

UNITY IN MUSLIM UMMAH

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

"The Jama'ah is what is the truth. Even if it is only one person." Abdullah ibn Masood (r.a.)

The Muslim *Ummah* has disintegrated into fragments, may be this is a strong expression, or rather a bitter one, but then most often truth is bitter, nevertheless, it's true. The *Ummah* (Nation) which is praised by Allah (swt) as the best of nations, (of course with conditions), the *Ummah* which was evolved to guide the mankind towards light, is unfortunately lying in the abyss of darkness. If we look at the global picture as a whole, we find that the number of Muslims has grown steadily to more than a billion and half today. Muslims possess the richest resources of the world and the most fertile lands of the earth. In spite of this, how ironic that the most vulnerable and the most dependent people on earth are also Muslims.

Coming to the religious level, we find that the number of mosques is growing everywhere. The number of Muslims going to mosques is also increasing. The number of Muslims performing the annual pilgrimage increases every year, and in fact, has to be controlled to restrict the number. The number of Muslim organizations has been

growing steadily. Whenever some differences arise among Muslims in one organization, they form another one and build another mosque...

Instead of Muslims being united in mercy towards each other, they are, on the whole, far from it. Instead of feeling the pain and misery of other Muslims (Chechens, Palestinians, Syrians, Kashmiris, for example), most of us are happily enjoying our material comforts of life. An atmosphere of disunity, accusing and blaming each other, has become the norm in the Muslim *Ummah*. Every sect accuses the other of straying from the right path of Islam. By giving rise to heresy, apostasy and innovations in religion, *Shaitan* achieved his main purpose of creating disunity in the ranks of the faithful and dividing the Muslim *Ummah* into different sects.

They are divided along religious, political, ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic, and sectarian lines. These divisions extend further into subdivisions. Status, wealth, fame, and fortune have also created social differences among Muslims.

Many reasons can be cited for the prevailing condition of *Ummah*, but without an iota of doubt primary among them is 'Disunity'. The *Ummah* has been divided into groups and schools of thought that are not found in the first generation of Muslims. To discuss this issue in brief, I have tried to emphasize its reasons and its consequences behind this misfortune/catastrophe.

Foremost is the indifference towards our *deen* (i.e., Islam) and the subsequent negligence in following the Quran and the Sunnah, which as the consequence leads to blind following of '*Sheikhs*' (who give undue importance to

their *madhhab*). They are not only ignorant but advocate sectarianism and division in Islam which is in direct conflict/contradiction with the ethics of Islam, and strictly forbidden by Allah (swt) in the Quran and Sunnah of the Messenger (pbuh). All Muslims are required to follow with reason the rulings of the early scholars in order to preserve the pristine purity of Islam as revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) and conveyed to his companions.

Allah (swt) says in his book: that those who create differences in the *deen* are among the *Mushrikun*:

“Be not among the Mushrikun i.e., those who create differences in Deen (Islam) and become sects. Each (sectarian) party quite content with itself (that it is following the correct path).” (Al Qur’an, 30:32)

In fact Allah (swt) commands us to be united, Allah says in the Qur’an,

“ And hold firmly to the rope of Allah (i.e. this Quran), all together and do not become divided.” and, “And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment.” (Al Qur’an, 3:103, 3:105)

And if you don’t then Allah (swt) commands the Messenger (pbuh) that you (pbuh) have nothing to do with those who do so, Allah (swt) says,

“Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad (pbuh)) have no concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do.” (Al Qur’an, 6:159)

And then comes the punishment in the form of sectarianism and division, as is crystallized in the following verse and the *hadith* of the Messenger.

“Say, “He is the (one) Able to send upon you affliction from above you or from beneath your feet or to confuse you (so you become) sects and make you taste the violence of one another.” Look how We diversify the signs that they might understand.” (Al Qur’an, 6:65)

And the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“If they were not to be ruling by the Book of Allah, Allah will send down as a punishment between them i.e., make them split and fight each other.” (Ibn Majah, vol. 5, Hadith no. 4019)

Not only ignorant and illiterate people but also many scholars, who imagine themselves very well informed, are of the opinion that every Muslim must fanatically follow an *Imaam*. A Muslim must follow either *Imaam* Abu Hanifa or *Imaam* Shafi’i or *Imaam* Malik or *Imaam* Ahmad bin Hambal. This is not only a mistaken idea but it is also an attestation of people’s ignorance and unawareness of the basic knowledge of Islam. These so-called scholars made it

