

## THE ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT

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A LECTURE PRESENTED ON FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2000 AT THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES HALL IN SYDNEY, ORGANISED BY THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM STUDENTS AND YOUTH (FAMSY).

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL. PEACE BE UPON YOU, AND THE MERCY AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH.

FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MEMBERS OF FAMSY FOR AFFORDING ME THIS WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO COME TO AUSTRALIA. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND TO THEM ON BEHALF OF MYSELF, MY WIFE AND THE MUSLIMS OF AMERICA OUR MOST HEARTFELT THANKS FOR THE WONDERFUL HOSPITALITY THAT HAS BEEN SHOWN TO US THROUGHOUT OUR STAY IN AUSTRALIA. THIS WILL TRULY BE ONE OF THE MORE MEMORABLE PERIODS IN OUR LIVES AND THAT WE WOULD TAKE BACK TO THE UNITED STATES WONDERFUL NEWS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTS THAT WE HAVE SEEN IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY HERE IN AUSTRALIA.

### **ISLAMIC CIVICS**

MY TOPIC TONIGHT IS ENTITLED "THE ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT", AND I THINK THAT SOMETIMES THE TITLES TO THINGS HAVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH HOW THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD. SOME OF US BELIEVE THAT A TOPIC LIKE "THE ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT" IS ONE OF THOSE TOPICS THAT SCHOLARS AND THE ULAMAA UP IN SOME IVORY TOWER DISCUSS AND THAT IT HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH OUR EVERYDAY LIFE, ON THE LEVEL OF OUR EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES. WHAT I WANT TO PROPOSE TO YOU TONIGHT IS THAT WHAT WE'RE REALLY TALKING ABOUT IS A LESSON IN ISLAMIC CIVICS. WHERE I COME FROM IN THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC EDUCATION IS COMPULSORY STILL IN MANY STATES UP UNTIL THE AGE OF SIXTEEN. IN SOME STATES ITS NOT COMPULSORY BUT ONLY BECAUSE IN THOSE STATES THEY ALLOW FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION, YOU CAN ARRANGE FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUR OWN CHILD IN YOUR OWN HOME; BUT EDUCATION IS COMPULSORY. PART OF THAT EDUCATION IS WHAT WE CALL CIVICS (IN SOME SCHOOLS THEY CALL IT GOVERNMENT WHILE IN OTHER SCHOOLS IT IS CALLED SOCIAL STUDIES).

THESE ARE LESSONS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO GROW UP TO BE CITIZENS; TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WILL BE PRODUCTIVE. THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOCIETY – THEY WILL BE A POSITIVE ADDITION TO THE SOCIETY AND THAT THEY WILL PROMOTE THE INTEREST OF THE SOCIETY AS DEFINED BY THE SOCIETY'S LEADERS. WHAT I WANT TO PROPOSE TONIGHT IS THAT WE NEED TO GET BACK TO ISLAMIC CIVICS, OF HOW WE AS MUSLIMS CAN FUNCTION AS PRODUCTIVE INDIVIDUALS IN GROUPS IN SOCIETY IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF ISLAM. WE FURTHER THE INTEGRITY OF THE RELIGION AND THAT WE SUPPORT THE FURTHERING OF OUR INTERESTS BOTH IN TERMS OF OUR ACTIVITIES AMONG OURSELVES AND WHAT WE DELIVER TO THE REST OF THE

WORLD. NOW I THINK IT'S A FORGONE CONCLUSION WITH ALL OF THOSE AYAT THAT WE HAVE IN THE QURAN THAT ALLAH (SWT) HAS NOT ASKED, BUT COMMANDED US AS A COMMUNITY TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND TO PROMOTE UNITY. AND THERE ARE MANY AYAT IN THE QURAN JUST TO NAME A FEW: "THOSE WHO DIVIDE UP THEIR RELIGION AND BECOME GROUPS UNTO THEMSELVES YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM MUHAMMAD"; "AND DO NOT BE LIKE THOSE WHO DIVIDED THEMSELVES UP AND DIFFERED AMONG THEMSELVES AFTER CLEAR SIGNS HAVE COME TO THEM AND THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHOM WILL RECEIVE A GRIEVOUS PENALTY."

