



# PITFALLS ON THE PATH OF ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

*by*  
**SADRUDDIN ISLAHI**

*Translated by*  
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**IDARA-E-TAHQEEQ-O-TASNEEF-E-ISLAMI**

Pan Wali Kothi, Dodh Pur Road.

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### **An established fact—a constant warning**

Whenever success has been achieved by any movement of the world, it was simply on account of the fact that the movement had adhered to those values which inevitably bring success. And whenever a movement has failed to reach its goal, the reasons obviously were, just the contrary. Movements fail because they submit themselves to such false values which result in mere confusion, utter weakness and a hopeless end. This is such an accepted reality that no past record of a movement—be it a movement for the promotion of Islam or for that of the Jahiliyya—can controvert it. This is what common knowledge speaks of. This is indeed a positive, established and self-evident reality. No future events can ever afford to deny it.

Any movement therefore, that aspires to attain real success, should, by all means adhere to the established truth. If it does not, then let it prepare itself for the inevitable disaster which is the obvious consequence of going contrary to the established rules of the Almighty. And amount of inherent truthfulness and inborn attraction of a movement will not be able to save it from meeting with the disaster. This is the reason why the great preacher of Islam, (peace on him) and his loving companions

(Allah be pleased with them), were constantly reminded of the inevitable traits they were to cultivate within themselves before they could take up the massive task of calling people towards Allah. The first addressees of the Qur'an were, clearly and unequivocally told as to what exactly should be their manifest traits and what was never to touch the core of their character. They were further enlightened about the exact ingredients that bring utter disappointment and failure, besides those that were bound to crown their efforts with lasting success. Mere precept was not relied upon ! The noble prophet (peace on him) and his companions were also made to witness the past histories of the preceding movements and the preceding Ummahs. With particular stress is narrated the history of the previous Ummah—the Sons of Israel. The lost grandeur of the Israelites has been narrated in the Qur'an with meticulous details and with force of expression, so that all the causes of the decline of the Israelites become apparant before the Muslim Ummah.

These details of the fall of the previous Ummah, narrated at length, in the lucid style of the Qur'an, serve as a very forceful reminder to the Muslim Ummah. They shall serve as a warning to us till the Qiyamah. Besides relating these factual details, the Qur'an repeatedly warns the Muslim Ummah. It reiterates :

“And do not be like those who

forgot the Lord, and the Lord  
made them oblivious of themselves."

"Be not like those who are divided  
amongst themselves and fall prey to  
faction after receiving clear Signs."

Real good of the Muslim Ummah, it is certain, is in adhering sincerely to the word of Allah, and in moulding its course accordingly. It is indeed a known reality, that as long as the Muslims remained true to the Qur'an, they ascended heights of power and glory, and their message kept adorning men's hearts and minds. But as soon as they became oblivious of this warning of the Qur'an, they began descending into depths of disaster and decay. Decline and fall are the obvious results of evading the self and neglecting the duty

This warning of the Qur'an is indeed a factual and lasting warning. This warning underlies that whenever the Ummah attempts to resume its Duty, it should keep referring to this warning, right from the beginning of its back journey till it really reaches its destination, and keep a vigilant eye over its activities even after having reached the goal.

The past record of the Muslim Ummah has made it easy for us to diagnose the real canker that made downfall inevitable. Now the Muslim Ummah has before itself, not only the histories of the past Ummahs, but also the record of its

own relegation. It has not only seen through the remote past of the earlier Ummahs, but has also witnessed its own backward march in the recent past. Now being aware of those traits which had turned the whole Umma into a dead lot, if the Ummah dose away with its follies and rises to a fresh sense of duty, with the required conscientiousness, and gives up its former attitude, it is quite likely that it will be able to learn to protect itself from those traits which brought such a misfortune to it in the past. And without having clear knowledge of these traits it is hardly possible that the Ummah will begin performing its mission.

Any attempt in the present times, to return back to Duty, is, however, not the first of its kind. Several sincere attempts — both individual and collective — have been made from time to time, in order to preach the message of Islam. And the proceedings of these collective as well as individual attempts have been recorded. These records serve as guidelines for any future Islamic movement. No Islamic movement in future will be a novel attempt to find Islam. It will only be a fresh attempt to revive the forgotten message. All movements of the past have been movements for renaissance and revival only. And a study and analysis of the revivalist movements will bring out a number of lessons for those engaged in the present day struggle for daw'ah. This sort of study will endow them with

certain insights which cannot accrue from other sources.

