

**EDITORIAL**

All praise and gratitude be to Allah (SWT) for enabling us to produce the second issue of this version of the Newsletter. This also coincides with the period of the Leadership Training Workshop jointly organised by the Forum, Muslim Association of Nigeria and the Coordinating Council of Nigeria Muslim Organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It is in the light of this that we dedicate this issue of the Newsletter to issues of Da'awah.

To call people to the right path is obligatory upon every Muslim. Allah (SWT) says "Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." (16:125)

In the hadith, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAW) said: "Convey from me, even one verse." (Bukhari) Conveying the message therefore is not restricted to the Ulama. Rather, it is a responsibility of each and every Muslim, according to his or her ability.

It should however be noted that calling to the straight path rests upon firm pillars, and is established upon foundations which are absolutely essential. If any of these are missing the the will not be correct and will not produce the desired results - no matter how much effort is expended and time wasted. This makes it necessary for every Muslim to know these pillars and foundations in order to fulfil this obligation. May we all learn from these articles, ameen

**ILLUMINATING THE WAY:  
PRIORITIES IN CALLING TO THE MESSAGE**

In every age, the Prophets `alahimussalaam, worked on reforming their societies by calling people to the message that Allah subhaanahu wa ta'ala sent them with. Today, Muslims are suffering in all spheres of life, while non-Muslim nations continue in their ignorance of purpose and path in this life. To reform these, it is essential for Muslims to follow the model of the Prophet of Islam sallallahu alayhe wa sallam and, after firmly grasping the message themselves, call others to it. Muslims therefore must exercise their efforts and use all permissible means to invite others to the truth they have. Bearing the message is a serious responsibility and a noble task and as such it has to be performed with knowledge, seriousness, consideration and wisdom. In embarking in such an effort, what are the priorities that one should keep as a guide?

**The Qur'an shows, in no uncertain terms, that the message and the top priority of all the Prophets was one and the same: The message of Tawheed.**

Tawheed means "the realizing and maintaining of Allah's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allah is One, without partner in His dominion and His

actions (Ruboobeeyah), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (Asmaa wa Sifaat), and one without rival in His divinity and in worship (Ulooheeyah)." Muhammad ibn `Abdillaah sallallaahu alayhe wassalam, the last Prophet to be sent to the mankind and the Jinn, was ordered by Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) in the Qur'an to say:

"Say you (O Muhammad): 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah i.e. to the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge. And Glorified and Exalted be Allah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikoon (polytheists; those who worship others along with Allah or set up rivals or partners to Allah).'" [al-Qur'an, Yusuf(12):108]

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*Letters to the Editor: 72 King Street, Loughborough, LE11 1SD.*

**Tawheed is the single most important concept in Islam and the top priority in bearing the Message. The following evidence shows this in a clear way.**

The oft-quoted reference with regards to priorities and gradation in da`wah is the famous hadeeth reported by Ibn `Abbas radihiyallahu `anhu: The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wasallam sent Mu`adh to Yemen and said, "Invite the people to testify that Laa ilaaha ill Allah [none has the right to be worshipped but Allah] and that I am the Messenger of Allah. And if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has enjoined upon them five daily prayers in every day and night, and if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the Zakaat from their properties and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them."

It was for this reason, that the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassallam stayed in Makkah for thirteen years, calling people to the correct understanding of the Oneness of Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala), and making worship solely for Him.

**The best of generations, the Companions radihiyallahu `anhum, learned their religion from the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam himself and continued in keeping the same priorities, strengthening belief before anything else.**

Abdullah ibn `Umar said, "We lived during an instant of time in which one of us would receive faith first before receiving the Qur'an and when the surahs were revealed we would learn what they permitted and what they ordered and what should be the stance towards them. But I have seen men from whom one is given the Qur'an before iman and he reads it from the opening of the Book to its closing and he does not know what it orders and what it forbids and what should be his stance towards it. He is like someone who is just

throwing out dates [i.e. he does not get any benefit from his recital]."

.Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Abdulkhaaliq, in his treatise on the priorities of the Islamic work in the West, also clearly explains that Tawheed is the top priority: "The first priority Muslims of the West must preserve is Tawheed. Believing in the oneness of Allah and worshipping Him Alone is the reason behind creation. Tawheed makes a Muslim different from the disbelievers. Muslims who live in the West are different from the disbelievers because of their Islam. Man (faith) is the way to success and the true Path of Allah. Whoever concentrates on this life and ignores the next life will be the one who loses both".