### **THE JAMAA'AH**

ALLAH (SWT) SAYS IN ANOTHER VERSE: "AND HOLD FAST TO THE ROPE OF ALLAH ALL TOGETHER AND DO NOT BE DIVIDED AND REMEMBER ALLAH'S BOUNTY UPON YOU WHEN YOU WERE DIVIDED AND HE MADE YOU BROTHERS OUT OF HIS BLESSING TO YOU". IT IS RELATED ON THE AUTHORITY OF ABDULLAH IBN MASUD, THE FAMOUS COMPANION, THAT HE ONCE SAID, "BEING TOGETHER AS A JAMAA'AH, BEING UNITED AS A JAMAA'AH, THIS IS THE HABLULLAH (THE ROPE OF ALLAH) THAT ALLAH IS TALKING ABOUT IN THIS VERSE", AND HE (RA) GOES ON TO SAY THAT, "THAT WHICH YOU DO NOT LIKE IN THE JAMAA'AH IS BETTER THAN THAT WHICH YOU LOVE IN YOUR OWN LITTLE SEPARATE GROUP." SO BEING WITH THE JAMAA'AH IS PREFERRED OVER BEING IN YOUR OWN LITTLE SEPARATE GROUP. THIS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, TO TALK ABOUT BEING A JAMAA'AH, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE IDEAS THAT WE DON'T AGREE WITH. WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ENDORSE NOTIONS THAT WE BELIEVE TO BE HARAM, WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ADVOCATE DOCTRINES THAT WE BELIEVE TO BE ANTITHETICAL TO ISLAM, THAT WE BELIEVE TO BE AGAINST ISLAM? HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN A JAMAA'AH WITH THESE KINDS OF IDEAS IN OUR MIDST? AND IT'S HERE THAT WE COME TO THE WHOLE POINT OF ISLAMIC CIVICS, AND WHAT ALL OF US IN THIS ROOM, IN FACT ALL OF US WHO SAY LA AILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMADU RASULULLAH, WHAT ALL OF US HAVE TO REMEMBER IS THAT THIS DEEN IS NOT OUR PERSONAL PROPERTY. THIS DEEN IS THE DEEN OF ALLAH (SWT). AND IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE PRACTICED AS ALLAH (SWT) HAS COMMANDED US TO PRACTICE IT. AND ALLAH HAS COMMANDED US, NOT ASKED US, COMMANDED US IN MANY AYAT TO BE UNITED, TO HAVE LOVE AND COMPASSION AMONG US. WE ARE GOING TO DIFFER IN OUR INTERPRETATIONS. WE ARE GOING TO DIFFER IN WHAT SOME OF US HOLD TO BE PRIORITIES FROM WHAT OTHERS HOLD TO BE PRIORITIES. HOW COULD THAT NOT BE THE CASE?

### **THE COMPANIONS DIFFERED**

THE COMPANIONS THEMSELVES DIFFERED ON THEIR UNDERSTANDINGS OF VARIOUS THINGS THAT THE PROPHET (S) SAID, OR THAT THE PROPHET (S) DID. WE ARE NO BETTER THAN THE COMPANIONS. WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS JUST LIKE THEM AND SO WE WILL DIFFER. BUT THE POINT BECOMES HOW DO WE MANAGE OUR DIFFERENCES? HOW DO WE DIFFER IN SUCH A WAY THAT WHILE OUR IDEAS MAY DIFFER AND BE SEPARATE, OUR HEARTS ARE UNITED AND WE RECOGNISE EACH OTHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS INVOLVED IN ONE MISSION? HOW DO WE DO THAT? THIS IS THE ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT THAT I AM TALKING ABOUT AS ISLAMIC CIVICS.

### **RULES OF DISCUSSION**

ONE OF OUR MAIN PROBLEMS, IF I MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO SAY SO, BECAUSE I DID NOT COME ALL THE WAY TO AUSTRALIA TO ADD TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE MUSLIMS IN AUSTRALIA. I CAME INSHAALLAH, IF ANYTHING, TO LESSON

THOSE PROBLEMS AND I ASKED ALLAH (SWT) TO GRANT ME THE TAUFIQ THAT WILL ENABLE ME TO DO THAT INSHAALLAH. BY MY HUMBLE ESTIMATION ONE OF THE REASONS THAT WE OFTEN TIMES FALL INTO DISAGREEMENT WITH EACH OTHER, THE KIND OF DISAGREEMENT THAT LEADS TO HATRED, DISTRUST, MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS, IS THAT WE ATTEMPT TO GO INTO DISCUSSIONS OF ISSUES WITH NO RULES OF DISCUSSION. WE'RE PLAYING WITHOUT RULES OF INTERPRETATION, AND THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT SEPARATES US FROM OUR PIOUS ANCESTORS. THEY HAD RULES FOR INTERPRETATION.

WE ALL KNOW THAT THE PROPHET (S) PASSED AWAY AND HIS COMPANIONS SUCCEEDED HIM AND WENT TO THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD WHERE THEY BEGAN TO ENCOUNTER REALITIES THAT WERE UNKNOWN TO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. ALL KINDS OF NEW PEOPLE STARTED COMING INTO ISLAM. WE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT DURING THE PROPHET'S (S) LIFETIME SYRIA WAS NOT AN ARAB COUNTRY. IT BECAME ARAB AFTER THE MUSLIMS WENT THEIR WITH ISLAM – THEY WERE NOT FORCED TO BE ARABS, NOR FORCED TO BE MUSLIMS, ISLAM WON THE HEARTS OF THE SYRIANS. EGYPT WAS NOT AN ARAB COUNTRY, IT BECAME AN ARAB COUNTRY, IT BECAME A MUSLIM COUNTRY. LIKewise WITH IRAN, NORTH AFRICA – YOU HAVE ALL THESE PEOPLE COMING INTO ISLAM FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND HISTORIES. HOW WAS IT THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF UNITY?

