
Answering those who accuse Ahlus-Sunnah of having irjaa

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Questioner: Our Shaikh, some books have surfaced which talk about the issue of declaring others to be disbelievers [takfeer], and they cite some proofs regarding the issue of ‘Eemaan with which they accuse the creed of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa’ah in this issue as being that of the Murji’ah, and they mention some statements of Ibn Abil-Izz and at-Tahaawee. So what is your response to this doubt [they raise]? May Allaah reward you with good.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹: Our answer is that firstly, the fundamental difference between the real Ahlus-Sunnah and the real Murji’ah is from two angles: that Ahlus-Sunnah believe that righteous actions are from ‘Eemaan, the Murji’ah do not believe that and openly state that ‘Eemaan is to acknowledge with the tongue and to attest to that with the heart—but that righteous actions are not from ‘Eemaan, and through that they reject many texts which, now at the very least, we are not in need of mentioning, unless compelled to.

This is the first point in which the Murji’ah oppose the real Ahlus-Sunnah.

The second point, which branches off from the first, is that Ahlus-Sunnah say that ‘Eemaan increases and decreases, [that] it increases through righteous action and decreases through disobedience. The Murji’ah deny this legislated reality and say that ‘Eemaan does not increase or decrease.

So the accusation of those people you alluded to [in your question]—and the responsibility is on the narrator [of correctly relaying what he is conveying, i.e., the answer I give is based on the question you ask]—the accusation of these present-day writers saying that Ahlus-Sunnah are Murji’ah in the issue of ‘Eemaan shows one of two things, and even the better of the two choices is bitter: either that they are ignorant of this reality, or that they are wilfully ignoring it. How can they accuse people who say that ‘Eemaan includes righteous actions and that it increases and decreases—how can they accuse them of being Murji’ah?

And the Murji’ah oppose these people [i.e., Ahlus-Sunnah] from the very root, saying that ‘Eemaan does not include righteous actions and does not accept any increase or decrease to such an extent that one of their heads used to say, ‘My ‘Eemaan is like that of Jibreel’ (عليه السلام)², and he might truly believe that, but he has not been truthful with the text of the Book of his Lord by saying, ‘My ‘Eemaan is like that of Jibreel,’ because he believes that ‘Eemaan has no connection to prayer, worship and piety and that it is just ‘Eemaan, and that this ‘Eemaan which is just belief does not increase or decrease since if it did decrease below [the level] of certainty [it would mean that] doubt and uncertainty would enter it and then at that stage it would not benefit.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² (عليه السلام) (alaihi salaam) Peace be upon him

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But 'Eemaan does not accept rigidity ... like [for example] this light, like this place, every time the light spreads in it the place expands and expands endlessly.

So the accusation of these people against Ahlus-Sunnah ... these people who make these accusations [against Ahlus-Sunnah] and who appear to follow the Khawaarij, [the Khawaarij being] those who make statements like this and who declare people who commit major sins to be disbelievers and who oppose many, very many texts from the Book and the Sunnah in that—how strange it is that they accuse the multitudes of Muslims from the Companions and those who followed them and those who followed them, people whom Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)³ testified to as being the best of generations, [how strange it is that they] accuse them of being Murji'ah, and by doing so oppose the great multitude of texts from the Book and the Sunnah.

And in my opinion, answering this fabrication does not require more elaboration than what I've just mentioned, and maybe in this much there is sufficiency, Inshaa'allaah.

Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 764.

³ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him