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The Splitting and Differing Mentioned in the Qur'an is in Relation to Innovation and Its People

Imaam ash-Shaatibee (rahimahullaah) said in al-I'tisaam (1/40-45):

...And Ibn Wahb said: "I heard Maalik saying: "There is no verse in the Book of Allaah that is harder upon those in disagreement amongst the People of Desires than this verse:

On the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will become white and some faces will become black; as for those whose faces will become black (to them will be said): "Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment (in Hell) for rejecting Faith." [Aali Imraan 3:106]

Maalik said: "And which words are more clearer than these?' And I saw him explaining these verses in reference to the People of Desires." Ibn al-Qaasim reported this and added: "Maalik said to me: "This verse is about the people of the qiblah [i.e. Muslims]." And what Imaam Maalik has said about this verse has been narrated from more than one person as has preceded such as al-Hasan.

From Qataadah, that he said regarding the saying of Allaah: **And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them [Aali Imraan 3:105]**, "Meaning: The People of Innovation."

And from Ibn 'Abbaas, that he said regarding the saying of Allaah: **On the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will become white and some faces will become black [Aali Imraan 3:106]**, "The faces of Ahl us-Sunnah will become white and the faces of Ahl ul-Bid'ah will become black."

And also amongst the verses [that are related to the censure of innovation] is His saying: **"And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become Al-Muttaqûn" [Al-An'aam 6:153]**

The 'Siraat ul-Mustaqeem' (Straight Path) is the path to which Allaah has called and that is the Sunnah. And 'Subul (other paths) are the paths of the people of disagreement who turn away from the Straight Path, and they are the People of Innovation. And the intent here is not the 'paths of disobedience' because no one makes disobedience a path that he continuously treads upon - in imitation of and resemblance to the legislation, but rather this description is specifically for the invented innovations.

And what Ismaa'eel has narrated from Sulaimaan bin Harb gives evidence to this: "Hammaad bin Zaid narrated to us from 'Aasim bin Bahdalah from Abu Waa'il from

Abdullaah [Ibn 'Abbaas] who said: 'One Day the Messenger (ﷺ) drew for us a long, straight line' and then Sulaimaan drew for us a long, straight line, 'and then he drew lines to its right and to its left and then said: This is the Path of Allaah. Then he drew lines to its right and to its left and said: These are different paths, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it', and then he recited the verse: **“And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths...” [Al-An'aam 6:153]**, meaning these paths (i.e. those on the right and left), **“...for they will separate you away from His Path” Al-An'aam 6:153]**”

Bikr bin 'Alaa said: “He meant the devils amongst men and these are the innovations and Allaah knows best.

And the hadeeth has been reported in many ways.

And 'Umar bin Salamah al-Hamdaanee said: “We were sitting in the circle of Ibn Mas'ood in the mosque, which had been plain land after it had been covered with gravel. 'Ubaidullaah bin Umar ibn al-Khattaab, who had just returned from an expedition, said to him: 'What is the straight path O Abu 'Abdur-Rahmaan?' He replied: 'By the Lord of the Ka'bah, it is that which your father was firmly established upon until he entered Paradise' and then he swore firmly upon that three times, Then he drew a line in the ground with his hand and also drew lines to either side of it and said: 'Your Prophet (ﷺ) left you upon this end and its other end is in Paradise. So whoever remains steadily upon it will enter Paradise and whoever takes any of these lines will be destroyed.”

And in another narration: “O Abu 'Abdur-Rahmaan, what is the straight path?” He said: “The Messenger (ﷺ) left us upon the nearest end of the line and its other end is in Paradise. And to its left and right are roads in which there are men who invite those who pass by them, saying: 'Come this way! Come this way!' So whoever is taken by them to those paths will end up in Hellfire and whoever remains steadfast upon the great path will end up, through it, in Paradise.” The Ibn Mas'ood recited:

“And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become Al-Muttaqûn” [Al-An'aam 6:153]

And Mujaahid said about the saying of Allaah: **...and follow not (other) paths [Al-An'aam 6:153]**, “The innovations and doubts.”

And Abdur-Rahmaan bin Mahdee said: “Maalik bin Anas had been asked about the Sunnah and he said: 'It is whatever has no other name for it except 'the Sunnah' and he recited: **“And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. [Al-An'aam 6:153]**

Bikr bin 'Alaa said: “He means - if Allaah wills - the hadeeth of Ibn Mas'ood that the Messenger (ﷺ) drew a line...” and he mentioned the hadeeth. And this explanation (afseer) shows that the verse includes all the different paths of innovation and does not specify one innovation over others.

