

87916 - Should the one who falls into bid'ah (innovation) be denounced?

the question

Making du'a loudly in a group and raising hands up while supplicating after the obligatory prayers is an innovation.

Question:

Do I have to denounce such innovations of the people in the masjid where I pray including the imam? What is the best way to do this? Knowing that some of them are really stubborn and do not accept any correction easily, there is no strength and no power except with Allah, and they may not accept it at all. Please guide me sheikh what shall I do? May Allah reward you.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is one of the greatest symbols of Islam, and it is essential to the well being of the ummah.

It says in al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (6/248):

The imams are unanimously agreed that it is prescribed in sharee'ah to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. Imam al-Nawawi and Ibn Hazm narrated that there is consensus on its being obligatory. The verses of the Qur'aan, the ahaadeeth of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the consensus of the Muslims all state that it is part of the naseehah (sincere advice) that is the religion. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'rrof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful”

[Aal 'Imraan 3:104].

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever among you sees an evil action, then let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith.”

Imam al-Ghazaali said: Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is the basis of the faith and the foundation of the message of the Messengers. If it is neglected, the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) will be overlooked and religious teachings will be forgotten, and chaos will become widespread and the people will be doomed.

But after that they differed concerning the rulings thereon: is it an individual obligation (fard 'ayn) or a communal obligation (fard kifaayah) or naafil (supererogatory action)? Or does it come under the same ruling as the thing that is enjoined or forbidden, or does it come under the principle of bringing benefits and warding off harm?

There are four points of view.

End quote.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is obligatory, but it is a communal obligation: if sufficient people undertake it then it is waived from the rest, but if there is no specific person who is doing it, then enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil becomes an individual obligation for everyone, as is the case with all other communal obligations. If there is no one who does it, then it becomes obligatory for everyone. Based on that, if you pass by some people who are doing evil and you do not find anyone who tells them not to do it, then it becomes obligatory for you to tell them.

Al-Liqa' al-Shahri (no. 35).

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on one who fails to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil when he is able to do that?

He replied:

The ruling is that he is disobeying Allaah and His Messenger, and he is weak in faith, and he is in grave danger of diseases of the heart and their consequences in this world and in the Hereafter, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawood (David) and ‘Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allaah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds.

79. They used not to forbid one another from Al-Munkar (wrong, evildoing, sins, polytheism, disbelief) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do”

[al-Maa'idah 5:78-79]

And it is narrated in a saheeh report that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever among you sees an evil action, then let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith.”

And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: If the people see an evil action and do not change it, soon Allaah will cause His punishment to encompass them all.” Narrated by Imam Ahmad with a saheeh isnaad from Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (may Allaah be pleased with him). There are many ahaadeeth on this topic; we ask Allaah to enable all the Muslims to undertake this great duty in the manner which pleases Him.

Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (6/504).

Secondly:

The scholars have sought to set out guidelines and limits concerning this matter, so as to avoid any negative consequences which may occur as the result of not understanding this serious

issue correctly.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) summed up some of these guidelines and etiquettes in a comprehensive comment in which he said:

The one who enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil must understand what he is enjoining and what he is forbidding; he must be gentle when enjoining and gentle when forbidding; he should be forbearing when enjoining and forbearing when forbidding. So he should understand before he enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil; being gentle when enjoining is most likely to achieve the desired outcomes; and forbearance after enjoining will enable him to be patient in bearing the reaction of the one whom he enjoins or forbids, because the reaction will often be offensive and rude. Hence Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “enjoin (on people) Al-Ma‘roof (Islamic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allaah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad), and bear with patience whatever befalls you” [Luqmaan 31:17].

Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (15/167).

It was also narrated that Sufyaan al-Thawri (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

No one should enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil except the one who has three characteristics: he is gentle when enjoining and gentle when forbidding; just when enjoining and just when forbidding; and he has knowledge of what he is enjoining and what he is forbidding.

Jaami’ al-Uloom wa’l-Hukam (p. 325).

So the scholar is the one who should occupy himself with enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, because he is the one who explains to him the shar’i rulings with evidence, and he is able to convince those whom he addresses, and explain the proof to them. As for the ordinary Muslims, they are also obliged to enjoin what is obviously good, such as prayer, fasting, paying zakaah and so on, and to forbid what is obviously evil, such as immorality, tabarruj (wanton display), theft and so on.

But if the ordinary Muslim comes across some evils or innovations which are subtle and he is uncertain about their rulings, or there may be differences of opinion concerning them among the scholars, in that case it is not permissible for him to start denouncing them by himself, rather he should convey to the people the fatwas of scholars which he has studied and which explain the ruling on this issue only, without resorting to violence or stirring up fitnah and division, and Allaah will reward him greatly.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

Denouncing innovation and myth is obligatory for the knowledgeable among Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (2/345).

Thirdly:

All you have to do is to study these fatwas that are published on our website in the answers to questions no. [11543](#), [21976](#) and [26279](#), then convey that to the people in a kind and gentle manner. If they respond to you, then praise be to Allaah, and if they do not respond, then you do not have to do any more than that concerning them, but the specialist scholars are still obliged to debate and try to convince them.

See also the answer to question no. [87779](#).

I ask Allaah to guide you and to bless you abundantly.

And Allaah knows best.