

Fazail-e-Tabligh

Virtues of Tabligh

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Foreword

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

We praise Him, and we ask His blessings on His noble Prophet.

First. I give thanks to Allah, who has enabled me to write this booklet on Tabligh. One of the best of the Muslim scholars of this age has advised me to select a few verses of the Holy Qur'an and some sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) on Tabligh, and explain the same. Since my humble services to such sincere believers can be a means of salvation for me, I present this useful pamphlet to every Islamic School, Islamic Association, Islamic Government, rather to every Muslim, and request them to serve the sacred cause of Tabligh in their own way. In fact, during this age there is a day-to-day decline in our devotion to religion, and objections against our true faith are raised not only by disbelievers, but also by the so-called 'Muslims'. The fardh and waajib observances are being neglected not only by the common Muslims, but by those also who hold important positions. Millions of Muslims have indulged in manifest false-worship, not to speak of neglecting prayers and fasting; yet they are never conscious of their practices which are against a pure allegiance to Allah. Trespassing the religious limits is very common, and mocking at the religious beliefs has become a fashion of the day. That is why the Muslim scholars have even begun to shun the common folk, and the result of this state of affairs is that ignorance about the teachings of Islam is increasing day by day. People offer the excuse that no one teaches them the religion of Islam with a keen interest. and the Muslim scholars have an excuse that no one listens to them attentively. But none of these excuses is valid before Allah. As a 'matter of fact. He will never accept the excuse of the common folk that they were ignorant about religious matters; for to learn religion, and to make a serious effort to acquire knowledge of its practices is the personal responsibility of every Muslim. Since ignorance of law is no excuse under any government, then why should it be accepted by the Lord of all rulers? They say, making excuses for crime is worse than crime itself. Similarly, the excuse of the scholars that no one listens to them does not hold water. They boast of representing the great spiritual leaders and divines of the past, but never consider how many troubles and hardships they bore to preach the true religion! Were they not pelted with stones? Were they not abused and oppressed to the extreme degree? But in spite of all these obstacles and hardships, they fulfilled their responsibilities about preaching, and they propagated the message of Islam regardless of any opposition.

Generally, the Muslims have limited Tabligh to the scholars only, whereas every Muslim has been commanded by Allah to stop people from doing forbidden things. If we admit for a moment that Tabligh is the duty of Muslim scholars only who do not perform it properly, then it is the particular duty of every Muslim to preach Islam. The emphasis that has been laid on Tabligh by the Qur'an and Hadith, will be proved by the Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that are going to be quoted in the following pages. Therefore, you cannot confine Tabligh to scholars only, nor can it be an excuse for you to neglect the same. I would request every Muslim to devote his time and energy to Tabligh as much as he can:

"Consider, the time at your disposal a blessing; for none knows what his end will be."

You need not necessarily be a perfect scholar to preach Islam and good morals to humanity. Whatever little knowledge of Islam you possess. you must impart it to others . . . Whenever a morally wrong or a forbidden thing is done in your presence, then as a Muslim it is your duty to stop the transgressor, as far as it lies in your power. I have described all the important things about Tabligh briefly in seven chapters. and I hope that every Muslim will benefit from them.

HAFIZ MOHAMMAD ZAKARIYYA

SHEIKH-UL-HADITH MADRASAH MAZAHIR-UL-ULUM.
SAHARANPUR.

Chapter 1: Verses of the Holy Qur'an concerning Tabligh

First of all, I want to mention a few verses of the Holy Qur'an concerning Tabligh. From these verses, the readers can easily see how important Allah considers the preaching of Islam. I have come across as many as sixty verses on this particular subject, and Allah knows how many more verses could be found by another keen observer. I quote here a few of them for the benefit of every true believer.

"And whose words can be better than his, who calls (people) towards Allah, and performs good deeds. and says: 'I am one of those who submit to Allah!'"

Certain commentators have written that whoever invites people to Allah through any means deserves the honour mentioned in the above verse.

For instance, the prophets call people to Allah by means of miracles, and supernatural actions, the scholars invite them by preaching and arguments, the Muslim warriors (mujahids) call them by means of the sword; and the muazzins call them by means of the azaan. In short, whoever invites people to good deeds deserves this reward, whether he calls them to the formal observances of Islam or to the internal improvements of the spirit, like the mystics who stress the purification of the heart and the realization of Allah's attributes.

In the concluding verse quoted above some commentators say such a person should also be proud of the honour bestowed on him by Allah, of being categorised as a Muslim, and he should proclaim this honour in words.

Some other commentators interpret that he should not be proud of being a preacher, but should consider himself as an ordinary Muslim.

"(O Prophet! SALLALLAHU ALAIHI WASALLAM) preach to them (the Truth), for preaching proves very beneficial for the Believers."

The commentators have written that by preaching is meant instructing the believers through the verses of the Holy Qur'an, for these would guide them to the Right Path. But such a preaching can be useful for the disbelievers also, for thereby they may become believers. Alas! in this age, preaching is not performed regularly and properly. Generally the object of the preachers is to show off their ability and eloquence to the listeners, whereas the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said:

"Whoever learns the art of declamation in order to attract the people towards himself, his prayers and observances, whether obligatory or optional, will not be accepted on the Day of Judgment."

"And command your family to observe the prayers, and also perform these yourself regularly. We do not ask you for sustenance. We will give you sustenance; and the ultimate success is for the God-fearing."

Numerous traditions say that whenever anyone complained of poverty to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), he recited this verse, and advised him to perform his prayers regularly, as though pointing to the fact that regularity in prayers will lead to ample provision.

It has been stressed in this verse to do a thing yourself before giving instructions to other, because this is a more effective and successful method of preaching. That is why all the prophets themselves first did what

they preached to others. Thus they became examples for their followers, who would not then think that the teaching of their religion are so difficult to carry out.

Moreover, Allah has promised ample provision for those who perform the prayers regularly, so that they should never feel that prayers can interfere with the earning of their livelihood, whether through trade, service, etc. Thereafter it is stated as a rule, that ultimate success and salvation will be attained by the God-fearing only.