WE ALL KNOW THAT IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I (R) CAME ON THE SCENE IN THE 2ND CENTURY OF ISLAM, AND IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I WROTE AN IMPORTANT BOOK CALLED AR-RISALAH; AND THIS WAS THE BOOK THAT STARTED THE MUSLIMS TO DEVELOP RULES OF ENGAGEMENT. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT – THAT IS TO SAY BROTHER YOU HAVE A HADITH AND I HAVE A HADITH. OKAY, WHAT DOES THE HADITH SAY. THE HADITH SAYS 'DO THIS', WHAT DOES 'DO' MEAN IN ARABIC? 'DO THIS' IS WHAT THEY CALL IN ARABIC SEEGHAT AL AMR. IT'S A COMMAND. IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I SAT DOWN AND SAID COMMAND CAN MEAN A NUMBER OF THINGS - IT COULD MEAN THAT SOMETHING IS WAAJIB (YOU MUST DO IT) OR THAT SOMETHING IS MANDOOb (YOU SHOULD DO IT) OR THAT SOMETHING IS MUBAAH (YOU MAY DO IT). AND SO NOW WHEN MUSLIMS COME TOGETHER AND THEY DISCUSS COMMANDS, IF ONE OF THEM SAYS THIS MEANS YOU HAVE TO DO IT AND THE OTHER ONE SAYS YOU SHOULD DO IT, THEY BOTH KNOW NOW WHAT THAT COMMAND COULD MEAN; IT COULD MEAN YOU MUST, OR YOU SHOULD. AND HE WHO SAYS THAT IT MEANS YOU MUST, HAS HE CORRUPTED THE HADITH OF THE RASUL? NO, THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT COMMANDS COULD MEAN, AND VICE VERSA. AND THIS WAS THE WAY IN WHICH THE MUSLIMS WERE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE ALL THESE DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND IT KEPT THEM TALKING ABOUT ISLAM AMONG THEMSELVES AND DEBATING THE ISSUES WITHOUT DIVIDING INTO SECTS AND SCHISMS.

THIS IS THE FIRST LESSON THAT WE NEED TO LEARN. AND IN THESE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS THAT WE HAVE, WE NEED TO PUT INTO THE CURRICULUM THIS ISLAMIC CIVICS BECAUSE OFTEN TIMES ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, WE HAVE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO HOME AND READ QURAN AND WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS THEY COME BACK AND THEY HAVE AN OPINION AND THEY DON'T KNOW THAT THERE MAY BE ANOTHER WAY TO UNDERSTAND THAT AYAH, AND THEY SAY THEREFORE THAT ANYBODY WHO DOES NOT SEE IT AS I SEE IT, HE MUST NOT BE SERIOUS ABOUT DEEN. THEREFORE WE FALL INTO SCHISM AND DISTRUST AND WE BECOME DISUNITED AND CAN'T GET VERY MUCH DONE. SO ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS WE NEED TO DO, AND I'M GOING TO PLEAD FROM THIS PODIUM TONIGHT WITH THE ULAMA OF AUSTRALIA, THAT THEY GET TOGETHER AND DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AMONG THE MUSLIMS. THE MUSLIMS USED TO CALL THIS USOOL-UL-FIQH. HOW NOT ONLY TO UNDERSTAND, BUT HOW TO DISCUSS OUR ISSUES? IF WE DON'T HAVE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT THERE'S ONLY GOING TO BE ONE OPINION I'M GOING TO

RECOGNISE, YOU KNOW WHAT THAT OPINION IS? IT'S MY OPINION AND ANYBODY WHO DISAGREES WITH THAT OPINION I'M NOT GOING TO RECOGNISE. I'M GOING TO ACCUSE THEM OF BEING EITHER INSINCERE OR NOT WANTING TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH. SO THIS IS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE NEED TO DO.

## **THE JAMA'AH AND 'ISMAH**

THE SECOND THING WE NEED TO DO IN THIS ISLAMIC CIVICS, IS RECOGNISE THAT IN ISLAM THERE IS NO CHURCH. WE DON'T HAVE A POPE OR VATICAN. IN ISLAM WE HAVE WHAT IS KNOWN AS 'ISMAH OR INFALLIBILITY – THAT THE PROPHET (S) HAD A PERFECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE REVELATION AND THIS IS WHY ANY TIME WE GO TO THE PROPHET (S) AND WE ASKED HIM A QUESTION AND HE GIVES US AN ANSWER WE KNOW THAT IS A CORRECT ANSWER. BECAUSE THE PROPHET (S) IS MA'SUM MIN AL KHATA (PROTECTED FROM ERROR IN INTERPRETATION). THIS IS ONE OF THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BEING A PROPHET. ALL OF THE PROPHETS WERE MA'SUMEEN MIN AL KHATA. BUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROPHET (S) DIES? WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS 'ISMAH? WHO GETS THIS 'ISMAH? DO I GET IT? DO YOU GET IT? ACCORDING TO AHLIS SUNNAH WAL JAMAA'AH IT IS THE JAMAA'AH WHO GETS THIS 'ISMAH. THE PROPHET (S) IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HIS COMMUNITY (UMMAH) WILL NOT UNIVERSALLY AGREE ON AN ERROR. IN OTHER WORDS EVERYTHING HIS (S) COMMUNITY UNIVERSALLY AGREES UPON IS TRUE, AND THEREFORE IS BINDING ON EVERY BELIEVER; BUT THAT WHICH HIS (S) COMMUNITY DOES NOT AGREE UPON IS SUBJECT TO DEBATE AND THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT THE COMMUNITY DISAGREES UPON. AND WHERE THE COMMUNITY DISAGREES NO ONE PARTY CAN ACCUSE THE OTHER PARTY OF BEING IN ERROR IN THE ABSOLUTE SENSE. THE MOST THAT THEY CAN DO IS WHAT THE IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I DID. AL-IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I SAID, "I BELIEVE MY OPINION IS RIGHT WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT IS WRONG AND I BELIEVE THE OPINION OF THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH ME IS WRONG WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT IS RIGHT." THIS IS THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE MUSLIM APPROACHES THOSE ISSUES ON WHICH THERE IS NO CONSENSUS IN THE COMMUNITY.