incumbent upon people to follow one of the four *Imaams* and prohibited them from following another at the same time. In other words they rose up the *Imaams* to the level of Prophets – to whom scriptures are revealed – and made it obligatory to obey every word of the *Imaam*, ending up in denial mode of the *Imaam*'s advises i.e. not to follow blindly, in other words doing away with their respective *Imaams* itself. Many people discard an authentic *hadith* because accepting it would mean declaring that the *Imaam* (of their respecting *madhhab*) was mistaken in his ruling which, in their opinion is an act of disrespect akin to blasphemy. Little do they realize that their preference of their *Imaam*'s opinion over the Prophet's (pbuh) statement is itself in total opposition to the stand taken by their own *Imaam*, and is in fact bordering on a form of *shirk* (known as *shirk fee Tawheed al ittiba*) that is sharing the unquestioned following which belongs only to the Prophet (pbuh) when it comes to religion. For in the declaration of one's Islam *la illaha illallah Muhammadur rasulullah*, only the Prophet (pbuh) is the accepted person who should be followed unquestioningly since following him is equivalent to following Allah (swt).

Imaam Shafi'i stressed a very important point concerning personal opinion versus the Sunnah. He said, "*The Muslims (of my time) were of unanimous opinion that one who comes across an authentic Sunnah of the Messenger (pbuh) is not allowed to disregard it in favor of someone else's opinion*".

Ignoring these evidences these ignorant people very often quote this untraceable *hadith* that 'differences in the *Ummah* is a blessing', without realising that it is in direct conflict with the Qur'an where Allah (swt) says,

"And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength depart, and be patient." (Al Qur'an, 8:46).

They over look the fact that every sect or group that they have formed has splintered into many sub groups... They do all the damages that they can – in the name of their respective *Madhhab* - by doing *taqleed* i.e. following it fanatically and blindly.

In *Shariah* the meaning of *Taqleed* (blind following) is to follow and refer to a saying or a point of view which the convinced (follower) has no argument to prove correct. Linguistically, *taqleed* means placing something around the neck, which encircles the neck. Technically it means following he whose saying is not a proof (*hujjah*). Sheikh Shaamee Hanafi said, "*It is to take the statement of someone without knowing the evidence.*" Such following is absolutely forbidden by the *Shariah*. To follow an issue which is proved by *Shariah* and lawful arguments is called *Ittiba* (compliance).

Most Muslims are unaware of the fact that blind following of a *Madhhab* is diametrically opposed to the position and teachings of the founders of the *Madhhabs*. Blind following (*Taqleed*), despite being the predominant way of deciding about a religious verdict amongst a large number of the present-day Muslims, cannot be justified from the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. First, because it implies that those following this approach have taken a decision not to use their own intellectual abilities. That is clearly against Qur'an. Second, because it has to be assumed by those adopting this approach that the scholar they have

chosen to follow is **infallible**. There is **none**, according to Qur'an, who is, apart from the Prophets, divinely guided and, therefore, infallible. Third, Qur'an itself condemns the approach of those who choose to follow others instead of using their own intellect in religious matters. Fourth, Giving preference to the opinion of a *Madhhab* over an authentic *hadith* borders on **shirk** since such preference contravenes the allegiance owed to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh).

In fact all of the *Imaams* and their students are on record as being opposed to the blind following of their opinions. Instead they repeatedly emphasized the importance of referring to the primary sources, the Quran and the Sunnah, as the basis of legal rulings. An example of their flexibility – When Imaam Abu Hanifa (rahimahullah) had ruled that the Islamic prohibition of '*Khamr*' covered only the product of fermented grape juice (literal meaning of '*Khamr*') and did not extend to intoxicants in general. However his three main students (Abu Yoosuf, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, and Zufur) later rejected the ruling of their teacher, since they encountered reliable *hadith* of the Prophet (pbuh) clearly, indicating that all intoxicants were to be included in the meaning of '*Khamr*'. This shows that in the early stage in the development of *Madhhabs* there was a marked lack of rigidity on the part of scholars and their students.

The *Imaams* and their students continuously emphasized the fact that their rulings were subject to error. Authentic *ahadith* were given precedence by the *Imaams* over their own opinions. On the basis of authentic *hadith*, not available to the *Imams*, their students later overruled several rulings, previously made by the *Imaams*. In any case none

of the *SalafusSaliheen* – specially the founder of the four schools (may Allah have mercy on all of them) ever encouraged division in the *Ummah*, rather they are on record to have strongly advocated unity in the *Ummah* by spelling out the following golden words:

The statements of the four Imaams prohibiting Taqleed (blind following).

IMAAM ABU HANIFA (702-767)

Abu Yusuf reported that the *Imaam* once told him, "Woe! Be on you. Do not write down all you hear from me, for surely I may hold an opinion today and leave it tomorrow, hold another tomorrow and leave it the day after". The *Imaam* was reported by his student Zufar to have said, "It is forbidden for anyone who does not know my proofs to make a ruling according to my statements, for verily we are only humans we may say something today and reject it tomorrow". His student, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, reported that the *Imaam* said, "If I have made a ruling which contradicts Allah's book or the Messenger's (pbuh) *hadith*, reject my ruling". *Imaam* Ibn Abdul-Barr reported that *Imaam* Abu Haneefa said, "If a *hadith* is found to be *Saheeh* (authentic), it is my *Madhhab*".

