

Be in agreement and not in dispute

When we look at the tree of da'wah, with its firm roots and tall branches, we will see how far its shade spreads day after day, and how it bears ripe fruits all the time, but there are storms coming one after another to uproot it, and there are diseases which threaten its growth and progress. But Allaah insists that His light should shine perfectly even though the disbelievers hate that. Among these diseases and storms is the problem of intense disagreements among the daa'iyahs.

These destructive differences lead to two dangerous things:

1 – Malicious joy directed against the daa'iyahs and their da'wah. Hating one another and insulting one another lead people to look down on them. Those who plot against the da'wah find opportunities to cause harm to the daa'iyahs and rejoice maliciously at their misfortune. Moosa said to Haaron, when he seized him by the (hair of his) head:

"so make not the enemies rejoice over me"

[al-A'raaf 7: 150 interpretation of the meaning]

2 – Putting people off the message and the daa'iyahs, because they are not united and because they do not pay attention to the etiquette of disagreement. For this reason the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari and Mu'aadh (may Allaah be pleased with them both), when he sent them as daa'iyahs to Yemen: "Be in agreement and not in dispute." (*Al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 3/142). When it was said to Ibn Mas'ood, "You criticized 'Uthmaan then you prayed four rak'ahs," he said, "Disagreement is an evil." (*Al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 1/394)

There are numerous reasons for disagreements and discord among the daa'iyahs, the most important of which include:

1- Calling people to follow oneself or a group. Da'wah should be to

call purely for the Qur'aan and Sunnah. If a daa'iyah calls people to follow him, it should be (like Ibraaheem's call)

"O my father! Verily, there has come to me of the knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me, I will guide you to the Straight Path" [Maryam 19:43 – interpretation of the meaning]

Its purpose should be to guide people to the truth:

"So follow me, I will guide you to the Straight Path" [Maryam 19:43 – interpretation of the meaning]

"Follow me, I will guide you to the way of right conduct"[Ghaafir 40:38]

The daa'iyah should avoid calling people to follow him (as a personality) or his way or his group. This is what al-Qaasimi referred to when he said: "No group found a way to make people follow them except by exaggerating about themselves, by means of undermining others or causing trouble for them whenever the opportunity arose or circumstances permitted it, whether that was by the sword or by the tongue." (*Kitaab al-Jarh wa'l-Ta'deel* by Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi).

2 – Undermining others and treating them badly. Being unfair to other daa'iyahs is one of the main causes of disagreement and division. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said concerning this matter: "Because one of the groups does not acknowledge what the other has of the truth and does not speak fairly of them. Instead, it exaggerates about what it has of the truth and attributes false things to the other, and the other group does likewise. Hence Allaah described unfairness as the root of differences." (*Iqtidaa' al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, p.40)

The daa'iyah should look at how far ahead of him his brothers are in goodness and virtue, and make that a reason to treat them with good manners and be polite if he notices mistakes and shortcomings on their part. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said concerning Moosa (peace be upon him), when he threw down the Tablets and pulled his brother's beard, and poked out the eye of the Angel of Death: "His Lord did not rebuke him, for he had achieved great things and stood up against the greatest enemy of Allaah, and he had to deal with the Children of Israel. But Dhu'l-Noon (Yoonus) did not achieve what Moosa achieved, so Allaah imprisoned him in the belly of the fish when he got angry with his people. And indeed Allaah has set a measure for all things [cf. Al-Talaaq 65:3]." (*Madaarij al-Saalikeen* by Ibn al-

Qayyim, 2/456)

3 – Sectarianism. The danger does not usually reside in the mere fact that there are different groups, but in partisan attitudes towards this or that effort, so that it becomes the matter of loyalty and enmity, love and hate. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: "If a man studies the way of some believing people, such as the followers of the imaams and shaykhs, he has no right to make his leader and companions the standard (by which he measures others), so that he takes as friends those who agree with them and takes as enemies those who differ from them." (*al-Fataawa*, 20/8; see also 20/124, 3/347)

He also said: "A person does not need to attach himself to a specific shaykh; everyone from whom he can learn something about his religion is his shaykh with regard to that matter. No one should attach himself to a shaykh and take his followers as friends and others as enemies. He should take as a friend everyone who is a believer and who he knows to have taqwa, among all the shaykhs and others." (*al-Fataawa*, 12/512; see also 12/514)

4 – Hasad (envy). The disease of hasad has created a great deal of hatred between different groups and daa'iyahs. The following story illustrates this point. Imaam al-Dhahabi said: Imaam al-Barbahaari had a large number of followers. He passed by the west side and sneezed, so his companions said 'Yarhamuk Allaah (may Allaah have mercy on you).' They made so much noise that the khaleefah heard it and was told of what had happened, and he thought it was too much. Then the people of bid'ah kept on stirring up hatred in the heart of the khaleefah until it was declared in Baghdaad, No two followers of al-Barbahaari may gather together. Then he disappeared. (See *al-Siyar*, 15/92)

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As-Salaamu 'Alaikum,

It is so ironic that the above words come from a "labelled" magazine from a "labelled" website. Labelled 'off' that is, by the arbiters of all things correct. In other words, if I had put the name of the source before you read it, some people would throw it out and thus fall exactly into what the piece is addressing without evaluating and judging the merits of what it contains for its own sake!

It is just as happened to me recently when someone informed me that

a certain scholar had been 'warned' against and thus should not be sat with nor should we sit with those who sit with him. This certain someone gave no specific evidence for this warning but implied it was mostly because the scholar was 'too general and did not warn against SPECIFIC groups or individuals'. Anyway, it was enough that he had heard it came from a certain shaykh. I personally saw this as leading only to sectarian suspicion and animosity which I and others have directly experienced or witnessed or heard of in reality.

In contrast, the 'warned' against scholar said to me **"Do not hate them (i.e. those who say this) they are Muslims!"**

This person telling me of the warning, and who admitted just learning things about manhaj since January, said to me that, "Brothers do not sit with certain people because they are afraid that their errors or bida'h would enter in to their hearts...So if your shaykh warns you against sitting with someone and you trust him and take his word for it, then that is okay." Again, this sounded like pure, unadulterated taqleed to me that unquestioningly accepts the judgement of someone without any examination, nor does the follower really have the RIGHT to do so without risking being labelled himself.

However, when I put the matter to the 'warned against' scholar and asked if that was how those who listened to and sat with him should behave towards those who warn against him, he once again, in total contrast to the person giving me all this 'lowdown', stated,

"No. You are known to have sound 'aqeedah and if you sit with them you will be able to distinguish between the truth and falsehood. It could even be some error in transmission or understanding"

In other words, he gave the person he was addressing (me) credit for having a brain! Guess which approach I prefer? You guys can guess at all the names you wish and fill in the blanks. It DOESN'T MATTER. What matters is the pattern and approach i.e. manhaj. Wallahul-Musta'aan.

TOISW

Another thing that REALLY upsets me is all this WARNING going on, but NONE of it being given directly to those who are accused or those who sit with them. Where is the naseehah that is due to the 'aamatul-Muslimeen? It seems those on the periphery and who are apparently

deemed 'vulnerable' are picked on. Only after unexplained nastiness and so much speculation has gone on for a long time and someone outside of the people making the 'warning' has nerve enough to go to the person with some usually vague information, does it all come out. It all seems so cowardly. There is NO WAY that it is correct.

Caesar opened the letter. The opening words of the letter, Bismillah (In the name of Allah) attracted his attention and he said: "I have not so far seen such a letter except that of Solomon. Then he called his interpreter so that he might read the letter and translate it for him. He translated the Prophet's letter as under: "(This is a letter) from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the great Hercules of Rome. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may be safe. Allah will give you two rewards (reward for your own faith as well as reward for the faith of those who are your subordinates). In case, however, you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Arisiyans as well. O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e.: we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us too should not accept others as their gods. And (O Muhammad! As and when) they recalcitrate against the true religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims".

