

Meeting the People Where They are, Or Meeting the People Where They Need to Be?

Observations on Recent Statements Aimed at Doing Away with Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil

ANWAR WRIGHT

7/27/2015

What follows is a reminder, in light of the Qur'aan and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Salaf of this Ummah, concerning the importance of enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil in Islaam and a reply to recent statements aimed at doing away with commanding the good and forbidding the evil.



Meeting the People Where They are, Or Meeting the People Where They Need to Be?

By Abu Suhayl Anwar Wright

WE HAVE HEARD SOME OF THE STATEMENTS from one of the callers to desires and misguidance here in Philadelphia whose goal, ultimately, is do away with the commanding of good and forbidding of evil, and to allow the people to do and say whatever pleases them from sin, transgression and innovation, without there being anyone to censure those statements and actions, or look down upon them. His speech is in line with the old statement of some common folk prevalent some years ago “Allah knows what’s in my heart” or “Only Allah can judge me.” These statements contain truth, but what is intended by them is to leave off censuring and rebuking open acts of disobedience, innovation, and other matters they commit which contradict the lofty Religion of Islam¹. The only difference now is that these new statements emanate from an individual who ascribes to knowledge and carries a degree from the Islamic University of al Madinah. His dubious statements only give ammunition to people who follow their desires and practice Islam in a way that suits their desires without there being anyone who can advise, rebuke, or censure them.

We hear this misguided Da’ee echoing his well-known refrain: “We have to meet the people where they are.” He also stated recently: “Let people live, stop making the religion difficult on one another”, “Stop being judgmental to one another, it’s divisive, and it causes fragmentation and division in our religion.” And his statement, “The religion teaches us to be understanding. Not all of the *Sahabah* were on the same level, the Prophet (ﷺ) met every individual where they were individually in their lives, trying to make them the best they can be as individuals in their own lives, not in the grand scheme of Islam”. Also, “Give everybody their time to change and let them find their niche in the religion and stop trying to impose on people..”, and “Some people have been to

¹ Shaykh Muhammad Nasir al Din al Albani (رحمته الله) mentions in the introduction of his checking of Riyadh al Salihin, Hadeeth number 8 in the book which is the Hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that states that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allah does not look at your bodies nor your physical images, but he looks at your hearts” Collected by Muslim. Shaykh Albani says, “Imam Muslim and others collect an additional wording (which is) ‘and your actions’...” Shaykh Albani continues, “And this addition is very important, because many people understand this hadeeth incorrectly. When you command them with what the legislation has commanded them with, such as growing the beard, leaving off imitating the disbelievers and other than that from the affairs commanded by the legislation, they reply to you by saying what is considered is only what is in the heart. They support their claim with this Hadeeth without knowing of the authentic addition (i.e. “and your actions”) that shows that Allah the Majestic and High also looks at the actions; if they are righteous He accepts them and if not He rejects them back upon them, as many evidences prove..” Riyadh al Salihin with Shaykh Albani’s checking pages 21-22.

hell and back to arrive where they are right now for someone to come along and say, why's she dressed like that?"

At the same time, this Da'ee brings a doubt to the people by using instances that occurred with the companions in order to attempt to justify his words. He mentions how Umar was stern and the Prophet didn't try to change that, and that Uthman was shy and the Prophet didn't try to change that, and Abu Bakr was reserved and the Prophet didn't try to change that; instead, they all changed on their own, according to the situations that were placed before them.

I say, comparing those instances that occurred with these Rightly Guided Caliphs (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ), to the idea of abandoning correcting and advising people due to their individual personalities is erroneous, and clearly two separate issues.

When did Abu Bakr's humility, Umar's harshness, or Uthman's shyness ever cause them to leave off commandments and prohibitions in the religion? When were personalities ever an excuse for the Prophet not to correct people if he saw from them shortcomings? Rather, as we know, he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) corrected the errors and shortcomings of the people, although they had different personalities, and we'll bring some examples in the coming paragraphs evincing this, if Allah wills. This false analogy put forth by this misguided Da'ee shows his feeble understanding of Allah's Religion, and his attempt to justify leaving off commanding the good and forbidding the evil, with the claim that people have individual personalities.

