

# The position of the *Salaf* with respect to the innovators

By Sheikh Saalih bin 'Abdillaah al-Fawzaan

Taken from *Al-Muntaqa Min Fataawa Fadeelatish-Sheikh Saaleh Bin Fawzaan Bin 'Abdillah Al-Fawzaan* (A selection from the legal rulings of the noble Sheikh Saaleh Bin Fawzaan Bin 'Abdillah Al-Fawzaan), Vol. 1, Pp. 173-174. <sup>1</sup>

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Sheikh Saaleh Al-Fawzaan was asked:

'We request from the noble Sheikh a clarification of the position of the *salaf* with respect to the innovators, and may Allah reward you with good.'

So he replied:

'The *salaf* would not declare everyone as an innovator, and they would not exceed the bounds in applying the term innovation (*bida'*) upon everyone who had differed with some types of differing. Rather, they described (the one with) the innovation as being the one who did an action in order to get closer to Allah (but) without any proof for it, being from the worship which the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) did not legislate, (with them) taking this (position) from his (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*'s) saying:

'Whosoever does an action which is not upon our affair, then it is rejected.'<sup>2</sup>

And in a narration:

'Whosoever introduces something new into this affair of ours which is not from it, then it is rejected.'<sup>3</sup>

So, innovation is introducing something new into the religion, there is no proof for it from the Book of Allah nor the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*), this is the innovation.

And if it was established that a person innovated an innovation into the religion and refused to return (from it), then indeed the methodology of the *salaf* was that they would boycott him and keep away from him and they would not sit with him.

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: Muassasatur-Risaalah, Beirut, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1425/2004, compiled by 'Aadil Bin 'Alee Bin Ahmed al-Fareedaan

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Imaam Muslim in his 'Saheeh' (3/1343, 1344) from the hadeeth of 'Aaishah (*radiyallahuanhaa*)

<sup>3</sup> Narrated by Imaam Al-Bukhaaree in his 'Saheeh' (3/167) from the hadeeth of 'Aaishah (*radiyallahuanhaa*)

This is their methodology. However, as I mentioned, after it is established that he is an innovator and after he is advised and he does not return back from his innovation, then at that time he is boycotted so that his harm doesn't encroach upon the one who sits with him and the one who is connected to him, and so that the people are aware of the innovators and the innovator.

As for exceeding the bounds in designating (the word) innovation upon everyone who differs with someone in opinion, (then it is when) it is said: This one is an innovator! (And) everyone calls the other an innovator and he has not brought anything new into the religion, (and he has done nothing) except that he and a person have differed, or he and a group from amongst the groups have differed. This is not an innovator.

And the one who does a prohibited action or an act of disobedience, he is called a sinner, and not every sinner is an innovator. And not every one who is mistaken is an innovator, because the innovator is the one who has introduced something new into the religion which was not from it. As for exceeding the bounds in the term innovation in applying it to everyone who differs with a person, then this is not correct, for indeed, perhaps the truth may be with the one who is differing (with the person), and this is not from the methodology of the *salaf*.