In the beginning of the seventh year of migration the Prophet appointed one of his brave officers named Abdullah Huzafah Sahmi Qarashi to carry his letter to Khusro Perviz inviting him to Islam. The letter of the Prophet is given below:
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the great Kisra of Iran. Peace be upon him, who seeks truth and expresses belief in Allah and in His Prophet and testifies that there is no god but Allah and that He has no partner, and who believes that Muhammad is His servant and Prophet. Under the Command of Allah, I invite you to Him. He has sent me for the guidance of all people so that I may warn them all of His wrath and may present the unbelievers with an ultimatum. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe. And if you refuse to accept Islam, you will be responsible for the sins of the Magi".

Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah was a brave and skilled rider and was associated with a famous event in the history of Islam. He was one of the six persons who were deputed to carry the missionary letters of the Prophet to the rulers of the world. The Prophet ordered him to carry the following letter to the Maqauqis, the Ruler of Egypt: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
This is a letter from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the Maqauqis, the head of the Copts. Peace be upon the followers of truth. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe (from the wrath of Allah). Embrace Islam so that the Almighty may grant you two rewards. And if you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Copts as well. "O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e. we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us also should not accept others as their gods. O Muhammad! (As and when) they recalcitrate against the true

religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims."

When the Prophet sent his envoy to Ethiopia with a letter some Muslim Muhajirs were still residing there whereas others had come over to Madina and had praised the justice of the great ruler of that country and his kindness to his subjects. In case, therefore, we find a sort of inclination, kindness and softness in the tone of the letter written by the Prophet to that ruler, it is, because he was aware of the mentality of the Negus.

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah to the Negus, the King of Ethiopia. Peace be upon you! I praise Allah except Whom there is no god. He is Allah who is free from all defects and faults; and His obedient servants are safe from His wrath. He sees and witnesses the conditions of His servants. I testify that Prophet 'Isa bin Maryam is a spirit of Allah and a 'word' (of Allah) which settled in the womb of pious Maryam. Allah created him in the womb of his mother without a father with the same Power with which He created Adam without parents.

I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner, and require you to obey Him and to follow my religion. Profess faith in Allah Who has appointed me to the prophetic mission. The King of Ethiopia should know that I am the Prophet of Allah. I invite you and all your soldiers to the Almighty Allah and I have, by sending this letter and my envoy, discharged the onerous responsibility which devolved upon me and have given you advice. Peace be upon those who follow guidance".

Ghassanians were a family of the Qahtani tribe named Azd who had been living in Yemen for a long time, and their lands were irrigated by means of Ma'rib Dam. When the dam was destroyed they were compelled to leave that place and come to Syria. Their power and influence eclipsed that of the natives and eventually they established a State named Ghassaniyah. They ruled in that area under the suzerainty of the Roman Emperors and when Islam disbanded their organization, thirty two persons out of them had ruled over Golan, Yarmuk and Damascus. Out of the six envoys who were sent to big countries to communicate the message of universal prophethood, the fifth was Shuja' bin Wahab, who proceeded to the State of Ghassaniyah to deliver the Prophet's letter to their ruler, Harith bin Abi Shamir at Ba'uzah. When the envoy reached the territory of Harith he came to know that the ruler was busy making preparations to receive Caesar who was coming from Constantinople to Jerusalem on foot as a mark of thanksgiving for his gaining victory over his enemy, Iran.

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah to Harith bin Abi Shamir. Peace be upon the followers of truth and the guides and the true believers. O Harith! I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner. If you embrace Islam your kingdom will continue to exist".

The last envoy of the Prophet proceeded to Yamamah, a territory situated between Najd and Bahrain, and delivered his letter to the ruler of that place named Hawzah bin Ali Hanafi. The text of the Prophet's letter is as follows:

"In the name of Allah. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. You should know

that my religion will spread in the east and the west up to the remotest corners of the earth. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe and your power and kingdom may continue to exist".

The concept of *Ghurbah* - Strangeness:

The Arabic word '*Ghurabaa*', is the plural of the word '*Ghareeb*' which is a derivative of the word '*Gharaba*' - which means "*to go away, depart, absent o.s., withdraw (from), leave (s.o., s.th.)*". The word '*Ghareeb*' means, "*strange, foreign, alien, extraneous*"(see *Hans Wehr Dictionary*).

It has been reported from the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), which has been authenticated by *al-'Allaamah al-Muhaddith al-Albaani* in his *Saheeh al-Jami' as-Sagheer* – that he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"Indeed Islaam began as something strange. And it will return as something strange the way it began. So give glad tidings to the strangers."

Indeed this is the promise of the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) who...

{... does not speak from his desire. It is only a Revelation revealed...}
(Q. 53:3-4)

This Hadeeth from the Blessed tongue of Muhammad (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) shows us the true nature of the Islaamic revival. The Islaamic revival that took place over 1400 years ago in the Arabian Peninsula had this nature of '*strangeness*' and indeed, the revival we are witnessing in our time also has the very same nature. This is so because history is the proof that the people who rejected Faith in Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*) and disobeyed Him usually outnumbered those who were loyal to Allaah and His Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Those who confirmed the oneness of Allaah were always in the minority and thus became the 'Strangers' in the community, for going against the current of the society they were living in.

Shaykh Jamaal ud-Deen Zarabozo outlines this in '*The Friday Prayer Part III* p.62:

"Allaah (Ta'aala) says in the Qur'aan,

{And most of the mankind would not believe even if you desire it eagerly.}
(Yusuf 103).

Allaah also says,

{But most of Mankind refuses [the Truth

and accepts nothing] but disbelief.}

(al-Isra 89)

In yet another verse, Allaah (Ta'aala) states,

{Indeed we have brought the Truth to you but most of them have a hatred for the Truth.}

(al-Zukhruf 78).

In these verses and, in fact, in numerous other places in the Qur'aan, Allaah (Ta'aala) has told us that the majority of mankind refuses to follow the Truth. Indeed, a hadeeth in Saheeh Muslim describes that of all mankind, nine hundred and ninety nine out of every one thousand will be in the Hellfire

This means that the True Believers will always be in minority. As they look around themselves they will see the majority of mankind turning their backs on the teachings and guidance of Allaah (Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala). They prefer disbelief and disobedience to Faith and obedience to Allaah.

The Believer will look like a stranger in their midst. His beliefs, actions and way of life will be completely different from theirs. The disbelievers may even do their best to make him feel like a stranger, someone who does not belong, someone with strange ideas and practices. They may be ridiculed. Psychological pressures may be put upon them. The media may attack them and so forth."

"Indeed Islaam began as something Strange..."

This strangeness is not something new with this *Ummah* in particular, rather it existed amongst all the other Prophets and Messengers before the Muhammad (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). From amongst them was the great Messenger, Nooh (*'alayhi salaam*), who gave *Da'wah* to his people for 950 years and they rejected and mocked him. Lut (*'alayhi salaam*) gave *Da'wah* to his people but the *Kuffaar* in response mocked him and tried to exile him and attacked his honour. Ibraaheem (*'alayhi salaam*) called his people to Allaah by which he went against the norm of his community, and consequently 'stepped on people's feet', for which he was persecuted, and thrown into fire. Moosa (*'alayhi salaam*) also called the Fir'awn and his people to worship Allaah (*Ta'aala*) alone, where the former rejected his call from the first day and was destroyed, and the latter ones, in the absence of Moosa began to worship a calf besides Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*).

'Isa ibnu Maryam called the people to worship Allaah alone, and he had to pay the price just like his predecessors, by being persecuted and mocked by his own people, so Allaah raised him up and he is alive until this day of ours and will return before the *Day of Judgement*.