WHEN WE TRY TO MAKE EVERYTHING IN ISLAM A MATTER OF CONSENSUS, WE ARE GOING AGAINST THE WAY OF OUR PIOUS ANCESTORS NO MATTER WHAT WE CALL OURSELVES. THIS IS A FACT, AND ANOTHER FACT IS THAT OUR PIOUS ANCESTORS DIFFERED ON MORE THAN THEY AGREED ON. THERE WAS ONE SCHOLAR NAMED IBN AL-MUNDHIR WHO DIED IN THE YEAR 310H. IBN AL-MUNDHIR WROTE A BOOK CALLED KITABUL-IJMAA', THIS WAS A BOOK THAT INCLUDED EVERYTHING THAT THE ULAMAA AGREED UPON UP UNTIL HIS DEATH. THIS BOOK IS ONLY ABOUT 250 PAGES BIG. THE REST WAS ALL SUBJECT TO ONGOING DEBATE, ONGOING DISCUSSION. BUT THE MUSLIMS THEN HAD RULES FOR DISCUSSION AND THAT IS WHY THEY COULD DISCUSS AND CONTINUE TO DEBATE AND EVEN CHANGE THEIR MINDS WITHOUT IT LEADING TO HATRED AND DISTRUST AND SOMEONE ACCUSING THE OTHER OF NOT BEING A PIOUS MUSLIM.

THEY CAME IN FACT TO IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL WHO USED TO SAY THAT IF YOUR NOSE BLEEDS THEN YOU HAVE TO RENEW YOUR WUDU. IMAM MALIK SAID THAT IF YOUR NOSE BLEEDS YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RENEW YOUR WUDU. SO THEY WENT TO IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL AND THEY SAID WHAT IF YOU WERE PRAYING BEHIND SOMEBODY AND THEY HAVE A NOSE BLEED AND THEY DON'T RENEW THEIR WUDU, DO YOU CONTINUE TO PRAY BEHIND THEM? AND IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL SAID, "HOW CAN I REFUSE TO PRAY BEHIND SOMEBODY LIKE IMAM MALIK? I HAVE DALEEL (EVIDENCE), HE HAS DALEEL; I HAVE SOLID DALEEL, HE HAS SOLID DALEEL." THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET (S) TOOK DIFFERENT THINGS FROM HIM AND WENT OUT TO THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THEY TAUGHT THOSE DIFFERENT THINGS IN THOSE VARIOUS PARTS. ALL OF THEM GOT WHAT THEY TAUGHT FROM THE PROPHET (S) SO IMAM

MALIK HAS HIS POINT OF VIEW AND IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL HAS HIS POINT OF VIEW. THIS WAS THE SPIRIT OF OUR PIOUS ANCESTORS, AND THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO.

### **GET PRIORITIES STRAIGHT**

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE TO DO IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THIS ISLAMIC CIVICS, THIS ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT, IS THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO GET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN ISLAM THAT ARE NOT SUBJECT TO ANY COMPROMISE. I'M REMINDING YOU IN THIS REGARD THAT THE PROPHET (S) IN THE 9TH YEAR OF THE HIJRA (MAKKAH WAS CONQUERED IN THE 8TH YEAR) WENT BACK TO MADINA AND IN THAT YEAR A WHOLE BUNCH OF TRIBES CAME TO MADINA TO PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE PROPHET, TO ACCEPT ISLAM. THERE WAS ONE TRIBE BY THE NAME OF BANI THAQEEF FROM TAIF, AND THEY CAME TO PROPHET (S) AND SAID THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO MAKE SALAH. THE PROPHET (S) SAID TO THEM THERE IS NO GOOD IN ANY RELIGION THAT DOES NOT HAVE SALAH. THEY THEN SAID THAT THEY WANTED TO KEEP OUR IDOLS. THE PROPHET (S) TOLD THEM: "NO, YOU ARE GOING TO GET RID OF THOSE IDOLS NOW." THEY SAID THAT IF THEY WERE TO DESTROY THE IDOLS THEIR PEOPLE WOULD GO BIZIRK. THE PROPHET (S) SAID THAT HE WOULD SEND SOMEBODY TO BREAK THE IDOLS FOR THEM. AND THEN THEY SAID THEY DID NOT WANT TO FIGHT ANY JIHAD. THE PROPHET (S) SAID OKAY. THEN THEY SAID THAT THEY LIKE WOMEN AND WINE. THE PROPHET (S) SAID THAT THESE THINGS ARE FORBIDDEN. THEN THEY SAID THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO PAY ANY ZAKAT. THE PROPHET (S) SAID YOU'LL PAY. WHAT IS THE POINT HERE? WHEN THEY SAID "WE WANT TO KEEP OUR IDOLS" WHAT DID THE PROPHET (S) SAY? "YOU ARE GOING TO GET RID OF THOSE IDOLS NOW" – CAUSE THIS IS A VIOLATION OF TAWHID AND THIS IS SOMETHING WE CANNOT COMPROMISE ON BUT WHEN THEY SAID "WE DON'T WANT TO FIGHT ANY JIHAD" WHAT DID THE PROPHET (S) SAY? HE (S) IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID: "WE'LL WORK WITH/ON THAT". DID HE (S) GIVE EVERYTHING THE SAME PRIORITY? NO HE (S) DIDN'T.