"O son! Perform thy prayers regularly; and command people to do good deeds, and prevent them from forbidden things, and bear patiently whatever befalls you (in the preaching of Truth): undoubtedly this demands courage!" (Surah Luqmaan: 17)

In this verse, several important things for a Muslim have been mentioned, which can be a means for our salvation; but we have neglected these very badly. Not to speak of the lack of preaching the truth, we have neglected even the prayers, which is a basic principle of Islam, in fact the most important after faith. There are so many people who do not perform their prayers at all; but even those who do, hardly perform it with all its requisites, such as congregational prayers. It is the poor only who perform the prayers with congregation in the mosque, while the rich feel it below their dignity to be present in the mosque. Ah! my complaint is only to Allah!

"O careless person! What is an insult for you, is a matter of pride for me."

"O Muslims! there must be a group among you who would invite people to Good; and would command them to do good deeds, and would prevent them from forbidden things; and these are the people who will attain salvation.*' (Surah Aaliimraan: 105)

In this verse, Allah has clearly commanded the Muslims to prepare a group or party which would preach Islam throughout the world: but we see that the so-called Muslims have totally neglected this commandment. On the other hand, the non-Muslims, are preaching their religion day and night. For instance, parties of Christian missionaries have been specially assigned to propagate their religion in the whole world; similarly other communities are trying their best to preach their own religions. But the question is, is there such an organization among the Muslims? The answer, if not in the negative, cannot be in the affirmative either. If any individual or any party among the so-called Muslims arises for the preaching of Islam, unreasonable objections are raised against them, instead of giving them help and co-operation, whereas it is the duty of every true Muslim to help those who preach Islam, and to remove shortcomings where necessary; but these people neither do anything themselves to preach Islam, nor help those who have devoted their lives to this sacred cause. Thus the result is that even the sincere and unselfish preachers are disappointed, and give up their efforts in this regard.

"O Muslims! you are the best of peoples, who have been selected for the guidance of mankind; you enjoin them to do good deeds, and prevent them from forbidden things; and you have firm faith in Allah." (Surah Aali Imraan: 10)

That the Muslims are the best of all nations, has been asserted in certain sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) also; and there are some verses of the Holy Qur'an that corroborate this. Even the above-mentioned verse bestows the honour of 'Best Nation' on us, provided we preach Islam, command people to do good and prevent them from evil.

The commentators have written that in this verse, the preaching of truth and prevention of evil has been mentioned before faith even, whereas faith (Imaan) is the root of all Islamic beliefs and actions. The reason is that faith has been a common factor among all the nations of the world, but the special thing that has particularly distinguished the Muslims is the mandate enjoining people to do good, and to prevent them from evil.

So, this is the real basis for the superiority of the Muslims, whenever they fulfilled it; and since in Islam good actions are of little value without faith, it is therefore specifically mentioned at the end of the verse. In fact, the real object in this verse is to emphasise the importance of enjoining people to do good deeds, and this is the distinguishing feature of the Muslim Ummah. It is not sufficient to enjoin good and to prevent from evil only now and then, but this practice should continue at all times and on all occasions regularly.

Reference to the task of preaching the truth are found in earlier religions, but the distinguishing merit of the Muslim Ummah lies in taking it up as a regular assignment. This is not a temporary work, but a permanent one.

"In the talk of an assembly of common folk there is no good at all, except those who command people to give charity (to the poor) or instruct them to do good things, or make peace between people (they will be rewarded by Allah). And whoever does this only to please Allah, soon he will receive a great reward from Allah."
(Surah Nisaa: 114)

In this verse, Allah has promised a great reward for those who preach truth; and how great and honourable can be the reward that has been called 'great' by Allah.

In this context, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said, "A man's words may be a burden (sin) for him, except those that he has spoken for giving instructions for good deeds, and preventing others from forbidden things, or for remembering Allah."

In another Hadith, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said, "Shall I tell you a virtue better than optional prayer, fasting and charity?" His Companions said, "You must tell us that virtue, O Messenger of Allah!" (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). He said: "To make peace between people, for hate and mutual conflict uproot good deeds, just as a razor removes the hair."

There are many more verses of the Holy Qur'an and sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that instruct us to make peace between people. What we mean to emphasise here is that to make peace between people is also another form of instructing them to do good and preventing them from evil. To introduce peace and cooperation in the society should therefore be given due importance.

Chapter 2: Sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) concerning Tabligh

In this chapter, I will quote certain sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that explain the meaning of the above-mentioned verses of the Holy Qur'an. It is not the intention to encompass all the relevant ahaa-dith. If I quote all the verses and the ahaadith on this subject, I fear no one will read them, for now-a-days people hardly spare time for such things. So, to place before you how important Tabligh is in the eyes of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahoh alaihe wasallam), and what serious consequences follow from its neglect, I give below a few sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahoh alaihe wasallam):

It is reported by Abu Sa'eed Khudri (Radhiyallahoh anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "Whoever sees a forbidden thing being done, he must prevent it by the use of his hand; and if he has no power for this action, then he should prevent it with his tongue; and if he cannot do this even, then he should at least consider it a vice in his heart, and this is a very low level of one's faith."

In another hadith, it has been said that if a person can prevent evil with his tongue then he should so prevent it; otherwise, he should at least think it evil in his heart and thus stand exonerated. Another hadith says that if anyone hates sin within his heart, he is a true believer, but this is the weakest form of faith. This topic has occurred in many other sayings of the Prophet.

Now think well how many Muslims there are who act upon this hadith in a practical way. How many of us prevent evil forcibly, how many with the tongue, and how many seriously hate it within our heart? We have to take stock of ourselves on these issues.

It has been reported by Nu'maan bin Basheer (Radhiyallahoh anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "There are people who do not transgress the limits (laws) of Allah, and there are others who do so. They are like two groups who boarded a ship; one of them settled on the upper deck, and the other, on the lower deck of the ship."

So, when the people of the lower deck needed water, they said: 'Why should we cause trouble to the people of the upper deck when we can easily have plenty of water by making a hole in our deck.' Now if the people of the upper deck do not prevent this group from such foolishness, all of them will perish - but if they stop them then they all will be saved." (Bukhari & Tirmizi)

Once the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) asked him: *'O Messenger of Allah! (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) can we people be destroyed even when there are certain pious God-fearing persons among us?" He answered: "Yes, when evil deeds predominate in a society."

Nowadays the Muslims are generally anxious about the decline and fall of this Ummah, and they suggest certain plans to stop this decline, but they never consider as to what is the main cause of our decline. They fail to identify the true reason of our spiritual and moral decline, particularly when the proper remedy has been told by Allah and the Holy Prophet (Sallallahoh alaihe wasallam).