Then how may one forget the most noble of the sons of Adam – Muhammad ibn 'Abdillaah – may Allaah's *Salaah* and *Salaam* be upon him; His entire biography from the beginning till the end shows us how he stood up with the call of *Tawheed* on the

methodology of the Prophets who went before him. How his own people turned against him and mocked him and how this truthful and trustworthy person was overnight labelled as a 'magician', a poet, a 'mad man' and '*...the one who is after power*' and so on. So the Muslims in the early stages were in a state of *Ghurbah* - Strangeness, as the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said,

"Indeed Islaam began as something Strange..."

"...and it will return as something strange the way it began..."

This indicates that the return of Islaam is a *fact* and that it must take the same route and methodology, and must go through the same phases of difficulties and hardship that the early Muslims went through. This is why Imaam Maalik (*rahimahullaah*) said that the latter part of this *Ummah* will not be corrected except by what corrected its earliest part. Therefore it is inevitable that this path of Islaamic revival must consist of firm faith in all that Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*) has sent down. Likewise, it is inevitable that the Muslims will have to go through hardship, endless struggle, persecution, exile and all that the first part of this *Ummah* went through to their correct Faith.

So we noticed the decline of Islaam as the time went until the Muslims were left without the *Khilaafah*, and *Kufr* and *Shirk* began to creep into the Muslim ranks in its various forms, for instance, secularism. The people of innovations and desires were at last set free to spread their diseases throughout the Muslim land. The aggressive *Kuffaar* invaded Muslim Lands and enforced their religion of *Kufr* over the Muslim people. Even when they left, they installed a person with a Muslim name who implemented the same *Kufr* as his predecessors. This caused Islaam to nearly fade away from the lives of the Muslims.

In the midst of this calamity, Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*) raised amongst this *Ummah* various personalities amongst the Scholars, the *Du'aat* (i.e. those who call to Islaam), intellectuals, thinkers, authors and the Mujaahideen in order to help and aid His Deen. The appearance of these personalities is not something new to this century, rather these people have appeared throughout Islaamic history. It is the promise of Allaah, by the tongue of His Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), that there will always be a party amongst this *Ummah*, which will hold the flag of *Tawheed* high up, as the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah being apparent upon the Truth; those who forsake them will not be able to harm them."

(Muslim)

They will cure this *Ummah* of the diseases and corruption and will act as shields against

foreign beliefs, ideologies and innovations that take away the beauty of Islaam. These people are indeed very few in number, so consequently they will become the victims of strangeness. As the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said about them, that they are...

"Those who are righteous when the people have become corrupt."

(Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan and others. *Saheeh* by supporting evidences, see '*The Friday Prayer*' by Jamaal ud-Deen Zarabozo)

Or in another narration:

"A small group of pious people in a large group of evil people. Those who disobey them are more than those who obey them."

(Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan and others. Hasan, see '*The Friday Prayer*' by Jamaal ud-Deen Zarabozo)

Today, by the Grace of Allaah, we can see the return of Islaam in front of our very eyes, by the return of the youth to Islaam and Jihaad. Many of us who started practising this Deen most probably went through the early stages of strangeness. When a person merely begins to take interest in Islaam, and the materialistic society around him/her begins to view this person as a stranger. When this interest leads a person to increase his Knowledge in Islaam, this person becomes more of a stranger by actually spending some of the time reading, '...'so-called' *religious books*, whereas the time could have been spent reading some *fiction*-novel.

Then this individual puts the Knowledge to practice by making *Wudhoo* and establishing *Salaah* five times a day, giving *Zakaah*, fasting in *Ramadhaan* and making Hajj. If this person is a brother, then he grows a beard, and if this is a sister, then she wears the Islaamic *Hijaab* and thus becomes even more of a stranger in her own household! Then this person takes on the duty of spreading the Message of the Messengers on his/her shoulders, by either speaking to the lost sheep of this *Ummah* on a one-to-one basis, or writing articles, or giving lectures. Thus becoming a stranger amongst those practising Muslims who practice the basics of Islaam, but do not take on the responsibility of taking it to others. Then this person goes a step further and devotes his/her life to either seeking Knowledge of Islaam, or living his entire life on a mountain in some trench writing the history of Islaam with his blood.

This person becomes even more of a stranger amongst those practising Muslims who take this message to others, but could not devote their lives to seeking Knowledge or making Jihaad in Allaah's way.

These are the strangers who are the torchbearers of *Tawheed*, those who restore the honour of this *Ummah* and bring back to her the peace and security she once enjoyed.

These are the strangers who were given the glad tidings of Paradise. As in the last part of the Hadeeth, the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"So Toobah for the Ghurabaa"

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The word '*Tooba*' is the name of a tree in Paradise that is promised to the strangers in this world. Regarding the word '*Tooba*', Shaykh Jamaal ud-Deen Zarabozo said the following in his work, '*The Friday Prayer Part III*' p. 66.

"The Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) has given the glad tidings of a tree in Paradise for those who have to live as strangers because the people are deviating from the teachings of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. What is the characteristic of this tree in Paradise?... The Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) explained that also when he said,

"Tooba is a tree in Paradise. The time it takes to traverse it is one hundred years. The clothing of the inhabitants of Paradise are taken from its sheaths."

[Sh. Al-Albaani called it Hasan in Silsila al-Ahadeeth as-Saheehah, v. 4 p. 639]

This glad tidings of the tree of Tooba for the strangers should make us all wish, strive and aspire to be from among the strangers in this time in which Islaam has truly become strange again."

May Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*) make us from the strangers of this world, and the inheritors of *Tooba* in the Hereafter,

- ***Ameen.***

Who are the Ghurabaa' - The Strangers?...

Besides the Ahadeeth mentioned above about the strangers, the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) made mention of these people in various other Ahadeeth that help us complete the picture of these people.

Firqatun-Naajiyah

The Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) described them as '*al-Firqatun-Naajiyah*', meaning - The Saved Sect, when he said:

"Indeed before you from the people of the book, they were divided into 72 sects, and this Ummah will divide into 73 sects; 72 in the Hellfire, and one in Paradise, and that is al-Jamaa'ah (the Group)."

(Hadeeth is authentic, see al-Amru bil-Ittibaa' with the Tahqeeq of Mashhoor Hasan p.47)

In another narration he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"They are those who are upon what I am upon today, and my Companions."

(The Hadeeth is Hasan due to many witnesses, see A'laam as-Sunnah al-Manshoorah by Ta'leeq of ash-Shalabi p.195)

So the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) taught us that this *Jamaa'ah*, which will be the saved sect, is upon what he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is upon and his Companions. Therefore this is the *first* criterion for those who claim to be the 'saved sect', that they should be upon what the first generation was upon in Belief and in actions, in morals and in manners, both outwardly and inwardly.

Some people claim that since the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used the word '*Jamaa'ah*' (i.e. the Group, the main body, the community), the saved sect then must be the majority of the Muslims. But this belief is incorrect due to various reasons, and from them are:

1) It contradicts the Ahadeeth of *Ghurbah* - the strangeness. Because the reason why the saved sect will be strange is due to the lack of its adherents in the first place. As the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"A small group of pious people in a large group of evil people. Those who disobey them are more than those who obey them."

(Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan and others. Hasan, see 'The Friday Prayer' by Jamaal ud-Deen Zarabozo)

2) The majority of the people (i.e. Muslims) can be on the Straight Path at one time, as well as becoming deviated from the Straight Path at another time. As is the case with the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) at the end of his life, followed by the four righteous *Khulafaa'*. The adherents to *Ahlu-Sunnah* back then were in the majority. But by the time of Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (*rahimahullaah*), the majority, under the influence of the government, became

astray by being the adherents of the *Mu'tazili* philosophy, and those who held on to the Sunnah became few.

