

فَضْلُ الْغُرَبَاءِ

When Strangeness Is A Virtue

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both parents

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Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

Introduction

All praise to Allaah, the Lord Who does what He wishes and Whom none can question as to why He does what He does – may He be purified from all blemishes. I testify that only Allaah is worthy of all worship and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. He sent him to take all the mankind out of darkness to light. Whoever follows him is guided, and whoever disobeys him has courted an everlasting perdition. O Allaah save us from Your Anger and Wrath.

This piece is about the people of Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) being the strangers referred to in various *ahadeeth* of the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam), as will be shown later, *Inshaa Allaah*. It will also delve into the path these strangers take that makes them so.

Who Are the Strangers?

Abdullaah bn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported from the noblest of mankind, Prophet Muhammad, sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam, that he said:

"بَدَأَ الْإِسْلَامُ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا كَمَا بَدَأَ ، فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ (يَوْمَئِذٍ إِذَا فَسَدَ النَّاسُ) (فَقِيلَ: مَنْ الْغُرَبَاءُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ ، قَالَ: "أُنَاسٌ صَالِحُونَ فِي أُنَاسٍ شُوءٍ كَثِيرٍ، مَنْ يَعَصِيهِمْ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يُطِيعُهُمْ") وفي رواية: (فَقِيلَ: مَنْ الْغُرَبَاءُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟، قَالَ: " الَّذِينَ يَصْلُحُونَ إِذَا فَسَدَ النَّاسُ)"

‘Islam began strange and shall return strange as it began, *Toobaa* to the strangers the day people will have become corrupt.’

It was said: O Messenger of Allaah! Who are the strangers? He replied: ‘Some righteous people amidst a lot of unrighteous

people; those who disagree with them are more than those follow them.'

In another version, the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: [The strangers] are those who strive to mend the society when the [whole] of the people have become corrupt.'

The basis of the hadeeth is in Saheeh Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allaah be pleased with him), while the other wordings are authenticated by the scholars of hadeeth such as Ash-Shaykh Al-Albaanee and Ash-Shaykh Shuayb Al-Ar'naoot, may Allaah be merciful to both. You can see *As-Saheehah* (1619, 1273) and *Saheeh Al-Jaami* (3921)

Scholars differ as to the actual meaning of *Toobaa*, as contained in the hadeeth. It was recorded from Ibn Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) that he said it means 'joy and coolness of the eyes.' 'Ikrimah (may Allaah be merciful to him) said: 'What they will have will be better for them.' Ibraheem [an-Nakha'ee] said: 'What they will be met with will be good and honourable for them.' Another opinion said it is the Jannah. Yet there is another one that says it is a tree in the Jannah. The summary therefrom is that *Toobaa* is a good thing for the *strangers* on the Day of Resurrection.

According to the hadeeth, what will usher in the strangeness of Islam is when corruption is widespread on earth, in other words, 'the day people will have become corrupt,' when the unrighteous people will outnumber the righteous ones, when those who will be against the Muslims who want to set things right will be more than those who listen to them.

So will anybody be in doubt that our world today has not made some Muslims a strange people? How do people view the culture

of Islam today? What is the view about those Muslims who say we must stick to the dictates of the Sunnah? Men who exhibit the traits of Islamic learning in them, how are they viewed? Muslim women who try to imbibe the culture expected of every Muslim woman, how are they treated?

So are you still in doubt?

Where Do You Want to Belong?

You, as a Muslim, where do you want to belong? To the unrighteous many or the righteous few?

Allaah the Mighty Lord said:

وَإِنْ تُطِيعْ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يُخْرُصُونَ

And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying. [Al-An'aam: 116]

The Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said again, as reported by Abu Tha'labah al-Khushanee (may Allaah be pleased with him):

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ الصَّابِرُ فِيهِمْ عَلَى دِينِهِ كَالْقَابِضِ عَلَى الْجُمْرِ فِي رَوَايَةٍ: (إِنَّ مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ أَيَّامًا الصَّبْرُ فِيهِمْ مِثْلُ الْقَبْضِ عَلَى الْجُمْرِ (لِلْمُتَمَسِّكِ فِيهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْرُ حَمْسِينَ) (رَجُلًا يَعْمَلُونَ مِثْلَ عَمَلِكُمْ " ، فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، أَجْرُ حَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَّا أَوْ مِنْهُمْ؟ ، قَالَ: " بَلْ أَجْرُ حَمْسِينَ مِنْكُمْ ")

'A time will come upon the Muslims, he that endures what he encounters with respect to his Deen will be like a person holding to an ember of live coal.' (As-Saheehah: 957)

In another version, the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

‘Behind you are days of perseverance the like of which whoever holds to his Deen will be like the one who holds to a live coal.’