**"Da`wah should start with fundamental issues, before proceeding with those that are less central. The Oneness of Allah is the beginning and the end. Each deed should be connected with it."**

Having shown that the first priority is calling to correct beliefs and faith in Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala), it is important to understand the underlying reasons as to why this primary objective remains true in all places and at all times. As Sayyed Qutb writes in Milestones: "Those who call toward God's Religion and want to establish the way of life prescribed by this Religion should ponder at length over this significant fact, that for thirteen years the Qur'an exclusively expounded this faith and did not deviate from this issue to describe the details of that system which was to be established on this faith or any laws for the organization of the Muslim society."

The basis and the strength of this call lies in our testimony of faith, "la ilaha ill Allah." Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) says in the Qur'an: "A good word is like a good tree, its roots are firm and its branches are in heaven; so it gives its produce every season by the leave of its Lord." [al-

.....*Invite the people to testify that Laa ilaaha ill Allah [none has the right to be worshipped but Allah] and that I am the Messenger of Allah. And if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has enjoined upon them five daily prayers in every day and night, and if they obey you in that, then inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the Zakaat from their properties and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them .....*

Qur'an, Ibraaheem(14):24-25] Dr. Al-Qaradaawee eloquently describes the effect of this da`wah upon the person, by influencing all of its personality and ultimately all of the society: "Da`wah seeks to penetrate the innermost recesses of man to transform him into a godly person in his conceptions, emotions and behavior by altering his thoughts, feelings, and will as well as the whole of his being, thereby shaping him into a different person. It also shakes up the structure of the society and alters its inherited beliefs, well-established traditions, moral conventions, and prevailing systems."

There is no doubt that all our shortcomings are related to our level of faith. Many consider unity of Muslims to be one of the most fundamental issues that we should concentrate our efforts on, since without strong unity Muslims are unable to face their problems. However, unity cannot be achieved through organizations or lectures, nor can it be achieved by spending money. We need to realize that it was Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) Himself who united the hearts of the Sahaba, once faith entered their hearts: "And He has united their (believers') hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah has united

them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” [al-Qur’an, al-Anfaal(8):63] So there is no way for establishing unity, brotherhood or an Islamic society except through profound faith and righteous action.

Consequently, the first step for us to take is to correct our faith. Anything else would be short-sightedness and lead to failure. We must learn and teach the true Islamic faith; its realities, signs and benefits. Learning the faith should be accompanied by learning about shirk and disbelief, so that Muslims safeguard from the disbelief and misguidance of the disbelievers. To strengthen our faith we must put the Qur’an back to its proper place in the Muslim’s life. The Qur’an is a book of guidance that is to be understood and abided by. Not merely recited and used as a talisman.

**Cultivating one’s personality and character should also come under top priorities.**

The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam said, “The best believers are those with the best character.” One of the duties of the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam was purifying people around him, by helping them acquire noble character and leave any evil that was in their souls. Spirituality and piety also need to be developed. Muslim scholars must act as Rabbaaniyyoon, teaching Muslims simple things first, before proceeding to more complicated matters, while Muslims must turn to their scholars for guidance and leave interpreting religion without knowledge. This is a very grave matter which is one of the major causes of many problems that both

Muslims and non-Muslims are facing today. Every innovation and act of shirk in its origin have speaking about Allah (subhanahu wa ta’ala) and His religion without knowledge. This is why it is such a great priority that Muslims learn to consult scholars in religious matters and speak only based on certain knowledge. Were Muslims to follow the way of Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq, who said, “What earth will hold me, and what heaven will protect me if I say something concerning the Book of Allah which I do not know”, there would probably be no secularism, modernism, feminism, rejection of the Sunnah and other deviations present among the Muslims.

The concept of hijrah represents a major factor in the life of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhe wassalam and a major struggle and effort to establish a community of Islam. This concept could be modified according to the situation in the West, to internal hijrah, whereby Muslims of all nationalities would gather themselves in various areas in the West, forming strong communities. Such communities do not exist today and due to that, protection and support of the Muslim community are lacking. Internal hijrah would provide easier circumstances for establishment of masaajid, Islamic schools and real institutions needed to satisfy the requirements of Islam on the personal, familial and societal level.