It is a pity that because of the wrong diagnosis, incorrect remedies, including continued neglect of Tabligh, are leading to the further decline of the Ummah. In fact, the main cause of our decline is that we do not pay attention to Tabligh nor do we help those who devote themselves to this sacred mission.

It has been reported by Ibn Mas'ood (Radhiyallaho anha) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasal-lam) said: "The decline and fall of Bani Israa-eel started thus: when the pious among them saw certain sins being committed by the transgressors, they forbade them from doing the same; but when the sinners did not repent, the pious because of their relationship and friendship continued to mix with them. So, when this state of affairs began to prevail, Allah caused their hearts to be accursed in the same manner." (i.e. the hearts were also affected with the disobedience of the transgressors).

Then in support of this, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) recited a verse of the Holy Qur'an, which says: 'The disobedient and the transgressors among the Bani Israa-eel were accursed by Allah.' On this, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) emphatically instructed his Companions: "(To avoid such decline) you people must enjoin upon others to do good deeds and prevent them from doing forbidden things; you should restrain every tyrant from tyranny and invite him towards truth and justice.*'

Another hadith says that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was reclining comfortably when, suddenly overcome with emotion, he sat up and said: tt! swear by Allah that you people cannot attain salvation, unless you prevent the tyrants from tyranny."

Another hadith says that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "You people must preach truth, and prevent the sinners from doing forbidden things, and check the tyrants, to bring them towards the right path, otherwise you will be accursed and your hearts will be corrupted, just as Allah did with Bani Israa-eel." The Holy Prophet (Sallal-laho alaihe wasallam) read certain relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an to emphasize this subject. Bani Israa-eel were condemned because among other things, they did not prevent others from doing forbidden things.

Nowadays it is considered a virtue to be at peace with all, and to please everyone on every occasion. They say it is a requirement of good manners with the evildoers.

Obviously, this is a wrong policy, because at most there may be some religious sanction for keeping quiet in extreme case, but never for falling in line with the tyrants and transgressors. At the very least, every one must instruct those people to do good whom he easily can influence for instance: his subordinates, his servants, his wife, his children, and his relations. In such circumstances, to be absolutely silent about Tabligh is unpardonable before Allah.

Hadhrat Sufyaan Thowri says: "Whoever is very popular with his relations and neighbours, we suspect him to be compromising in preaching the true teachings of religion."

Numerous traditions say that when a sin is committed secretly, its harm is generally limited to the sinner only; but when a sin is committed openly, and those possessing the capability do not prevent it, then it ultimately affects all the people around.

Now everyone can see for himself, how many sins are committed before him every day, and he, in spite of having the power to prevent them neglects to do so. And it is a pity that, if anyone gets up to put the wrong down, the ignorant and shameless people oppose him instead of co-operating with him.

Those who do wrong will come to know by what a great reverse they will be overturned.

Hadhrat Jareer bin Abdullah (Radhiyallahu anho) says, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu alaihe wa-sallam) saying: "When a sin is committed before an individual or a group and they do not prevent it, in spite of having the capability, then Allah inflicts a severe punishment on them before their death." (Targheeb)

O my friends who desire the improvement of Islam and the Muslims! now you have clearly seen the causes of our decline. Not to speak of strangers, we generally do not prevent even our own family and our subordinates from wrong-doing.

We do not even make up our minds to prevent evil, much less doing something practical about it. Whatever our own son does against the Commandments of Allah, we do not check him even; but if he takes some interest in politics, or mixes up in a certain political party, we are seriously anxious not only about him, but about our own safety and honour. Then we warn him and also think about some plans to be safe and secure from any harm; but on the other hand, when he transgresses against Allah's Commandments, we are never anxious about the life in the Hereafter, and about the Reckoning of the Day of Judgement.

Sometimes you know full well that your son is addicted to some idle pursuits and is very lax in his prayers, but you have no courage to prevent him from such habits, or to chastise him, although Allah has clearly commanded you to be severe in uprooting such evils and even sever relations with the transgressor.

There is many a father who would be angry with his son, because he is lazy and does not attend to his studies or services or business properly, but is there anyone who is angry with his son, because he does not perform the fundamental observances of Islam?

As a matter of fact, the adverse effect of this negligence is not limited to the great loss in the Hereafter but it is a pity this evidently extends to our worldly affairs and interests also, which are so dear to us. This blindness of ours is horrible, for Allah says:

"Whoever is blind in this world, he will be surely blind in the Hereafter."

And such transgressors have taken leave of their senses because "Allah has sealed up their hearts, and on their ears and eyes there are veils (so they neither hear nor see the truth)."

It has been reported by Hadhrat Anas (Radhiyal-laho anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wa-sallam) said: "So long as a person says "La ilaaha ilallaah" (no one is worthy of worship but Allah), he receives spiritual benefits, and is saved from miseries and calamities, unless he neglects its rights." His Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah (Sallaho alaihe wasallam)! how are its rights neglected?" He answered: "When sins are committed openly, and the person who recites the kalimah does not prevent the sinners from wrongdoings." (Targheeb)

Now you can yourself consider how very often sins are committed during these times, yet there is no serious attempt to check or prevent them. In such a dangerous and ungodly atmosphere, the very existence of the Muslims in the world is a great blessing of Allah, otherwise we are inviting ruination through all possible means.

Hadhrat Aa-ishah (Radhiyallaho anha) asked the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam), "When the punishment of Allah befalls the inhabitants of any locality, does it affect the pious, just as it affects the guilty?" The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) answered: "Yes, it does affect all of them in this world, but at the Resurrection the pious will be separated from the guilty." Therefore, those people who are simply satisfied with their own piety, and do not participate in improving others should not rest assured that they are safe from the punishment of the Almighty. If any chastisement is inflicted by Allah, they too will be involved in it.

Hadhrat Aa-ishah (Radhiyallaho anha) says: "Once the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) entered the house and I guessed from his face that something of great importance had happened to him. He did not talk to anyone, and after making wudhu (ablution) he entered the mosque. I stood behind the wall to hear what he said. He sat at the pulpit and after praising 'Allah, he said, "O Muslims! Allah has commanded you to call people to good deeds, and prevent them from committing sins; otherwise a time will come when you will pray to Him, but He will not listen to you; you will ask your needs of Him, but He will not grant them; you will demand His help against your enemies, but He will not help you." After saying this, he came down from the pulpit."

