companions submitted to the *ayaahs* of the Qur'aan and the *hadeeths* and did not any encounter problems

In a side point Shaykh as-Suḥaymee *hafizahullaah* mentioned the principle of general and concise negation, and detailed affirmation of Allaah's Attributes along with its proof.