Shaykh Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

...As for gentleness, it is to deal with the people gently and lightly; even with those who are deserving of punishment, one possibly may still use gentleness with them. However, this should only be [the case] if the person that one is using gentleness with deserves gentleness. (But), if a person is not deserving of gentleness, such as the case in the statement of Allah the Glorified and High: "The fornicator and fornicatress, flog both of them one hundred times. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment."²

This clearly demonstrates that whatever a person's personality may be, perhaps compassionate, as mentioned in the previous verse, or other than that, they must conform to what Allah has legislated, and this includes commanding the good and forbidding the evil. And it is not said that due to one's personality, they must be given time to change and "find their niche in the religion", or "they'll change when certain circumstances allow them to change"; as if all of this must occur before conforming with what Allah legislated.

In summary, although people possess various personalities, and they differ regarding their individual character, they are commanded to implement the whole of the religion, and the enjoining of good and forbidding the evil must be applied with everyone. As for changing ones personality or individuality, as far as my knowledge, no one from the people of knowledge claims that this is

² Sharh Riyadh al Salihin 3/573-574

necessary, unless that personality conflicts with the Qur'an or Sunnah, then one should strive and supplicate to Allah that He better their character.

It has been established that the Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated: "O Allah guide me to the best of character, no one guides to it except You, and divert from me the evil of it, no one diverts from its evil except You."

I now would like to mention some evidences from the Book and Sunnah that show the obligation of commanding the good and forbidding the evil upon the Muslims, and likewise mention some edicts from the people of knowledge that repudiate the statements of this caller to misguidance and his destructive path, in hopes that this be a clarity for those Muslims who may be deceived by his words believing they hold correctness or validity.

Evidences from the Qur'an regarding enjoining the good and forbidding the evil:

Allah says: **"You are the best people raised up from Mankind. You command the good, you forbid the evil and you believe in Allah."** [Aali Imran 3:110]

Imam Sa'di (رحمته الله) said:

Allah the Most High praises this Ummah and informs that they are the best Ummah that Allah brought out for the people. This is due to them striving to complete themselves by having eeman which necessitates that they perform everything Allah commanded them with, and that they strive to complete other than them by commanding the good and forbidding the evil which entails calling the people to Allah and exerting themselves in doing so and putting forward what they are able to in order to return them back from their misguidance, their being amiss, and their disobedience. So with this, they are the best Ummah to be brought out for the people.

And Allah says: **"And let it be amongst you an Ummah who calls to al Khayr, who command the good, and forbid the evil, and they are the successful."** [Aali Imran 3:104]

Imam Sa'di (رحمته الله) said:

[and they command the Ma'roof] and it is that whose goodness is known by way of (sound) intellect and by the Legislation (of Islam) **[and forbid the Munkar]** and it is that whose evil is known by way of (sound) intellect and by the legislation. And this is a direction from Allah to the believers that there be a group from them who set out for da'wah in His path and who direct the people to His religion. This includes the Scholars and those who teach the religion, and the callers who invite the people from other Religions to enter into the Religion of Islam, and call those who went astray to

al Istiqamah (uprightness). (Likewise it is a direction) for those who strive in the cause of Allah, and those who set out to check on the conditions of the people and to order them with (implementing) the legislation such as the five obligatory prayers, zakah, fasting, Hajj and others affairs of Islam. Also like checking on the scales and measures (that weigh goods) and to check on the people within the market place and prevent them from cheating and false transactions. All of these affairs are from the Furud al Kifayat (i.e. if done by some the sin is taken off the rest of the people but if left by all the Muslims then everyone is sinful), as the verse indicates [and let it be from (i.e. some) of you]...”

He continues: “And this group who are prepared to invite to the good and command Ma’roof and forbid al Munkar are the elite believers, and because of this Allah said regarding them **[and they indeed are the successful]**.”