Particularly those persons should consider this hadith well who want to fight the enemies of Islam, but neglect the performance of the requisites of Islam; they forget that the strength and stability of the Muslim Nation depends upon the propagation of Islam. Hadhrat Abu Darda (Radhiyallaho anho), who is a distinguished Companion of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) says: "You must command people to do good, and restrain them from evil; otherwise Allah will cause such a tyrant to rule over you, who will not respect your elders, and will not have mercy on your youngsters. Then you people will pray to Him, but He will not accept your prayer; you will ask Him for help, but He will not help you, you will seek His pardon but He will not pardon you; for Allah Himself says:

"O Believers! if you help Allah, then will He help you. and will make your feet firm (against your enemies)."

Says Allah in another verse:

"O Believers! If Allah helps you, then no one can overpower you; and if He does not help you, then who can come to your help? and only in Allah should the Believers trust."

It has been reported by Hadhrat Huzaifah (Radhiyallaho anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) said on oath:

"You must command people to do good deeds, and prevent them from doing forbidden things; otherwise Allah will inflict a severe punishment upon you, and then even your prayers will not be accepted by Him."

Here my respected readers should consider well how many times they violate the commandments of Allah; then they will know why their attempts to reform the nation fail, and why their prayers are of no avail, and they instead of sowing the seeds of progress, cause its decline.

It has been reported by Abu Hurairah [Radhiyallaho anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) said, "When my followers will begin to adore the worldly benefits, their hearts will be deprived of the dignity and love of Islam; and when they stop the preaching of truth, and preventing transgression, they will be deprived of the blessings of the Revelation; and when they will abuse each other, they will fall from the esteem of Allah." (Tirmazi)

The well-wishers of the nation should ponder why their efforts result in failure instead of success. If you people believe your Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and his teachings to be true and educative, then why do you take those things as useful that are declared harmful by him. He says such and such thing will aggravate your disease, but you think they will bring health to you. The Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) said:

"None of you can be a true Muslim, unless his desires are subject to the religion that I have brought."

But contrary to this, you think that religion is an obstacle in the way of your individual and national progress on the lines of other nations. Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

"Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We grant increase in his harvest; and whoever desires the harvest of this world we give him the fruit thereof but there is no portion for him in the Hereafter."

A hadith of this meaning says:

"The heart of a Muslim whose object is the life Hereafter does not care for the worldly pleasures, yet the world is brought to his feet; on the other hand, whoever goes after the world, he is overpowered by miseries and calamities, yet he cannot receive more than his allotted portion."

The Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) read the above-mentioned verse, and said: Allah says: "O son of man! devote yourself to My worship, and I will free your bosom from the worldly anxieties and will remove your poverty, otherwise I will fill your heart with a thousand worries and will not remove your poverty."

These are the words of Allah and the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam), but you foolishly think that religion and the teachings of Mullahs (religious divines) are a hindrance in the path of your (worldly) progress. Don't you think that your worldly progress can be very helpful to the Mullahs, for then you would be in a better position to serve them. Then why should they oppose you, to their own loss? As a matter of fact they are sacrificing their own worldly interests by speaking the truth. by preaching Islam, in order to bring you to the Right Path. When whatever your religion scholars tell you is in fact based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, then is it sensible for you to turn away from them? And if you deny them, then can you be a true believer? Your religious preachers might have some personal faults but. so long as they are conveying to you the commandments of Allah from the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the Holy Prophet, (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) you are bound to listen to them and to obey their instructions; and if you don't obey them, you have yourself to answer for your disobedience to Allah. Not even. a fool would say that the official orders should not be obeyed, simply because they were communicated by a lowly servant.

Never make such a sweeping statement that those who have devoted themselves to the sacred cause of Islam hanker after worldly gains and interest. True preachers of Islam are never selfish, and never ask anything for themselves; the more they worship Allah, (and devote themselves to the work of religion) the less attention they pay to worldly offerings. Nevertheless, if they ask help of you, it will be entirely for the sake of religion (to preach Islam and the Holy Qur'an); and therein they find more satisfaction than in any personal cause. Then why should you hesitate to help them?

A question is generally raised stating that Islam does not prescribe giving up of worldly interests and in this connection the verses of the Holy Qur'an are often misunderstood, for instance, there is a verse that says:

"Our Lord! grant us good in this world, and good in the Hereafter; and save us from the chastisement of the Fire (of Hell)." (Al-Baqarah: 210)

Some ignorant people stress that in this verse the worldly good is favoured and appreciated by Islam, as much as the good in the Hereafter. In other words, there is no renunciation of the world in Islam. Such people claim to be perfect scholars after having seen only some translations of the Holy Qur'an. The true meanings of the Holy "Qur'an can be properly understood by those only who have looked deep into its verses and are well-informed on this subject. Different interpretations of the above-mentioned verse that have been explained by the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) and the scholars of Islam are as follows:

Hadhrat Qatadah (Radhiyallahu anho) says: "By 'good in this world' is meant peaceful existence and necessary livelihood".

Hadhrat Ali (Karramallahu wajhahu) says that by 'good in this world' is meant a pious wife.

Hadhrat Hasan Basri (Rahmatullah alaih) says that by 'good in this world' is meant knowledge of Islam and prayer'.

Hadhrat Suddi (Rahmatullah alaih) says that by 'good in this world' is meant lawful earnings.

Hadhrat Ibn Umar (Radhiyallahu anho) says that by 'good in this world' is meant righteous children and goodwill of other human beings.

Hadhrat Ia'far (Radhiyallahu anho) says that by "good in this world" is meant good health, honest living, knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, victory over the enemies of Islam, and the company of the pious."

I would add that if "good in this world" meant our material progress, even then the emphasis in the verse is on praying to Allah for such a "good" but not on completely busying ourself in this pursuit. Asking' from Allah. even if it be the mending of a shoe is in itself a part of religion. Besides, if it means honest living, or to be prosperous and self-sufficient, that too is not forbidden in Islam; by all means make your living in this world consistent with religion. The point is that our endeavours in the cause of religion should at least be as much as those for worldly gains. if not more, because Islam teaches us to value both this life and the Hereafter.