While the priorities discussed more specifically refer to da`wah to Muslims, da`wah to non-Muslims is as important. The issue of priorities with regards to non-Muslims is clear: The most important matters are bringing the disbelievers away from their shirk to belief in Oneness of Allah (subhanahu wa ta’ala) and Messengership of Muhammad sallallahu alayhe wassalam, and teaching them the true purpose of their existence.

Lastly, it is important to mention that

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the first ones that Muslims should call to Allah (subhanahu wa ta’ala) and warn are their families. Allah (subhanahu wa ta’ala) says in the Qur’an: “O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from the Fire whose fuel will be people and stones (idols). ” [al-Qur’an, at-Tahreem(66):6] Family is the basic nucleus of the society and when that institution is healthy, all of the society will be alike

**The situation resulting from not giving necessary attention to priorities and concentrating on less central issues has serious consequences.**

Doing the wrong things, in the wrong place, at the wrong time can result in placing efforts in activities that can often be delayed or even eliminated, while those that have the strongest impact and that are most urgent are forgotten and neglected. Less central issues have been given a great deal of importance, while the fundamental ones have been neglected. Muslims even spend a lot of time arguing over subsidiary matters. Muslims have also given more attention to some voluntary forms of worship, and even those that have no basis in the Sharee`ah, over those that are obligatory. That is how dhikr became more important than enjoining good and forbidding evil. Ibn ul-Qayyim



explained this as follows: “The Shaitan has misled most people by beautifying for them the performance of certain voluntary acts of worship such as voluntary prayers and voluntary fasting while neglecting other obligatory acts of worship such as enjoining the good and eradicating the evil, to the extent that they do not even make the intention of performing them whenever they are able to”.

This neglect with regards to priorities has resulted in Muslims losing their faith, the source of their strength. The present weakness is used by the enemies of Islam to further prolong the current state of affairs. Dr al-Qaradaaweey says, “The only form of Islam allowed by the enemies of Islam is that upheld by the dervishes and the professional traders in religion; the ‘Islam’ which only celebrates occasions, supports despotic rulers, and prays for them to have a ‘long life.’ It is an ‘Islam’ based on Divine pre-determination and ‘no-choice’ in belief, sanctions Islamically condemned bid`a (innovation) in `ibaadah (worship), permits passive ethics and intellectual rigidity, and encourages emphasis on minor rather than major and vital issues. Those who follow and promote this ‘Islam’ are patronized by corrupt rulers. Even the irreligious, secularist rulers bless this form of religion, show respect and support to its advocates in order to enable them to lull the masses and induce them to the status quo, and engage the youth in a web of illusions, symbols, terms and trivialities. Perhaps this is what led Marx to claim that ‘religion is the opiate of the people.’”

**Though tawheed always remains the central theme of da`wah and the end we want to reach, the situation may dictate different, more specific priorities, depending on time and place.**

While Islamic faith is relatively firmly established in certain areas of

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the world, in others there is a total ignorance of the religion of Islam. Obviously, the daa`iya would not speak about the same issues and on the same level at such two places. A good example of priorities changing according to place is that certain sects that appear only in certain places do not have to be refuted elsewhere. So while there is need to warn people against the deviations of the Nation of Islam in North America, that is really of little importance in Bosnia or Pakistan. Similarly, there are different shirk practices in different places that need to be corrected, but concentration of efforts and priorities will depend on the relevant deviation in a particular place. Nevertheless, da`wah may vary depending on whether the people being addressed are atheists, Hindus or other types of polytheists such as Ahlul-Kitaab.

Priorities also differ with time. Centuries ago, when the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam was calling people to Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala), he did not have to emphasize the fact that Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) is the Creator of the Universe and the One Who owns it and administers it. This was common knowledge even among the Jaahilee Arabs, so the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam concentrated on correcting their beliefs about Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) and calling them to worship Him, rather than speaking to them about Allah’s existence. Nowadays, the situation differs in many areas of the world. Atheism and agnosticism are not uncommon, so therefore there is need to invite people to the belief

in Allah’s existence. All these relates to calling people to worship of Allah subhanahu wa ta`ala.