What the workers need today is the sincere will to maintain cautious sagacity. All sorts of pills are not at hand. The whole of the history of the Islamic movement is there to guide us along the path. Besides the histories of the preceding Ummahs, there are the autobiographical details of the Muslim Ummah itself. Now having access to such an ample collection of 'Clear Signs' if the daw'ah movements of to-day fail to perceive the roots of evil, then, it clearly would speak of a heavy bankruptcy of reason. And this in turn would rule out even the slightest chance of success for the movement.

### **'Need for Self-introspection'**

This warning carries the same amount of worth for the Islamic movement of India as it would, for the Islamic movement throughout the world. The Islamic movement of India too, should have a very careful look at the various causes of the failure of the various movements. And its success largely depends upon how cautious and vigilant it remains, and how well it avoids plunging into the abyss of follies that have snatched all hopes of success from the previous movements.

The Islamic movement of India has made a highly critical analysis of the philosophy and tech-

nique of the various daw'ah organizations of the world. And the faults of these dawah movements have been explicitly and objectively spelled out. Major weaknesses, either of thought or of action, have been pointed out rather tacitly, for they were mostly those that played a vital role in the past destruction of this Ummah. And the attempts to save future movements from similar destruction demand that the former faults should not be repeated.

True criticism and genuine analysis do not end here. Rather it only begins now. It demands a lot more sincere self-criticism, launched with a true will to analyse our own thought and action. A critical study of the belief and action of others may only be of partial worth. But that of our own action and belief is of constant need. No movement can ever deny its worth. This kind of self-analysis demands a sincere, perceptive, and a mentally alert attempt to guard ourselves against all those evils which caused utter failure of several movements in the past. If self-criticism is not attended to, and if we deem ourselves above self-criticism—then, God forbid, we will be following the same track that had virtually led the whole Ummah into a strong contradiction of word and deed—so that—despite our strong aversion to the ways of the christians and the Jews, we will be, rather unconsciously, following them throughout.

The need of the hour is that, all those, who have now, stood up with the sense of Duty—the only

Duty that the Ummah has been raised for—, instantly give up all previous notions of superiority about themselves and begin making a true analysis of their career. Unless this is done, they will only be allowing their Faith and action to be led to perpetual decay. May the Lord forbid, how can one expect results contrary to what has constantly been happening in the past? And, therefore, why not attempt a vigilant fortressing against all such scaring possibilities in the future? Why wait for them to raise their ugly heads? It is indeed wise to prepare ourselves in advance before the storm tends to become uncontrollable.

### **Basic Device for Self-introspection**

Self-introspection is not something to be indulged in haphazardly. A preventive measure without any discipline hardly serves the purpose. Justice can be done to this most seminal device, only when every single member of it, regards it to be his primary duty. All the workers of the organization may not be similar in their responsibilities. Yet they do share the responsibility to some extent or the other. Designation, knowledge and insight only tend to increase one's responsibility—and in no way do they exonerate others from their responsibility. Lesser insight and wisdom in certain workers would probably lessen their responsibility, but will not exonerate them from their responsibility altogether. Thus to imagine that the job of che-

cking the flaws of thought and technique of the organization is wholly with its elders' is a downright misapprehension. And herein lies the crucial fallacy of the workers. Such fallacious notions will hardly enable the workers to adopt healthy dawah attitude. And if unhealthy attitudes are allowed to gain ground, they may as well prove death-knell for the entire movement.

Proper precautions against these follies can be ensured only with a sincere and penetrating study of the relevant instructions given by the Qur'an and the Ahadith. Moreover, a comparative study of the past dawah movements, in comparison with each other, should also be made so that the causes of their success and failure become apparent. But a mere collection and analysis of these causes would not serve the purpose. This is the way how the researches proceeds. Instead, these warnings and self-evident constructions should be arranged before the Dace as a constant looking glass, so that he is able to form his future role after this retrospective study. This placing of a constant mirror of past activities before the eyes, will help the worker control over his own follies, and thereby correct his future steps. And whenever he can see any kind of flaw intruding either his belief or action he can instantly attempt a severe overhauling without any shadow of hesitation or doubt. Such a procedure befits a dutiful Dace.

Let us remember, it is easier to find apparant demerits of thought and technique, but it is very difficult to spot the flaws that lie concealed within. This difficulty can be overcome if two main devices are carefully attended to.