Please consider also the following verses of the Holy Qur'an. which lay more stress and importance on the life Hereafter:

"Whoever desires the harvest of the life Hereafter, We will certainly increase his harvest. Whoever desires this present world (and its benefits), We shall soon grant him whatever he desires; then We will make Hell his destination, wherein he will be thrown headlong, with disgrace. And whoever desires the Hereafter, and makes an effort to attain it. and he is a true believer- those are the people whose efforts will be rewarded." (Bani Isra-eel: 18-19)

.. And amongst you are those who desire this world only; and amongst you are those who desire the life Hereafter. " (Aali Imraan: 152)

"These are the benefits of the life of this world; but with Allah is a very good abode." (Aali Imraan: 14)

"(O Prophet! Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) say: "The benefit of this world is very little; but the life Hereafter is much better for those who fear Allah." (An-Nisaa: 77)

"The life of this world is nothing but a game and sport. and the House of the Hereafter is much better for the pious." (Al-An 'aam: 32)

"And leave aside those who have made a jest of their religion, and they have become puffed up with this worldly life." (Al-An'aam: 70)

"You people desire the benefits of this present world only. but Allah desires the Hereafter (for you)." (Al-Anfaal-67)

Are you pleased with the worldly life instead of the Hereafter? But the benefits of the life of this world are as nothing. when compared to the Hereafter." (At- Towbah-38)

"Whoever desires the life of this world. and all its adornments, we make their attempts therein fruitful, and nothing is decreased' from their due. For them there is nothing but Fire in the Hereafter. whatever they performed (of some good deeds) in the world has been destroyed, for whatever they did was absolutely false. " (Hud-16)

"And they have become pleased with the worldly life only; but the worldly life, when compared to the Hereafter, is but a small benefit." (Ar-Ra'd-26)

"On them fell the wrath of Allah. and for them is a great chastisement It is because they preferred the life of this world to the Hereafter." (An-Nahl-107)

There are many other verses in which the life of this world and the Hereafter have been compared. I cannot mention all of them. but I have quoted a few of them as examples. Basically, the moral of all the verses is that those who prefer this world to the Hereafter will be losers in the long run. If you cannot properly deal with both the worlds, then the life Hereafter is preferable, and you should fulfil its requirements. I admit that this world and the requisites of the life here are unavoidable needs, yet note that no sensible person would keep sitting in the toilet, even though one is compelled to visit the toilet

If we carefully study the Shariat, we will have to admit that it has prescribed a proper place for our worldly activities and religious duties. We have been commanded to devote one half of our time to the prayers, and we may spend the rest of our time in our worldly pursuits, whether we devote it to rest or to earning our living. According to this plan, we can maintain a balance between the two, and can carry out our duties about our religion as well as about our worldly 'life. So. if we devote ourselves wholly or mainly to the worldly requirements, then we are unjust and negligent. The sense of justice requires that we should be faithful to both, that is, to the requisites of life as well as to the hereafter, so that both are catered for because Islam does not advocate withdrawal from this world. This is what is meant by the verse:

"O Lord! give us good in this world and in the Hereafter. and save us from the Fire (of Hell)." (Al-Baqarah: 201)

In this chapter, my real object was to quote the sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) about the Tabligh work. And the seven that I have quoted above are sufficient for true believers; as for the disbelievers. Allah says:

"Those who do wrong will come to know by what a (great) reverse they will be overturned."

Some sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) indicate that there will come a time when everyone will follow his own wishes and temptations. and no one will pay heed to the teachings of religion or to the commandments of Allah. In those times. the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) has advised us to mind our own business and to worship Allah, rather than deliver sermons to the people. But the divines of the nation say that such a period has not yet come; therefore, try your best to reform yourself and to instruct others. before such a time comes. We must avoid those shortcomings pointed out by the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) above as these are the doors through which will occur corruption in our personal life as well as in the society. The Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) has counted these shortcomings among the causes of our destruction.

"O Allah! save us from the trials of evil, whether it be external or internal."

Chapter 3: Practise what you Preach!

In this chapter it is intended to draw attention to a significant shortcoming. Just as most educated Muslims and scholars of the day have neglected the duty of Tabligh work, similarly there are those who preach Islam to others through speech and by writings, but they neglect practising what they say. In fact they, as preachers, should attend to reforming themselves more than to reform others. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) has strictly forbidden such persons to preach who are themselves guilty of transgression.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) on the night of Mi'raai (ascension) saw a group of persons whose lips were being clipped with fiery scissors. On asking who they were, Jibra-eel (Alayhis salaam) told him that these persons were preachers from among your followers who did not act on what they preached. A hadith says: "Some of the residents of Paradise will ask those in Hell: "How are you people here, whereas we followed your preachings, and thereby we got into Paradise?" They will answer: "We did not practise ourselves what we preached to others."

Another hadith says: "The punishment of Allah will descend more speedily upon the wicked scholars than on the common sinners. They will be astonished to see this, and will say: "Why is the punishment of Allah inflicted on us before the idolaters even?" They will be answered thus:

"Those who transgressed in spite of having knowledge of religion are more guilty than those who had not this knowledge." The Muslim divines have written that the sermons of those who do not practise the religious observances themselves, cannot leave an impression on others. That is why the religious speeches, writings and the journals in this age fall flat on the listeners and the readers!

Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

"Do you command people to do good, but forget your own souls, although you read the Book? Do not you understand?"

The Holy Prophet says:

"On the Day of Judgement, no one will be permitted to move away a single step until he is put these four questions: (1) How did you spend your period of life? (2) What use did you make of your youth? (3) How did you earn your wealth, and where did you spend it? (4) How far did you act upon your knowledge?"

Hadhrat Abu Darda (Radhiyallahu anho) is a distinguished Companion of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam). He says: "The thing I fear most is the question that will be put to me on the Day of Judgement in the presence of all the people: Did you act upon the knowledge that you possessed?"

A certain Companion of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) asked him: "Who is the worst of all creatures?" He answered: "Don't ask me a question about bad things, but ask me a question about good things. The worst of all creatures are the wicked scholars, (i.e. those who do not practise what they say)."