This is why Sufyaan ath-Thawree said to Yoosuf al-Asbaat:

"O Yoosuf! If you hear of a person from the east, that he is a person of Sunnah, then send him Salaam. And if you hear of another from the west who is a person of Sunnah, then send him Salaam, for Ahlus-Sunnah have become few!" (Talbees Iblees by Ibnul-Jawzi p.17 Daarul-Kitaab al-'Arabi)

3) Another criterion of being from the saved group is, as the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"They are those who are upon what I am upon today, and my Companions."

(The Hadeeth is Hasan due to many witnesses, see A'laam as-Sunnah al-Manshoorah by Ta'leeq of ash-Shalabi p.195)

Therefore the '*Jamaa'ah*' is, what is in accordance with the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, and not the trend of the people. This is why Ibn Mas'ood (*radhiallaahu 'anhu*) said:

"Al-Jamaa'ah (i.e. the group) is what is in accordance with the Truth, even if you were to be alone!"
(See A'lam as-Sunnah al-Manshoorah p.195)

Taa'ifatul-Mansoorah

In many other narrations he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) described them as, "*at-Taa'ifatul-Mansoorah*", meaning - '*The Victorious Group*', as in the Hadeeth of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*):

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah being apparent upon the Truth; those who forsake them will not be able to harm them."
(Muslim)

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah being apparent (and over-powering), until the Decree of Allaah comes to them, while they are apparent."
(Bukhaari & Muslim)

In another narration the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) describes them as those who *establish the order of Allaah*.

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah. establishing

the Order of Allaah; Those who forsake them, or oppose them, will not be able to harm them, until the Decree of Allaah comes and they are apparent (and over powering) upon the people."

(Bukhaari & Muslim)

In a different narration he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) describes them as those who **fight for the Truth (i.e. the Mujaahideen)**:

"This Deen will never depart from being established, so long as there is a band from the Muslims fighting for it, until the Hour is established."

(Muslim)

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah fighting upon the Truth, over-powering, until the Day of Resurrection."

(Muslim)

"There will never cease to exist a band from my Ummah, fighting for the Decree of Allaah, over-powering their enemy; they will not be harmed by those who oppose them, until the Hour approaches them and they are upon it (i.e. fighting for the Truth)."

(Muslim)

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah fighting upon the Truth, over-powering those who are hostile to them, until the last of them fights the Maseeh ad-Dajjal (i.e. the false christ)."

(Al-Haakim called it Saheeh (4/450), and adh-Dhababi agreed.)

In one narration the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) indicated where this group would be found when he (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah upon the Deen, apparent over their enemy and over-powering. They will not be harmed by those who oppose them, except what afflicts them from hardship, until the Order of Allaah approaches them and they are like that (i.e. steadfast on the Truth)."

They [i.e. the Companions (*radhiallaahu 'anhum*)] said: "*O Messenger of Allaah! Where are they?*" He (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied:

"They are at Bait al-Maqdis, and on the outskirts of Bait al-Maqdis."

(Ahmad)

The points to note in all these narrations are the following:

- There will not be a time when this Ummah will live a *day* without this group. As the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said in all the narrations mentioned above:

"There will never cease to exist a group from my Ummah..."

Therefore this necessitates that no matter what state the Muslims might be in, whether they are strong or weak, elevated above all other nations or in a state of humiliation, *Taa'ifa al-Mansoorah* will not cease to exist and its non-existence only signifies the *Day of Judgement*.

This *Taa'ifah* (i.e. party) will be:

- 1) Apparent upon the Truth.
 - 2) Apparent upon the people with evidences and proofs.
 - 3) Establishing the Order of Allaah (*Subhaanahu wa Ta'aala*).
 - 4) Over-powering their enemies and being those hostile to them.
 - 5) Fighting for the Truth.
- There will be many people condemning them (*not necessarily them condemning everyone else!*), speaking ill of them, backbiting and slandering them. But none of this will be able to harm them in the least. They will continue to be apparent on the Truth, apparent over the people with irrefutable evidences and proofs as well as the sword, establishing the Order of Allaah and making Jihaad in His Path regardless of what the people say.
 - Lastly, the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) confirms the continuity of this group, "...*until the Hour is established*". Meaning when these people disappear, *Tawheed* will disappear. When *Tawheed* of Allaah disappears from this earth, indeed that is the moment when every soul will be brought to its account.

Therefore the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) described this faction from amongst the Ummah with different names and different qualities. Some times they are mentioned as being the *Ghurabaa'*, sometimes they were mentioned to be *al-Firqatun-Naajiyah* and sometimes they were mentioned to be *at-Taa'ifatul-Mansoorah*

All these names point towards one faction out of those 73 factions, which has been promised Paradise.

This is why *Shaykh ul-Islam* Ibn Taymiyah (*rahimahullaah*) begins his '*Aqeedat ul-Waasitiyah*' by saying:

"As for what follows:

This is the Belief of al-Firqatin-Naajiyatil-Mansoorah (The Saved and the Victorious group)..."

Likewise we find *al-'Allaama Haafidh* bin Ahmad al-Hakamee authoring a book under the title: "*A'laam as-Summatil-Manshoorah li I'tiqaadit-Taafi'fatil-Naajiyatil-Mansoorah*"

So who are the Ghurabaa'?

This question is raised when one looks at the various factions of the Ummah and finds each one of them claiming to be the 'Saved and the Victorious group'. Nowadays in particular when the Muslims have been divided even more by partisanship, we find people pointing at particular groups or parties and claiming them to be the Saved and the Victorious group.

One should understand that claiming a particular individual or a party to be the 'Saved and the Victorious group' means testifying for them Paradise, and *nullifying* from them the Hellfire. This goes against one of the principles of *Ahlus-Sunnah*, which states that we do not testify Paradise or Hellfire for anyone. Therefore it is incorrect to say that a particular individual is from the *Firqatin-Naajiyatil-Mansoorah* or a particular group of people with a certain name for that matter. However, it could be said that such and such people or a group is more *deserving* to be from *Firqatin-Naajiyatil-Mansoorah* or by describing a group of people in general, who possess one of the qualities of *Firqatin-Naajiyatil-Mansoorah*.

For example Imaam al-Bukhaari (*rahimahullaah*) said in his *Saheeh* concerning the Saved group that,

"They are the people of Knowledge."

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (*rahimahullaah*) said,

"If they are not Ahlul-Hadeeth, then I do not know who they are."

This statement was further clarified by al-Qaadhi 'Ayaadh when he said, "*Ahmad meant Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and those who believe in the madhhab of Ahlul-Hadeeth.*"

Similarly it has been reported from Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (*rahimahullaah*) that when he was asked about this group he replied:

"They are the people of the west (i.e. Syria). For verily they are the ones who are fighting against the Romans. Anyone who fights against the Mushrikeen is upon the Truth."

Likewise *Shaykh ul-Islam* Ibn Taymivah (*rahimahullaah*) opined that the *Mu'aahideen* are

the most deserving of people to be including in the Victorious group when he said:

"As for the group in Syria and Egypt and their likes, then they are in this time fighting for the Deen of Islaam. So they are the most deserving of the people to enter the Victorious group, which was mentioned by the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) with his statement in the beneficial authentic Ahadeeth:

'There will never cease to exist a group in my Ummah, apparent upon the Truth. They will not be harmed by those who oppose them, nor those who forsake them, until the Hour is established',

and in the narration of Muslim,

'The people of the west (i.e. Syria) will never cease...'
(Majmoo' al-Fataawa v.28 p.531)

Therefore, it should be concluded that those belonging to the *madhhab* of *Ahlu-Sunnah* in statements and actions, inwardly and outwardly, as well as those who are engaged in Jihaad in our time, are indeed from the 'Saved and the Victorious group', be they from different groups and parties, from different geographical places at different times. From this, we know that this group is not necessarily an organised group of people operating in a certain part of the world, rather they are individuals spread out across the globe. Amongst them are the '*Ulamaa*', the Mujaahideen, the *Du'aat* (i.e. Callers to Islaam), those who command the good and forbid the evil, wherever they may be.

