

Force Them to the Narrowest Part of the Road

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Shaykh Abdullaah ibn Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Saalih Aali Bassaam (Rahimahullaah)
Shaykh Saalih Ibn Fawzaan Aali Fawzaan (Hafidhahullaah)

– وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَا تَبْدُؤُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى
بِالسَّلَامِ, وَإِذَا لَقَيْتُمُوهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ, فَاضْطَرُّوهُمْ إِلَى أَضْيَقِهِ “ أَخْرَجَهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Imaam Muslim reported in his Saheeh (authentic collection of Hadeeth), from the Hadeeth of Abu Hurairah (RadiyAllaahu 'an-hu) that the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said: “Do not initiate greeting al-Yahood¹ and an-Nasaaraa² (with peace) [before they greet you], and when you meet them on the road force them to its narrowest side.”

Shaykh Abdullaah ibn Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Saalih Aali Bassaam (Rahimahullaah) said³:

It has been narrated in the Sunan of ad-DarQutnee, from the Hadeeth of 'Aa'idh al-Muzanee (RadiyAllaahu 'an-hu) that the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said: 'The Deen of al-Islaam is exalted and nothing (i.e. no other deen) is exalted above it.'

This contains an evidence that whenever al-Yahood and an-Nasaaraa become **Dhim-mee-yoon**, i.e. under the protection of al-Islaam, in return for paying the Jizyah⁴, residing among the Muslims, in the land of the Muslims - they, then, have special legal rulings that are particular to them, which are mentioned in the chapter of (Fiqh Books entitled) **Ahlu-dh-Dhimmah**.

From among these legal rulings [particular to Ahlu-dh-Dhimmah] is that if/when **al-Kitaabee** (i.e. someone from among the People of the Book) meets a Muslim in the road - the Muslim is to force him to the narrowest part of the road. The middle of the road and the widest part is for the

¹ Those who claim to be followers of the Prophet Moosaa (Peace be upon him).

² Those who claim to be followers of the Prophet Isaa (Peace be upon him).

³ Taw-deeh al-Ah-kaam min Buloogh al-Maraam, pgs. 238-239

⁴ A tax upon the non-Muslims, since they are not required to pay Zakah.

Muslim - as a notification (and symbol) of the honor and glory of Islaam over them.

And perhaps these *Mudaayiqaat* (i.e. embarrassments, inconveniences, annoyances) will serve as an impetus or incentive for them to enter Islaam, since there is nothing separating them from enjoying this honor and respect except their entry into Islaam (i.e. its acceptance); in which case they will enjoy all (rights and respect) that the Muslims enjoy, and carry the same responsibilities as the Muslims.

These legal rulings are nowadays a problem and a dilemma due to the weakness of the Muslims and their subordination to and dependency upon the disbelieving nations. However, we should not lose hope of the honor, upper-hand and leadership returning to the Muslims. Indeed, Allaah, the Most High, said: 'They (i.e. disbelievers) want to extinguish the light of Allaah with their mouths; but Allaah will not allow except that His Light should be perfected, even though the disbelievers hate it'. [Qur'aan, 9:32]

Shaykh Saalih Ibn Fawzaan Aali Fawzaan (Hafidhahullaah) said⁵:

[This hadeeth] also indicates that we must 'force them (i.e. the disbelievers) to the narrowest part of the road'. **Its meaning** is that we should not give them the *middle* of the road or the *best part* of the road, since this person is an enemy of Allaah, the Mighty, the Majestic. Therefore, we must humiliate him, since **Allaah** has humiliated him; so **we** must not honor him.

Allaah, the Most High, says: 'Do you not see that **whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the moving (living) creatures/beasts, and many of mankind prostrate themselves to Allaah. But there are many (men) on whom the punishment is justified. And whosoever Allaah humiliates, none can honor him. Verily, Allaah does whatever He wills.**' [Soorah al-Hajj, 22:18]

Hence, we do not give him the *middle* of the road; this is for the Muslim. Rather, we give him the *side* or *edge* of the road, *meaning: We do not prevent them from passing by, but we allow them to pass by from the side/edge of the road, and do not give them the middle and best part of the road.*

⁵ Tas-heel al-Il-maam bi-Fiqhi-l-Ahaadeeth min Buloogh al-Maraam, pgs. 168, 169

Imaam Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-Uthaimen (Rahimahullaah) said⁶:

This means that if they (i.e. this disbelievers) meet you (i.e. Muslims) on a road, then you must not open the way for them. Rather, 'you must force them to the narrowest part of the road'.

For example, if the road is wide enough for four people (to walk side by side), and four of these people meet us (on the road), we must not make room for them (to pass). Rather, we should **continue on as we were**, so that we force them to **pass between us one by one**. And we must not make room for them, due to what this would entail of making them feel *honored* and *respected*, and then their feeling *proud* and *exalted* (above others)...

[The Shaykh (rahimahullaah) goes on to say]:

From the benefits of this Hadeeth is that it is not permissible to open the way for those who we meet (on the road) from among al-Yahood and an-Nasaaraa. Rather, (if there is not enough space), we make the narrow part of the road for them, due to his (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: 'force them to the narrowest part of the road'.

It is even more justified to treat others besides the Nasaaraa in this manner [since the Nasaaraa have more rights than the other disbelievers].

Is it permissible for us to squeeze them in, meaning: to **push them or press them** until they are forced up against the wall? The answer is **No!**

[This is not permissible] since the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) had al-Yahood with him in al-Madeenah, and *it has never been transmitted* that when the Muslims met a Yahooodee, that they rammed or pressed him against the wall. [Not only that, but] this kind of treatment is **not befitting of a Muslim**. Rather, what is important is that we do not honor them by spreading out and making room for them.

[Translated by Abu Muhammad 25th Dhul-Hijjah 1434 AH (30th October 2013 CE)]

⁶ Fat-h Dhil-Jalaali wal-Ikraam Bi-Sharh Buloogh al-Maraam, pgs. 259, 260