At times there are certain pressing issues that need to be addressed. During Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s time, the issue of non-creation of the Qur’an was very important, while today calling people to even more basic issues such as recognizing Allah’s existence and worshipping Him is more important. Various books of creed written since the time of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhe wassalam emphasized those issues that were most controversial at the time of writing. Therefore a book of creed that explained the differences between the Jahmiyya and Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamaa`ah that was written centuries ago would certainly be of much value even today. However the emphasis would have to be given to the issues that are more pressing today, such as irjaa’, ash`arism, or secularism, which today is probably the greatest single challenge to the Muslims, and one of the main causes of disbelief.

Also, knowledge of the events of which the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam informed us that will take place in the future may dictate some of our concentrating of efforts in certain places more than in others. The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wassalam informed Muslims of various battles that will occur and we should therefore keep this in mind and support da`wah in places such as Palestine, so as to strengthen the Muslims’ position before events such as al-Marhamat ul-Kubraa take place.

It is also important for Muslims when

giving da`wah to realize that the issues and problems that require effort back in their homelands are not necessarily the same as where they are currently situated. Neglect of the true situation and the fact that priorities differ with place and time may result in undesired results, which is yet another reason for wisdom in da`wah.

**The first duty of the Muslims is to rectify their beliefs by means of learning on the basis of clear evidence and in accordance with the correct understanding of the early generations of Muslims.**

The main concern in da`wah should be calling to monotheism and the `ibadah of Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala). That was the way of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhe wassalam, and the way of those who follow him. Once tawheed is accepted, we can proceed to explain other aspects of Islam, beginning with the five pillars. "Therefore, we want to correct the people's `aqeedah and make them aware of all kinds of outward and inward shirk and encourage them to do the obligatory things and avoid the forbidden, and we want to encourage them to stick to the sunan and the mustahabbaat [recommended deeds], to incite them to avoid the makruuhaat [disliked deeds]."

It is our hope that by performing da`wah in this manner will help us fulfill our responsibilities and that Allah (subhanahu wa ta`ala) will count us among those about whom He says: "And who is better in speech than he who invites to Allah and does righteous deeds and says: 'I am one of the Muslims.'" [al-Qur'an, 41:43]

*An excerpt from Al-Jumu`ah Magazine, Ramadhan 1417.*

## Obligation of a Muslim Towards a Disbeliever (Shaikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz)

Question: What is obligatory upon a Muslim with respect to non-Muslims concerning different types of interactions and also with respect to holidays and festivals?

Response: The responsibilities of a Muslim towards non-Muslims are many, including:

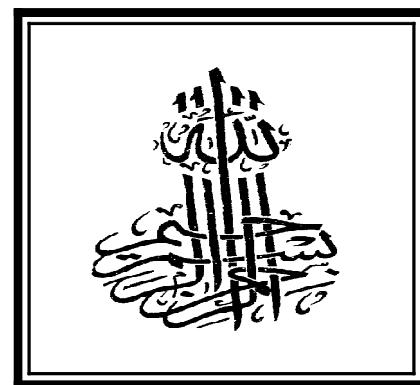
First, he must call them to the way of Allah. This is to preach to them and to make clear to them the reality of Islam, according to his ability and if he has the knowledge to do so. This is the greatest and best good deed that one could do toward his fellow citizen and for those who live together with Jews, Christians and other disbelievers. On this point, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The one who guides to good gets the same reward as the one who performs it." [Muslim] The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told Ali, when he was sending him to Khaibar to encounter the Jews, to invite the Jews to Islam. He told him, "By Allah, if Allah guides one person by you, it is better for you than the best types of camels." [al-Bukhaaree, Muslim] The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, "Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward similar to the reward of the one who follows him, without the reward of either of them being lessened at all." [Muslim, Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, an-Nasaa'ee, at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maaajah] Calling them to Islam, preaching Islam to them and advising them concerning that is one of the most important deeds and is one of the best ways to get closer to Allah.

Second, [the Muslim] may not wrong the other person with respect to his life, wealth or honor, if the non-Muslim is a citizen of the Islamic state or has attained other protection. He must fulfill the other's rights. He may not wrong him with respect to his wealth by stealing from him,

deceiving him or cheating him. He cannot harm him in his body by beating or killing him. His protection from the state guarantees his safety from such things.

Third, there is no prohibition concerning buying, selling, renting or other such business transactions with them. It has been authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) bought things from the polytheistic disbelievers. He also purchased items from Jews. In fact, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) died, his shield was being held as collateral with a Jewish person in exchange for food for his family.