Primarily, the worker of the Islamic movement should keep a vigilant eye over the various deceptive tricks of his 'nafs'. This vicious human tendency is the one strong hurdle that he has of necessity to curb. Man's inclination to feel complacent over his own weaknesses tends to enhance the flaws in his conduct. The 'nafs' will always justify and validate all misdeed and will try to explain them away. Often a severe struggle ensues in the human mind, between forces of good and evil. Even if the conscience pinpoints the flaws the 'nafs' tries to rationalize the flaws, by stressing some fine reason as the necessary justification for the flaw. Amidst this struggle for supremacy between these two tendencies, the inherently weak human being gets overpowered by the strong reasoning of the 'nafs' and imagines that he is really on the right path. Hence the necessity to guard the self against these manipulations of the 'nafs'. This is indeed the first pre-requisite for successful self-criticism.

Next, what that the workers of the Islamic movement should never lose sight of is the fact that faults and foibles often appear in guise! It is not

necessary that they should pollute the movement in the same way as they had in the past. This is the notorious trick that Satan often tries to play. He seldom fabricate a simple design. Every moment he tries to adopt a new way of deceiving people. He knows well, which human weakness to play upon. He is aware of the flaws in our thought and techniques. He is acquainted with exact string with which he can defeat human struggle for perseverance. As a result of his continuous concealed poisoning, the weak human character gets subdued. Now a person who was abhorant to a certain vice in its appearance, submits himself when it comes in a different garb—as though swallowing a sugar-coated pill. This vicious trick brings abundant success to hostile forces. And the most cautious Islamist too is likely to fall a prey to them any moment. Overcoming this trick of Satan forms the next step towards self-criticism.

A perceptive and realistic analysis of our own thought and technique is possible only when these two pre-requisites are constantly kept in view.

### **Serious hazards for the Islamic Movements**

Let us look at those particular causes which are primarily responsible for the failure of the Islamic movement. These causes cannot be enumerated in some tabular form. Nothing can be pointed out as the exclusive and particular cause for the move-

ments' failure. The causes vary according to particular situation and conditions. We shall refer to only those main causes which form the basis and finally lead to the failure of the movement. The seriousness of their nature demands that they be particularly stressed.

### **1. Lack of sincerity and God-consciousness.**

When the Muslim does not have sincerity and God-consciousness is doubtful the failure of the Islamic movement becomes inevitable. This is the clear symptom of the movement's failure. And their persistence acts as the last blow. Though not the only cause for the movement's failure, it is certainly its basic cause. This cause assumes importance on account of several factors.

Lack of sincerity and God-consciousness, when it gains ground among the workers of Islamic dawah, reacts as a deadly, destructive amalgm. No other agent can be so devastating to the character of these workers, as could be the lack of these two basic qualities.

Lack of these two qualities becomes all the more dangerous when we see that most other weaknesses and drawbacks take their roots from this mother-weakness. Though several psychological factors may be responsible for the origin of various other weaknesses, a perceptive glance makes it clear that lack of sincerity and God fearin-

gness is at the root of all evil. Moreover, the absence of these basic virtues often tends to act as spur to the gradually working poison — and thereby hastens the movements' final break down. Indeed its various aspects need to be made more explicit and clear.

The words used here are 'sincerity' and 'God-consciousness.' 'Sincerity' connotes the workers' absolute complacency and contentment at heart, and activeness and vigilance of mind, to submit himself to the objectives of the Islamic movement that he is attached to. No worldly affairs be allowed to middle with it. No other thoughts be allowed to intrude with his decision. All his activities be conditioned with his mission. The dawah mission and its requisites should so regulate his belief and action, and his thought and movements that he does only that which his mission demands and devote his activities only to those aspects which the mission permits.

God-consciousness means the genuine desire to submit everything—his attachment to the Islamic movement and all his efforts on the path—to one single cause—the acquisition of Allah's will. None besides this should be the basis of his endeavour. Neither his own self, his family, his nation, his party, and group, his country and motherland nor the whole humanity at large should in any way share the reason for his attachment to the Islamic

movement. All his actions should have only one orientation—the Lord's pleasure ! The only power behind all his movement and action should be his sincere urge to acquire the will of Allah and to gain success in the Hereafter.

This kind of sincere consciousness of Allah's presence makes a movement truly Islamic. And it is this kind of inborn attachment with the Lord that distinguishes the Islamic movement from other movements of the world. A more sincerity of attitude towards the mission is as necessary for the non-Islamic movement as it is for the Islamic movement. Hence the additional requisite for an Islamic movement is deep God-consciousness in its workers besides the usual need of sincerity. That is why when the Qur'an conferred upon the Muslim Ummah, the Duty to be 'witnesses for Truth' it particularly stressed that this Duty be performed only for Allah. It said :

Therefore, if the Dawah work is done even with a tinge of other aims, intentions and inclinations, it fails to be the Islamic dawah. If the inner intentions of the worker is not exclusively oriented to win Allah's will, how can his efforts be characterized as pure? For a worker of the Islamic movement sincerity corresponds to the seminal human-organ—heart—and God-consciousness is equal to the pure blood running through its veins. A mere heart, without the blood arteries is never a sign of life.

