

# Deviation and the Straight Path

Two efforts have continued since the creation of man: The effort of guidance or the effort of the Ambiyā', and the effort of deviation or the effort of Shaytān. This all began the day, Nabī Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was created and Allah ordered all the angels to bow down to Nabī Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, all did with the exception of Iblīs. Shaytān took a vow that day that he would lead all of men astray:

(Shaytān) said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your Straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them, and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful (to You)." [Ma'idah: 16,17]

Allah سُبحانه وتعالى in turn made two promises:

## FIRST PROMISE OF ALLAH

(Allah) said, "Get out of Paradise, reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them, I will surely fill Hell with you, all together." [Ma'idah: 18]

## SECOND PROMISE OF ALLAH

And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance, there will be no fear upon them, nor will they grieve. [Baqarah: 38]

Thus, the effort of Shaytān continued endlessly trying to lead man astray, but in every generation Allah سُبحانه وتعالى would send Ambiyā', who would warn man of the plots of Shaytān, save them from misguidance, and guide them back to the path of salvation.

Many fell prey to the deceptions of Shaytān and adopted the path of deviation, ultimately leading to their destruction in this world and the hereafter. The Path of Hidāyat (guidance) has been referred to time and again as the Sirāt al-Mustaqīm (the Straight Path), it is clear and apparent with no bends, curves, or angles. When one travels to a certain destination then he has to follow the exact coordinates in order to reach that town. A slight variation even by a few degrees—even if it be but a single degree—will result in him veering completely off course and missing his destination entirely. Initially it might appear that it is matter of one degree, but as you travel down the road, you may find that you've missed the mark by thousands of kilometres.

Take for example the people of Nūh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام: After Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام the people were on Tawhīd, worshipping only one Allah and ascribing no partners to him; however,

Shaytān tricked these people into making idols of celebrated personalities from amongst them, so that they may be revered and their memory preserved. Slowly this reverence, took on a more ritualistic approach, until slowly but surely it led to outright idol worship. What appeared to be a harmless innovation led to complete deviation. Allah سُبحانه وتعالى then sent Nabī Nūh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to guide his people. Those who followed him were successful while those who rejected him were afflicted with a terrible punishment.

And such was the case with many nations of the past: The people of Nabī Hūd عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام ('Ād), the people of Nabī Sālih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Thamūd), the people of Nabī Lūt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, the people of Nabī Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and the nations of other Ambiyā'.

Nabī Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام had two sons, Ismā'il and Ishāq. The son of Ishāq was Ya'qūb who was known as Isrā'īl. It is his children who are known as the Banū Isrā'īl. They too were fooled by the deceptions of Shaytān on a number of occasions, and each time Ambiyā' were sent to guide them back to the path of salvation.

Deviation has been something that has affected man in every age, whereby people strayed from the Straight path and made their ultimate abode Jahannam. To us it might seem foolish and difficult to fathom that anybody could have fallen for such beliefs and been tricked into such forms of worship. However, the sad reality is that people were tricked into following false prophets and even worshipping false gods.

The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at that which hears nothing but calls and cries [i.e. cattle or sheep] They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they do not understand. [Baqarah: 171]

Such devotees of their false ideologies did they become that they were incapable of seeing the truth, even when it was right before their eyes.

Āzar, the father of Nabī Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, would prostrate to the very idols which he had made with his own hands. Yet, he failed to see the error of his ways.

Take the example of the Banū Isrā'īl; who saw the sea split apart and Fir'awn drowned right before their eyes—a unique miracle of the might and majesty of Allah سُبحانه وتعالى—but they were quickly tricked by Sāmiri into worshipping the golden calf. Even after that, after those who worshipped the calf were punished, later when they passed a group of people



worshipping idols, they asked Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to make for them an idol as well which they could worship.

Sometimes, people despite knowing that what they believed in or continue to believe in is false still adhere to their false beliefs, to save themselves embarrassment and ridicule. Perhaps the motivation of some might be worldly gain or popularity, or perhaps their intentions may be noble; but because it is contrary to the established teachings of Islam (Qur'ān and Sunnah) it will ultimately lead to deviation. A case in point would be the nation of Nabī Nūh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.

So, the motives can be financial, political, or maybe even religious; but regardless, they have succeeded in duping the masses and in the process made fortunes for themselves. The Aga Khani Shī'ah believe that Prince Karim Aga Khan is the present Imam, and that he is the light of Allah on earth, practically god incarnate. When he speaks it is god speaking, thus they refer to him as the Talking Qur'an and the Qur'an we know and recite they refer to as the Silent Qur'an, which they belief is abolished. Thus, they cling on to every word he says, as to them it is regarded as revelation itself. He has since abolished the performance of salāh, fasting, Hajj, and zakāh as we know it. He has, however, made Dāsond compulsory on his followers, which is to pay 12.5 percent of one's income yearly to the Imam, 2.5 percent he will use on charities as he deems fit and the other ten percent, belongs to him which he may use at his leisure and discretion. His net worth in 2023 has been estimated to be 14 billion dollars, making him one of the world's richest men.

There have been many agents of Shaytān who led many astray, when chided for their devilish schemes, they lay the blame at the feet of their followers instead, mimicking their mentor as this is exactly how Shaytān will answer:

And Shaytān will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves. I cannot be called to your aid, nor can you be called to my aid. Indeed, I deny your association of me (with Allah) before. Indeed, for the wrongdoers is a painful punishment." [Ibrāhīm: 22]

We live in a time wherein new ideologies and philosophies are declared daily, and a number of deviant sects have become rampant in our society. Deviation is not an occurrence restricted to the previous nations only; it affects us at present as well. While the line of Nubuwwah ended with Nabī Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ — and there will be no new Prophet nor is there anyone having the

same rank as the Prophets who has come or is still awaited—it does not mean that Shaytān has retired. Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "My Ummah will follow in the

footsteps of the Banū Isrā'īl, step for step, they were split into 72 sects and my Ummah will be split into 73 sects, all of them will be in the hell-fire except one." When the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was asked who will be those who will be saved from the fire, he replied, "Those who follow my path and the path of my Sahābah." [al-Tirmidhī, #2641] Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. Thus has He instructed you that you may become righteous. [An'ām: 153]

In another, narration the Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "I left you on a clear path, the night of it is the same as the day. None will digress from it after me except the one who is destroyed." [Musnad Ahmad]

The effort of the Ambiyā'—the effort of guidance, calling towards good and preventing evil—is now the responsibility of the Ummah.

We should be wary of those sects who claim to be Muslim, yet propagate beliefs contrary to that firmly established by the Qur'ān and Sunnah, or criticise the faith of the best of generations—the Sahābah and those who followed them from the Tābi'in. For in following them and emulating the manner they adhered to the Sunnah is the pleasure of Allah and our salvation. As Allah has said:

And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Ansār and those who followed them with good conduct, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment. [Tawbah: 100]

The Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said in another hadīth:

The best people are those of my generation [Sahābah], then those who follow them [Tābi'in], and then those who follow them [Taba' Tābi'in]. [Sahīh Muslim, # 2533]

In yet another narration, the Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ warned against introducing innovations into dīn, leaving clear instructions as to who we should follow:

Those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my Sunnah and that of the Rightly Guided Khalifahs after me. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Beware of newly invented matters [in the religion], for every new matter is bid'ah (innovation) and every bid'ah is misguidance. [Abū Dāwūd, # 4607]

May Allah keep us steadfast upon the Truth and Straight Path, save us from deviating, and grant us the ability to adhere to the Sunnah of Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the practice of the Righteous Khalifahs, those whom Allah was pleased with and they were pleased with Him. Āmīn



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