IMAAM MALIK (717-801)

Imaam Malik never hesitated to change his rulings, even if he had uttered them in public, if he found a *Saheeh hadith*. IbnWahb reported, "I once heard someone ask Malik about washing between the toes during wudhu, to which he replied, 'people do not have to do it'. I waited until most of the people left the study circle and informed him there is a *hadith* concerning it. He asked what it was, so I said that al-Laythibnsa'd, IbnLuhay'ah

and Anribn al- Haarith all related from al-Mustawrid ibn shidaad al- Qurashee that he saw Allah's Messenger (pbuh) rub between his toes with his little finger, Malik said, 'Surely that is a good Hadith which I never heard before'. Later when I heard people ask Malik about washing between the toes, he used to insist that it must be washed". Ibn Abdul -Barr reported that Malik once said, "Verily I am only a man, I err and am at times correct, so thoroughly investigate my opinions, then take whatever agrees with the book (Quran) and the Sunnah, and reject whatever contradicts them".

IMAM SHAFI'I (767- 820)

The Hadith scholar al-Hakim collected a statement of Ash Shafi'i in which he (Shafi'i) said, "There is no one among us who has not had a Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) elude him or have one slip his mind; so no matter what ruling I have made or fundamental principles I have proposed, there will be in them things contrary to rulings of Allah's Messenger (pbuh). Therefore, the correct ruling is according to what Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, and that is my ruling".

IMAAM AHMAD BIN HAMBAL (778-855)

Imam Ahmad was very explicit in his warnings against *taqleed*, as is evident in the following saying of his, recorded by IbnQayyim. "Do not blindly follow my rulings, those of Malik, Ash Shafi'i, Al-Awzaai or Ath-Thawree. Take (your rulings) from whence they took theirs". In other of his statements recorded by Ibn Abdul Barr, he said, "The opinions of al- Awzaai, Malik, and Abu Haneefa are simply opinions and to me they are all equal, but the real criterion for right or wrong is in the *ahadith*". Ibn Al-Jawzee reported that Imaam Ahmad

said, "Whoever rejects an authentic hadith of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) is on the verge of destruction".

The above mentioned quotations make them unaccountable for the **doings** of their followers.

It becomes clear that all these *Imaams* (may Allah have mercy on them) have discouraged us to follow them **blindly (in other words they have not claimed infallibility)** and encouraged us to follow the way of the Prophet (pbuh) which can easily be found (given the revolution in information technology today) in the authentic *ahadith* books of the Prophet (pbuh).

The people who blindly follow (*Muqallid*) very often say that all the four *madhhab* are correct all the time without realizing that the opposing opinions cannot all be correct simultaneously. It is only one of them which can possibly be correct or perhaps none. One example worth mentioning is that the opinion of *Imaam* Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) is that the *wudhu* does not break if a man touches a woman, while *Imaam* Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) says the *wudhu* breaks, now who is correct? A true seeker after truth should be concerned to find out which opinion is the right one - not the most convenient one. If none of them seems to be correct, he should continue his struggle to discover one himself, if he has the required abilities. When one does a little homework one finds the *hadith* of Aisha (r.a) where the Prophet (pbuh) kissed her and went to offer *salah* **without performing wudu again**. (Abu Dawud, vol. 1, Hadith no. 178) and in another hadith,

Narrated 'Aisha (r.a.), "I used to sleep in front of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) with my legs opposite his Qibla (facing him); and whenever he prostrated, he **pushed my feet** and I withdrew

them and whenever he stood, I stretched them.” Aisha added, “In those days there were no lamps in the houses.” (Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, Hadith no. 492)

The only source that form the foundation of all Islamic knowledge are the Book of Allah and His Messenger’s (pbuh) practical example, referred to as Qur’an and Sunnah respectively in Islamic literature. The following verse from Qur’an is an irrefutable verdict in support of the conclusion drawn above:

“O believers, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you in authority: and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day” (Al Qur’an, 4:59).

This verse, while on the one hand impresses upon Muslims the necessity of obeying the leaders (those who are in authority), it concedes, on the other, the possibility of a difference of opinion, in which case a committee of able men should settle the dispute on the basis of what is said in the Qur’an and the sunnah (refer it to Allah and the messenger). **It obviously means that all sources other than these two are challengeable in Islam.**

Sayyed Mawdudi explains this verse (4:59) in the following words, *“This verse is the cornerstone of the entire religious, social and political structure of Islam, and the very first clause of the constitution of an Islamic state. In the Islamic order of life, Allah alone is the focus of loyalty and obedience. A Muslim is the servant of Allah (swt) before anything else, and obedience and loyalty to Allah (swt) constitute the centre and axis of both the individual*

and collective life of a Muslim. Other claims to loyalty and obedience are acceptable only in so far as they remain secondary and subservient and do not compete with those owed to Allah (swt). All loyalties which may tend to challenge the primacy of man’s loyalty to Allah (swt) must be rejected. This has been expressed by the Prophet (pbuh) in the following words:

“No obedience to any creature is allowed when it is a disobedience to the Creator.” (Sahih Bukhari, vol. 9, Hadith no. 363)

Another basic principle of the Islamic order is obedience to the Prophet (pbuh). No Prophet, of course, is entitled to obedience in his own right. Obedience to Prophets however, is the only practical way of obeying Allah (swt), since they are the only authentic means by which He communicates His injunctions and ordinances to men. Hence we can obey Allah (swt) only if we obey a Prophet. Independent obedience to Allah (swt) is not acceptable, and to turn one’s back on the Prophets amounts to rebellion against Allah (swt). The following hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) explains this: “Whoever obeyed me, indeed obeyed Allah; and whoever disobeyed me, indeed disobeyed Allah”. (Sahih Bukhari, vol. 9, Hadith no. 385)

In the Islamic order of life Muslims are further required to obey fellow Muslims in authority. This obedience follows and is subordinate to obedience to Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh). Those invested with authority (ulu al-amr) include all those entrusted with directing Muslims in matters of common concern. Hence persons invested with authority include the intellectual and political leaders of the community, as well as administrative officials, judges of the courts tribal chiefs and regional representatives. In all these capacities, those invested with authority are entitled to obedience and it is improper for Muslims

to cause dislocation in their collective life by engaging in strife and conflict with them. This obedience is (conditional) contingent, however, on two conditions: first, that these men should be believers; and second that they themselves be obedient to Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh).

These two conditions are not only clearly mentioned in this verse they have also been elucidated at length by the Prophet (pbuh) and can be found in many ahadith, here are some of them:

“A Muslim is obliged to heed and obey an order whether he likes it or not, as long as he is not ordered to carry out an act of disobedience to Allah (ma’siyah). When ordered to carry out an act of disobedience to Allah, he need neither heed nor obey.” Sahih Bukhari, vol. 5, Hadith no.629)

“There is no obedience in sin; obedience is only in what is good (ma’ruf).”(Sahih Bukhari, vol. 9, Hadith no. 363)

In an Islamic (order) the injunctions of Allah (swt) and the way of the Prophet (pbuh) constitute the basic law and paramount authority in all matters. Whenever there is any dispute among Muslims or between the rulers and the ruled the matter should be referred to the Quran and the sunnah, and all concerned should accept with sincerity whatever judgment results. In fact, willingness to take the Quran and the sunnah of the Messenger (pbuh) as the common point of reference, and to treat the judgment of the Quran and sunnah as the last word on all matters is a central characteristic which distinguishes an Islamic system from the un-Islamic ones.

Some people question the principle that we should refer everything to Quran and sunnah. They wonder how can we probably do so when there are numerous practical situations involved, for example, rules and regulations relating to municipal administration, the management of the railways and postal

systems and so on and so forth which are not treated at all in these sources. This doubt arises, however from misapprehension about Islam. The basic difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim is that, whereas the latter feels free to do as he wishes, the basic characteristic of a Muslim is that he always looks to Allah (swt) and His prophet (pbuh) for guidance, and where such guidance is available, a Muslim is bound by it. On the other hand, it is quite important to remember that when no specific guidance is available, a Muslim feels free to exercise his discretion because the silence of the law indicates that Allah (swt) Himself has deliberately granted man the freedom to make his decision.”

Al-Qurtubi has also correctly stated that “had the objective of the verse been to establish the unquestionable authority of “*ululamr*”, the wordings of the verse should have been “*faruddhuila al-imamiwaululamr*” (then refer it to the Imaam and the *ululamr*). The words “and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger” clearly show that the verdicts of *ululamriminkum*, whoever they are, can be disputed. The claim that the Imaams hold a place of independent source of knowledge in Islam, therefore, is contrary to the clear guidance of Qur’an.”

It is reported that when Qur’an accused the Jews and the Christians in these words,

“They consider their rabbis and monks to be their lords apart from Allah ...” (Al Qur’an, 9:31)

‘Adi bin Hatim, who had embraced Islam after being a Christian, asked the Prophet about the reason Qur’an made that allegation. The Prophet (pbuh), replied by asking this question: “Was it not a fact that those rabbis and monks used to

dictate (to the people) what was lawful and what was not?" He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet (pbuh) then said that, *"that was tantamount to making them gods."* (Tirmidhi, vol.3, Hadith no. 247).