Fourth, one should not give them the greetings of peace first. However, one responds to their greetings. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do not give the greetings of peace first to the Jew or Christian." [Muslim] He also said, "If the people of the book give you the greeting of peace, then say, 'Wa Alaikum (and upon you).'" [al-Bukhaaree] Therefore, a Muslim does not greet a non-Muslim first. But when a Jew, Christian or other disbeliever greets him, he replies, "And upon you also," as the Prophet (peace be upon him) has ordered. This is from the rights of conduct between a Muslim and a disbeliever. He also must be neighborly toward his non-Muslim neighbor. If your neighbor is good to you, you do not



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harm him and you may even give him charity if he is poor or give him a gift if he is rich. You may also advise him concerning what is good for him. All of this may lead him to want to learn about Islam and become a Muslim and because neighbors have very great rights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The Angel Gabriel kept advising me concerning the neighbor until I thought he was going to inherit [from his neighbor]." [al-Bukhaaree, Muslim] Allah also says in the Quran, "Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and drove you not from your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity" [al-Mumtahinah (60):7].

It is recorded in an authentic hadith from Asma bint Abu Bakr that her mother, who was a polytheist, visited her and asked for her assistance - this was during the time of the peace treaty between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers so she went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask him about that and he told her to keep the ties of kinship with her and be righteous towards her.

Fifth, a Muslim should not participate with them in their greetings and festivals. However, one may give them condolences upon the death of someone if he finds some legal

benefit in doing so. He may say to them, "May future bring good to you," or something of that nature. He may not say, "May Allah forgive him," or, "May Allah have mercy on him," if the person who died was a disbeliever (see Quran 9:113). That is, one may not make prayers for a dead disbeliever although one may ask for guidance for those who are alive and so forth.

*An excerpt from "Answers to Common Questions From New Muslims", (c) IANA, url: <http://www.islaam.com>*

## **Extremism: The Accusation and the Truth (Part I)**

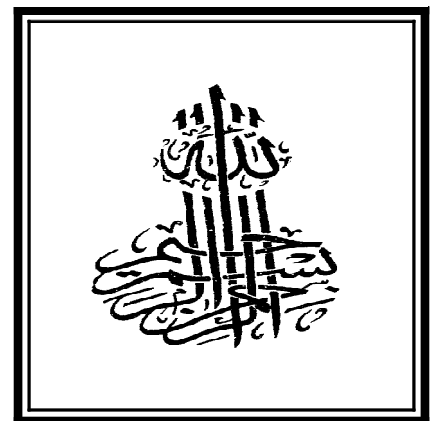
**(SHAIKH YUSUF Q ARDAWI)**

Logicians argue that one cannot pass a judgement on something unless one has a clear conception of it, because the unknown and the undefined cannot be judged. Therefore, we first have to determine what "religious extremism" means before we can condemn or applaud it. We can do so by considering its reality and its most distinguishing characteristics. Literally, extremism means being situated at the farthest possible point from the centre. Figuratively, it indicates a similar remoteness in religion and thought, as well as behaviour. One of the main consequences of extremism is exposure to danger and insecurity.! Islam, therefore, recommends moderation and balance in everything: in belief, ibadah, conduct, and legislation. This is the straightforward path that Allah (SWT) calls al Sirat. al mustaqim, one distinct from all the others which are followed by those who earn Allah's anger and those who go astray. Moderation, or balance, is not only a general characteristic of Islam, it is a fundamental landmark. The Qur'an says: Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.

As such, the Muslim Ummah is a nation of justice and moderation; it witnesses every deviation from the 'straightforward path' in this life and in the hereafter. Islamic texts call

upon Muslims to exerceise moderation and to reject and oppose all kinds of extremism: ghuluw (excessiveness), tanattu' (transgressing; meticulous religiosity) and tashdid (strictness; austerity). A close examination of such texts shows that Islam emphatically warns against, and discourages, ghuluw. Let us consider the following ahadith:

1. Beware of excessiveness in religion. [People] before you have perished as a result of [such] excessiveness. " The people referred to above are the people of other religions, especially Ahl al Kitab [the People of the Book]; Jews and Christians and mainly the Christians. The Qur'an addresses these people: Say: O People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds [of what is proper], trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by who misled many, and strayed [themselves] from the even Way".