Hence, it is clear from the speech of this great Imam that there should be those who call astray Muslims to uprightness and that there be those who check the conditions of the people and order them with implementing the legislations of Islam. We do not hear him echoing the statements of this misguided Da’ee “meet the people where they are”, or “don’t impose on the people” or “let people find their niche in Islam”.

Also, Allah clarified that commanding the good and forbidding the evil is from the descriptions of the believers and that commanding the evil and forbidding the good is from the descriptions of the hypocrites.

He the Most High said: **“The hypocrites, men and women are from one another; they enjoin al Munkar and forbid al Ma’roof and they close their hands (from spending in Allah’s cause). They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them. Verily the hypocrites are the Fasiqun.”** [al Taubah 9:67]

Then He said: **“The believers, men and women are helpers of one another; they enjoin the Ma’roof and forbid from al Munkar, they perform the Salah and give the zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.”**

And from the advices of Luqman the wise to his son was: **“O my son! Perform the prayer, enjoin al Ma’roof and forbid al Munkar and bear patience with whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah with no exemption.”**

Shaykh Sa’di (رحمته الله) says:

So this entails completing of himself by doing what is good and leaving what is evil, and (striving) to complete others with that, by commanding him (or her) and forbidding him (or her). And due to Him (Allah) knowing that it is a must that he will be put to trial if he commands (the good) and forbids (the evil), and that in commanding and forbidding entails difficulty, He commanded him with being patient upon that and said **[and bear patience with whatever befalls you. Verily, these]** which Luqman advised his son with **[are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah]**.

This is the methodology that has come in the Book of Allah. The believer commands the good and forbids the evil and remains patient upon what results from harms and difficulties. This individual desires to bring into Islam the teachings of disbelievers such as Dale Carnegie who refuses to censure or rebuke anyone, let alone even advise them for their shortcomings; which is why we find this Da'ee praising Dale Carnegie's work, as can be seen in one of his previous publications.

Furthermore, being new to the religion is not excuse to overlook the new Muslim's errors that oppose the Qur'an and Sunnah. Rather, we have in the Sunnah where the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) strongly rebuked those who were new to Islam because of a statement of theirs that contradicted with the Tauheed of Allah.

Reported by Abu Waqid al Laythee (رضي الله عنه) who said:

"We went out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the expedition to Hunain while we had just recently accepted Islam. The pagans had a lote-tree called Dhat Anwat where they would remain and hang their weapons upon it. When we passed by it we said, O Messenger of Allah, won't you make for us another Dhat Anwat just like their Dhat Anwat? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, Allahu Akbar! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, verily these are the ways (of the disbelieving nations). You have said exactly as the Banu Israil have said to Musa, "Make for us a god just as their Gods, He (Musa) said, Verily you are an ignorant people. (7:138)". Certainly, you will follow the ways of those who went before you."

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (رحمته الله) mentioned in his points of benefit from this Hadeeth:

"That the Prophet did not excuse them (due to their ignorance); rather, he replied to them with his statement: ""Allahu Akbar, verily these are the ways (of the disbelieving nations), indeed you will follow the practices of those who came before you"" So he (i.e. the Prophet) magnified the seriousness of the matter with these three (scolding statements)."

So where is this Da'ee from the infallible teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his dealings with even the new Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) didn't "meet them where they were" because they were new Muslims. He didn't "give them time to change and find their niche in the religion." Rather, he rebuked their statement, which if they had implemented it, it would've been an act of shirk; however, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prevented them from this.

He claims that "not all the Sahabah were upon the same level" and that the Prophet (ﷺ) "met them where they were". Did not the Prophet (ﷺ) say when he saw 'Umar ibn al Khattab reading some pages from the Torah "Do you have doubt (of what I have come with) O Ibn al Khattab" Did he not instruct Abu Bakr as Sideeq to forgive the believers who spoke about some things regarding the incident of the great slander done upon our mother 'Aisha (رضي الله عنها)?