Never misunderstand the words 'will of Allah', and 'Success in the Hereafter! They never mean that lack of them is accountable only in the 'Akhirah'! No. This criterion is true for individual deeds alone. Whereas, when these individuals get together in the form of an organization, they will have to face the results of their misdeeds then and there in this world itself. For individuals this world is only a place to trial, but for groups and organizations it is the place to reap the rewards as well.

Both experience and wisdom lead us to their conclusion. The holy Qur'an emphasizes this fact repeatedly. It says that the success of an Islamic movement depends wholly upon God's 'nusrah' :

There is no success,  
Save from Allah

(Quran)

How on earth can the people expect God's 'Nusrah', if their belief and intentions are not oriented towards Him and why will the Just Lord ever confer His 'nusrah' upon such people who do not struggle to acquire His will and pleasure? Surely he is so very Unmindful, that He cares only for those who come to Him with a pure and tender heart, and showers His 'nusrah' only upon those who sincerely surrender to Him.

Common knowledge dictates that an Islamic movement lacking in sincerity and God-conscious-

ness, can never possess that genuine inherent strength which is so necessary for its around success. When the primary goal is lost sight of, there will be nothing to bind the workers together into a single integrated whole. The organization will lose its basis and the workers will begin obeying their own whims. As a result, divisions will occur—each group struggling to carry the whole organization towards its end. Harmony of thought and technique will be lost, and, unable to bear internal strife and chaos, the whole movement will collapse.

We have before us the history of the most renowned dawah movements of the world. We are well aware that, so far as its upholders remained sincere and true 'witnesses for Allah', in the real sense of the term, they kept ascending heights of glory, and nearly half of the world came under their sway. But alas, when this sound balance was lost, as a result of constant en'masse conversions to Islam, where the converts did not possess that excelled amount of God-consciousness, the movement too, fell a victim to internal strife, thereby marking a drastic turn in the history of Islam. In the recent past we have witnessed the plight of the great movement launched by Syed Ahmad Shaheed. Who can deny the absolute sincerity, fortitude and perseverance of his companions? But, indeed, how sad to recall, that a sincere and determined group of these gems, when mixed with the worthless

hoard of false pebbles lost its worth. And very soon these rising stars sank into perpetual darkness even before attaining prime.

Comparatively too, this particular spiritual weakness needs extra care and attention for its elimination. Generally it takes roots in the human sub-conscience. It is from here that it drains away the treasures of sincerity and God-consciousness. It is therefore, very difficult indeed to attempt a vigilant and carerul analysis-cum-criticism. Even the most perceptive and keen observer often fails to detect the absence of these virtues. And even if he is able to detect it, is not easy for him to acknowledge it. A sincere and straight forward acknowledgement of the weakness demands an amount of strong Imarah, and plenty of moral courage. Our eternal enemy, Satan, constantly aims at debasing the seat of all virtue—the Mumins' heart—and incessantly tries to attack its basic treasures—sincerity and God-consciousness. And once he gets hold of the heart-treasure, he is never prepared to give it up. Instead, he stakes all his strength to win over the heart of the Mu'min by completely draining it of God-consciousness and sincerity. He employs several tricks to shear the Muslim of his faith and Imaan, and to deprive him of his Lord's protection. Often he fools him conscious of his religiosity and tries to puff up his pride by playing upon his sense of honour, or by falsely rationalizing his misdeeds. He works with such

vigour that the feeble Imaan gets badly deceived and gives in to the manipulations.

Indeed, it is only God-gifted, strong and deep-rooted faith, that enables one to detect and frankly and sincerely confess his own internal drawbacks. And after confession comes the stage of cure—which is in itself no less than an ordeal. It calls for firm determination, careful planning, sound preventive measures and an incessant struggle. In the process, even a moments indelence may result into failure and great loss. The attainment of this spiritual excellence needs untiring efforts and ceaseless striving. However, those who really, wish to attain this as their goal, will have to undergo the whole ordeal, without a single frown on their brow, and with perpetual steadfastness.

## **2. Unsound knowledge and improper insight**

Another primary cause for the decline and failure of an Islamic movement is tragic absence of the practical ability to derive guidance from the seminal sources of Islam. This inability leads to two major draw-backs:

- i) Unsound power of Ijtehad
- ii) Lack of insight into Diyn.

As a result philosophical stagnation sets in, and virtually paralyses one's thinking faculty. Mental confusion, therefore, runs riot.

