

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

General Advice On the Fitnah of the Quilliam Foundation and Its People

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Despite one's best attempts to ignore irritating and indeed subverting projects popping up from time to time during our current turbulent phase as Muslims living in the West, it has been difficult to avoid the *fitnah* and the public confusion and dismay over the launch of the recent Quilliam Foundation.

It being another ill-fated attempt to promote “secular Islamic democracy” as the *only* option for us Muslims, and notwithstanding the wicked irony of the “Islamist” nature of Abdullah Quilliam himself, one still feels the need to offer some advice concerning what has been said and done over the last few weeks, particularly on the internet, from various parties. So:

- This *fitnah*, and it is a test of the resolve and patience of the orthodox, traditional Muslims of the community, is nothing new. The call for even a semi-separation between “worldly affairs” and personal worship is something completely alien to orthodox Islam. It has been withstood before and Islam will withstand it again, with or without our help.

- That being said, Islam must not be reduced to just a political ideology. This is exactly the mistake that groups such as *Hizb ul-Tahrir* and *al-Muhajiroun* promoted – an almost soulless ideology with the emphasis being “top down” as opposed to spiritual reform of the individual and effectual change of the moral condition of society independent of the state if need be. Thus, one is sadly unsurprised at the level of mass defection from such political extremism (I avoid the word “Islamism” for its founders have no idea what they are defining) to this absurd extremism of “secular democracy” we are witnessing today. The fact that various organisations are having to re-define for their audiences exactly what they specifically intend by their understanding of “secular democracy” proves the worrying inferiority complex such Muslims have.

- It is important to state though that Islam isn't an “ideology” as such - not because of what some political philosophers contend i.e. because an “ideology” is necessarily rooted in politics – but because Islam completely transcends the definitions that humans try to restrict it by. Islam exists and thrives whether the political aspect is

present or not. This doesn't mean the Muslims support the idea of a secular democracy and it certainly doesn't mean we can wish away for example the command for *Jihad* when the time, context and conditions support it. As always, balance is the key.

- The various individuals involved in this foundation and others like it, from the "progressive" movements more common in the USA, to those like the **BMSD** right here on our shores, have various shortcomings in their understanding and application of their knowledge of Islam. This should serve as a clear warning against putting too much trust and faith in **any** individual, because we are all fallible, at risk of influence from our prevalent environment or simply hell-bent on deviancy, except he whom Allāh has Mercy upon. Islam avoids ultra-dependence and confidence in any person, however pious, knowledgeable and bright. This is applicable to everyone, whether myself, yourself, your teacher, your father or even the *Shaykh'l-Islam* himself. One doesn't consider what someone *was* upon but rather whether what is being said *now* is in line with the truth or not. This was the statement of the early founding fathers and is more applicable today than ever before, otherwise one will witness the incredible level of disappointment and despair that we have seen when Muslims who were thought highly of turn out to be less than what was expected.

When the truth is judged by individuals, disaster beckons. It is us, mere human beings, who are judged by the truth.

- At the same time, any such individuals or organisations are to be afforded the complete respect and humanity that is obligated from those who follow the religion of Islam. Advice should be given in private, regardless of whether the advised individual or organisation's indiscretions might have been in public. The best opinion is always assumed and excuses are always sought. Every avenue is exhausted before one is forced to go public, which will always cause harm and *fitnah* regardless of however honest ones intentions are.

- Likewise, there is actually a limit to excuses, especially when one feels that the general harm is greater. Often, an organisation will do certain extreme things or make certain wild statements (as has been witnessed) under the umbrella of the "greater *maslahah* (benefit)". The same subjective appraisal of the "greater *maslahah*" should be afforded to those who feel that private attempts to advise, or a long history of advising, have failed and thus further action is required to establish what is right. This might be bitter but if one wishes for others to understand what motivates a certain course of action taken by the complainant, one should also the motivation behind the course of action that others take.

Yet this does not justify some of the things that have been said and sent around social networks and lists. The publishing of private correspondences, the promotion of illicit material, the propensity to claim disbelief and other wrongs cannot be justified. Two wrongs don't make a right, even in the pursuit of undeniable truth.

- Probably the most important piece of advice for all of us to pay heed to is to ask Allāh *jalla wa 'ala* for steadfastness and protection in these difficult times of *fitnah* where the best of us can be taken with the wind. It isn't Islam that has anything to worry about, it's the inherent weakness of Islam's adherents, who need to check their relationship with Allāh and strengthen it by every means possible to withstand the ideological and at times emotional onslaught we are witnessing today. We ask Allāh for *'afiyah*.

And He, *'azza wa jall*, knows best.