Did not the Prophet (ﷺ) cut off the hand of al Makhzumiyyah when she stole, refusing to accept the intercession of Zayd ibn al Harith (رضي الله عنه) on her behalf? Did not he stone to death Ma'iz

and al Ghamidiyyah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) due to adultery? Did he not flog the companion Abdullah Himar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) who drank intoxicants?

Did he not instruct the man who said “Whatever Allah wills and what you will”, to instead say “What Allah wills alone”? Did he not instruct the woman who said “And we have a Prophet who knows what tomorrow entails”, to divert from that statement and say what she used to say before?

Thus, this idea that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) “met the people where they were” and did not correct errors, rebuke falsehood, and censure actions and individuals is rejected by the authentic narrations of the Sunnah.

Perhaps, the statement of the rightly guided Khalifa Umar ibn al Khattab (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) best sums up this Da’ee: “The people of opinion are enemies of the Sunnah, they were incapable of memorizing the ahadeeth and it slipped pass them so they could not comprehend them, so they spoke with opinions and went astray and led others astray.”

Then consider the fact that the vast majority of those who this Da’ee seeks to “meet where they are” are people whom have been Muslims for years. How long until these individuals can be called to Tauheed, to Sunnah, to the methodology of the Salafus Salih, be warned from Shirk, from innovation, from the callers to misguidance, from free mixing, from al-Tabbaruj³? The reality is that this Da’ee doesn’t want to change these affairs, but rather would like them to become the norm amongst the Muslims, to maintain the status quo. He desires an Islam where everyone practices it the way their “individuality” tells them to practice it—the Dale Carnegie way—and not the way legislated in the Book and Sunnah. Furthermore, if Islam was just based upon “individuality”, what then is the purpose of the communal acts of worship being legislated, such as the Jum’ah prayer, the Hajj, the fast of the Month of Ramadan, and other acts of communal worship?

Allah commands the believers in His Book: **“O you who believe! Enter perfectly into Islam and do not follow the footsteps of Shaytan. Verily, he is to you a plain enemy.”** [al Baqarah 2:208]

Imam as Sa’di (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said regarding this ayah:

This is a command from Allah for the believers to enter [perfectly into Islam]: meaning into all the areas of the legislation and not to leave anything from it. Also not to be from those who have taken their desires as their God, whereas if a legislated matters is in accordance to his desire he does it, and if it opposes it, he leaves it. Rather what it necessary is that the desires follow the religion and that one does everything that they are able to do from the acts of goodness, and that which he is incapable of, he has determination to do it and intends to do it, so he will reach it by his intention.

And due to the fact that entering into the religion is done completely, it cannot be achieved nor imagined (that it can be done) except by opposing the paths of the

³ “The scholars explain *al-Tabarruj* to mean the (woman’s) open display of her beauty and areas of temptation such as her bosoms, her neck, her ears, her jewelry, her hair and the likes of that.” Fatawa al Nur ala al Darb by Shaykh Bin Baz 4/2220

Shaytan. He (Allah) said: [**and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytan**]; meaning by doing acts of disobedience to Allah [**Verily, he is to you a plain enemy**], and a plain enemy does not command except with evil and illicitness and what is harmful upon you.

Also, due to it being a must that a person will fall short and be deficient, Allah said [**Then if you slide back after the clear signs have come to you**] meaning after having knowledge and certain, [**then know that Allah is All Mighty, All Wise**].

And in (the verse) is a severe threat and (instilling of) fear, that causes one to leave sliding back, for indeed the All Mighty, the Irresistible, the All Wise, if the disobedient disobeys Him, He will overpower him with His Might, and punish him with whatever His wisdom necessitates, for indeed from His wisdom is that He punishes the disobedient and criminals.