It is an undisputed fact that a movement retains its strength only as long as it has access to the seminal roots of Sharaiah and draws on it. Such direct acquisition of strength is possible only when the pioneers of the movement are equipped with sound knowledge of Diyn, and proper ability to make use of it. Besides the pioneers, other workers of the movement too should have proper knowledge of the Diyn and its various requistes. They should be very clear about the points that separate Islam from 'Jahiliyya', and should have sound understanding of the basic philosophy and thought of the Sharaiah. They should also possess clear knowledge of their own duties and responsibilities, besides being aware of the exact domain of their activittes.

If this is not the exact state of affairs, if people become oblivious of their responsibilities and duties, if the leaders refuse to be guided exclusively by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, if the workers being hankering after their own whims' if they suggest a novel track for themselves independent of the fundamental Diyn, and if they start dragging the whole movement in the direction of their own fancy, so that, when you look at them your impression would be:

Give decisions without  
knowledge, being misled  
they mislead others.

then be sure that the Islamic movement has entered the phase that can prove highly inauspicious. Any movement in such a phase can be compared to a ship without a pilot which is being sailed by the passengers in opposite directions that each fancies.

### **Personality Cult**

Closely related to the second weakness of the Islamic movement lies its third severe drawback—'excessive devotion' — commonly known as personality cult. Studies into human psychology and historical data, both support the general notion that personality cult runs riot mostly with the religious movements. The common tendency here is to exalt a person so much, and be taken away by him to such an extent that one's attachment, struggle for the movement and interest in the movement, all, either rest on his devotion to and honour for that particular person or issue from his love for the leader. Now one begins looking at things not with one's own critical eyes, but through the vision of the beloved person. when one accepts a thing, or rejects it, one does not do it on his own judgement but according to what the beloved person does. One begins his decisions blindly and considers him above every weakness and flaw. One thinks it absurd to judge his opinion from the angle of right or wrong. And one deems it utterly wrong to associate him with a folly. In extreme devotion for him, one is not willing to accept any weakness in his thought, belief or action.

This kind of excessive devotion deprives men of the power of judgment, and the ability to differentiate virtue from vice. And when that beloved person passes away, the devotees are left aghast not knowing what to do and where to go. At such a juncture they are not worried about the future prospects of the Movement: No. They only grieve at the loss of their loved one:

This is a very sensitive aspect of human psyche. Even in the early history of Islam such instances have been recorded. But that period was so well-steeped in submission to Allah that such occasional emotional vagaries could not cause much confusion. In fact there was no room for any crookedness of belief and action to take roots, therefore it perished rather easily. But when a similar mischief arose in the recent past, in the era of Syyyid Ahmed Shaheed, it sprung with all evils attendant upon a personality cult turned the sincerely people into wayward automations.

Unless the workers of the Islamic movement firmly and undoubtedly believe that their sole guide and fore runner is the noble prophet Muhammad (peace on him), and unless they are convinced, at heart, that the only object of all their struggle and endeavour is the acquisition of the Lord's pleasure, let them be sure that their present lies uncertain and their future most dubious.

#### 4. Imbalances in the understanding of Diyn

The fourth important hurdle for an Islamic movement is the unstable and unbalanced view of Sharaiah held by its workers. Such instability is the result either of poor knowledge and lack of perception or an outcome of certain external factors — i.e. a reaction to other improper views of Diyn.

A movement for the revival of Diyn is often launched at a period when the Ummah has become either oblivious of its Duty or has lost the will to work for Islam. This attitude, in turn, is the result of two main reasons:

- i) The Muslim Ummah has become oblivious of the sense of Duty, and
- ii) Its image of Diyn has become faulty and improper.

At such juncture, some sincere souls guided by Allah, take up the task of bringing the Ummah back to life. These workers sincerely want that people join them in masse. They particularly wish those people to join them who are 'Muslim' in the real sense of the word, and who understand their 'duty' as Muslims to be 'witnesses for Allah' :

. But when these Daces call people towards Allah, they meet with discouragment.

Despite sincere efforts to approach people from all walks of life, they come to realize that their call

is not heeded. With mixed feeling of longing and melancholy they ponder over the causes of the failure of their dawah efforts. Are we presenting before people something that they do not fully believe in? If not, why do these people deny our message? Why do they reject our call?! is their self-questioning. And when daces analyse the real psychic situation of the rejectors, they conclude with the following impressions—that is (i) absence of the sense of duty and (ii) a confused and inappropriate image of Diyn.

