



THE ETHICS OF DEBATE IN HADITH PERSPECTIVE: AN ANALYSIS OF ABŪ AL-LAITH AL-SAMARQANDĪ'S THOUGHTS

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the ethics of debate in the perspective of hadith by examining the thoughts of Abu Laith al-Samarqandiy in the book *Bustān al-Ārifīn*. The background of this study focuses on the phenomenon of debate that often leads to hostility and division in society, especially when the debate aims to humiliate, dominate, or seek recognition. Abu Laith al-Samarqandiy emphasized that this attitude deviates from Islamic ethics that promotes unity and prevents stubbornness in arguing. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive method with text analysis to understand the ethical principles of debate in the view of hadith and al-Samarqandiy's thought. The results of the study show that debates aimed at maintaining the ego and bringing down the opponent are reprehensible behavior and even sinful if it results in interference for others. Islam requires a Muslim to avoid debate, even when on the right side, in order to maintain peace and harmony in the community.

Keyword: Ethics of Debate, Hadith, Abū Laith al-Samarqandiy

A. Introduction

Difference is one of God's decrees that adds beauty to the life of this world with its diversity. Variations in human views, beliefs, and behaviors are a certainty that has been determined. These differences encourage humans to understand and respect each other, and provide opportunities to enrich each other's life experiences (Acep et al., 2023). By understanding that differences are part of the divine plan, we can manage and respond to them with wisdom and respect.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَرَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ^١

Meaning:

“And if your Lord wills, surely He will make people one people, but they will always disagree.” (QS. Hud [11]: 118).

The meaning of the verse that uses the word وَلَا يَرَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ^١ in the form of *fi'il mudhari'* shows that differences and disagreements will continue to occur, both now and in the future. According to Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, this verse covers a wide range of differences, including in religion, behavior, skin color, language, and sustenance. Wahbah al-Zuhailiy gives a similar view by emphasizing that the verse refers to differences in arguments, ideologies, beliefs, and also sustenance. It underscores that diversity is universal and comprehensive, covering various aspects of human life (Zulfikar, 2019).

In communication, one of the biggest challenges arises when both parties disagree on the views they consider correct. Disagreements like this often lead to arguments or debates. In Islam, discussion or debate gets important attention, and this topic is always relevant to discuss because it concerns how humans interact, exchange thoughts, and understand each other (Anam et al., 2015).

Munādzarah of knowledge and student manners raises the importance of discussion and exchange of ideas among students in order to deepen their understanding of religious knowledge. *Munādzarah* comes from the Arabic language which means scientific discussion or debate that aims to corroborate arguments based on authentic sources. In the tradition of Islamic boarding schools, this activity is not only a place to sharpen reason, but also a means of training students to respect differences of opinion, develop communication skills, and practice manners or ethics in interacting.

In addition to knowledge, the aspect of adab is an important foundation in the educational process at Islamic boarding schools. Students are not only required to understand religious knowledge, but also to uphold ethics in learning, such as respecting teachers, fellow students, and maintaining tawadhu (humility). The combination of *mudāzarah* of knowledge and manners is a characteristic of

education in Islamic boarding schools, which aims to give birth to a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has noble morals.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Meaning:

“Call (people) to the way of your Rabb with wisdom and good lessons and refute them in a good way.”

In this verse Ibn Kathir interprets that, in the face of debate, Allah commands to be done in the best possible way, full of gentleness, and polite language, just as Allah also commands Moses and Aaron to speak softly to Pharaoh in the hope that he will remember or fear. This emphasizes the importance of a wise and benevolent approach to da'wah (Ibn Katsir, 1431).

Imam at-Thabari interprets that, in discussing or debating, Allah commands to be done in the best possible way, including being patient and forgiving all insults that may be accepted, while still carrying out the obligation to convey His message (Thabari, 1422).

Therefore, Shaykh Muhammad bin Shalih Al-'Uthaymeen explained quoting from the book of Imam ad-Dzahabi, that whoever argues only to seek victory, will not get taufik and blessings in his knowledge. However, if one argues with the aim of seeking knowledge, exposing the truth, and rejecting falsehoods, then that is the debate that is recommended (Ad-Dzahabi, 2006).

This shows that, in debating, both for students and preachers, it is important to have sincere intentions and good manners. As emphasized by scholars, the main purpose of debate is to seek the truth, not victory. This includes student manners in maintaining a humble, patient, and gentle attitude, so that efforts to seek knowledge and correct mistakes can be done in a wise and inspiring way. This approach strengthens scientific values and helps students or preachers get blessings in the knowledge they are looking for.