ALLAH (SWT) DOESN'T GIVE EVERYTHING THE SAME PRIORITY. "DO YOU MAKE GIVING THE PILGRIMS WATER AND TAKING CARE OF THE KA'BA LIKE SOMEBODY WHO BELIEVES IN ALLAH AND THE LAST DAY AND FIGHTS IN THE PATH OF ALLAH", THESE THINGS ARE NOT EQUAL. WALLAHI (BY ALLAH) SOMETIMES WE TAKE A BROTHER WHO SAYS LAA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMADU RASULLALLAH AND THEN HE DOESN'T HAVE A BEARD AND WE TREAT HIM LIKE HE IS A KAAFIR, SUBHANALLAH! WHAT PRIORITY DOES THIS HAVE? WE KNOW THE HADITH OF RASULLALLAH (S), HE SAID ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT THERE'S ONE MAN WHO TOOK A CARD WRITTEN ON IT LAA ILLAHA ILLALLAH, ON ONE SIDE OF THE SCALE, PUT ALL HIS OTHER BAD DEEDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCALE AND WHAT HAPPENED? THIS CARD OUTWEIGHED ALL THE OTHER DEEDS. THIS IS NOT MY WORDS, THIS IS THE WORD OF THE PROPHET (S), WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THIS IS THE DEEN THAT THE PROPHET (S) TAUGHT US. AND HE TAUGHT US THAT FOR A REASON.

THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE THAT HUMANITY HAS FOR SALVATION. THERE ARE OVER ONE BILLION MUSLIMS IN THE WORLD TODAY, AND THEY COME FROM ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF BACKGROUNDS, WITH ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF HISTORIES, WITH ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF PROBLEMS. WE ARE VERY AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN PALESTINE AND WE SEE THE CARNAGE AND IT DISGUSTS US. IT HURTS US AND MAKES US ANGRY AT OURSELVES THAT WE ARE SO WEAK THAT WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING. BUT LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THERE ARE MUSLIMS IN THIS WORLD WHO ARE STARVING AND WHOSE SITUATION IS SO BAD, THAT THEY DON'T HAVE A

TELEVISION TO WATCH WHAT'S GOING ON IN PALESTINE. WE HAVE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT REALITIES CONFRONTING THEM, AND THEY HAVE DIFFERENT TIMETABLES. IF WE ARE GOING TO REMAIN ONE UMMAH WE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO ACCOMMODATE EACH OTHER. THAT MEANS GETTING THE ESSENTIALS STRAIGHT AND AGREEING TO CONTINUE TO WORK ON THOSE THINGS THAT ARE NON-ESSENTIALS.

THERE IS A HADITH OF THE PROPHET (S) IN SAHIH MUSLIM, SHAIKH UL ISLAM IBN TAYMIYA TALKS ABOUT THIS HADITH IN SOME DETAIL. A MAN AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHET (S) USED TO DRINK WINE AND WOULD GET CAUGHT AND WAS WHIPPED. HE WOULD DRINK AGAIN AND BE WHIPPED AGAIN. ONE DAY THEY CAUGHT HIM DRUNK AGAIN AND BROUGHT HIM BEFORE THE PROPHET (S) AND AFTER PUNISHING BEGAN TO CURSE HIM. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROPHET (S) SAID TO THEM? HE (S) SAID: "DO NOT CURSE HIM BECAUSE HE LOVES ALLAH AND THE PROPHET." THERE ARE WEAK BELIEVERS AND STRONG BELIEVERS AND NOT ALL BELIEVERS ARE STRONG. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY ARE NOT BELIEVERS. AND THIS IS WHAT THE PROPHET (S) HAS TAUGHT US. IF WE CONTINUE TO ACT IN THE WAY THAT THE PROPHET (S) TAUGHT US TO ACT TOWARD OUR BROTHERS AND OUR SISTERS MAY BE NEXT YEAR, FIVE YEARS OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW THEY WILL EVOLVE INTO A MUCH BETTER MUSLIM. AND THE PROPHET (S) SAID, "GENTLENESS AND KINDNESS WAS NEVER A PART OF ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT IT MADE IT BEAUTIFUL, AND HARSHNESS WAS NEVER A PART OF ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT IT MADE IT UGLY." THIS IS OUR MODEL, OUR TEACHER, OUR USWAH HASANAH AND THIS IS WHAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN IF WE ARE GOING TO GET RID OF THIS `ADAAWA WAL BAGHDAA THAT IS AMONG US AS AN UMMAH AND WE HAVE TO KNOW THIS IS A CURSE. WHEN ALLAH (SWT) TALKS ABOUT AL `ADAAWA WAL BAGHDAA IN THE QURAN WHO DOES HE TALK ABOUT? HE TALKS ABOUT AHLUL KITAB FOR THINGS THAT THEY DID THAT CONTRAVENED THE REVELATION AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THEM. SO LET US NOT LOOK AT OUR DIVISION AND BLAME SOMEBODY ELSE. THIS IS A PROBLEM OF THIS UMMAH AS A WHOLE. AND WE MUST GET BACK TO AN ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT IF WE ARE TO OVERCOME THIS.