As a foremost task, the daces attempt to overcome these two drawbacks. And as they censure people for their lack of duty-consciousness, the criticism is accepted often with apologetic stances and quiet submission. But as for their incorrect idea of Diyn, they do not accept it as a fact. Criticism of one's beliefs and views, however much fair and just, is never accepted with a cool and serene temper. And that too, if this criticism is directed against those beliefs which people love and severe, they react with even more acerbity, Instead of paying any heed to this criticism with sobriety, they launch counter-criticism against the movement itself - either directly or indirectly—and start denouncing the objectives of the movement. When this opposition becomes severe and violent, the workers of the Islamic movement too get affected. In retaliation, they take even more severe stance against the false beliefs of the masses, for

they see that these very beliefs are the cause of all mischiefs; it is these false notions that are preventing the more sincere Muslims from doing the duty which is the very *raison d'être* of their existence. Therefore these daces, aim at a very sharp attack at these false notions. But not conscious of their own immoderate stand in countering their opponents, the daces themselves become victims of imbalance. At such a juncture, only those sober workers can keep themselves away from unconsciously falling a prey to this counter-folly, whom Allah has granted a higher degree of religious insight, a dependable amount of cool mindedness and deeprooted sobriety of thought. Otherwise the strong antagonistic attitude of the masses tends to carry them to an extreme point of opposition and instability so that, the situation becomes so sensitive that if the common people refuse to accept a certain belief in accordance with its proper status, these workers tend to elevate it above its just position—both becoming victims of immoderation towards Diyn in their own particular spheres.

As is generally seen, that some people for instance tend to emphasize certain Virtues of Allah to such an extent that they almost lose sight of certain other virtues and its obligations. And as a result the whole concept of Diyn assumes a shape that is far removed from the original, thereby inverting the whole mechanism of their thought and belief. And the other side of the picture is that,

when confronted with such people, the workers of the Islamic movement react with same extremity. In retaliation they emphasize those Virtues of Allah which have been lost sight of by the other group and, inevitably, disregard those that the other group emphasizes.

The result of such discrimination, obviously, is that the Diyn, in all its fulness and grandeur fails to be adopted into everyday life. And the real vitality and magnificence of Al-Diyn, remains obscured behind veils.

However much minor, every attitude of instability and imbalance has its ill-effects on Diyn. Whether a wrong attitude has been adopted by the workers of the movement or by those who oppose the movement, the Diyn is, however, the sufferer. If it is the former group that has caused this instability then the disadvantages are greater—because a movement launched by men of unsound understanding of Diyn is certainly not an Islamic movement in the true sense for it can hardly serve the great purpose of Islamic resurgence with all such flaws attached to its form. All its struggle, however, much hard, will not be in conformity with the Diyn. Such a movement, obviously, will deprive itself of the support of that group of excellent workers who abhor every kind of instability in Diyn. And without an able group of men, the movement will only add to its misfortunes, as it will go farther away from the main stream; as a result the move-

ment will gradually face a tragic end, adding to the list of feuds in the history of the Muslim Ummah.

### **5. Groups Prejudices**

Another grave misfortune for an Islamic movement is the presence of communal feelings among its workers. It is a common human weakness that we apply certain standards when we judge ourselves and use certain other measures to judge others. For our own flaws we are lenient and always willing to overlook, but when the drawbacks of others are in question our vision instantly narrows and becomes highly rigid. Such double standards are adopted by we Muslims in almost every domain of life—be they in matters relating to self, family, community, caste, nation or Country. Every where our partisanship runs riot and discriminates the 'personal' from the 'public' and own' from 'alien'.

Often such an attitude holds its sway for, if a person adopts such a discriminating policy purely for individual benefits he is likely to face severe criticism from every quarter, and his own conscience too is likely to abuse him; but if he discriminates between people on the basis of Jamaat or community, he need not fear! There will be no accusing finger raised towards him. Rather, as a compliment he will be applauded for his 'virtue'; will be loaded with garlands; will be hailed in slogans! How about the pricking of his self now? No it would stop pricking! It would become calm

amidst the loud screams of praise and applause raised from various corners.

This human tendency towards discrimination is very powerful and awe-inspiring. Even that sincere group of people which has risen to work for Islam cannot be found to be above such feelings. The whole history of the Muslim is a witness to this. Several times has the Ummah suffered owing to these prejudices. Even to-day we can recall the past to see where we have suffered at the hands of such tendencies.

