

In The Name of Allaah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy

Allaah [The Most High] said:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ أَلْفَحِينِ

And thus do We explain the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail, so that the way of the Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners) become manifest. [Surah Al-An'aam. Aayah 55]

Imaam Ibnul Qayyim [may Allaah have mercy upon him] stated regarding this above verse:

Those who know Allaah, His Book and His Religion are acquainted with the path of the believers and that of the criminals in detail- the two paths are clearly visible to them, just as a path leading to its destination and the path leading to destruction are made clearly visible. They are the most knowledgeable amongst the creation- the ones who benefit [the people] the most, the ones with the most useful advice and they are an evidence of right guidance. This is why the Sahaabah have excelled all those to come after them until the Day of Judgment, for indeed they were brought up upon the path of misguidance, shirk and paths leading to destruction, and they knew them in detail; then the Messenger [sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam] came to them and took them out from darkness [an entered them] into complete light- from shirk into Tawheed; from ignorance into knowledge; from misguidance into guidance; from injustice into justice; from confusion and blindness into guidance and clear-sightedness. They knew the worth of that which they received and were triumphant by way of it. [They knew the worth] of that which was contained in what they [received], since what is in opposition to the [truth and right guidance] reveals the goodness of what it opposes, because [upright] affairs are made clear by way of their opposites. So they increased in desire and love of that which they embraced, disliked and hated that which they had turned away from. And of all the people, they had the most love for Tawheed, Imaan and Islaam, and had the most hatred for that which was in opposition to it. They were the most knowledgeable of the path in detail.

As for those who came after the Sahaabah, amongst them is that one who was brought up in Islaam but knows not what is in opposition to it. Therefore, some of the details of the path of the believers and that of the criminals became confusing to him, for indeed confusion occurs due to the weakness of one's knowledge regarding both paths or one of them, as Umar Ibnul Khattaab [radiyallaahu-anhu] said: "The bonds of Islaam will be undone one after the other when a people who grew up in Islaam know not what Jaahiliyyah [Pre-Islamic Ignorance] is." This [statement shows an aspect of] Umar's perfect knowledge [of Islaam].

And there is that one who is neither acquainted with the path of the criminals nor has it been made clear to him, or he has doubts and thus thinks that some of their ways are from the ways of the believers. This has occurred in this Ummah in many affairs of Aqeedah, Knowledge and Action regarding the path of the criminals, the disbelievers and the enemies of the Messengers, [which] was brought into the path of the believers by the one who does not know

the [detailed distinction between] the path of believers and the path of the criminals, so he called to [this path], excommunicate the one in opposition and declares lawful that which Allaah and His Messenger made unlawful, just as what has occurred with many of the people of bidah, such as the Jahmiyyah, the Qadariyyah, the Khawaarij, the Rawaafid and their ilk- among those who initiated an innovation, called to it and excommunicated those who opposed it.

The people are four categories in this subject matter [i.e. the obligation of having knowledge of the path of the believers and that of the criminals in detail].

The First Group: They are those who know the path of the believers and that of the criminals in detail-in both knowledge and action. They are the most knowledgeable amongst the creation.

The Second Group: They are those who are blind to both paths- those resembling animals. The path of the criminals comes [to them] and they follow it.

The Third Group: It is that one who concerns himself with (seeking) knowledge of the path of the believers and not its opposite. He only knows (the path of the criminals) by way of its opposition to the (path of the believers) and in a general way, and [holds] that all that is in opposition to the path of the believers is falsehood, even though that is not illustrated to him in detail. Rather, when he hears some of that which contradicts the path of the believers, he turns away and does not preoccupy himself in understanding and knowing its falsity. This person is in a state (similar) to one who is safeguarded from following desires- whose heart is neither put at risk nor is he called to (such desires), as opposed to those who are aware of (such desires) and their souls are inclined towards them, but they strive against it for the Sake of Allaah. A letter was written to Umar Ibnul Khattaab (radiyallaahu-anhu) and he was asked about this affair, as to which of the two men is the better- a man who is not put at risk by way of desires and does not go through its difficulties, or a man who is pushed towards it but abandons it for the Sake of Allaah? Umar (radiyallaahu-anhu) wrote back saying: The one who is desirous of sin but abandons it for the Sake of Allaah is from 'those whose hearts Allaah has tested for piety. For them there is forgiveness and a great reward.' [Surah Hujuraat. Ayah: 3]