### **TRYING TO MAKE MUSTAHAB WAAJIB**

ANOTHER REASON THAT SOMETIMES WE FALL INTO NEEDLESS FIGHTS AND SCHISMS IS THAT WE DISPUTE ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE EITHER MUSTAHAB OR MAKRUH AND WE TRY TO MAKE THE MUSTAHAB WAJIB. OR WE TRY TO MAKE THE MAKRUH HARAM. AND THEN WE GO ON FIGHTING ABOUT THESE THINGS. IN ISLAM THE ULAMA, NOT ABDULHAKIM JACKSON'S ISLAM FROM AMERICA, AGREE THERE ARE FIVE RULINGS IN ISLAM. THESE ARE HARAM, MAKRUH, MUBAH, MUSTAHAB, WAJIB, AND MOST OF OUR DISAGREEMENTS COME IN THESE TWO AREAS OF MAKRUH AND MUSTAHAB. WHAT DOES WAJIB MEAN? IT MEANS THAT IF YOU DO IT ALLAH WILL REWARD YOU, IF YOU DON'T DO IT HE WILL PUNISH YOU. HARAM MEANS THAT IF YOU DO IT ALLAH WILL PUNISH AND YOU IF YOU DON'T DO IT HE WILL REWARD YOU. MUSTAHAB MEANS THAT IF YOU DO IT ALLAH WILL REWARD YOU AND IF YOU DON'T DO HE WON'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU. MAKRUH MEANS THAT IF YOU DO IT ALLAH WILL NOT PUNISH YOU BUT IF YOU DON'T HE WILL REWARD YOU.

THE TWO RAK'AAAT BEFORE FAJR IS MUSTAHAB. A BROTHER JUST ACCEPTED ISLAM OR A SISTER MARRIED TO A MUSLIM MAN ALL HER LIFE BUT JUST CAME BACK TO ISLAM RECENTLY AND THEY COME TO THE MASJID FOR FAJR AND DO NOT PRAY THE TWO RAK'AAAT OF FAJR. WHAT DO I SAY TO THEM? DO I START ACCUSING/ABUSING THEM? WHY SHOULD I SINCE THE TWO RAK'AAAT ARE MUSTAHAB! GIVE THAT PERSON TIME TO EVOLVE AND DEVELOP. WHAT DID THE PROPHET (S) SAY TO BANI THAQEEF ABOUT JIHAD, HE (S) SAID WE'LL WORK ON THIS JIHAD – OMAR (RA) WENT BIZIRK, HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE

PROPHET'S (S) RESPONSE. THE PROPHET (S) SAID TO OMAR (RA) THEY WILL COME AROUND – THEY WILL ACCEPT IT EVENTUALLY. AFTER THE PROPHET'S (S) DEATH A NUMBER OF TRIBES IN ARABIA LEFT ISLAM; ONE OF THE TRIBES WHO DID NOT LEAVE ISLAM WAS BANI THAQEEF. THOSE SAME PEOPLE WHO JUST A FEW YEARS EARLIER WHO SAID THEY DID NOT WANT TO FIGHT ANY JIHAD. DO YOU SEE THE WISDOM OF THE PROPHET (S). AND HE SAID: "I KNOW THAT THERE WILL COME OUT OF THESE PEOPLE SOME WHO WILL DEFEND ISLAM AND WHO WILL TAKE IT TO THE HORIZONS."

## **A MATTER OF EDUCATION**

WHY ARE WE GOING TO GET INTO A FIGHT OVER HOW TO POSITION THE HANDS DURING SALAAH AND FORGET THE FACT THAT I AM PRAYING DESPITE HAVING MY HANDS ON MY CHEST OR BY MY SIDES. WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT, THE FACT THAT I'M PRAYING OR THE FACT THAT I'M NOT PRAYING THE WAY YOU'RE USED TO? THIS IS PART OF OUR PROBLEM AND A BIG PART OF THE PROBLEM IS A MATTER OF EDUCATION. AND THIS IS WHY IN OUR ISLAMIC SCHOOLS WE MUST GET BACK TO OUR ISLAMIC CIVICS BECAUSE IF WE DON'T WE WILL BE REPEATING THE SAME OLD SONG OVER AND OVER AGAIN. IF WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN THIS NOW, THEN BY THE TIME THEY ARE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN THEY WILL KNOW BETTER. IF WE CAN PUT ASIDE ALL THESE KIND OF MINOR ARGUMENTS THEN WE HAVE TIME AND ENERGY AND LOVE TO PUT INTO OUR REAL ISSUES – BUILDING A FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH, MAKING OUR SOCIETY A PLACE IN WHICH OUR VEILED WOMEN CAN WALK WITH A SENSE OF PRIDE. GETTING INTO SOCIETY AND TAKING IT BACK FROM THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DIRECT PEOPLE TOWARD THE PATH TO HELL. THAT'S WHAT WE COULD DO, BUT NOT IF WE'RE SITTING AROUND ARGUING OVER THINGS THAT WE DON'T NEED TO ARGUE OVER, AND THIS IS A MATTER OF EDUCATION.

THIS IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IN A PLACE LIKE AUSTRALIA THAN IT IS IN LEBANON OR SYRIA OR PAKISTAN. THIS IS SO BECAUSE IN AUSTRALIA YOU'LL HAVE MUSLIMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD AND ALL THESE PEOPLE SAW ONE ISLAM ALL THEIR LIVES. NOW THEY COME TO AUSTRALIA AND THEY SEE OTHER MUSLIMS DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY, SO NOW THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHOW WHO IS THE "RIGHT MUSLIM".