This assessment, given by the Prophet (pbuh) is an eye-opener to anyone who assumes the role of the original source of Islamic law is thus pretending to be a god, and those who confer that status to him are making him one. Another point worth mentioning is that there are some people who in justification for their blind following say that the great *Imaams* (may Allah have mercy on them) could not have missed authentic *ahadith*, had they really been so. These people conveniently overlook the fact that all the *ahadith* were neither collected nor classified in their respective period.

Moreover what is confirmed with the scholars is that in every *madhhab* exists *ahadith* that is not found in other *madhaahib*. Thus, the one who holds on to only one *madhab* will be ignorant of a magnificent other side of the *Sunnah* that is preserved in other *madhaahib*. But the scholars accept it from the person regardless of what group he was a part of so long that he is a trustworthy Muslim that can be depended on for narrations of *hadith*. Indeed *Imaam* Ash-Shafi'i made this clear, when he spoke with *Imaam* Ahmad and said, *"You are more knowledgeable of the ahadith than me. So if authentic hadith comes to you, inform me of it so that it would be my position, regardless if the reporter is from al-Hijaz, Koofah, or Misr."*

And when we look towards the best of generations of this *Ummah* we find a complete absence of rigidity and factionalism. The *sahaabah* who were trained by the best of

trainers, i.e. the Prophet (pbuh) knew the limitations, shortcomings and fallibility that humans are prone to.

The *sahaabah* who were in decision making positions made it clear that their deductions were not necessarily as Allah intended. If they made different rulings on a problem in their undivided capacities and were later informed of an authentic *hadith* (saying or action of the Prophet (pbuh)) on the subject, they would immediately accept it, dropping all differences.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE SAHABAH WHO WITHDREW THEIR OPINION, WHEN TOLD OF A SAHIH HADITH OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

Saeed (r.a.) reported that, *"Umar (r.a.) used to say that the Deyah (compensation for accidental murder) is given to male paternal relatives of the husband and the woman does not inherit anything from the Deyah of her husband"*, until ad- Dhhaak ibn Sufyaan (r.a.) said to him, *"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) wrote to me to give Ashyam ad- Dibaabee's wife from her husband's Deyah"*. So Umar (r.a.) withdrew his opinion. (Abu Dawud, vol. 2, Hadith No. 2921, authenticated by Al-Albani, Sunnah Abu Dawud, vol. 2, Hadith No. 2540).

The *Sahaabah* used to drop all differences when informed of an authentic Hadith... e.g. after the death of the Prophet (pbuh), the *Sahaabah* held different opinions as to where he (pbuh) should be buried. When Abu Bakr (r.a.) related to them that he had heard the Prophet (pbuh) say that Prophets are buried in the spot they die, they dropped their differences and dug his grave beneath his bed in Aisha's (r.a.) house. (Tareekh al-Islam, vol. 1, p. 246)

Mut'ah, a pre-Islamic form of temporary marriage which had been allowed in the early stage of Islam was forbidden by the Prophet (pbuh) (in the later stage of his life). Some of the *Sahaabah* were unaware of the prohibition and thus continued to practice temporary marriage during Abu Bakr's (r.a.) caliphate and the first half of Umar's (r.a.) caliphate. When Umar (r.a.) became aware of the practice of *Mut'ah*, he forbade it and prescribed a severe punishment for the offence. (Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, Hadith no. 3253)

Imaam Malik has rightly said: *"The views and opinions of everybody may be accepted or rejected except his who is resting in this grave."* While saying this, Imaam Malik pointed towards the grave of the Prophet (pbuh).

Moreover the biggest drawback of fanatically sticking to one *Madhhab*, sect or person, is surely one will not be able to act upon many *ahadith* (which exist in other *Madhhab*) rather there is a possibility of going against many of the *ahadith* of the Prophet (pbuh) in ignorance, and that may lead to *kufir* (infidelity).

That is why many Hanafi and other scholars have made it clear that it is not obligatory to follow one particular *madhhab*/sect. Here are a few statements:

Kamal bin Hamam Hanafi in his book on principles of fiqh *At-Tahir Wal-Taqrir* writes: *"To follow any specific Madhhab has not been advocated by any source (Quran, hadith) nor anybody has given any argument in its favor. Only those things that Allah and His Messenger have made obligatory are worth following – It is obvious that Allah and His Messenger have not made it obligatory to follow any person in religious matters. The golden era of the Prophet (pbuh), his companions*

and their followers passed, but no one made it compulsory to follow a specific Madhhab or person."

Shah Waliullah Dehalwi has written in *Insaffi Bayan Asbab Al- Khilaf*: *"For the first two centuries of the Hijra era people were not aware of any Madhhab, as a matter of fact, no Madhhab existed at all during that time. For that reason nobody knew any Madhhab and did not follow anyone except Allah's Messenger (pbuh). Venerable companions of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) the Tabe'een and the succeeding generation of the Tabe'een followed their consensus and did not follow any individual. So anybody who ignores this consensus and opts all the sayings, verdicts and views of any one Imaam and does not try to search and confirm it from the two basic sources i.e. the Quran and Sunnah, is acting against the levels of faith. Such a person has gone astray from the right path of Islam."*

The blind followers of *Madhhabs* believe in the infallibility of their respective *Imaams*, thus effectively elevating them to the status of the Prophet (pbuh). They think that their *Imaam* can never commit a mistake and whatever he says is always true and right. They never accept any argument or clear evidence which is against their belief.

