

Ta'teel

Based on the works of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan (حفظه الله)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

QUESTION: What is Ta'teel?

ANSWER:

This literally means 'to leave something empty or abandoned'.

In the context of Allaah's Names or an Attributes, then ta'teel is to reject a Name or an Attribute which has been mentioned in the Qur'aan or the authentic hadeeths.¹

To give an example:

The Qur'aan mentions that Allaah has two Hands:

No, both His Hands are widely outstretched!

[Soorah al Maa'idah (the 5th chapter) verse 64]

When they hear this verse for the first time, some people's instinct may be to say 'How can this be? God has two Hands – what is this?' and then immediately reject this concept.

These people have knowingly or unknowingly made ta'teel of this Attribute of Two Hands – they have rejected this Attribute.

However, if the person stopped for five minutes to reflect, and to apply the basic principles of how Allaah's Names and Attributes should be understood, then he/she would reach a different – and correct – conclusion.

Islam teaches that the Qur'aan is the Speech of Allaah – it has never been changed since its revelation and it never will be changed.

Islam also teaches that there is no one more knowledgeable about Allaah than Allaah Himself. It also teaches that Allaah does not tell lies – as anyone will know.

Islam teaches that Allaah has Attributes, but they do not resemble the Attributes of the Creation – even if the words are the same.

¹ Refer to *Sharh 'Aqeedat il Waasitiyyah* p62 of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen for more information

Ta'teel

Islam forbids the people from delving into how Allaah's Attributes are; we do not and cannot fully encompass the Creator, since our minds are very limited.

Islam also teaches not to interpret Attributes away from their literal meaning in the Arabic language, unless there are other verses or other hadeeths (i.e. revelation) which say that the Attribute means something different from its literal meaning.

And there are no verses or hadeeths to say that Allaah's Hands mean anything other than...Allaah's Hands.

So putting all this together, the Muslim realises that Allaah has two Hands because He himself said so, they are real Hands, they are not like our Hands, and we do not know the exact details of how these Hands are except for the limited information on them contained in the Qur'aan and the authentic hadeeths.

And after reading the article on tahreef, you will realise the error of the person who says: 'I cannot accept that God has two Hands. It must mean something else! I think it actually means two powers or two blessings or something like this.'

This person has firstly rejected the Attribute of Two Hands (ta'teel) and he has then tried to twist the meaning into something he finds more palatable (tahreef).