The research in this thesis uses *a library research* approach, which focuses on literary sources such as books and documents. This method focuses on theoretical and conceptual studies, exploring ideas and ideas. Because of its descriptive nature, this study collects data in the form of text and narratives, not numbers or statistics, so it focuses more on understanding the content than quantitative analysis (Alkalah, 2016). The data collection technique applied is to conduct an in-depth literature review through reading and studying various literature. The sources studied include books, scientific papers, journals, and related articles that are relevant to the focus of the research. This approach aims to obtain information that supports a thorough analysis of the problem based on the perspective of the existing literature (Adlini et al., 2022).

B. Concept and Ethics of Debate

Debate is a common phenomenon that occurs in various circles of society, from ordinary people to intellectuals. A fiqh scholar said that it was Abū Layṭṣ (Abu Laits Al-Samarqandy, 2010): "Some people hate debate and debate in science". which means this should be avoided as it can cause more harm than good. Debates about science often lead to disputes and hostility among people. In this context. Al-Faqih emphasized how important it is to seek knowledge with sincere and wise intentions, not to win disputes or show personal superiority (Al-Faqih, 2010). Those who do not like to argue they are postulating with the words of Allah (may Allah be pleased with them) Surah Az-Zukhruf verse 58:

مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا

Meaning:

"They don't give you anything except arguing." (QS. az-Zukhruf [43]: 58).

This verse indicates a situation in which some individuals do not engage in honest debates or discussions, but rather are hostile and fight hostilely. This verse shows that they do not put forward their arguments seriously or seek the truth, but rather they tend to be controversial and hostile (Nabrisah, 2020).

In another verse Allah says in Surah al-Kahf verse 54:

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

Meaning:

"Indeed, man is the creature who resists the most." (QS. al-Kahf [18]: 54).

Ibn Jarīr interpreted above in his book *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī* (Thabari, 1422) Humans argue a lot, do not want to repent of the truth and are not deterred by preaching. And man is a creature who likes to argue. (Masithoh, 2024) Ibn Zaid said, "Man is the most contentious being." He said: Argumentation: Argumentation, the strife of men with their prophets, and the rejection of what was brought to them. God denounces those who like to argue and condemns them. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that she said: (see Abu Laits Al-Samarqandy, 2010):

أَبْغَضُ الرِّجَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْأَلَدَّ الْخِصْمُ

Meaning:

"What Allah hates the most is He who likes to argue and disobey." (al-Bukhāriy, 1422, p. 131).

An-Nawawī explained, In the context of the above hadith, the word "enemy" seems to refer to a person who often takes the opposite or different position from others in a conversation or discussion. It can also refer to someone who always opposes or chooses a different point of view, regardless of the evidence or arguments provided. In this situation, the enemy is not just an opponent or an opponent; They may also be someone who tends to be unwilling to accept or acknowledge opposing perspectives or arguments. A stubborn attitude or even a tendency to avoid the truth (Al-Nawawi, n.d.).

Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī from the Prophet PBUH, said (see Abu Laits Al-Samarqandy, 2010):

مَا ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدًى كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا أُوتُوا الْجَدَلَ

Meaning:

"No people have gone astray after they have been on the throne except because they are quarrelsome." (Ibn Mājah, n.d., p. 19; Tirmiziyy, 1975, p. 378).

Nūr al-Dīn in his book *Marqāt al-Mafātīḥ: Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* explains the above hadith, "No people ever goes astray after receiving the instructions given to them, unless they are caught up in the wrong argument. This means, they go astray and go into paganism simply because they engage in futile debates with their prophet, asking for miracles from him because of their stubbornness and lack of gratitude. This shows that arguing just to win an argument, without seeking the true truth, is inappropriate behavior, which is meant to be stubborn (Al-Din, 1985).

Al-Gazaliy also warned that criticizing someone else's speech can be based on words, meaning, or intention. Sometimes a person points out errors in grammar or word order, which may occur due to a lack of knowledge or dominance of his tongue. On the other hand, there are those who criticize meaning by saying that the other person is wrong, or criticize the intention by stating that the opponent's goal is not the truth, but personal gain. If this happens in a scientific discussion, it is referred to as a reprehensible debate; What should be done is to be silent or ask questions to learn, not to be stubborn or criticize. Arguments aimed at knocking down an opponent, humiliating him, and degrading him by accusing him of lack of knowledge are a sign of arrogance and selfishness, where a person wants to highlight himself by showing his opponent's shortcomings. This motivation is rooted in the desire to show off knowledge and strengths, as well as attacking others to demean them. This attitude reinforces arrogance and animality, which are inherently reprehensible and destructive. Constant debate reinforces these qualities, not only reprehensible, but also a sin to hurt others (Al-Gazāliyy, n.d., pp. 117–118).