And also amongst the verses [that are related to the censure of innovation] is the saying of Allaah the Exalted: **And upon Allâh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all (mankind). [An-Nahl 16:9]**

The explained path is the Path of Truth and that which is other than it, turns away from the truth - and these are the paths of innovations and misguidance - may Allaah protect us, by His Excellence, from travelling upon them. It is sufficient for whatever turns away [from the Truth] that it is warned against and the verse contains a warning and a prohibition [of taking other paths that turn deviate from the Truth].

And Ibn Waddaah mentioned, saying: “Aasim bin Bahdalah was questioned: ‘O Abu Bakr, have you considered the saying of Allaah, the Exalted: **And upon Allâh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all (mankind). [An-Nahl 16:9]**

He replied: ‘Abu Waa’il informed us, from ‘Abdullaah Ibn Mas’ood saying: “Abdullaah bin Mas’ood drew a straight line and drew lines to its right and to its left and then said: ‘The Messenger (ﷺ) drew just like this, and he said about the straight line: ‘This is the path of Allaah’ and about the lines to its right and left he said: ‘These are different ways, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it.’” Allaah the Exalted said: **“And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it...” [Al-An’aam 6:153]**, to the end of the verse.

From at-Tustaree, that he said: “Explanation of the path (qasd us-sabeel) - that is the path of the Sunnah, ‘ways that turn aside’ (wa minhaa jaa’ir) - meaning to the Hellfire and they are the sects and innovations.”

And from Mujaahid, that he said: “Explanation of the path (qasd us-sabeel) - meaning the one who is justly balanced between exaggeration and negligence and this shows that the one who turns aside is one who commits excesses or is negligent, and both of them are amongst the descriptions of the innovations.”

And from ‘Alee (radiallaahu ‘anhu), that he used to read it: “Wa minkum jaa’ir...” (And amongst you is one that turns aside). They said: ‘He means by that this Ummah.’ So it is as if this verse along with the one before it have come with the same meaning.

And amongst the verses is the saying of Allaah: **Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad) have no concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allâh, Who then will tell them what they used to do. [Al-An’aam 6:159]**

The explanation (tafseer) of this verse has come in the hadeeth from Aa’ishah (radiallaahu anhaa) who said: “The Messenger (ﷺ) said: ‘O Aa’ishah! Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects. Who are they?’ So I said: ‘Allaah and His Messenger know best.’ He replied: ‘They are the People of Desires, the People of Innovations and the People of Misguidance from this Ummah. O Aaishah! For every sin

there is repentance, except [for] the People of Desires and Innovations, there is no repentance from them and I am free and innocent of them and they of me.”

Ibn ‘Atiyah said: “This verse includes the People of Desires, Innovations and Deviation in the minor matters and others besides them from amongst the people engrossed in argumentation, and disputation with theological rhetoric (kalaam). All of this is directed towards the mistakes and the arena of evil beliefs.”

And he means - and Allaah knows best - by ‘amongst the people engrossed in argumentation, and disputation in the minor matters’ what Abu ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul-Barr in the chapter on ‘Censure of Ra’I (Opinion)’ in his book ‘Kitaab ul-‘Ilm’ and we shall mention it [in due course] with the power of Allaah.

And Ibn Battaal quotes in his ‘Sharh ul-Bukhaaree’ from Abu Haneefah that he said: “I met ‘Ataa ibn Rabaah in Makkah and I asked him about something and he said: ‘From which place are you?’ I said: ‘Kufah’. He said: ‘Are you from the town [whose inhabitants] split their religion and break into sects?’ I said: ‘Yes’. He said: ‘From which group are you?’ I said: ‘From those who do not revile and abuse the Salaf (Pious Predecessors), who have faith in Qadr and who do not declare anyone to be a disbeliever on account a sin [that he committed].’ So ‘Ataa said: ‘You know [the truth] so hold fast.”