And Allah the Most High said: “**He (Allah) ordained for you from the Religion, which he ordained for Nuh, and also what He inspired to you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibrahim, Musa, and Eesa, saying you should establish the Religion, and make no divisions in it.**”

Imam Sa’di said about this verse:

This is the greatest favor Allah bestowed upon His servants, that He legislated for them the best Religion, most pure and most wholesome; the Religion of Islam. The one which He legislated for the selected and chosen ones from His servants; rather, Allah legislated it for the chosen of the chosen ones, and the elite of the elites one, who are the Messengers of Strong determination who were mentioned in this verse. They are the highest of the creation in degree and the most complete from every aspect. So the Religion that He chose for them, must be appropriate for all their circumstances, in accordance to their completeness. Rather, Allah only completed them and chose them because of them fully taking on its responsibility. So if it wasn’t for the Religion of Islam, no one from the creation would be raised in degree. It is the spirit of happiness, and the spiritual pole of completeness; it is what this Noble Book comprises of and called to from Tauheed, righteous actions, good etiquettes and mannerisms.

For this reason He said [**you should establish the religion**] Meaning; He commanded you to establish all which was legislated in the Religion, its foundations and branches. Likewise that you establish it within yourselves, and you strive to establish it within others, and that you all cooperate upon righteousness and piety and that you do not cooperate upon sin and transgression [, **and make no divisions in it**] Meaning, Let it occur from you all agreement in the foundations of the religion and its branches, and strive that you are not divided by (trivial) matters and not to divide into schisms, so much so that you become groups, bearing enmity to one another, whilst your all in agreement in the foundation of the Religion.

This noble verse along with its tafsir by this great Imam shows many matters:

First: If this Religion of Islam was that which Allah legislated for the best of the creation who were the Messengers of strong determination and it was appropriate for their circumstances, then Islam, the whole of Islam is appropriate for us all the more.

Second: The command to establish the whole of the Religion, the Foundations and the branches within ourselves and strive to establish it within others. A clear refutation of this Da'ees claim to "meet the people where they are", and "do not impose on the people."

Also to establish the religion comprises the cooperating upon righteousness and piety and not cooperating upon sin and transgression.

Third: The warning of differing in the Religion whilst the Religion is one and its foundation is one. So if it is the case that the religion is one religion legislated for the whole of mankind, and from the religion is commanding the good and forbidding the evil, how can commanding the good and forbidding the evil cause division, as this Da'ee mentions "Stop being judgmental to one another, its divisive, and it causes fragmentation and division in our religion." The Qur'an has been called al Furqan, and the Prophet (ﷺ) was described as one who divided between a man and his brother; this is all because Islam calls to division...that is, between truth and falsehood.

This is merely another attempt by him to belittle the affair of commanding the good and forbidding the evil, in a manner that appeals to those who are weak in religion and want to follow their desires, by labelling it being "judgmental". The Prophet (ﷺ) has explicitly mentioned that if one leaves off commanding the good and forbidding the evil, which this Da'ee calls "Judging others", that it can be a reason for a general calamity to befall the people.

Narrated an- Nu'man ibn Bashir (رضي الله عنه) who said: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The example of the person abiding by Allah's orders and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their spots on a ship. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go to the upper deck to get it, so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) as not to trouble those above us. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe."

Ibn Hajar (رحمه الله) said regarding this hadeeth in al Fath: "In it shows that punishment is deserved due to leaving off commanding the good."⁴

Shaykh Salih al Fawzan, may Allah preserve him, said in his explanation of an- Nawawi's Forty Hadeeth, after mentioning the previous hadeeth: "So this is a parable for the sinners who want to put a hole in the ship of Islam, because Islam is the ship that saves from destruction and drowning. So if those above leave those who are below and that which want to do, they all will be destroyed, and if they prevent them they all will be saved. This is a crystal clear parable regarding commanding the good and forbidding the evil, and that in it is safety from destruction."⁵

⁴ 5/363

⁵ al Mihnat al Rabbaniyyah Fi Sharh al Arba'in al Nawawiyyah page 255

He also said while explaining the hadeeth of Abu Sa'id al Khudri (رضي الله عنه): "Whoever from amongst you sees an evil, let him change with his hand, if he is unable then with his tongue, if he is unable then with his heart, and that is the lowest branch of Eeman." Reported by Muslim

The Shaykh said:

And Allah obligated upon this Ummah the commanding of good and forbidding the evil, because this is rectification of the society. Sins and acts of opposition (to the legislation) is a reason for destruction and ruin, and the cure for that is with the commanding of good and forbidding of evil, and this is advice for the one being commanded or forbidden. It is not from the aspect of imposing upon the affairs of the people, as the people of hypocrisy say. They say: 'Commanding the good and forbidding the evil is overseeing the people and imposing upon their affairs'! It is said to them, this is not from the aspect of overseeing the people or imposing upon them, rather it is from the aspect of rectification and advice.