Moreover, from these words we can conclude that debate is not justified in Islam because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded to avoid debate even if you are in the right position and follow the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

C. Leaving the Debate even Though it is True

According to Islamic teachings, it is very important to avoid unproductive debates, regardless of one's beliefs that they are right. This is based on Keeping the unity of Muslims prioritized over the pursuit of divisive truths. Muslim communities can be divided by constant hostility (Sulidar & Hp, n.d.). Allah says in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 224:

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْصَةً لِّإِيمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبْرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning:

“Do not make Allah in your oath an obstacle to doing good, piety, and creating peace among people. Allah is the Hearer and the Knower”. (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 224).

This verse reminds us that while we have the truth on our part, the way it is delivered and its impact must also be considered. In a narration, Prophet said (Abu Laits Al-Samarqandy, 2010):

دَعِ الْمِرَاءَ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ مُحِقًّا

Meaning:

“Do not argue, even if you are right”.

In other narrations it is mentioned (Abu Laits Al-Samarqandy, 2010):

لَا يَجِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَقِيقَةَ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَدَعَ الْمِرَاءَ وَهُوَ مُحِقٌّ

Meaning:

“Not one of you has the truth of faith until he leaves the debate when he is right”.

A servant will not attain the true faith until he leaves the debate when he is right (Abdul Aziz, n.d.) Debate causes hostility and hostility among Muslims is haram, because it can divide Muslims. Therefore, avoid arguments even if they are in the right position.

D. Arguing in Pros

Debate is the activity of exchanging ideas between two or more people who seek to influence others to accept their ideas well and understand each other. (Jazeri, 2010) Apart from that, arguing sometimes causes bad controversy, so it needs to be avoided.

In addition, the Qur'ān records disputes that occurred between the apostles and their followers. to promote them. One example of the Prophet's debate with his followers is in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 258, where the Prophet Ibrahim argued with a king who said, "According to a narration is the king of Namrūz." This story shows that debate is one of the ways of Islamic da'wah (Anam et al., 2015).

According to Sayyid Muhammad Thantawi, Mujlà is an attempt to defeat the opinions of others with strong evidence and reasons. This means refuting well, in the best way of mujadalah; not by harsh speech or by using words that can awaken, awaken, and clear the mind (Usman, 2009).

Scholars generally say, "It is okay to aim to show the truth," based on the words of Allāh An-Naḥl verse 125:

وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Meaning:

"And argue with them using the best way".

In another verse it is also said, "*Do not argue with them, except with real arguments.*" (QS. An-Nahl verse 125).

Abu Laith as-Samarqandy in his book is quoted as saying, "Do you not see the one who disputes with Nabī Ibrāhīm in the presence of his Rabb." (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 282). From Ṭalḥah bin 'Ubaydillāh, he said, "We used to argue about the meat of game that was eaten by an unlawful person and then slaughtered by a lawful person, while the Prophet was asleep, then we raised our voice, and then he woke up and asked, "What are you arguing about?" We told him, and he ordered us to eat it." He did not forbid them to argue on this matter, for in the debate it would appear who was right and wrong, and the consideration of seeking the right was permissible, and the forbidden verses showed that the one who argued without a solid basis, and wanted riya', then the ruling was makruh, according to Abu Laith (Abu Laith Al-Samarqandy, 2010):

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْعِلْمَ لِثَلَاثٍ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ: أَنْ يُبَاهِيَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ أَوْ يُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ أَوْ يَصْرِفَ بِهِ
وُجُوهَ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ

Meaning:

“Whoever learns knowledge for three reasons, he is in hell: for *riya'* to the scholars, to debate the ignorant, or to turn people's eyes to him”. (Abū Dāwud, 2009).

This statement reflects a teaching that emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony and avoiding unproductive debates. This hadith also shows us that Allah does not like someone who is constantly engaged in a fierce and endless debate, especially if the debate does not bring any benefit or goodness. And also the habit of unproductive arguments and debates can lead to error or error, even after a person or group has received guidance or truth from God. This is because constant and endless debate can divert focus away from the truth and lead to confusion and division.

E. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the Islamic view, debate should be avoided if it has the potential to cause unproductive damage, disputes, or hostilities. A good debate is one that is carried out with the aim of seeking the truth, accompanied by sincere intentions and a wise way. There is a prohibition on arguing if the intention is only to show personal superiority or prove one's own truth without caring about the impact on the ummah. The verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet show the importance of abandoning debate if it can provoke hostility and hatred. Abu Laith al-Samarqandiy emphasized that debates conducted for the purpose of humiliating, mastering, or obtaining recognition only lead a person to error. Islam encourages the ummah to maintain unity and avoid stubbornness in arguing. A true Muslim is one who is willing to avoid debate even if he is on the right side, in order to avoid division and maintain peace in the community.

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