And from al-Hasan who said: “Uthmaan bin ‘Affaan (radiiallaahu ‘anhu) came out one day and addressed us with a sermon but the people interrupted his speech and began to throw pebbles at each other until – He said: ‘And we heard a voice from one of the rooms of the Wives of Prophet (sallallaahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and it was said: This is the voice of the Mother of the Believers.’ He said: ‘So I heard it and she was saying: ‘Verily, your Prophet is free and innocent from the one who divides his religion and breaks up into a sect’ and she recited:

Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad) have no concern in them in the least [Al-An’aam 6:159]

Al-Qaadee Ismaa’eel said: “I consider that he means by his saying ‘Mother of the Believers’ to be Umm Salamah, that has been mentioned in some of the hadeeth and Aai’shah at that time was performing Hajj.” And from Abu Hurairah: “That this verse was revealed in connection with this Ummah.” And from Abu Umaamah: “They are the Khawaarij.”

Al-Qaadee said: “The apparent meaning (dhaahir) of the Qur’aan indicates that everyone who introduces an innovation into the religion such as the Khawaarij and others besides them - that they come under this verse, because when they innovate, they argue and dispute [over this innovation], cause divisions and break off into sects.”

And amongst such verses is the saying of the Exalted:

And be not of Al-Mushrikûn (the disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, polytheists, idolaters, etc). Of those who split up their religion (i.e. the true Islâmic Monotheism), and became sects, [i.e. they invented new things in the religion (Bid’ah), and followed their vain desires], each sect rejoicing in that which is with it. [Rum 30:31-32]

It is also read as 'faaraqoo' [instead of 'farraroo' - thereby giving it the meaning 'depart from and sever oneself from the religion']. Abu Hurairah explained it with reference to the Khawaarij and Abu Umaamah has reported this in marfoo' form.

It has also been said: 'They are the People of Desires and Innovations'. They said: 'Aa'ishah (radiiallaahu anhaa) reported it from the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam)' and that is because this is the nature of the one who innovates - as Ismaa'eel al-Qaadee has said and as has preceded in the other verses.

And amongst such verses is the saying of the Exalted:

Say: "He has power to send torment on you from above or from under your feet, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, and make you to taste the violence of one another. [Al-An'aam 6:65]

From Ibn 'Abbaas that: "Covering you with confusion in party strife, this is the divergent and varying desires (i.e. innovations)."

And built upon His saying: **...and make you to taste the violence of one another. [Al-An'aam 6:65]**, is the pronounciation of takfeer [declaring someone a disbeliever] of some of you over others so that they fight each other, as occurred with the Khawaarij when they revolted against the Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. And it has been said that the meaning of: **..or to cover you with confusion in party strife [Al-An'aam 6:65]**, is "Covering with disunity"

Mujaahid and Abu al-'Aaliyah said: "This verse is about the Ummah of Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam)." Abu al-'Aaliyah said: "They are four in number, two of them appeared twenty-five years after the death of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam), so they were covered with the confusion of party-strife and some of them were made to taste the violence of others - and two remained and they will occur, for sure: Being swallowed from underneath you (i.e. by the earth) and being transformed from above you."

And this, all of it, is very clear in that the differences and desires (i.e. innovations) are disliked and not liked and are blameworthy and not praiseworthy. And from what has been reported from Mujaahid about the saying of Allaah: **But they will not cease to disagree - except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy (the follower of truth - Islâmic Monotheism) and for that did He create them. [Hud 11:118-119].**

He said about 'those who disagree': "They are the People of Falsehood" and about 'except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy': "The People of Truth, there is no difference amongst them." And it has been reported from Mutarrif bin ash-Shakheer that he said: "If the desires had been but one (i.e. united) then a person would have said: 'Perhaps the truth is in it. But when the desires split and separate [and become many], every possessor of intelligence knows that the truth never splits [contradicting itself]."

From 'Ikrimah "But they will not cease to disagree', meaning in the desires [i.e. their innovations] and 'except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy', they are the Ahl

us-Sunnah.”

And Abu Bakr bin Thaabit al-Khateeb has quoted from Mansoor bin Abdur-Rahmaan that he said: “We were sitting with al-Hasan and there was a man behind me standing and he began to order me to ask him about the saying of Allaah: **But they will not cease to disagree - except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy [Hud 11:118-119]**

So he said: “Yes, ‘they will not cease to disagree’ upon their different ways ‘except on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy’ so whomever He bestows His Mercy upon does not disagree.[i.e. he is not in disagreement as to the truth, he is clear about it.] And Ibn Wahb reports from ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul ‘Azeez and Maalik bin Anas: “The People of Mercy do not differ.” And this verse has a beautiful explanation which will come later - if Allaah wills.”