He (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said further:

‘Whoever amongst you hold to his Deen, as you are today, will have the rewards of fifty people; a man will carry out the like of your acts.’

They said:

‘O Messenger of Allaah, do you mean the rewards of fifty men from amongst us or from amongst them?’ He (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: ‘Rewards of fifty means from amongst you.’ (As-Saheehah: 494)

Patience is one of the vital hallmarks of the *strangers* when Islam becomes strange.

One of what will make the Muslims become strange people on earth, as earlier said, is because sins will be prevalent. People will not care about whether what they do is righteousness or not.

Allaah – the Mighty – Lord says:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ

Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]. [Ruum: 41]

Human Beings Are Catalysts

Human beings are the catalysts of how the earth looks like. If you get to a society where peace and tranquility reign, it is the people of the area that are righteous. The more the righteousness on earth the more the earth is peaceful.

And our Lord – the Mighty – will not change the condition of a people until they change their attitudes themselves.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَّالٍ

Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron. [Ar-Ra'd: 11]

Prevalence of sins is a sign of the Last Hour. When the situation becomes so, then the Muslims have to be wary lest they are swept away by the tide.

Anas bn Maalik reported from the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) that he said:

(لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّىٰ لَا تُمَطِّرَ السَّمَاءُ ، وَلَا تَنْبُتُ الْأَرْضُ) (وَيَقَلَّ الْعِلْمُ فِي رَوَايَةٍ: (وَيُرْفَعُ الْعِلْمُ) (وَيَظْهَرُ الْجَهْلُ) (وَيَكْثُرُ الزِّنَا وَيَكْثُرُ شُرْبُ الْخَمْرِ")

‘The Hour shall not be until the sky will not pour down rain, the earth will not give out plants, knowledge will become little, [in a version], knowledge will be taken away, ignorance will be commonplace, there will be widespread Zina and liquors will be

taken in a large quantity.’ [The main wordings are in Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim]

Is our time not a time of Zina and liquor, homosexuality and bestiality? What will you say about knowledge, not of the world but the Deen? We are practically wallowing in ignorance, in the real Islamic sense.

And sadly many Muslims still emulate the sinners.

The Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, on the authority of Abu Saeed Al-Khudree:

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شِبْرًا شِبْرًا وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ قَالَ فَمَنْ

'You shall follow the practices of those before you span by span, cubit by cubit, such that if any of them enters the hole of a daab-lizard, you will follow him.' They said: Are you referring to the Jews and the Christians, O Messenger of Allaah? He (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: Who else could it be? [The hadeeth is recorded by Al-Bukharee and other collectors of hadeeth]

In a version, the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: '[You will follow them] even if any of them cohabits with his wife in the open.'

Yet in another version, he (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: 'Even if any of them cohabits with his mother in the public.'

Tell me the sins the unbelievers do today that many Muslims do not engage in?

Repercussions of Sins

The repercussions of sins are many. The major among them is that it can destabilize the society either via direct punishment from Allaah, as He did to the people of 'Aad, Thamud, Lut, and many others; or indirect, like famine, plague, sudden deaths and pandemic.

The total destruction of Fir'aun was preceded by some minor punishments perhaps he and his people would take heed. Allaah – the Mighty – said:

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

And We certainly seized the people of Pharaoh with years of famine and a deficiency in fruits that perhaps they would be reminded. [Al-'Araaf: 130]

So Allaah – the Mighty – could punish the people who engage in sins with famine and shortage of farm produce. And He – the Mighty – could send down diseases and plagues. Allaah the Mighty – said further in the story of Fir'aun earlier cited:

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدمَّ ءَايَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ

So We sent upon them the flood and locusts and lice and frogs and blood as distinct signs, but they were arrogant and were a criminal people. [Al-'Araaf: 133]

Mark His Words – the Mighty, '[they] were a criminal people.' So Allaah punishes the criminals in various ways.