Says the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) in another hadith: "Knowledge is of two kinds: one, which remains on the tongue only and does not affect the heart and so is in fact an accusation from Allah; and the other which penetrates into the heart and revives the spirit: that is indeed useful." What we mean to say is that a Muslim should not acquire only that knowledge which concerns the formal observances, but also the spiritual knowledge which would purify his heart and enlighten his brain; otherwise it would be a cause

for questioning on the Day of Judgement as to how far it was acted upon. Similar warnings are contained in several other ahaadith.

Therefore I would solemnly request all the missionaries and preachers to reform themselves outwardly and inwardly, and to practise themselves what they preach to others. otherwise 'mere preachment without practice cannot be accepted by Allah, as has been shown by various verses of the Holy Qur'an. as well as sayings of the Holy Prophet. I pray to Allah that He should enable me also to improve myself externally and internally and practise what I preach, for I entirely depend upon His favours to hide my deficiencies.

Chapter 4: Importance of Ikraam in Taligh

This chapter concerns another very important requirement for Tabligh, which through a little carelessness of the preachers, can do harm instead of good. For instance, when trying to prevent someone from wrongdoing, or save him from a bad habit, you should advise him privately and not openly disgrace him in the eyes of others; a Muslim's dignity is a valuable asset; as explained in the following sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam):

It has been reported by Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallahu anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) said: "Whoever conceals the sins of a Muslim. Allah will conceal his sins in this world and in the Hereafter: and Allah helps His servant so long as he helps his brother Muslim." (Targheeb)

It has been reported by Ibn Abbaas (Radhiyallahu anho) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) said: "Whoever conceals the wrong-doings of a brother Muslim. Allah will conceal his wrong-doings on the Day of Judgement, and whoever will publicise the wrong-doings of a brother Muslim. Allah will disclose his wrong-doings to the people, so much so that he will be disgraced sitting in his own house." (Targheeb)

Similarly there are many other traditions on this subject, therefore, the preachers of Islam should always have a great regard for conniving at faults and maintaining the dignity of brethren in Islam. Another hadith says: "Whoever does not help his brother Muslim, when he is being dishonoured, Allah will not pay heed to him when he himself is badly in need of help." Still another hadith says: "The worst form of usury is dishonouring a Muslim."

In numerous traditions like this, the dishonouring of a Muslim has been strictly forbidden; therefore, the missionaries should be particularly cautious on this subject. The correct method is to advise people secretly on the sins that come to knowledge secretly; and take corrective measures openly on the sins that are committed openly. Even the advice should be given in such a manner that the transgressor is not dishonoured, lest the advice produces the opposite effect. In short, the transgressors must be checked strictly, according to the commandments of Allah, but let us not forget the instructions given above to respect the dignity of every Muslim.

Moreover a preacher must be polite and courteous when he addresses his audience: for ill temper and bitter words have just the opposite effect. A preacher spoke harshly to the Caliph Ma'moon ar-Rasheed. He said:

"Please be polite and courteous to me, for Fir'own was a worse fellow than me, and Moosa (Alayhis salaam) was a much better person than you, but when he and Haroon (Alayhis salaam) were sent to instruct Fir'own, Allah said:

"Speak to him in soft words, that he may turn to the Right Path, or perchance he may fear Me!" (Taahaa-44)

A youth (from the outlying regions) came to the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), and said: "Please permit me to commit adultery." The Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) took this very ill, and were enraged at his words; but the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) said to him: "Come nearer to me. Would you like anyone to commit adultery with your mother?" He said: "Not at all." The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) said: "Then other people will also never tolerate such a shameful act with their mothers." Then the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) asked him the same question about his sister, aunt etc and he answered each time in the negative. Then the Prophet (Sallallahu

alaihe wasallam) put his hand on his chest and prayed: "O Allah! purify his heart, forgive his sins, and guard him against adultery." The reporters say that, after this, nothing was more hateful to him than adultery.

To be brief. -the preachers should always be kind, polite and sympathetic towards their listeners. and should treat them as they would themselves like to be treated.

Chapter 5: Importance of Ikhlāas (Sincerity) in Tabligh

I would particularly request the missionaries to base all their speeches, writings and actions on sincerity. Even a small good deed based on sincerity will be greatly rewarded by Allah, whereas without sincerity it will fetch no reward in this world or in the Hereafter.

Says the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) in this context: "Allah does not look towards your faces. or towards your riches: but He sees (the sincerity of) your hearts, and the nature of your deeds." (Mishkaat)

On another occasion: the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) was asked as to what is the meaning of 'Eernaan'. He answered: "It means sincerity." (Targheeb)

Hadhrat Mu'aaz (Radhiyallahu anho) was given command in Yemen. When he was about to depart. he asked for advice from the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), who said: "Observe sincerity in all your religious beliefs and actions. for it will increase the reward of your good deeds." Another hadith says: "Allah accepts only those deeds of His servants, which are based on complete sincerity to Him."

Another hadith says: "Allah has proclaimed: 'I am the most self-respecting and self-sufficient of all partners; therefore whoever brings forth a partner to Me in any action. I entrust him to the same partner. (and do not help him at all). Then I have no value for his actions. which are all given to the partner.'"

It has been stated in another hadith that it will be proclaimed on the Day of Judgement: "Whoever has brought forward a partner to Allah in any action. he should demand his reward from the same partner; for Allah is far above needing any partner."

Another hadith says: "Whoever performs prayer for show. he becomes guilty of false worship; and whoever observes fasts for show, he also becomes guilty of false worship; and whoever gives alms for show. he also becomes guilty of false worship." (Mishkaat)

To be guilty of false worship here means that he does not perform such good deeds sincerely to please Allah only but by making a show of them he wants to win the favour and appreciation of human beings. which is to set up partners to Allah indirectly.

Another hadith says with this meaning:

Certain categories of people will be called first of all for reckoning on the Day of Judgement. A martyr will be asked by Allah, "Did I not bestow such and such favours on you?" He will admit those boons and favours. Then Allah will ask him: "How did you make use of My favours?" He will answer: "I went to the Holy War to please You, and was killed therein." Allah will say: "You lie; you participated in the Holy War to be called a hero by people, and this has been done." Then he will be thrown headlong into the fire of Hell. Next, a scholar will be called and the same questions will be put to him. In reply he will admit the favours of Allah. Then he will be asked: "How did you make use of My favours?" He will answer, "I acquired knowledge of Islam and taught it to others, simply to please You." Allah will say: "You lie; you attained knowledge in order to be called an aalim and recited the Holy Qur'an to be called a qaari." Then he too will be thrown headlong into the fire of Hell.