SHEIKH UL ISLAM IBN TAYMIYA WRITES IN FATAWA MISRIYA

"If an individual follows only one from the four Imaams- Imaam Abu Hanifa, Imaam Shafi'i, Imaam Malik and Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal- and in connection with certain issue he finds a more positive and stronger argument than that of his own Sheikh or Imaam, and leaves the weaker argument and embraces the strong one, this act of his is estimable. All religious scholars thought that it made no difference to the faith of the follower; on

the other hand, it is said that he is dearer to the Prophet (pbuh) and nearer to the truth than a person who follows only one Imaam eagerly and blindly and pays less heed to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). He who follows Imaam Abu Hanifa and thinks his Imaam is always correct in every religious matter and everyone should follow him, and all other Imams who differ with him are not reliable, is certainly ignorant; such thinking may lead him to blasphemy and infidelity. We seek refuge with Allah from this evil."

SHAIKH SALIH AL-FULANI IN HIS BOOK IQAZ HAMAM UHUL ABSAR WRITES

"There is a difference between a blind follower and a follower of evidence. A blind follower never enquires about the orders of Allah and His Prophet (pbuh), he is always interested to discern the views of his Imaam. Even if he finds that the views of his Imaam are contrary to the Quran and Sunnah, he sticks to them. However, a follower of evidence is not primarily interested to know the point of view of a particular Imaam, but his query is more towards the understanding of the orders of Allah and the Prophet (pbuh). A follower of evidence reaps benefit from all fields, whereas a blind follower sticks to one. This is the principal difference between the blind followers of later period and former righteous believers. One goes after an Imaam and his views, whereas the other picks up a right thing from wheresoever he finds."

Imaam Auzai said: "Follow the pious predecessors (Salafus Saliheen) of the early period of Islam even if you are left alone; do not pay any heed to later views and opinions because most of these are just adorned with high sounding words and phrases, altering the meaning and sense of Quranic verses and hadith of the Prophet (pbuh)."

Rabi bin Sulaiman Jaizi narrates that "once a person asked about an issue from Imaam Shafi'i. He replied, "that it is narrated that the view of the Prophet (pbuh) is like this in this matter." The man asked again, "Do you have the same view"? Imaam Shafi'i trembled with fear and turned pale on hearing this question and said. "Hell with you, no place on earth and heaven would save me from the wrath of Allah, if I give a reference of a hadith and my verdict is not in accordance with it. I shall honor and pay due respect to the hadith. Imaam Shafi'i repeated this again and again and the fear of Allah overpowered him."

When Caliph Haroon-ar Rasheed consulted Imaam Malik on completion of the book (whom he had commissioned to compile an authoritative book of the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh)) to allow him to make it the state constitution, which would have made the *Madhhab* of Imaam Malik binding on all Muslims, the Imaam refused to have it done. Since he was aware that his compilation included only those *ahadith* of the Prophet (pbuh) that were available in Hijaz (western coast of the Arabian Peninsula including Makkah and Madinah) where Imaam Malik taught and founded his *Madhhab*. He felt strongly that no single *Madhhab* should be binding on all Muslims in view of the fact that any single *Madhhab* would exclude many other *ahadith* narrated by *Sahaabah* who had travelled to other parts of state. This is a clear example of that flexibility which characterized the founders of the *Madhhabs*.

Other examples of their flexibility... Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, a prominent student of Imaam Abu Hanifa, took a journey from Iraq to Madinah in order to study under Imaam Malik, likewise Imaam Shafi'i journeyed first to Hijaz

(he was from Gazzah) to study under *Imaam* Malik, then to Iraq to study under Muhammad ibn Hasan.

Al-Albani explained that *“one of the principles of Islamic scholarship is that religious knowledge cannot fall into rigidity.”*

Syed Iqbal Zaheer, a hanafi scholar of our time, with a clean reputation has displayed his flexibility by compiling a book of fake *ahadith* in which there are *ahadith* that have gained currency among ‘scholars’ and layman alike, some of these are hereunder :