Many movements were launched with the sincere aim of serving as 'witnesses for Allah', but they fell prey to communal virus and lost their way in the middle. The point to be noted is that all dawah movements begin their task with utmost sincerity; they have vigilant eye over their strength of Imaan; they are careful to see that they work according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. All this is well attended to in the initial stages. But when the cursed communal virus sets in, it mars the whole vision of these once sincere and God-fearing workers. Now they begin looking at things with quite a different eye. Their activities have not round the Diyn but round Jamaat and its welfare, at a further stage only the Jamaat's good appears to be general good and only the Jamaat's support sounds like the support of all-Truth. As a result, every belief held by the Jamaat and every action taken by it, becomes a model of righteousness; the

Jamaat's activities alone are looked at with favour and everything outside the Jamaat with disfavour. If, incidentally some flaw of the Jamaat is brought to view it is brushed aside and ignored, and, on the contrary, any non-Jamaat belief and activity is looked down with distaste and its merits are thought to be unworthy of praise. The non-Jamaat merits are very stingily approved, as though our own organization and Jamaat is not prone to any folly, like that of the angels whose activities cannot be subject to any kind of criticism. This kind of partisanship is indeed far-removed from genuine God consciousness.

The most dangerous aspect of this erroneous path is that it takes the guise of a virtuous and divinely supported path. And, therefore, people get attracted towards it. Those who follow this path feel a sense of honour instead of indignity. It is an acknowledged fact that human nature tends to be attracted towards that evil very easily which puts on the garb of a virtue. Those unfortunate people who allow themselves to be so carried away by vices often become weak in arriving at a judgment. They daringly oppose and reject an established Truth for the simple reason that it has come from 'alien' quarters: and brazenfacedly follow in the footsteps of the unfortunate Jews in repeating:

Follow only those who  
adhere to your creed.

Now, how can we expect such people to work sincerely for the Diyn? How can we find their efforts being fruitful for the Islamic movement? It will indeed be a folly to expect good out of evil!

Let us ensure that these people whose vision does not cross the good of their own community, who sacrifice the cause of Islam over petty group benefits, and who differentiate between 'personal' and 'alien' even at the time of supporting all-Truth, and allow their sense of justice to be overruled by mean selfish considerations, in fact are hypocrites in disguise, and all their hue and cry about Islam is mere lip-service. They want to work for themselves in the name of working for the Diyn. How can one worship God as well as his group at the same time?!

## **6. Improper use of personal opinion**

Next important cause for the failure of the Islamic movement is the improper use of the freedom to express one's opinion. When this abuse exceeds certain limits, the whole movement becomes victim of nepotism' and nepotism is that chronic disease which will never allow the movement to proceed even a step forward, Far from proceeding forward, it begins retreating backward—like a fast descending train which has been separated from its engine while ascending a hill.

The thinking faculty is certainly a distinctive human quality. No one can be denied the freedom

to use it. It is everybody's birth-right, and those who do not use this right, infact, deprive themselves of the honour due to them as humans.

Islam, the natural religion of the world, makes it binding on every human being to utilize his mental faculties, not merely, as a right but rather as a primary duty. Those who leave their mental faculties to the wind have been refered to by the Qur'an as ,animal like'. And still further, those who deliberately avoid pronouncing 'Truth' have been called 'dumb devils'. But, let us remember, so much importance to mental faculties is given only when they are used with utmost care, responsibility and sincerity. Improper use of this talent has been strongly forbidden by Islam.

That is the most unfortunate period for Muslim Ummah, when its leaders and scholars become forgetful of their status and indulge in irresponsible use of the power of thought and belief or begin worshipping their own opinions, spreading mental chaos and confusin all around. The noble prophet (peace on him) has said :

"When you find miserliness holding its sway all over; *People being driven away by the power of passion*; this world being prefered to the Hereafter and every counsellor wooing his own counsel, and when you find that you too are a victim of one of these vices, then beware and

look after your ownself, and leave the others to what they are."

(Mishkat Chapter-' Amar-bil-Marroof')

One should reflect on the underlined phrases and look at the stress laid on 'every counsellor wooing his own counsel'. This means that when every counsellor insists upon his own counsel a sincere Muslim is not unjust in withdrawing from his duty of 'enjoining good and forbidding evil'. What then will the Muslim do if matters exceed this?! What will he do when, those who are not even worthy of rendering advice, begin offering counsels and insisting on them?! This will indeed be the worse stage of the psychological ailment—a stage when no ordinary person will dare attempt a cure!

Improper and Irresponsible use of opinion is a very serious danger in the way of the Islamic movement. The hadith reveals the seriousness of the hurdle.