This is why Imaam an-Nawawi (*rahimahullaah*) said in his *Sharh* of *Saheeh Muslim* pv.13 p.67:

"It is possible that this group is divided amongst the different categories of the Believers; So from amongst them are the brave ones who are fighting From amongst them are the Fuqahaa' (Islaamic Jurists). From amongst them are the Muhaddithoon (i.e. specialists in Hadeeth). From amongst them are the Zuhhaad (i.e. those who abstain from extravagance), and those who command the good and forbid the evil, and from them are people belonging to other categories from good. And it is not necessary that they should be all together, rather they can be separated over different regions of the earth."

Is 'Aqeedah Alone the (Sole) Criterion for One to be from the Saved Group?...

Some people unfortunately, who emphasise on '*Aqeedah*' too much and leave out actions, morals and manners assume that Belief is the only criterion for one to be from the Saved group. Therefore, according to their argument, anyone with the correct beliefs is *automatically* from the Saved group regardless of his deeds, and likewise anyone with the incorrect Creed is doomed to the Hellfire and there is no chance of that person being from the Saved group even if his good actions were numerous. This is a false

assumption and is nothing but merely a reflection of a disease in their own beliefs called *al-Irjaa'* (i.e. to separate actions from *Imaan*).

Rather, the true picture is that some Muslims are more deserving of being from the Saved group than others are, due to their Beliefs or/and actions. So if a Muslim doesn't have many righteous deeds but has the correct Creed, the latter might over-weigh the former and thus he may become from the Saved sect. Likewise, if a person carries some *bid'ah* (which does not amount to *Kufi*) in his beliefs, but he has numerous good deeds to out-weigh the corruption in his Creed then this person may also become from the Saved group.

This is because the criterion for one to be from the Saved group is not Belief alone. Rather it is *Imaan*, which according to the Qur'aan, the Sunnah and the *Ijmaa'* of the Salaf is, statements *and* actions, inwardly and outwardly.

This is why Shaykh Ibn Baaz (*rahimahullaah*) said in '*Words of Advice Regarding Da'wah* p.50, concerning the Saved group:

"All of these Ahadeeth teach us that the Saved group from this Ummah are those who adhere to the 'Aqeedah, speech and actions (i.e. Imaan) of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions (radhiallaahu 'anhum)."

Since the Muslims differ from each other in their level of *Imaan*, so the one with the highest *Imaan* (which is Belief, speech and action) is more deserving of being from the Saved group.

Similarly the *Du'aat* and those who command good, and forbid the evil, may be more deserving to be from the Saved group than the average Muslim. The Scholars and the Mujaahideen might be more deserving than the previous category, and similarly, the Scholars who are the Mujaahideen might be more deserving than the former.

And Allaah knows best.

EXPOSING THE TACTICS OF THE OPPONENTS OF ISLAM

Originally 1992/Revised 2000

The following are the edited notes from a speech delivered before a mixed audience of Muslims and non-Muslim university students in the United States. It seems just as relevant today as it did then, so perhaps it can be of some use for those in the field of da'wah as talking points or at least matters that need to be approached from an Islamic perspective so practical solutions can be found. Sometimes such a frank discussion of such issues may lead to more effective da'wah, and although directed to a specific audience, most of the points raised widely apply elsewhere in varying degrees, and Allah knows best.

All praise and thanks is due to Allah. We praise Him and we ask from Him and beg His forgiveness and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil in ourselves and the wickedness in our deeds. May the salaam and salaam of Allah be upon His Noble Messenger Muhammad and upon his companions and followers until the Day of Resurrection, ameen.

The purpose of this article is to highlight to all those who may read it that there are many factors today which prevent people from understanding with clarity the message of our religion - Islam. Do not mistake that I think that merely listening to a single speech or reading a single article will suddenly lift all of the veil that may be over anyone's eyes and that they will be hit with a bolt of light that will turn him or her around and they jump from a state of disbelief to a state of total faith. We would love for this to happen and believe in the possibility but we know ultimately that it is only Allah who guides whom He wills. In the Qur'aan in the chapter Al-Oassas in verse 56, Allah addresses the Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) thusly: **"Verily! You guide not whom you like but Allah guides whom he will. And He knows the best who are guided."** I therefore realize that even the most rational argumentation is not what causes a person to accept or reject this religion, no matter how sincere its proponents may be.

I state this at the outset so that my intent is clear to you. That is, I hope to discuss and bring to your attention various means by which you may be deprived of the actual ability to discern what Islam really is and in our opinion subsequently are unable to truly distinguish truth from falsehood. We are well aware that the audience is not an uneducated or unsophisticated one so also don't misunderstand my statement as a hidden insult, that is, one that presumes ignorance on your part or that there is some inherent inability within you to comprehend the message of Islam or events that occur around you. No, rather it is more in the way of bringing to the forefront as much as possible that various methods which sometimes by themselves may not amount to much but when looked at and assessed cumulatively they amount to nothing less than a concerted effort to distract, pull away, indeed repel even the most intelligent person from considering Islam as a legitimate, viable, and comprehensive way of life. Indeed, in the eyes of a believer it is the only correct way of life and it is the one which is revealed for the benefit of all people regardless of their background, ethnicity, locality etc.

I have divided the topic into three main parts. **One**, the tactics of the outright opponents to Islam among the disbelievers. **Two**, shared tactics of those who consider themselves Muslims and those disbelievers who are open in their opposition. **Three**, tactics of the more subtle opponents to Islam who may even be counted among the ranks of the Muslims. I will try to give some examples in order to establish that such tactics are indeed real and not overblown or imagined, as any sociologist or social psychologist would probably say is a classic trait of any cult - to paint themselves as beleaguered and misrepresented. I hope to also suggest some causes for such opposition and finally present some practical solutions to this problem. I am not an Islamic scholar but rather a man who has worked in the field of propagation in some form or another almost since my acceptance of Islam nearly two decades ago. I did not always work according to any method besides that of my own or what was presented to me as being Islamic. I have since however, made efforts to become more educated about my religion and have traveled great distances to do so and hope to continue along that road if Allah so wills.

The following is based therefore upon practical experience and observation over those many years. However, it would be patently misleading and indeed unfair to present myself as other than a student of knowledge merely because I now have a platform. I point this out because, as I hope to point out again later, it is far too frequent that the people who we allow to come before us as "Islamic experts, scholars, speakers, thinkers, and writers" are just "padding" their resumes in many cases and have little or no practical experience in an Islamic context or in other than an academic setting. Indeed many of these expositors or representatives of our religion are neither adherents or sympathetic to anything which could be said to resemble the Islam of Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) or the Muslims of the ages!

Why Such Tactics Are Effective

Implementation of many of the tactics which I will list is made much easier in a country such as this one (USA) where there is no shortage of media by which any one can get a platform, air-time, or print space to spread their views no matter how erroneous, ridiculous, or venomous (not to mention the Internet nowadays). There seems to be however, in the opinion of many Muslims who are regular observers of the media, that this is a consistent means through which to attack Islam. Yes, attack. There is a difference between a mistake which can be made through faulty research, trash-mongering and sensationalism - which can readily be found on the talk show circuit and in the tabloids - and distortion which almost every major representative of the mass media indulges in. The cumulative effect nevertheless amounts to an attack. We concede that not all media outlets for example are inherently against or hostile towards Islam or Muslims and that honest mistakes are not made. Nevertheless, we find it hard to believe, for example that any one who reports for a sophisticated journal or network that prides itself on getting the facts or its investigative journalism, could be so wholly ignorant of Islamic beliefs that they could consistently portray certain individuals as Muslim spokespersons who openly declare beliefs which are diametrically opposed to the beliefs of Islam.

