



AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that differences of opinion exist among human beings
- Know the meaning of arguing and quarrelling including rebellious arguing against different forms of authorities
- Understand the negative effects of unnecessary arguing on an individual and the society
- Understand and know some ways of avoiding arguments; especially the practice of agreeing to disagree and tolerance
- Understand that Allah does not like those who argue and fight between themselves

AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

Imam Al Hādi (as) said:

“Disputation corrupts old friendships and undoes strong ties. The most minor dispute can bring about aggression, and aggression causes relations to be severed.”ⁱ

In this lesson we will focus on what Islam considers a psychological and social disease that has many bad effects and from which we are advised to stay away from – the disease of arguing and disputing unnecessarily. The Holy Prophet (saw) even went to the extent of saying

“A servant will not perfect the reality of faith until he abandons argumentation, even if he is right”ⁱⁱ

Let us explore the meaning of this in more detail, so we know how to identify useless arguments and to stay away from them.



DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

One of the basic facts of being a human being involves having free will and this characteristic of the human being allows each one of us to have and form opinions and ideas about certain things. The difference of opinion is as much a fact of life as is eating and drinking and can be properly dealt with if understood.

Each one of us is different and there are some things that are common in truth while others are personal. For example to believe that lying is wrong is common between all human beings. But which colour of shirt or shoes each person likes might be different.



However, differences of opinion can many times lead to arguments and if not stopped can even lead to fights and wars. Islam considers arguing for no reason on topics that have no benefit for Muslims as wrong and a waste of time – because it leads to so many negative effects. Islam says to avoid arguing even if you think you are right!

ARGUING AGAINST AN AUTHORITY



Many times we come across examples where a child has a different opinion to his parents, and wants something that his parents refuse to give him – for example, permission to go watch a movie at the cinema. The parents in this case are authorities who, out of their love, wisdom and care want to protect the child. However, the child is young and wants to follow only his desire not knowing the full consequence. In such a situation, it is easy for the child to start arguing and trying to justify his demand and in the process, getting angry and disrespectful toward his parent(s) – which is a great sin.

UNNECESSARY ARGUMENTS

Sometimes people like to argue for the sake of argument – because they want to attract attention or prove themselves to be smarter. This is very discouraged in Islam. The ill-effects of being argumentative are many, but let's list a few main ones here:

- A lot of wasted time with no use or benefit in the end
- Can cause a lot of disrespect for another person
- Can create grudges that can break relationships and families
- Creates tensions between people and exposes people's faults because sometimes with anger, other things are said against the person, making it a personal attack on each other

DEALING WITH ARGUMENTATIVE

PEOPLE

In this we learn from what Imam 'Ali (as) has said in his advice to one of his companions, Kumayl:

“O Kumayl, in every race there some groups are better than others, so beware of debating with the vile groups, and if they insult you, then tolerate them, and be of those whom Allah (SWT) has described in His verse, “and when the ignorant address them, say: peace”ⁱⁱⁱ

Therefore, some of the things we can do to avoid quarrelling are:

- Agree to disagree
- Keep an open mind and be ready to admit your mistake and learn from it
- Be confident if you are truthful and don't impose your view on another person
- Look at the consequences of arguing and see whether it will lead to anything useful or just a waste of time
- Be tolerant to different opinions just as much as you would like others to see your point of view
- Be respectful
- Avoid concerning yourself with that which doesn't concern you
- Don't argue without knowledge or proof if you don't have any



CUTTING RELATIONS

One of the main effects of being argumentative is that it leads to cutting off of family relationships, which is disliked by Allah (SWT).

وَتَقَطُّوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ... أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ
وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

“...and sever your ties of kinship...Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight” (47:22-23)^{iv}

Review Questions

Q1. When dealing with a person whom we cannot convince of the truth we should:

- Keep arguing until the other person eventually gives up
- Agree to disagree
- Get angry and shout until the other person gets scared and agrees

Q2. Arguing unnecessarily leads to:

- Relationships breaking up
- Better debating skills
- Both a & b

ⁱ [Mizan Al Hikma page 996, hadith 5789]

ⁱⁱ [Mizan al Hikma, page 995, hadith 5783]

ⁱⁱⁱ [Mizan Al Hikma page 1084, hadith 6140]

^{iv} References

- Mizan Al Hikma
- Lecture on Social Islam, Sheikh Mansour Leghaei – ‘Don't Argue’
- Holy Qur'an