Thereafter a rich man will be called, and the same questions will be put to him. He will say: "I always spent money to please Thee." Allah will say: "You lie; you spent money in order to be called a generous man, and this has been said." Then he will also be thrown headlong into the fire of Hell. (Mishkaat)

Therefore, our preachers of Islam should always avoid show and vanity, and should render their services only to please Allah. They should follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), and should not desire to win fame, or favour and appreciation of people. If such a vain desire is suspected in their mind, they should seek the refuge of Allah, and should ask His pardon. May Allah grant us sincerity to serve His religion to the best of our efforts.

Chapter 6: Respect for Learning and the Learned in Islam

In this chapter, I would make a few submissions to the Muslims in general that they may know how to respect the scholars and the preachers of Islam. Today it is usual to have unfounded misgivings and objections nthe preachers and the learned men of the nation' this is very harmful from the religious point of view. In every circle and every institution of the world, there are good as well as bad people; and if there are a few bad persons among -the scholars also, it is no wonder. Two important considerations are here noteworthy. Firstly. you should not form any definite opinion about the character of anyone. unless you have a solid proof about it.

Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

"And do not take practical steps regarding anything, about which you have no knowledge; for everyone will be questioned as to how he used his ears and eyes and the heart."

And obviously it is unjust to reject the (good) advice of a preacher, simply because you have some unconfirmed doubts about him.

The Jews translated their scriptures into Arabic and used to read them out to the Muslims; but the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was so cautious about giving his decision on this subject that he said: "O Muslims! you should neither confirm what they say, nor reject them; rather you should say: 'Whatever Allah has revealed, we believe in all that.'" In other words he prohibited contradiction of even an unbeliever's narration without proper investigation. But contrary to this precept, we reject those instructions of preachers that are against our wishes, without any arguments on our part, and attack their reputation even when we know them to be righteous.

Another thing that you must keep in mind is that even the righteous scholars and preachers of your nation are also human beings. and as such they too can have some weaknesses. The responsibility of their good or bad deeds really rests on them and the final reckoning belongs to Allah: but I hope that by His mercy and immense generosity He will forgive them for after all they have been serving His Religion and Faith at great personal sacrifice throughout their lives. In short, either to entertain doubts and objections against the religious preacher himself, or spread them amongst others, will take people away from religion and be the cause of geat distress for those who participate in such affairs.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) has said:

"Whoever respects the following three. he really pays respect to Allah: (1) An aged Muslim, (2) One who teaches and preaches the Holy Qur'an without any excess, (3) And a ruler whois just to the people." (Targheeb)

Also the following saying of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) tells us:

"He is not among my followers. who does not respect our elders. is not merciful to our youngsters. and does not pay due reverence to our scholars."

"Whoever belittles the following three persons is not a Muslim but a hypocrite: first, an aged Muslim; second, a scholar (of religion); and third, a just ruler."

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) has also said: **"I fear particularly for three shortcomings in my followers. First, due to increasing worldly benefits and achievements. they will envy one another; second, discussion of the Holy Qur'an will become so common that even the ignorant will claim that they know the meanings of the Holy Qur'an, although many meanings are such that cannot be understood by anyone except the well versed scholars of that Book, who say: "We have a firm faith in it, and that it is from Allah", so how much more careful should be the common people: third, the religious scholars will be neglected and will not be patronized properly."** (Targheeb)

Many similar traditions are found in the books of hadith. It has been mentioned in 'Fataawa Aalamgiri' that the sort of derogatory words that are generally used today by the ignorant people about the scholars of Islam may seriously damage their faith. Therefore, people must be careful to avoid such words. Suppose for a moment there are no true and sincere scholars of Islam in the world (and the majority consists of corrupt people), even then nothing is gained by branding them as evil scholars. Rather, it is the religious and moral duty of every Muslim to form such an Islamic society that would give birth to sincere servants of Islam. Only when such a body of persons is in existence we should rest content.

Of course, there have always been some differences of opinion among the Muslim scholars, mostly about minor problems, for which they cannot be maligned. There is a hadith that says: "The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) gave his shoes to Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallahu anho), and said: "Take my shoes as a sign, and proclaim among the Muslims that whoever will say 'La ilaha illallah, Mohammadur Rasul-ullah' from the bottom of his heart, he will certainly enter Paradise." Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anho) met Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallahu anho) in the way and asked him where he was going. He told him the message of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), yet Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anho) was annoyed, for he did not agree with such a proposition: therefore he hit the messenger in the chest, who fell back. Yet no one raised objections against Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anho), nor was any demonstration arranged against him because of this difference of opinion. Many differences of opinion existed among the Sahabah and later the four Imams of Fiqh differed among themselves in numerous details.

There have been many minor differences of opinion about prayers among the four Imams; I myself know of about two hundred, but this does not mean that their followers should doubt the faith of one another, and call each other 'infidel'. The fact is that the common people are mostly unaware of the finer points on which various scholars differ in their views; these differences are a blessing in disguise. As a matter of fact, good preachers and sincere servants of Islam do not attach any importance to such trifling things, but continue their attempt to bring people to the Right Path. We know that doctors differ among themselves and lawyers differ in their advice, nevertheless people continue to make use of their services. But those who are ignorant, selfish and lazy, they simply use their difference of views to raise objections against the religious scholars. Anyhow, it has been enjoined on every Muslim to listen to those scholars of the Holy Qur'an, whom he respects and knows to be the followers of the Sunnah, and should avoid reproaching those whom he does not like. Anyone who has no proper knowledge of Islam and the Holy Qur'an, has no right to raise objections against the scholars. The scholars of Islam should always keep this saying of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) in mind and act accordingly: "It is to waste knowledge to address those who are not fit for it."

In this corrupt age, when even the commandments of Allah- and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) are being criticised, I have no reason to wonder if the sermons of Muslim scholars are not heard and the Qur'an not followed. Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an.

"And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah, surely these are the unjust."