It is absolutely necessary for the workers of the Islamic movement to cultivate perseverance and fortitude, and get used to the spirit of sacrifice in the process of giving and taking counsel. If a person arrives at a certain conclusion after necessary reflection, he has very right to express his opinion with all the required proof, and with force. But this does not mean that he should insist upon people

to accept his opinion as the total Truth. On the contrary, he should bear in mind that his opinion may be incorrect and somebody else's correct. It is always possible that his view falls short of covering all aspects of the concerned problem over which the opinion is being sought; or, it is equally possible that the opinion of others are more weighty and relevant, and that he has failed to perceive the relevance and weight implicit therein. But after considering these details, if he still deems his opinion to be sound, and if other counsellors continue to vote against his opinion, and if, through a majority decision they reject his opinion as a whole, it is binding on him, as a true and sincere worker, to willingly and gladly withdraw his counsel and faithfully accept the majority decision, though, as an individual he can still retain his own stand. He should submit his personal opinion to that of the majority, even if he sees that such a submission is likely to strike a blow at the very roots of the movement, or, God forbid, goes against the fundamental tenets of Islam.

No movement or organization whose workers are incapable sacrificing personal view in favour of the majority view can hope to achieve their goal. Who can claim better authority over a decision than our noble prophet (peace on him)? But lo ! What do we behold here? The noble saviour (peace and blessings of Allah shower on him) has several times withdrawn his opinion and accepted the

counsel of the majority of his loving companions, (Allah be pleased with them) inspite of the fact that if he (peace on him) had made his decision prevail, not a single sahabi would have dared oppose him ! How then, can any body amongst us insist upon his opinion or counsel? Are we so sure that our thoughts and opinions are absolutely flawless and perfectly true? are we receiving devine revelations to be so sure of their thoroughness? If not, can we be sure that we are above all criticism? !

Freedom of thaught and expression is one thing and insistance on our opinion is another. Let us remember that healthy and sound use of this faculty enables the Islamic movement to employ and concentrate its strength on one single front—ie against all-Jhailiyya--and helps the movement proceed in a slow yet steady pace towards its destination. But love of one's own opinion is such a pernicious disease that it can only cause ultimate destruction of the movement at the hands of its own workers, like the unfortunate troops of the Kings Porus which attacked their own fortification in description.

The whole history of the Muslim Ummah is a witness to the given truth. Even before to the end of the Glorious caliphate, dissension and civil strife cropped up in the Ummah. And till this day the breach has not been resolved. The unique Diyn that has come to call people towards unity of thought, belief and action has itself become a

victim of disunity and disharmony, so that its adherents are now found to be divided into as many as seventy two various sects.

The main cause for such an unfortunate state of affair is the cursed tendency among people to insist on personal opinion even about highly controversial issues. Being allowed to continue, this tendency has become so strong and deeply rooted that even the position of the Ummah as 'Witness for Allah' seem to have undergo a change. Men's adherence to certain beliefs and concepts alone has become synonymous with being 'Witnesses for Allah'. And an additional misfortune is that the victims of 'opinion worship' do not realize that they are the sufferers. The disease itself is deemed to be a sign of health. And the general notion is that to give up a certain personal view is to fall-back from the status of 'steadfastness over the Truth'. When such a malignant tendency becomes serious, then every single moment adds to the venom of dissension as a result of which the whole society gets entrapped into mischief and confusion. Though apparently the whole caravab appears to proceed in complete unision over one single highway and towards one goal, but in truth it is only a collection of various groups of travellers trodding into various directions and offering an unfortunate spectacle. The Qur'an's remark on them need to be pondered over

"Each party is rejoicing with  
that which is with itself."

Every such movement that has been launched for the resurgence of al-Diyn, and has for its goal the establishment of Diyn as a way of life in every single domain' on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah in their genuine spirit and form, should seek the Lord's support and protection against any attempt that may shove it away from Truth and into the vally of darkness.

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## THE AUTHOR

The author of this booklet Maulana Sadruddin Islahi, who belongs to the Islamic movement, is well known as a scholar and author. There are more than a dozen published works to his credit. His work 'ISLAM EK NAZAR MEIN' has gained much welcome and its many editions have come out in English also—Islam at a glance. His main books are 'Maarka-e-Islam Aur Jahiliyat' (Conflict between Islam & Ignorance), Fariza-e-Iqamat-e-Diyn (Establishment of Islam—a duty of Muslims), Asas-e-Diyn Ki Tamir '(Construction of Islamic fundamentals), 'Islam Aur Ijtimaiyat, (Islam upholds Collectivism), 'Diyn Ka Qurani Tasawwar' (Quranic Concept of Islam.), 'Islamic movement of India—an introduction' and 'Quran Majeed Ka Taaruf' (Introduction of Quran).

He is also the president of Idara-e-Tahqeeq-o-Tasneef-e-Islami, Aligarh.

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