I RESPECT ALL ULAMAA, WHETHER I AGREE WITH THEM OR NOT; AND THE ONLY PERSON WHO DOESN'T RESPECT AN `ALIM IS A JAHIL – HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS ALL ABOUT. IBN TAYMIYA SAID THAT PART OF OUR PROBLEM IS THAT MANY OF OUR ULAMAA DON'T TEACH THE PEOPLE THAT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY OF DOING THINGS. INSTEAD THEY LEAVE THE PEOPLE TO THINK THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OF DOING THINGS AND THEREFORE WHENEVER THEY SEE SOMEONE DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT THEY THINK THE PERSON IS INVOLVED IN THE BIGGEST BID'AH (INNOVATION) THAT ENTERED PLANET EARTH. AND THIS IS A PROBLEM. IBN TAYMIYA (R) SAID, (FROM KITAB RISALAT AL ULFAH BAINA AL MUSLIMEEN) NOT ONLY SHOULD THE ULAMAA TEACH THEIR PEOPLE THAT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY OF DOING THINGS THEY SHOULD EVEN MODEL THAT FROM TIME TO TIME.

THE PROPHET (S) SAID THAT HIS UMMAH WILL NOT AGREE ON AN ERROR. HE (S) DID NOT SAY THAT YOU WILL NEVER MAKE A MISTAKE, OR THAT I WILL NEVER MAKE A MISTAKE, WE MAKE MISTAKES ALL THE TIME, HE SAID THE WHOLE UMMAH IS NOT GOING TO MAKE A MISTAKE. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE NEED TO REMEMBER. WE NEED TO COME BACK TO THE SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET (S) IN ISLAMIC CIVICS – HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER. IN SPAIN THEY USED TO SAY, MAN ASLAMA FAQAD TAHADARA, MEANING WHOEVER BECOMES A MUSLIM ACQUIRES HADAARAH (CIVILISATION), THE ABILITY TO LIVE WITH EACH OTHER. TO KNOW THAT IN THIS ROOM NOBODY IS MA'SUM (INFALLIBLE)

AND IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PROPHET (S), WHO WAS MA`SUM, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT THESE DIFFERENCES.

### **ISSUES THAT ARE CLEAR**

LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT. THE PROPHET (S) HAS SPOKEN AND IN SOME AREAS HE HAS SPOKEN VERY CLEARLY. IF HE (S) HAS SPOKEN CLEARLY THEN THE UMMAH WILL KNOW THAT. THE UMMAH WILL NOT DISAGREE ON IT. THIS IS WHY WE DON'T FIND ANY `AALIM WHO SAYS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRAY FOR EXAMPLE ON A TUESDAY AFTERNOON. ANY `AALIM WHO SAYS RIBA (USURY) IS HALAL IS WRONG, IT IS HARAM! STEALING IS HARAM, ZAKAT IS FARD – THERE IS NO DISAGREEMENT ON THESE ISSUES.

BUT THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT THE PROPHET (S) SAID THAT ARE SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION AND WE LEARNED THIS FROM THE COMPANIONS. WE ALL KNOW THE FAMOUS STORY OF THE PROPHET (S) WHEN HE TOLD THE COMPANIONS (RA); "THERE IS NO PRAYER TO BE OFFERED UNTIL YOU REACH THE CAMP OF BANI QURAIZAH." SOME OF THE COMPANIONS SAID WHAT HE MEANT WAS TO HURRY UP AND GET TO BANI QURAIZAH BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT THE SALAT TIME TO BE MISSED. THE OTHER COMPANIONS SAID NO THAT'S NOT WHAT HE MEANT, HE MEANT DON'T MAKE SALAT UNTIL YOU GET TO BANI QURAIZAH. SO ONE GROUP MADE SALAT ON TIME WHILE THE OTHER GROUP PRAYED WHEN THEY GOT TO BANI QURAIZAH (AFTER THE TIME OF ASR HAD ELAPSED). WHEN THIS INCIDENT REACHED THE PROPHET (S) HE DID NOT REBUKE EITHER OF THEM. BOTH GROUPS TOOK THE PROPHET'S (S) WORDS AND WITH COMPLETE INTEGRITY, NOT TRYING TO UNDERMINE HIS (S) MISSION, NOT TRYING TO GET OUT OF WHAT THEY WERE COMMANDED TO DO, BUT WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS TRYING TO FULFILL THEIR DUTY TO OBEY THE PROPHET (S) – BOTH WILL GET THEIR REWARD. THESE WERE THE COMPANIONS OF RASULLALLAH (S). ARE WE BETTER THAN THEY ARE? SUBHANALLAH, THIS IS WHERE OUR PROBLEM IS. THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO ISLAMIC CIVICS.

### **LEVELS OF DISAGREEMENT**

THERE IS ONE OTHER AREA THAT I WANT TO TOUCH UPON BECAUSE SOMETIMES A LOT OF THE POISON IN OUR DISCUSSION COMES FROM THE FACT THAT WE'RE NOT EVEN CLEAR ON WHAT WE'RE DIFFERING ABOUT. THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE LEVELS THAT WE CAN DISAGREE ON.

1. THE LEVEL OF REVELATION: IS THIS AYAH FROM THE QURAN OR IS THIS HADITH SAHIH CAN WE ACCEPT IT?

2. THE LEVEL OF INTERPRETATION: AFTER ACCEPTING THAT AN AYAH IS FROM ALLAH OR A HADITH IS FROM RASULULLAH, WHAT IS OUR INTERPRETATION OF IT?