Muslims have therefore been warned not to follow in their steps: he who learns from the mistakes of others indeed lives a happier life. Furthermore, the reason behind the above hadith is to alert us to the fact that ghuluw may crop up as an insignificant action which we then unwittingly allow to continue and develop into a menace. After reaching Muzdalifah-during his last hajj-the Prophet (SA'AS) requested Ibn 'Abbas to gather some stones for him. Ibn 'Abbas selected small stones. Upon seeing the stones, the Prophet (SA'AS) approved of their size and said: "Yes, with such [stones do stone Satan]. Beware of excessiveness in religion". This clearly indicates that Muslims should not be so zealous as to believe that using larger stones is better, thus gradually allowing excessiveness to creep into their lives. Al Imam Ibn Taymiyah argues that this warning against excessiveness applies to all forms of belief, worship, and transaction, and notes that since the Christians are more excessive in faith and in practice than any other sect, Allah (SWT) admonishes them in the Qur'an. "Do not exceed the limits of your religion".

2. "Ruined were those who indulged in tanattu" And he [the Prophet (SA'AS)] repeated this thrice. Imam al Nawawi said that the people referred to here, "those indulging in tanattu:" i.e., those who go beyond the limit in their utterance as well as in their action. Evidently the above

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two ahadith emphatically assert that the consequence of excessiveness and zealotry will be the complete loss of this life and of the hereafter.

3. The Prophet (SA'AS) used to say: "Do not overburden yourselves, lest you perish. People [before you] overburdened themselves and perished. Their remains are found in hermitages and monasteries. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (SA'AS) always condemned any tendency toward religious excessiveness. He cautioned those of his companions who were excessive in ibadah, or who were too ascetic, especially when this went beyond the moderate Islamic position. Islam seeks to create a balance between the needs of the body and those of the soul, between the right of man to live life to its full, and the right of the Creator to be worshipped by man; which is also man's raison d'etre. Islam has laid down certain forms of `ibadah to purify the human being both spiritually and materially, individually and collectively, thereby establishing a harmonious community in which feelings of brotherhood and solidarity rule, and without hindering man's duty to build culture and civilization. The obligatory duties such as salah, zakah, siyam' and hajj are simultaneously personal as well as social forms of ibadah. While performing these obligations, a Muslim is neither cut off from the mainstream of life nor is he alienated from his community. On the contrary, his ties are emotionally and practically strengthened. This is the reason why Islam did not prescribe monasticism, a practice which requires alienation and seclusion,

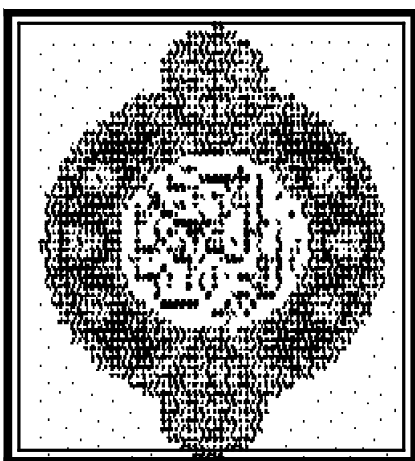
thus preventing man from enjoying the blessings and al tayyibat of normal life and from sharing in its development and promotion.

### 1. Defects of Religious Extremism

All these warnings against extremism and excessiveness are necessary because of the serious defects inherent in such tendencies.

The first defect is that excessiveness is too disagreeable for ordinary human nature to endure or tolerate. Even if a few human beings could put up with excessiveness for a short time, the majority would not be able to do so. Allah's legislation addresses the whole of humanity, not a special group who may have a unique capacity for endurance. This is why the Prophet (SA'AS) was once angry with his eminent companion Mu'adh, because the latter led the people one day in salah and so prolonged it that one of the people went to the Prophet and complained. The Prophet (SA'AS) said to Mu'adh: "O Mu'adh! Are you putting the people on trial?" and repeated it thrice. On another occasion he addressed an imam with unusual anger: "Some of you make people dislike good deeds [salah]. So whoever among you leads people in salah should keep it short, short because amongst them are the weak, the old, and the one who has business to attend to.

Furthermore, when the Prophet (SA'AS) sent Mu'adh and Abu Musa to the Yemen, he gave them the following advice: "Facilitate [matters to people] and do not make [things] difficult. Give good tidings and do not put off [people]. Obey one



another and do not differ [amongst yourselves].

Umar ibn al Khattab (RA'A) also emphasized this by saying: "Do not make Allah hateful to His servants by leading people in salah and so prolonging it that they come to hate what they are doing."