- *“Whoever devoted himself to Allah in sincerity for forty days will have springs of wisdom flowing from his tongue.”* (untrustworthy)
- *“Allah will raise a people on the Day of Judgment who will be wearing green colored attires made from green wings (of birds). They will perch upon the walls of paradise. The keepers of paradise will look at them and ask, ‘who are you’? They will reply, ‘We are a people who worshipped Allah in secret; so he admitted us into paradise in secret.”* (Fake)
- *“Abu Hanifa is the lamp of my Ummah.”* (Fake)
- *“Love of one’s mother land is part of faith.”* (Baseless)
- *“Ali raised the khayber gate.”* (Unauthentic)
- *“We are returning from a minor Jihad (and heading) to a major Jihad”. It was asked ‘What is major Jihad?’ He (pbuh) replied, ‘Jihad against the heart.”* (Weak)
- *“The scholar’s ink is better than the blood of martyrs.”* (Fabricated)
- *“Rubbing the two eyes with the back of the index fingers after the Muaddhin has said, in adhan: ‘I testify that*

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,’ and saying the following words: I (also) testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and His slave. I’m satisfied with Allah as the Lord, with Islam as the religion, and with Muhammad as the Prophet’ – (doing and saying this), will as the Prophet (pbuh) has said, “assure my intercession for him.” (Baseless)

- *“He whom I made the guardian of my secrets, my successor in my family and the best of those I am leaving behind- I mean Ali ibn Abi Talib.”* (Fabricated)
- *“Do not make ablution at a place where you pass urine. Abdution (water) of the believers will be weighed along with his good deeds”. (Baseless)*
- *“When Adam (a.s.) had committed his sin (in paradise), he supplicated in these words: ‘Lord! I beseech you in the name of Muhammad to forgive me’. Allah (swt) asked: ‘Adam, how could you know Muhammad when I have not yet created him? Adam replied: ‘My Lord! When you made me with your hands and blew in me the spirit from you, I raised my head and saw written on the pillar of Arsh: “There is no god by Allah, (and) Muhammad is His Messenger”. From that I knew that you will not allow a name appear next to yours but that of the most beloved to ‘You’. Allah said: you spoke the truth Adam. He indeed is the most beloved to Me. Ask me by his name and I will forgive you. If not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.”* (Fabricated)
- *“Let him who said the Adhan, also say the Iqamah.”* (Baseless)

- *"He who visited the House (of Allah) on Hajj (pilgrimage) but did not visit me was not faithful to me."* (Fabricated)
- *"He who did Hajj after my death, and then visited my grave is, as if he visited me in my life."* (Fabricated)
- *"He who visited the graves of his parents, or one of them every Friday, will have all his sins forgiven; and will be counted among the pious."* (Fabricated)
- *"Disagreement among my Ummah is (a source of) mercy."* (Untraceable)
- *"My companions are like stars: whichever of them you followed, you will be rightly guided."* (Fabricated)
- *"Leftover drink of a believer is a cure."* (Baseless)
- *"The best of days is that day of 'Arafa which falls on a Friday. Such a Hajj is seventy times worthier than that Hajj which is not on a Friday."* (Fake-Baseless)
- *"A man's Hajj is not accepted except (its sign is that) the stones, i.e. the stones of ramyu of the pilgrim (hajj) disappear (from the site)."* (Weak)
- *"A scholar never becomes feeble minded (in old age)."* (Fabricated)
- *"(Allah said) If not for you (Muhammad) I would not have created the universe."* (Fake)
- *"He {the Prophet (pbuh)} used to trim his beard from sides as well as over the length."* (Fake)
- *"Whoever was inspired about a deed as being virtuous, and so acted upon it in the hope of being rewarded, Allah will reward him accordingly, even if it were not to be so."* (Fabricated)

- *"A man will appear among my followers Muhammad bin Idris (Imam Shafi'i) who would do more harm than the devil."* (Fabricated)
- *"When he the Prophet (pbuh) finished his prayers he passed his right hand over his head and said these words: "In the name of Allah besides whom there is no other god, the kind, the merciful. O Allah drive away from me worries and grief."* (Very weak)
- *"When Bilal stood up for calling up the congregation he used to first say: Assalamu Alaika Ayyuhan Nabiyyu Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatahu Yarhamuka Allah."* (Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you O Prophet May Allah show you Mercy.") (Fake)

CONCLUSION

Right from the time of the companions down to this day, there has been a consensus among the Muslims (scholars) that whatever is transmitted to us from the holy Prophet (pbuh) on the authority of reliable transmitters of *ahadith* (i.e. Sahih *ahadith*) is the valid explanation and enunciation of Allah's commands and the opinion of anyone else is **subservient** to it. Anyone's opinion is acceptable only if it conforms to the sayings or the deeds of the Prophet (pbuh), if it conflicts with a *hadith* it must be outright rejected.