Chapter 7: Keeping Company with the Righteous Divines

In this last chapter, which really completes the sixth one, I would remind the Muslims to follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), and to keep the company of those who devote themselves to Islam and remember Allah day and night, for this will make them steadfast in Islam. Even the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) was commanded to keep such company; says the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) on this subject:

"Shall I tell you a thing by which you can attain good in this world and the Hereafter? Remember, it is the company of those who remember and glorify Allah day and night." (Mishkaat)

Now it is up to you to search for and to recognize the true lovers of Allah and these are the followers of the Sunnah, for Allah has sent his beloved Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) as a model for the guidance of the Muslims. Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

"O Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam)! say: "If you people (really) love Allah, then follow me; so that Allah will love you, and will pardon your sins; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Therefore, whoever follows the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) faithfully is nearer to Allah, and whoever does not follow him is far away from Allah and cannot win His favours. The commentators of the Holy Qur'an have written that whoever claims to be a lover of Allah, but does not follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), he is a liar; for it is a requisite of love that everything associated with the beloved must be loved. A poet has quoted the words of the famous Qais'Aamir, the lover of Laila:

"Whenever I pass through the city of Laila, I love every door and wall of it. Really I do not love the city as a city, but rather love the people in it who are associated with Laila." Another poet says:

"You pretend to be a lover of Allah, and yet you do not obey His commandments! And I swear, in practise this is strange. If you were a true lover, you would never disobey Him, for a lover always follows the orders of his beloved."

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) said: **"All my followers will enter Paradise, but not those who have denied me." The Companions said: "Who would deny you?" He said: "Those who follow me would enter Paradise, but those who disobey me, they in fact deny me."**

In another hadith, the Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) has said. **"No one of you can be a true Muslim unless his wishes are subordinate to that which I have brought, that is the Holy Qur'an."** (Mishkaat)

One can hardly believe that those who claim to be well-wishers of Islam and the Muslims would disobey Allah and His Prophet. When we say that such and such thing is against the Sunnah, they feel very annoyed: then how can they be among the followers of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam)?

Sa'di (Rahmatullah alaihi) has said:

"Whoever treads a path contrary to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), he will never reach his destination."

Therefore, whoever keeps the company of true lovers of Allah and followers of the Sunnah, in order to obtain spiritual benefits, he will certainly progress towards salvation.

On this particular subject. please consider the following sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam):

"Whenever you people pass through the Gardens of Paradise. partake of their fruits." The Companions asked: "What are the Gardens of Paradise?" The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) answered: "The assemblies wherein knowledge of Islam and the Holy Qur'an is taught."

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) also said: **"Luqmaan instructed his son in these words: 'Keep the company of scholars, and listen attentively to the words of the wise for therewith Allah revives the dead hearts just as He revives the dead earth with heavy rains; and the wise alone understand the religion. '"**

A Companion asked the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) **"Who can be the best companion for us?" He answered: "Such a person that. when you see him. you remember Allah; when you listen to him, your knowledge of Islam is increased; when you see his actions. you are reminded of the life Hereafter."** (Targheeb)

Again, "The most devoted servants of Allah are such that. when you see them you remember Allah." Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

"O those who believe! Fear Allah, and be with the truthful (faithful) people!"

The commentators have written that by 'truthful' are meant the mystics and the true lovers of Allah, for whoever attaches himself to them and listens to their sermons, he attains very high standards of spirituality.

Sheikh Akbar has written: "You cannot get rid of the evil wishes of yourself, though you may strive for it for your whole life unless your desires are subjected to the commandments of Allah and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam). So, when you find a true lover of Allah, serve him well and follow his instructions as though you have no will of your own; obey him in all your spiritual, religious and personal problems. even those concerning your occupation, so that he may lead you to the right path and take you nearer to Allah. "

Says the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) **"When a group of people remember Allah in a meeting. then the angels surround that gathering, Allah's mercy descends on them and Allah remembers them in the assembly of Angels."** What honour can be greater for the believers than that Allah remembers and appreciates them? Says the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam): **"An angel is sent to those who remember Allah sincerely, and he says 'Allah has forgiven your past sins, and has converted your bad deeds into good ones'."**

In another hadith, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam) says: "Any assembly of Muslims, who do not remember Allah, (do not) send salutations to His Messenger (Sallallahu alaihe wasallam), will face disappointment on the Day of Judgement."

There is a prayer of Hadhrat Dawood (Alayhis salaam) in the following words: "O Allah! if you see me . neglecting the assembly of those who remember Thee, and attending the assembly of transgressors, then break my feet (that I may not be able to walk towards them)."

A poet has said,

"When I do not listen. to Him and see His face. it is better to be deaf and blind."

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallaho anho) says: **"An assembly wherein Allah is remembered and glorified. shines for the heavenly creatures, just as the stars shine for the earthly creatures."**

Once, Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallaho anho) went to a bazaar and proclaimed to the people: "O brethren! You are sitting here, and the legacy of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) is being distributed in the mosque." The people ran to the mosque, but as nothing material was being distributed there, they returned disappointed. Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallaho anho) asked them. "After all what was being done there?" They answered: "A few people were reading the Holy Qur'an, and a few others were engaged in praising and glorifying Allah." He said:

"This is what we call the legacy of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam)."

Imam Ghazali (Rahmatullah alaih) has mentioned many similar traditions. Even the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) has been commanded by Allah:

"O Messenger! keep the company of those who pray to Allah every morning and evening. and they desire only His pleasure; and do not turn your eyes from them to the attractions and adornment of the worldly life: and do not follow him whose heart We have turned away from our remembrance, and who follows his desires, and (therefore) he has broken the limits (of true religion). "

Numerous traditions indicate that the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) used to thank Allah for producing such pious people among his followers that he was commanded to keep their company. And in the same verse, the Holy Prophet (Sallallaho alaihe wasallam) has been commanded to avoid the company of those who are slaves of passion and trespass the limits laid down by Allah. He has been instructed again and again not to follow their vain desires.

Now all those who blindly follow the ways of the ungodly and transgressing people of the non-believing nations should search their hearts and see how far they are true believers. Their imitating the pagans and the Christian has taken them far away from the Right Path:

"O ignorant desert dweller! I fear that you won't be able to reach the Kaaba; for the path that you tread leads to Turkistan."

My object was to advise you on religious matters, and I have done my duty. Now I entrust you to Allah, and bid farewell. Even the prophets were commanded only to preach the truth.

(Hafiz) Mohammad Zakariyya Madrasah Mazahir-ul-Ulum Saharanpur
5th of Safar 1350 (21st of June 1931)