The second defect is that excessiveness is short-lived. Since man's capacity for endurance and perseverance is naturally limited, and since man can easily become bored, he can not endure any excessive practice for long. Even if he puts up with it for a while he will soon be overcome by fatigue, physically and spiritually, and will eventually give up even the little he can naturally do, or he may even take a different course altogether substituting excessiveness with complete negligence and laxity. I have often met people who were known for their strictness and extremism; then I lost contact with them for a while. When I inquired about them after a period of time, I found out that they had either deviated and taken the opposite extreme, or had, at least, lagged behind like the "hasty one" referred to in the following hadith: "He [the hasty one] neither covers the desired distance nor spares the back [of his means of transport]."

So is the Prophet's guidance embodied in another hadith: "Do those deeds, which you can endure, as Allah will not get tired [of giving rewards] till you get bored and tired [of performing good deeds]...and the most beloved deed to Allah is the one which is done regularly even if it were little."

Said Ibn 'Abbas: "A female attendant of the Prophet (SA'AS) used to do siyam during the day and spend the whole night in iqamah. The Prophet (SA'AS) was informed of this, and he said, 'In every deed [or action] there is a peak of activity followed by lassitude. He who in his lassitude follows my Sunnah is on the right path, but he who in his

lassitude follows another [guidance] has [erred and] gone astray.

'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allah was told of men who were exhausted by 'ibadah. He said, 'This is the maximum of Islam and peak of its activity. Each maximum has a peak of activity, and each peak of activity is followed by lassitude...he whose lassitude is in tune with the Book [the Qur'an] and Sunnah is on the right path, but he whose lassitude is for disobedience will perish.'" How superb is the Prophet's advice to all Muslims not to overburden themselves in 'ibadah and to be moderate so that they may not be overcome by fatigue and finally fail to continue. He said: "Religion is very easy, and whoever overburdens himself will not be able to continue in that way. Be right [without excessiveness or negligence], near [perfection], and have good tidings [in being rewarded for your deeds]."

The third defect is that excessive practice jeopardizes other rights and obligations. A sage once said in this respect: "Every extravagance is somehow bound to be associated with a lost right." When the Prophet (SA'AS) knew that 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar was so absorbed in 'ibadah that he even neglected his duty toward his wife, he said to him: "O 'Abd Allah! Have I not been correctly informed that you do siyam daily and offer 'ibadah throughout the night?" 'Abd Allah replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet (SA'AS) then said: "Don't do that, but do siyam and then break your siyam, offer 'ibadah during the night but also sleep. Your body has a right on you, your wife has a right on you, and your guest has a right on you..."

The incident between Salman al Farisi (RA'A), the eminent companion, and his devout friend Abu al Darda' (RA'A) is another case in point. The Prophet (SA'AS) made a bond of brotherhood between

Salman and Abu al Darda'. Once Salman paid a visit to Abu al Darda' and found Umm al Darda' (his wife) dressed in shabby clothes. He asked her why she was in that state, and she replied, "Your brother Abu al Darda' is not interested in [the tayyibat of] this world." In the meanwhile Abu al Darda' arrived and prepared a meal for Salman who requested Abu al Darda' to eat with him, but the latter replied: "I am doing siyam. Salman then said: "I am not going to eat unless you do." So Abu al Darda' ate [with Salman]. When it was nighttime Abu al Darda' got up to offer iqamah, but Salman told him to go back to sleep, and so he did. Again Abu al Darda' got up and once again Salman told him to go back to sleep. Toward the end of the night, Salman told Abu al Darda' to get up, and both offered salah. Salman then told Abu al Darda': "Your Lord has a right on you, your self has a right on you, your family has a right on you. So give each the due right." Abu al Darda' narrated this to the Prophet (SA'AS) who said: "Salman has spoken the truth." (*To be continued*)

*An extract from Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism by Shaikh Yusuf Qardawi, 1407 AH/ 1987 AC.*

**".....The Prophet (SA'AS) used to say: "Do not overburden yourselves, lest you perish. People [before you] overburdened themselves and perished. Their remains are found in hermitages and monasteries. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (SA'AS) always condemned any tendency toward religious excessiveness. He cautioned those of his companions who were excessive in ibadah, or who were too ascetic, especially when this went beyond the moderate Islamic position....."**