Aaishah [may Allaah be pleased with her] reported from the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) that she asked him about the plague and he said:

كَانَ عَذَابًا يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

‘It is a punishment that Allaah sends on whomever he wishes but makes it a mercy for the believers (if any of them dies in the process)...’ [Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree]

And sudden and wanton deaths will follow, and that is another indication of the last Hour. The Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam), on the authority of Anas bn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him), said:

مِنْ أَفْتِرَابِ السَّاعَةِ أَنْ يَفْشُوَ مَوْتُ الْفُجْأَةِ

‘From the indications of the closeness of the Hour are prevalent sudden deaths.’ [As-Saheehah: 2292]

Do you know that, He can even punish the sinners with opulence before destruction?

وَكَايِنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَمَلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا وَإِلَى الْمَصِيرِ

And for how many a city did I prolong enjoyment while it was committing wrong. Then I seized it, and to Me is the [final] destination. [Hajj: 48]

إن الله ليملئ للظالم حتى إذا أخذه لم يفلته". ثم قرأ قوله تعالى: وَكَذَلِكَ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَىٰ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخَذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ

‘Allaah will continue to give respite to the unjust one until He shall get hold of him and He will not let him off.’ Then the Messenger of Allaah (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam) recited the Verse:

And thus is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes the cities while they are committing wrong. Indeed, His seizure is painful and severe. [Hud: 102]

The global lockdown going on due to the menace of the corona virus pandemic should not be seen by the right-thinking people as an occurrence born out of man's physical failure but spiritual downfall. Many sins of man cannot be ruled out as a cause. Waving it aside is being persistently insolent in the Sight of the Creator.

If the rest of the people will wave it aside, the Muslims should not.

Be On Your Guard, O Muslims

We always therefore need to be on our guard, we Muslims. We must not allow evils to thrive in the society. The tag of strangers people make on us should not dissuade us from calling to Allaah and His Messenger (sallaLlaahu alayhi wa sallam).

‘And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.’ [Aal-Imraan: 104]

He the Most High also says:

‘You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allaah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.’ [Aal-Imraan: 110]

‘And say, ‘The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve.’ [Al-Kahf: 29]

Abu Saeed al-Khudree (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated:

I heard the Messenger of Allaah (salla-Llaahu alayhi wa sallam) saying: 'Whoever sees a wrongdoing amongst you should change it with his hand, if he is not able let him change it with his tongue, if he is not able let him change it with his heart, that is the feeblest form of Faith.' [Recorded by Muslim]

Keeping quiet in the face of the evil may bring a fitnah that will consume all.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

And fear a trial which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty.

[Taubah: 25]

An-Nu'maan bn Basheer (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (salla-Llaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

'The similitude of those who observe the limits set by Allaah and those who go aboveboard is like a group of people who cast lots on a ship such that some of them stayed on the upper deck and the others in the lower deck. When the ones in the lower deck needed water they went to those on the upper deck and said: what if we make a hole down the deck to get our own portion of water and we save you, people of the upper deck, from our troubles?' The Messenger of Allaah (salla-Llaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: 'If they [the people on the upper deck] should play deaf to them [that is, to the people in the lower deck], they would all get drowned, but if they hold them back, they would all remain safe.'

[Recorded by Al-Bukhaaree]

There is safety in commanding good and forbidding evil.

Allaah said about some children of Israel:

And ask them about the town that was by the sea - when they transgressed in [the matter of] the sabbath - when their fish came to them openly on their sabbath day, and the day they had no sabbath they did not come to them. Thus did We give them trial because they were defiantly disobedient.

And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allah is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him."

And when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched punishment, because they were defiantly disobeying. [Al-'Araaf: 163-165]

Cursed are those who do not command good and forbid from evil.

Allaah says:

Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed.

They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing. [Al-Maaidah:

78-79]

Conclusion

Is it now clear that being a stranger in this world is after all a grace from Allaah? There is nothing you will lose when you don't belong to what is in vogue or what is in fashion.

Abdullaah bn Umar (may Allaah be pleased with both) narrated from the Messenger of Allaah that he (salla-Llaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

'Be in the world like a stranger or a wayfarer.' [Recorded by Al-Bukhaaree]