The Fourth Group: This group knows the path of evil, bidah and kufr in detail and the path of the believers in general. This is the situation of many of those who concern themselves with the beliefs of the previous nations and that of the people of bidah. They are acquainted with (these affairs) in detail, but not with what the Messenger (sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam) came with; rather they are acquainted with it in general even though they may know some of its affairs in detail. Whoever examines their books will see that. Likewise, those who know the paths of evil, oppression and corruption in detail and are followers of it; if they repent, abandon these (affairs) and return to the path of the pious believers, then their knowledge of it will only be general. They will not be acquainted with it in that detailed manner known to those who spend their lives (studying) its regulations and ways.

The Objective: Indeed, Allaah (Glorified be He) loves that one should know the path of

His enemies in order to avoid and hate it, just as the path of the His awliyaa (close friends) is known and followed. (1)

The Messenger [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] said, "Indeed the one who lives long amongst you will see differences; so upon you is to (adhere) to my Sunnah". Imaam Abu Haatim [may Allaah have mercy upon him] said, "This is clear evidence that the Messenger [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] commanded his Ummah to know the Du'afaa [weak narrators] amongst them and (distinguish) them from the Thiqaat [reliable narrators]. That is because the Sunnah cannot be adhered to alongside the lies and falsehood mixed with it, except by way of knowing the Du'afaa and (distinguishing them) from the Thiqaat. (2)

Al-Allaamah Rabee Bin Haadee Al-Madkhalee [may Allaah preserve him] stated, "It is obligated on the people of truth to exercise patience and increase in adhering to this religion of truth. Whenever the desires become abundant, it becomes necessary to increase in acquainting (oneself) with the truth and adhering to it, as the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'The one who lives long amongst you will see a lot of differences, so upon you is that you follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided khulafaa. Bite onto it with your molar teeth (i.e. hold onto it firmly) and beware of newly invented matters (in the religion), for every newly invented matter (in the religion) is a bidah and every bidah is misguidance'". (3)

Hudhaifah Bin al Yamaan [may Allaah be pleased with him] said, "People used to ask the Messenger of Allaah [sallallahu-alayhi-wasallam] about the good times, but I used to ask him about bad times fearing lest they overtake me. I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah! We were in a state of pre-Islamic ignorance and evil, and then Allaah brought us this good [time through Islam], is there any evil time after this good one?' He said, 'Yes.' I asked, 'Will there be a good time again after that evil?' He said, 'Yes, but therein will be a hidden evil.' I asked, 'What will be the evil hidden therein?' He said, '[That time will witness the rise of] the people who will follow ways other than mine and seek guidance other than mine. You will know [their] good points as well as [their] bad points.' I asked, 'Will there be an evil time after this good one?' He said, 'Yes. [A time will come] when there will be people standing and inviting at the gates of Hell. Whosoever responds to their call they will throw them into the fire.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah! Describe them for us.' He said, 'They will be a people having the same complexion as ours and speaking our language.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah! What do you suggest if I happen to live in that time?' He said, 'You should stick to the main body of the Muslims and their leader.' I said, 'If they have no [such thing as the] main body and have no leader?' He said, 'Separate yourself from all these factions, though you may have to eat the roots of trees [in a jungle] until death comes to you and you are in this state'". [Bukhari and Muslim.... The wording of the above is that of Imaam Muslim]

Al-Allaamah Saaleh Al-Fawzaan [may Allaah preserve him] stated: They used to ask him [sallallahu-alayhi-wasallam] about the good related to righteous actions, affairs of the correct Islamic creed and dealings, but Hudhaifah used to ask him [sallallahu-alayhi-wasallam] about the evil times fearing lest they overcome him. Therefore, in this is evidence that it is not enough to only learn about the good; rather one must know about the evil in order to avoid it. If you do not know about the evil, you will come close to falling into it, as the poet said: "I acquaint myself with the evil not for the sake of evil, but to be safeguarded from it. The one who does not know [the distinction between] evil and good will fall into evil.