How can such consistent occurrences go unchallenged or not pointed out? Several reasons are suggested.:

- This (the U.S.) is a nation whose culture and overall philosophy accepts the principle that each individual has the right to say about himself that which he believes about himself whether true or not.
- Religious beliefs have traditionally been considered, more or less, an area where people tread lightly.
- The rise of "humanism" or "secular humanism" as a doctrine among many of the 'intellectual' strata. Supposedly based on rationalism, it claims to be a non-advocate of organized religion, it is indeed a religion unto itself with its own set of principles etc. It advocates a "global human ethic" that goes beyond traditional religious principles and it states that truth is relative, and super or supra-natural phenomena (i.e. miracles, revelation) is anathema to rational human thought.
- There is a widespread view that religion in general is speculation, based upon outmoded dogma of particular people in particular times.
- Religion has no place in the everyday affairs of life. It is limited and compartmentalized in the area of what people define as worship.
- The popularization of what the "Star Trek Concept" (science fiction) of God among the people which relegates almost all religious thought or belief in a life beyond or anything of a supernatural, metaphysical nature to be vestiges of some greater life form that is so far beyond us in intelligence and capability that we merely see it as "Supreme Being" due to our lower evolution etc...
- Concepts such as honor and respect for one's parents, elders, protection of womenfolk, paternal or leadership of the household and male leadership of society are all relegated to the dark corner of "traditional", ancient or even "regressive" values which have a negative connotation in the youth, "make change your friend" society. Again, when you hear these terms it is as if you are talking about some alien culture that can be found in science fiction.
- The widespread notion that religion in general is just a big troublemaker, leads to suppression, conformity, fanaticism and finally conflict.
- The inability of Muslims to effectively confront issues raised due to lack of in-depth knowledge of Islam themselves and internal division, therefore we are

shortcoming in our da'wah efforts in at least educating people effectively and properly about Islam. Considering the above realities, how then will Muslim callers fare when Islam is portrayed as 'the religion of the Arabs with its origins in the barren deserts of the Arabian Peninsula from an illiterate man who was influenced by the teachings of Christianity and Judaism and sought to break away from the pagan and warring tribes which abounded there and indeed held ambitions of holding power in the region.'? How much easier could it be to put even the most blatant lie as representative of Islam to the mass American public?

This subject is very broad and extensive so this discussion can not by any means claim to be comprehensive. Each point could easily carry a lecture or even book by itself (for some points, more is necessary to properly elaborate.) Therefore, the following points are indeed in themselves very general and require much detailed explanation and they open up many more interrelated topics.

A. Commonly employed tactics used by the open Kuffaar (Disbelievers)

- Bribery, seduction, blackmail, terror, torture, extortion, war, sanction, threats, lies, misrepresentation and distortion, rumor, not necessarily in that order.
- Injection of doubt as to the veracity of the sources of Islam. Hadeeth attacked as unreliable etc. and even the Qur'aan as concocted or inauthentic.
- Attack Muslim cultures and scholars as backward, antiquated, irrelevant, etc.
- Present a deviant picture of Islam as representative of it that is repulsive or repugnant to any person with a sense of decency.
- Depiction of Islam as a religion particular to the "Third World" nations of the Earth. i.e. Depicted as regional or limited and not a universal message.
- "Demonization" of Islam, Muslims, and Muslim Nations through negative stereotyping and one-sided sensational negative reporting. i.e. A picture of Islam as expansionist and inherently violent, fomenting terrorism, criminality etc.
- Adherence to Islam is almost always depicted as a political phenomenon due to socio-economic fluctuations or injustices as opposed to being a result of heartfelt conviction and serious thought.
- Practically never a positive or uplifting portrayal of Islam, Muslims, or their condition. Islam portrayed as a religion of old men and fools.
- Allege that the Islamic system is a Socialistic structure which devalues or suppresses individualism, social change and freedom of expression.
- Disagreement with or dissension from the political or economic principles of America (or the respective non-Muslim nation one may be in) constitutes lack of patriotism/treason/heresy in the fullest religious sense though this is not always stated in a blatant manner. Nationalism (Americanism) is not viewed as religion (deen) even though it practically is.
- Widespread inundation of western culture into the sensual, material pleasures of this life which downgrades the spirit or makes focus onto it and religion difficult, strange, or weird. Thrill-seeking and gratification through entertainment and recreation i.e. music, sports, art, movies, fiction, drinking, and of course sex where anything goes between consenting adults (and sometimes children) are all open and a constant and distracting barrage volleyed upon the senses.

B. Shared/mutual tactics used by Kuffaar and misguided Muslims

- Putting forward those personalities who advocate unconditional assimilation into, support of, sympathy toward, and whole-hearted participation in the social and political system of the U.S. They make virtually no distinction between Muslims

and others and they indeed emphasize the commonalities i.e. nationality and race between them before religious considerations.

- Never present or explain the principles of Islam in a simple and cogent fashion.
- Putting forward or spotlighting unqualified individuals or groups as representatives of Islam who may be unethical, deviants, or outright heretics from the religion (or just plain stupid) with no subjective measures being used to ascertain the qualifications of such people. One rarely sees Islam represented or presented in the popular mass-media by bona fide, well-known, or acknowledged leading scholars but more often by minimal, secondary, or even fringe scholars or simply uneducated or undereducated laymen. Indeed, qualification usually means not one who is versed in the sharia, but merely one who has a title before their name.
- Islamic Sharia is often presented as antiquated, irrelevant, authoritarian, unsophisticated, limited and its punitive measures excessive, barbaric, "Draconian" - It is overly restrictive to personal freedoms -especially for women. Anti-woman, paternalistic.
- Rejection of the sunnah as authoritative or authentic source and claim to emphasize the Qur'aan alone and thus leaving it open to all types of baseless interpretation.
- Pushing religious doctrine on the public sphere is a big "no-no" i.e. at work, school, etc. Open manifestations of religion in this society are considered discomfiting. (Just look at the negative reaction to the relatively weak references to God made by the Jewish vice-presidential candidate as a measure of this discomfort).
- Use of euphemisms or "catch" words or watch" words which equate as "extremism" in the minds of people and used as red flags in relation to Western (American) society i.e. proselytizing, zealous, zealot, zeal, fundamentalist, fundamentalism, radicalism, puritanical, clergy, cleric, mullah, Puritanical Wahabi Sect, etc.
- Highlight particular cultures or cultural practices as representative of Islam no matter how deviated or antithetical to Islamic tenets they may be.
- Promotion and legitimization of "Interfaith Dialogue" i.e. the Parliament of World Religions etc. which puts Islam on equal ground with that which Allah has declared as false and replaced.

C. "Internal" Tactics i.e. those which are found particularly among misguided Muslims.

- Lack of aqeedah (proper belief) – i.e. what it is, where to get it, from whom do we get it, how do we get it, most importantly why do we need it, or a manhaj based upon sound Islamic principles.
- Redefinition of aqeedah according to the leader of the group as opposed to the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and his companions and the scholars, or devaluing or not dealing with 'aqeedah at all.
- Usage of weak and forged hadeeth, or new interpretations of sound hadeeth which are grounded only in the mind of the interpreter and not any sound established principles.
- Usage of deviant or incorrect and incomplete interpretations of the Qur'aanic and even deliberately outright misquoting in translation.
- The terms or concepts of Walaa (Loyalty, love) and Baraa (Disassociation, enmity) are purposely left out of our vocabulary and understanding.