Later the Shaykh Said, "Allah described the believers that they make al Tawasi (mutually advise one another) with the truth, so this (i.e. commanding the good and forbidding the evil) is Wasiyyah (advice) and not Wisaayah (overseeing the people). Allah said: **"And they advise one another with the truth and advise one another with patience."** [al-Asr 103:3]⁶

SubhanAllah, have we not heard from this misguided Da'ee this same speech; "Do not impose on the people"? It shows that the people of falsehood speak with one tongue. Allah the Most High says: **"So said the people before them words of similar import. Their hearts are alike. We have indeed made plain the signs for people who believe with certainty."** [al-Baqarah 2:118]

I would like to conclude by mentioning some important Fatwa by the Imam, Shaykh Abdul Aziz bin Baz (رحمه الله). The Shaykh was asked about the ruling on commanding the good and forbidding by those charged with authority or those who are from the general people. Here is a portion of what he said in his lengthy reply:

..And in summary, commanding the good and forbidding the evil is a great affair and a holy obligation and a duty upon the Muslims; if those who are sufficient from (the people of) a land or town performs it, its obligation falls from the rest (of the Muslims). But if it's not performed by those sufficient to do so, it becomes a duty upon the rest (of the Muslims) and they are sinful by leaving it off. Also, if you are in a locality, a town, a country, a masjid or a neighborhood where there is a manifest evil and it is not prohibited, it is upon you to prohibit it and not to be negligent in that, because perhaps there is no one other than you who can prohibit it and take your place. So it is obligatory upon you to prohibit the evil wherever you may be according to your ability as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said "Whoever from amongst you sees an evil, let him change with his hand, if he is unable then with his tongue, if

⁶ al Mihnat al Rabbaniyyah Fi Sharh al Arba'in al Nawawiyyah page 253-254

he is unable then with his heart, and that is the lowest branch of Eeman.” Reported by Muslim in his Saheeh.

This shows that it is of levels, that it is obligatory upon every Muslim and that they prohibit it according to their ability; with the hand, then with the tongue, then with the heart. Changing it with the heart is by one’s temperament changing, having dislike and departing from that sitting which has evil, if they don’t comply to the person’s prohibition (of the evil), this is how the believer should be. The Prophet (ﷺ) said “If the people see an evil and do not change it, Allah will come close to sending down upon all of them His punishment.”

And he (ﷺ) said: You will all indeed command the good and forbid the evil, or Allah will come close to sending upon all of you a punishment from Himself.” He (ﷺ) also said “Allah the Exalted and High said: O people, command the good and forbid the evil before you all supplicate to Me and I will not answer and before you ask of Me and I will not give you and before you seek My help and I will not help you.”

All this points to a serious matter, and we are now in a time where the majority of people have become negligent, and the praiseworthy jealousy has lessened and evil has spread and prohibiting (the evil) has decreased. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Muslim to not take on that description and not to be deceived by the people (i.e. who leave off commanding the good and forbidding the evil).

So, this is for the Muslim woman in her home with her children and with her neighbors; she must have jealousy for Allah the Mighty and Exalted. She must prohibit vice regarding her daughter, her sister, her maid, those around her and whoever she sees; in the markets and outside the markets she prohibits vice with her hand and her tongue, according to her ability. Also with her children she prohibits vice with her hand and removes the evil; also upon the people of her household, whether it be maids or anyone else, and in instances other than that, she prohibits with her tongue according to her ability. She is the same as a man in this; they both have the duty of prohibiting the evil with the hand, then with the tongue, then with the heart.