A person must learn about the truth-its proofs and evidences. He must learn and know what falsehood is and the doubts associated with it, in order that he can be saved from falsehood and warn people against it. How can he avoid and warn people against it if he is unaware of it? And with regards to this, the Qur'aan has clarified truth and falsehood; it has clarified Eemaan and Kufr, Tawheed and Shirk, and Halaal and Haraam. It has not only clarified Tawheed, Halaal and truth; rather it clarified that which is in opposition to them, so that the Muslim can avoid them.

Likewise, the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him]- in his Sunnah- clarified good and evil, truth and falsehood in all affairs of the religion. The scholars [may Allaah have mercy upon them] clarified – in their written works- what Tawheed, Shirk, disbelief and hypocrisy are. They have clarified the belief of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa-ah and the beliefs of the deviated sects, such as the Jahmiyyah, the Mutazilah, the Ashaa-irah.....and other than that.

They have clarified the correct and forbidden [deeds related] to mutual dealings. They have clarified the correct [Islamic] marriage, the false and corrupt marriage and the women forbidden [for one to marry]. They have clarified the [good manners legislated in the sharee'ah] and the evil manners that are in opposition to it. All of this gives the Muslim an insight into his affairs, so that he knows the truth by its evidences, knows what falsehood is and the doubts associated with it, in order that he can avoid falsehood and tell the people avoid it.

This is why you find in the books of belief: clarification of the belief in Tawheed and the belief of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah, clarification of the beliefs [that are tantamount] to misguidance, the doubts associated with it and refutation against it, in order that the Muslim is not misled by beliefs [that are tantamount to] deviation, false beliefs and deviated schools of thought; and in order that the Muslims can be upon a correct understanding with regards to the affairs of their religion and that which is in opposition to it.

Some of the people at present- the majority of them ignorant ones and amongst them misguided ones- say, "Do not learn about the false beliefs; suffice yourselves with learning the correct belief only and do not involve yourself in seeking to know the beliefs of the people of misguidance and the refutations against their doubts. Leave this and teach the children of the Muslims the correct belief only. Do not inform them about the statements that are in opposition [to the truth], the doubts and refutation against them." This one [i.e. the one who makes these statements] is either one of the ignorant people who knows nothing about knowledge or he is one of those motivated by personal desires-those who want to spread the false schools of thought and their doubts; rather it may be that they say, "It is sufficient for a person to say, 'I am a Muslim; I am a believer..... a general Islaam suffices, do not say, 'Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah-ah, [do not say], 'the people of misguidance, splitting and differing; do not say this, because it will cause division between the Muslims.'"

These [statements are tantamount to] misguidance because Allaah [The Mighty and Majestic] has clarified the truth in opposition to falsehood, guidance in opposition to misguidance and Tawheed in opposition to shirk. Allaah [The Mighty and Majestic] has clarified all the affairs of the Religion- a detailed clarification of the affairs related to worship, mutual dealings and manners. Therefore, this must be clarified in order that it is made clear to the people, [and in order] that they can be upon clarity, and so that the true Muslim is distinguished from the so-called Muslim and no deviation and forgery enters into Islaam. We must make a distinction between this and that one, in order that truth is not confounded with falsehood, and [in order] to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and [between] good and wickedness. We do not suffice ourselves with a general Islaam because this is misleading, and it is deception. We warn against this propaganda. The truth must be clarified and distinguished from falsehood, and guidance must be distinguished from misguidance. Hudhaifah [radiyallaahu-anhu] used to ask the Prophet [sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam] about the evil and did not suffice himself by only asking the Prophet about the good. The Prophet affirmed that for him and did not say to him: "Suffice yourself with knowing what good is" rather he [sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam] affirmed and clarified- for him- the evil that was to occur, in order that he may beware and warn others. This is the Sunnah; this is the path of the Qur'aan and that of the Messenger [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him]. (4)

[Ref 1: An Excerpt from 'Al-Fawaa'd pages 167-180'. slightly paraphrased]

[Ref 2: Source: Muqaddimah Kitaab Al-Majrooheem Minal Muhadditheen of Imaam Ibn Hibbaan (rahimahullaah) Page: 66]

[Ref 3: Majmoo 14/294 (3rd paragraph)]

[Ref 4: <https://salaficentre.com/2019/08/27/admonition-from-the-hadeeth-of-hudhaifah-people-used-to-ask-the-messenger-of-allaah-about-the-good-times-but-i-used-to-ask-him-about-bad/>]