- Spread of "modernism" which states as a principle that reformative thought is necessary. Need to re-work the sharia by creating a new set of jurisprudential principles (usool).
- Popularizing the notion that even people who deny the messengership of Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and its finality or who commit open associationism (shirk) can possibly be Muslims without knowing it.
- Emphasizing national origin or ethnic and racial backgrounds more so than the tie of brotherhood through faith.
- Denying that any differences exist within the Muslim Ummah or denouncing any one that says these differences should have any bearing upon interaction with anyone who claims to be Muslim claiming that this hurts Muslim unity.
- Not properly assessing when certain differences are legitimate and can be overlooked for the sake of the greater goal of achieving unity and effectively conveying the Islamic message.
- Widespread promotion and imitation of practices and customs of disbelievers which is most intensely geared toward the youth, then the women, then the men.
- Legitimization of innovation (bid'ah) i.e. the use of Christian doctrine and tenets even Biblical themes and sources to support Islamic principles.
- Remove references to any potentially "offensive" terms, i.e. Jihad, deviance, disbelief heresy, disbeliever, particularly the Arabic terms Kaafir, Kufr, Bid'ah, from their language or speech. (Even Hellfire or the concept of Divine punishment)
- Discourage seeking knowledge period or doing so according to established principles or methods of acquisition. Rather they advocate short cuts, formulas, or even mystic ritualistic methods of achieving closeness to Allah or righteousness or what they consider to be knowledge.
- Eliminate the Companions of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam & raa) or the early generations of the Muslims and the scholars as examples and references for the Muslims. Downplay or reinterpret the sunnah in every aspect, i.e. questioning its authority in Islamic law.
- Change the criterion for scholarship or leadership. i.e. Insisting that the "real" scholars (Ulamaa) are the scientists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects thus underplaying the role of religious scholarship within the society and making it unappealing by portraying it as limited.
- Deliberately undermine the respect due to scholars and scholarship by perpetuating stereotypes of both teachers and students of knowledge, thereby eliminating trust.
- Maintaining a state of unawareness among the masses of who the scholars are in the first place and their contributions, writings and rulings.

Effects of the Above Tactics

- Turns off any potential converts to Islam by creating fear and total mistrust of both Islam and the Muslims. Thereby effectively cutting them off from the light of the deen.
- Reinforces in the minds of non-Muslims that Islam is no different than any other religion, or even backward and regressive, therefore there is no need to change since it offers nothing new or dynamic which will improve the human condition.
- Creation of doubt and even shame in Muslims about their religion and cause them not only to be physically but psychologically inhibited and therefore

unwilling and unable to propagate the religion and in many cases reluctant even to practice it. This generates a posture of apologetics from those Muslims and dramatically retards the spread of Islam, which is the goal of its opponents.

- Assimilation of Muslims in non-Muslim culture thus undermining the ability to raise any effective or strong Muslims from among the youth. Indeed creates a distaste of the true deen within them. Incapacitating the creation of an intellectual pool of men and women who can carry forward the deen in an effective or authentic manner, according to the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah.
- Creating a nationalistic or ethnic view and approach to Islam, or more accurately, create a new religion that cannot truly be called Islam but rather has some outward aspects of it. It will certainly be one that cannot nor will it pose a challenge to the present society or any future one or offer it anything that will make Islam seen as a viable alternative.
- Furthers the devaluation of Islam and increases corruption and immorality.
- Robs Muslims of the ability to differentiate between Eemaan & Kufr, sunnah and bid'ah.
- Ultimately threatens the very existence of a strong and truly Islamic community by damaging or altering the very structure of the Islam's belief system, ethics, or characteristics.

Suggested Solutions That Can Be Applied by Muslims and Non-Muslims

1. Look to the pure sources of Islam and learn and study them properly. Namely, the Qur'aan and authentic hadeeth.
2. Reference should be made to the good, verified and pious scholars of Islam and established, recognized Islamic institutions in these matters and not pretenders. Of course this necessitates knowledge of what a true scholar is.
3. Talk to Muslims with truly open ears and be aware of the difference between the "average Ahmed" and the learned person in Islam. Try to overcome stereotypes. As individuals, Muslims are of various degrees of knowledge and commitment.
4. Make effort to be aware of Islamic history and current events from the Islamic perspective or at least an objective one.
5. Muslims must practice those acts of worship which make the heart closer to Allah and obedient to His commands and those of His Messenger (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam). Renew individual personal commitment to the deen and perform all those acts which confirm one's faith and strengthens their understanding.
6. Strict and sincere adherence by Muslims to what is verified as the sunnah of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and the practices of the early believers.
7. Establish Islamic practice consistently within the home in every aspect of our lives and emphasize education in the deen.
8. Muslims must learn the method of da'wah (propagation) employed by all of the Prophets most especially Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and his companions (radiallaahu 'anhum). Consistency and good character are some of the best propagators.
9. Respond to the attacks of the opponents of Islam intelligently using authentic proofs and consistent or practical examples. Disbelievers should be provided with cogent and accurate information and if necessary at times be forced through intellectual and effective argument and exposition to stop making blanket judgments based upon a biased picture or isolated events. An honest and critical look at their societies would reveal a multitude of tremendous problems in almost every facet of life.

10. Muslims should be media aware and saavy at least to the extent that they know how to effectively contact news organizations and other information outlets in order to challenge what they may propagate that is incorrect or inaccurate and provide them with correct information.

Do not hesitate to ascertain the credentials of anyone who purports to represent Islam, the Muslims, or what they think.

Abu Abdillah

UPON WHOM IS DA'WAH OBLIGATORY?

Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen

Question : Is da'wah (calling) to Allah obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman, or is it to be left for the Scholars and the students of knowledge only? Is it permissible for the lay person to do da'wah to Allah?

Answer : "When a person has knowledge and insight into that which he is calling to, then there is no difference between the one who has a great amount of knowledge, or a student of knowledge who has recently started in pursuit of knowledge or a lay person - as long as he has certain knowledge of the issue at hand. Rasulullah (*Sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*), said:

"Convey from me, even if it is one verse." [Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith # 3461]

So it is not a condition upon the daa'ee (*the one calling*) to attain a great amount of knowledge, but the condition is that one must have knowledge of what one is calling to. If this calling is established upon ignorance and built upon emotion and passion, then it is not permissible.

Thus, we see that some of the brothers who call to Allah, they do not have except a little knowledge. We see them, due to their strong emotions, prohibiting that which Allah has not prohibited, whilst making obligatory that which Allah has not made obligatory upon His worshippers. This is a very dangerous matter, since permitting what Allah has made haraam (*unlawful*) is like prohibiting what Allah has made halaal (*lawful*). So when they begin prohibiting people for making a particular matter then others will rebuke them for making it haraam. Allah - the Most High - says:

“And do not say, concerning that which your tongues falsely put forward, ‘This is lawful and this is forbidden,’ so as to invent lies against Allaah. Indeed, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper.” [Quran Surah Nahl 16 Verses #116-117]

As for the lay person, then he must not call to Allah if he does not have knowledge. Rather, it is essential to have knowledge in accordance with the saying of Allah - the Most High:

“Say: This is my path. I call to Allah upon sure knowledge.” [Quran Surah Yusuf 12 Verse #108]

So it is a must to call to Allah upon knowledge. However, if a matter is clearly known to be evil or good, then one can command it - if it is good, or forbid it - if it is evil.

So the callers to Allah must start with knowledge. Whosoever calls to Allah without knowledge, then such a person will cause greater harm than good - as is evident. So it is obligatory for a person to first acquire knowledge, then to do da’wah. As for the clear evils and that which is clearly good, then the good is enjoined and the evil prohibited.”