With this, affairs will be rectified, communities will be rectified, good will become apparent, virtue will become prevalent and immorality will decrease. However, if the people are negligent and they see evils and do not change them, immorality will spread, virtue will decrease, and the affair of commanding the good and forbidding the evil will lessen due to this negligence, and further, it is feared the coming of general and specific punishments upon everyone, and there is no might nor power except with Allah.⁷

The Shaykh was also asked the following question:

⁷ Fatawa al Nur ala al Darb 4/2014-2015

If I live with a Muslim who prays, recites the Qur'an and we eat and drink together, however he does not advise me when I fall into something prohibited, rather he keeps quiet. Sometimes I think of cutting him off because I see this to be a shortcoming from him, so what is the ruling on that?

The Shaykh answered:

At any rate, this is considered to be a shortcoming (on his behalf). If your (Muslim) brother doesn't advise you or let you know about any mistakes that occurred from you, this is a shortcoming. However, it is upon you to inform him of this and not to cut him off. You say to him, 'Brother, let me know when I fall short, reprimand me, because the Muslim is the brother of a Muslim and Allah the Glorified and High says [And the believers, male and female, are helpers to one another; they command the good and forbid the evil.]. So it is upon him to remind him of Allah and to advise him in order to aid him against his own soul, because some people are cowardly, and they fear that if they speak to command the good and forbid the evil, his brothers (in Islam) will boycott and abandon him. So what is intended is that he is informed, so he may know that you –and all praise is for Allah- are pleased with him telling you (of your shortcomings).

If one examines the Fatwa by Shaykh Ibn Baz they can observe the following:

One: Not telling your companion about their faults is a shortcoming.

Two: It is virtuous to point out the shortcoming of your companion so they can correct it.

Three: The Shaykh includes this matter in the affair of commanding the good and forbidding the evil, as he cites the ayah from Surah al Taubah.

Four: Being afraid of telling one of their shortcoming out of fear they will abandon you is from cowardice.

So again, this clearly refutes the ignorant statements of this misguided Da'ee who says "stop trying to impose on the people...", and "Some people have been through hell and back to get where they are now." Does he not know by letting a person know their shortcomings in order to rectify them, that is something good and one will thank a person for doing so, thus, it will be a greater reason for the betterment of themselves?

Then we also ask, who hasn't gone through hardships in their lives? If we made ease in life, the scale for commanding the good and forbidding the evil, then when will commanding the good and forbidding the evil ever occur, as most of the people have experienced hardships in their life. May Allah protect them and us from the true Hell. [The fire of hell is more intense in heat, if only they could understand] al Taubah 9:81.

Were not the new Muslims who the Prophet (ﷺ) rebuked for asking him to make for them a tree like the tree of the disbelievers not on an expedition to war and going to fight, perhaps ready to lose their lives and property? Was that not a hardship? But, did that stop the Prophet from

rebuking their statement with those harsh words? And there are other examples and lessons like this in the Sunnah.

In closing, dear reader, I hope to Allah that you see the importance of commanding the good and forbidding the evil and that it is from the foundations of Islam. I also pray that you have seen what this misguided Da'ee and those similar to him call to with their aforementioned phrases; those who only intend to tear down and destroy this foundation in order for immorality, vice, innovation, and desires to remain present in the name of "individuality", or "not judging", or "not imposing". And no doubt, commanding the good and forbidding the evil has principles, the most important is having knowledge and insight regarding what one is commanding and what one is prohibiting, so one does not command with what is evil nor prohibit what is good. Likewise a person must have sincerity and only partake in this lofty matter seeking the Face of Allah the Most High. Also, one should have wisdom, gentleness and kindness and be eager for the rectification of the person they are commanding or prohibiting. All of these matters have their proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah and they are principles that must be observed when undertaking this affair.

I ask Allah that He guides the Muslims to everything that He loves and is pleased with, to forgive our shortcomings and sins, and bless us to be those who command the good and forbid the evil and take the advice of those who advise and cause us to die upon the best of deeds.

و صلى الله و سلم و بارك على نبينا محمد و على آله و صحبه و سلم