3. THE LEVEL OF APPLICATION: SOMETIMES WHEN WE AGREE ON THE LEVELS OF REVELATION AND INTERPRETATION, WE MIGHT DISAGREE ON THE LEVEL OF APPLICATION. FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE TIME OF THE PROPHET (S) THEIR WAS A GROUP WHO WERE KNOWN AS AL MU'ALLAFATUL QULUB – EITHER NEW MUSLIMS OR EVEN NON-MUSLIMS WHOM THE PROPHET (S) WAS ATTEMPTING TO OPEN UP SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL SPACE. THESE WERE PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT OPPOSED TO ISLAM BUT WERE AFRAID THAT WHEN THEY BECAME MUSLIM THEIR LIVES WOULD CHANGE IN WAYS THAT THEY WERE UNCERTAIN ABOUT. SO WHAT THE PROPHET (S) WANTED TO DO WAS SOOTHE THEIR HEARTS BY GIVINGE THEM GIFTS, MONEY, CAMELS AND ALL KINDS OF THINGS. AND ONCE THEY GOT THESE THEY MIGHT CONSIDER ISLAM AND THINK IT NOT BAD. AFTER THE



PROPHET (S) DIED AND UMAR (RA) BECAME CALIPH (ABU BAKR WAS ONLY CALIPH FOR 2 YEARS) ONE OF THE TRIBES THAT THE PROPHET USED TO GIVE MONEY TO CAME TO UMAR AND REQUESTED THE MONEY THAT THE PROPHET USED TO GIVE TO THEM. UMAR RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT: "I'LL GIVE YOU THIS (SWORD) AND THAT'S ALL YOU'RE GOING TO GET." THE COMPANIONS QUESTIONED UMAR SAYING THAT THE PROPHET (S) USED TO DO THAT. UMAR REPLIED THAT THE PROPHET (S) USED TO DO THAT IN OUR TIME OF NEED, "I KNOW WHY HE DID IT I WAS THERE. HE (S) DID IT WHEN WE NEEDED TO – WHEN WE WERE WEAK AND AFRAID OF THE TRIBES AROUND ARABIA. NOW THERE IS NO LONGER ANY CAUSE TO DO THIS, I WILL GIVE THEM NOTHING BUT THIS (SWORD). " THE QUESTION ARISES, DID UMAR ACCEPT THE AYAH? YES! DID UMAR ACCEPT THE PROPHET (S) INTERPRETATION OF THE AYAH? YES! WHERE DID UMAR DIFFER? WITH THE APPLICATION OF THIS AYAH.

### **WHAT ARE NOT DALEELS (PROOFS)**

"ASTAGFIRULLAH," IS NOT A DALEEL. ANGER IS NOT A DALEEL. YELLING IS NOT A DALEEL. EVEN TAKFEER (CALLING SOMEONE A KAAFIR) IS NOT A DALEEL. WHAT DO I MEAN BY THIS? SOMETIMES WHEN I CAN'T CONVINCE YOU ABOUT MY POINT OF VIEW, RATHER THAN GIVE YOU DALEEL I YELL AND SCREAM. I START OUT WITH "ASTAGHFIRALLAH HIL ATHEEM", THIS IS NOT DALEEL. WHAT IS NEEDED IS PROOF FROM QURAN, SUNNAH, QIYAS, AND IJMAA'. LET US NOT TERRORISE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

THINGS WE SHOULD NOT BE ARGUING ABOUT

IF WE'RE ARGUING ABOUT AN ISSUE OF TAUHID/SHIRK, OR WHETHER THE PROPHET (S) ALWAYS SPOKE THE TRUTH OR NOT, OR WHETHER THERE IS A DAY OF JUDGEMENT OR NOT – THEN WE HAVE A PROBLEM. WE ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ARGUING ABOUT THESE ESSENTIAL THINGS – WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AGREEING ON THEM. BUT IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT IS NOT FUNDAMENTAL, THEN EITHER I CAN CONVINCE OR I CAN'T AND LET US LEAVE IT AT THAT.

### **THE IGNORANT AND THE HYPOCRITE**

WE HAVE TO GET TO KNOW OUR PEOPLE BECAUSE SOMETIMES A PERSON MAY HOLD A VIEW, AND THEY MAY HOLD THAT VIEW BECAUSE THEY ARE IGNORANT. LET US TRY TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOMEONE WHO IS ARROGANT, WHO HAS NO REGARD FOR THE TRUTH AND WHO DOESN'T CARE WHETHER YOU ARE RIGHT OR NOT, THEY JUST WANT TO HOLD ON TO THEIR OPINION - THAT'S ONE KIND OF PERSON. THEN THERE IS ANOTHER KIND OF PERSON WHO IF YOU CONVINCE HIM HE MAY SEE YOUR POINT OF VIEW. SO WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT HOLDING EVERYBODY WHO MAKES A MISTAKE AS A PERSON WHO REJECTS QURAN AND SUNNAH. HE MIGHT JUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE.

IBN TAYMIYYAH (R) SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO HOLD WRONG IDEAS MAY BE BELIEVING WRONG MINDED, ERRING MUSLIMS (MUMIN MUKHTI, DAAL `AN BA'DI MA JA'A BIHI RASULLULLAH). OR HE MAY BE MUNAAFIQUN ZINDEEQ, A HYPOCRITE WHO WANTS TO HIDE BEHIND FANCY WORDS AND DOESN'T REALLY BELIEVE IN ALLAH AND THE LAST DAY. THEREFORE, WE HAVE KNOW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE IN ORDER FOR US TO GET BACK TO ISLAMIC CIVICS, INSHA'ALLAH.

TRANSCRIBED BY SR FAIZA ABDULLATIF