[As-Sahwatul-Islaamiyyah of Shaykh Ibn al-‘Uthaymeen]

Magnificent Journey #7

THE PEOPLE OF BLISS

By Imaam ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

From the book Ar-Risaalat ut-Tabukiyyah

Translation & Comments by Muhammad al-Jibaali

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Contrary to the miserable people discussed in the last chapter, our discussion will now focus on the people of happiness and bliss. These can be divided into two classes.

The First Class of Happy People

The first class consists of those who possess the quality of intellectual independence; they are described by Allah (T) as follows:

"The first and foremost [to embrace *Islam*] of the *Muhaajireen*¹ and the *Ansaar*², and also those who follow them in the best way; Allaah is well-pleased with them, and they are with Him." [Soorah at-Tawbah 9:100]

These are the happy ones for whom Allah's acceptance is confirmed. They are the Companions of Allah's Messenger (S) and those who follow them in the best way until the Day of Resurrection.

The conventional expression '*Taabi'oon*' applies to the companions' followers who have met with them in person. However, the description here is not restricted to them, but includes anyone who righteously follows their way; and any such person is of those with whom Allah (T) is pleased and who are also pleased with Him.

FOLLOWING WITH *IHSAAN*

The manner of following the *Sahaabah* (in this *ayah*) is not ambiguous. It is restricted by Allah (T) to being in the 'best way'. It cannot be fulfilled merely by wishes, or by adhering to them in some matters while rejecting them in others. It should always be done with *Ihsaan* (with righteousness and in the best way); this is a condition to deserve Allah's (T) acceptance and His Gardens. He (T) said:

"He it is Who has sent among the unlettered a messenger [Muhammad] from among themselves, to convey unto them His messages, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error. And He has sent him also to other people who have not quite reached them (the *Sahaabah*); He is All-Mighty, All-Wise. That is the bounty of Allaah which He bestows on whom He wills. Allaah is the One of great bounty." [Soorah Al-Jumu'ah 62:2-4]

The first group of people mentioned here are those who met the Messenger (S) and accompanied him. The latter are those who did not meet the first group; this applies to anyone who comes after them and adheres to their way, until the Day of Resurrection. This group falls behind the first group (the *Sahaabah*) both in era and in stature, even though both groups are of the happy ones.

THREE KINDS OF HEARTS

A third group of people would be those who reject the Guidance that Allaah (T) sent with His Messenger (S), or who do not benefit from it. Those are described by Allah (T) in the following:

"The likeness of those who were entrusted with the responsibility of the Torah, but who subsequently failed in that, is as the likeness of a

donkey which carries a huge burden of books [but understands nothing of them]..." [Soorah Al-Jumu'ah 62:5]

The Prophet (S) also classified people into three groups based on their response to his Message and Guidance. He said:

"An example of the guidance and knowledge with which Allah (T) has sent me is that of a rain that falls on different kinds of land:

- 1) One land is good; it accepts water and produces vegetation and grass in plenty.*
- 2) Another land is dry with a solid bed that reserves water so that people can drink and irrigate with it.*
- 3) The third kind is a porous land that can neither retain water nor produce vegetation.*

*This is an example of those who acquire the knowledge of the Deen and benefit from that with which Allah (T) sent me, and of those who do not take heed and who insist on rejecting Allah's (T) Guidance."*³

The Messenger (S) likens the knowledge (with which he came) to rain, because both are causes of life. Rain is the cause of life for the body, while knowledge is the cause of life for the heart. He (S) also likens different hearts to different valleys, as Allah (T) said:

"He sends down water from the sky, making different valleys flow according to their different natures..." [Soorah Ar-Rad 13:17]

Thus, just as there are three kinds of land, there are three kinds of hearts:

- 1) The first is a good land which accepts water and is ready to produce vegetation. When rain falls on it, it absorbs the water eagerly, giving rise to all sorts of pleasant vegetation.

This is an example of one with a healthy, pure, and intelligent heart, which embraces knowledge, and is guided by its true intelligent nature, blossoming by that wisdom and true faith. Therefore, it is eager to take the knowledge, and ready to bear fruits because of its good nature.

It is also like a rich business man who has experience in different trades and investments, which enables him to invest his wealth in that which brings the best profit.

- 2) The second kind is a hard, solid land prepared to preserve and keep water: It benefits people who visit it to drink or irrigate.

This is an example of one whose heart preserves knowledge and safeguards it so as to convey it just as he hears it, without changing it or deriving conclusions from it. This is also described in another *hadeeth*:

"There is often one who conveys knowledge to one who is more

knowledgeable than himself; and there is often one who carries knowledge when he himself is not knowledgeable."⁴

It is also like a rich man who does not possess the knowledge or experience to invest his wealth, but who knows very well how to preserve it.

3) The third is a barren land which is incapable of holding water or producing vegetation: no matter how much rain falls, it does not profit by it.

This is an example of one whose heart does not accept any knowledge or wisdom. It is also like a poor man who neither possesses wealth nor knows how to preserve it.

The first of the above three examples applies to a learned man who teaches knowledge, and who calls people to Allah (T) with clear guidance; such are the inheritors of the Prophets.

The second applies to one who preserves the knowledge, and who transmits what he hears precisely; he carries to other people precious goods that they can use for trade and investment.

The third applies to one who neither accepts Allaah's Guidance nor benefits from it.

Thus this *hadeeth* covers the different types of people and their different attitudes toward the Prophet's (S) *Da'wah*, which make them either happy or miserable.

The Second Class of Happy People

The second class of Happy People consists of the believers' followers from their offspring who die before reaching the status of *takleef*⁵. They will be with their parents [in the Hereafter], as Allaah (T) said:

"As for those who believe and whose offspring follow them in faith, We shall unite them with their offspring, and We shall not let any of their deeds go to waste; every person is responsible for that which he has earned." [Soorah At-Tur 52:21]

Allah (T) tells that He unites the offspring with the parents in the *Jannah*⁶, just as He united them in faith (*Eemaan*). And because the offspring did not do deeds that would make them deserve this high honour, Allah (T) informs that this union does not waste any of the deeds of the parents. They receive their full reward for what they did, plus the bonus of uniting them with their offspring.

Also, because this reunion in rewards and ranks is a bounty from Allah (T), one might imagine that it would be in violation of the rules of justice. To clarify this, the *ayah* indicates that if the children committed sins, they alone would be liable for punishment, and that every person is responsible for what he does without involving others with him in punishment. Thus this union takes place in terms of

rewards and bounties, but not in terms of justice and penalty.

This is indeed one of the keys and treasures of *Qur'aan*, the knowledge of which Allah (T) gives only to those whom He wills.

Thus this *ayah* covers all people: the miserable and the happy - those who are followed, and those who follow them.

Consequently, let a prudent person who cares about his well-being see to which class he belongs. Let him not be influenced by habits or ruled by laziness. If he finds that he belongs to a happy class, let him strive to move to a higher rank, seeking Allah's help and facilitation. And if he finds that he belongs to the miserable class, let him move out of it into a happy class while it is still possible, and before he would have to say:

"Oh! Would that I had followed the path shown to me by the Messenger." [Soorah Al Furqan 25:27]

FOOTNOTES:

1 *Muhaajir*: A migrator - one who undertakes *hijrah*. Plural: *muhaajiroon* or *muhaajireen*. Reference here is specifically to those who migrated from Makkah to al-Madeenah in obedience to Allah.

2 *Ansaar*: Those who give help and aid. It usually refers to the citizens of al-Madeenah who gave aid to the *Muhaajireen* when they migrated to their town.

3 Al-Bukharee and Muslim.

4 Narrated by Zayd bin Thaabit, Anas bin Maalik and others; recorded by Aboo Daawood, at-Tirmitheeh, Ahmad, and others; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*as-Saheehah* no.404).

5 *Takleef*: Responsibility for one's deeds.

6 *Jannah*: Literally: garden. It usually refers to the Gardens of Paradise.

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