Muslim history witnessed a lot of turmoil and disorder after the martyrdom of Uthman (r.a.) the third caliph. Battles between supporters of Ali (r.a.) and Aisha (r.a.) and later with those of Muawiyah (r.a.), led to the creation of the *Khawarij* and the *Shee'ah* sects. A great deal of *ahadith* were fabricated in favor of Ali (r.a.) and the household of the Prophet (pbuh) by *Shee'ah* themselves, as

admitted by a well known *Shee'ah* source, Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, who says: "*Lies were introduced in ahadith on merits originally by the Shee'ah. In the beginning they fabricated many ahadith in favor of their man motivated by enmity towards their opponents.*"

The position of the generality of Muslim is that the four *Madhhabs* are infallible and everyone must follow one of them and the followers must not change the *Madhhabs* or pick ruling from other *Madhhabs*, whereas great *Imaams* and founders of the *Madhhabs* generally adopted the stand that *Madhhabs* singly or in their totality were not infallible (correct or without fault) and following of any one *Madhhab* was not obligatory on a Muslim. Early scholar emphasized the fact that only those ruling of the *Sahabah* which were proven to be correct in the long run were to be followed as correct. The *ahadith* used to defend *Madhhabs* sectarianisms are either misinterpreted or are unauthentic or fabricated.

Moreover the Quran explicitly and implicitly condemns conflict and dispute among Muslims. Differences among the *Sahaabah* were due to varying interpretational abilities and the extent to which they were exposed to *ahadith* of the Prophet (pbuh). Their different rulings were not rigidly clung to in the face of evidence to the contrary. It is also noteworthy that disagreements among the *Sahaabah* never led to disunity and division amongst them, whereas among later scholars of the *Madhhabs*, difference evolved into disharmony among Muslim.

An individual is bound to confront difficulties in choosing one point of view from amongst a number of those available, in his attempt to follow Qur'an and sunnah. How

can he achieve that objective, given the differences on various issues?

There can be no **one** answer for all people. For religious scholars who have the ability to understand the original sources properly, the only way to follow *shari'ah* is to follow it in accordance with their own understanding of it. Those who do not possess that, the opinion appearing to be the most convincing should be the one they should follow, even though that might result in accepting verdicts of different scholars on different matters. Scholars too will have to adopt this strategy in the areas they have not researched as yet. If there are individuals who are unable to find out clearly the most strongly supported case, they may then accept the opinion of the scholar who enjoys their confidence more because of his good character and sound knowledge. **As for the common people who do not have the knowledge to make independent decision in doubtful situations, it is for them to follow whatever is available to them, keep their minds open and rely on open-minded scholars as much as possible.** In fact the only infallible *Madhhab* which deserves to be followed without any questions asked is that of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself. Only his interpretation of *Shariah* can be considered divinely guided and meant to be followed until the last day of this world. All other *Madhhabs* are the result of human effort, and thus subject to human error. Or as *Imaam* Shafi'i, so wisely put it, "*There isn't any of us who hasn't had a saying or action of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) elude him or slip his mind. So no matter what rulings I have made or fundamental principles I have established, there will be in them things contrary to the way of Allah's Messenger (pbuh). However, the correct ruling is*

according to what the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, and that is my true ruling."

In case of clashing *hadith*, Imaam Shafi'i described how scholars should address such situation, "*One should first examine which ahadith have the most reliable isnad,*" he states unequivocally that, "*No two reliable ahadith can be contradictory, since it is impossible for the Prophet (pbuh) to have an inconsistent sunnah. Instead one must determine the proper relationship between the contrasting ahadith, and ahadith that convey different rulings on an issue may indicate that the Prophet (pbuh) intended there to be latitude and flexibility. If this is not the case, then the one Hadith might address certain circumstances and the second one other circumstances. If neither of these options is possible, one hadith must abrogate the other.*"

On the Day of Judgment one will not be asked about his *Madhhab*, or how faithful he was in following it, instead he will surely be asked, why he stuck to one particular sect and why he adopted a specific *Madhhab*, when there was no precedent at the time of the Prophet (pbuh) and the *Sahaabah* (r.a.)?

Blind faith in a particular *Imaam* and following him strictly (without reason) is like taking rabbis and monks to be lord.

MOREOVER THE KEY TO NULLIFY THE DIFFERENCE IS MENTIONED IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves,

refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination." (Al Qur'an, 4:59)

"But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad (pbuh)) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission." (Al Qur'an, 4:65)

"And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment (i.e. his Sunnah legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant, etc.) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them." (Al Qur'an, 24:63)

"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers - We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination." (Al Qur'an, 4:115)

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should (thereafter) have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.” (Al Qur’an, 33:36)

In conclusion it is time to return to pure *deen*, back to the faith/belief of the Messenger (pbuh), to the light of the Quran and Sunnah and act upon the principles of Islam as our *Salaf* (ancestors) did. This is the only way which can save us from destruction and disunity and can lead us to the right and enlightened path of real happiness.

Let us pray to Allah to unite our hearts in the path of Islam. It is Allah’s promise that if we do that, then we will regain our dignity, power, and glory. (Al Qur’an, 24:55). And Allah does not break His promise (Al Qur’an, 2:80).

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