

Lessons from the Companions Living as a Minority

(Based upon a lecture by Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaki *Hafidbabullah*)

Sometimes we fail to notice the fact that the Rasul (saws) lived the majority of his *da'wah* life as a minority in a non-Muslim society. Thirteen years out of the twenty three years of *da'wah*, he (saws) spent living as a minority in *Makkah* (which was then a non-Muslim society). There is a lot for us to learn from the *Seerah* of the Rasul (saws) to guide us when we are living as minorities, whether it is in the East or the West.

Not much has been written on the topic of living as a minority because our early Muslim scholars did not give much attention to it since they did not really have to go through such situations themselves. Also, the scholars were very practical and would only look at what relates to their daily practical life instead of digging into matters which were irrelevant. A lot of work has to be done by us in order to derive many of the lessons from the *Makkan* era (thirteen years) of the *da'wah* in which the Rasul (saws) spent living as a minority.

There are a few lessons that can be discussed:

1) Delivering the message

a) delivering in a clear way

When Allaah (swt) revealed the ayah:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

“**And warn your tribe** (O Muhammad SAWS) **of near kindred.**” [Surah Ashuara: Verse 214]

This was an *ayah* that was revealed to Muhammad (saws), commanding him (saws) to declare the message publicly. Initially, the first stage of *da'wah* was secret; Rasul Allaah (saws) was only teaching to his family and close associates, without declaring the message publicly. The next stage was for the Rasul (saws) to declare his message to the public. The Rasul (saws) stood on the mountain of *safa* and started calling in all those around. The incident is as follows:

Narrated by Ibn Abbas: “*One day the Prophet ascended Safa mountain and said, "Oh Sabah!!" All the Quraish gathered round him and said, "What is the matter?" He said, Look, if I told you that an enemy is going to attack you in the morning or in the evening, would you not believe me?" They said, "Yes, we will believe you." He said, "I am a warner to you in face of a terrible punishment." On that Abu Lahab said, "May you perish ! Is it for this thing that you have gathered us?" So Allah revealed: 'Perish the hands of Abu Lahab!...' (Surah Lahab: Verse 1)*” [Sahih Bukhari]

The people of Quraish already knew what Muhammad (saws) was teaching about, the fact that he (saws) was calling to *Tawheed* was not a secret. One man from Kindah who had come to visit *Makkah*

¹ He (saws) was calling out “Ya Subaha” and this call is like ringing an alarm, it is a word that is used only when there is an emergency. Therefore when the people heard the Rasul (saws) calling out with this, they rushed to him (saws) because they understood that it must be something extremely important.

before, saw a man walking out of his tent and praying, then a woman came out and prayed and then a young man came out and prayed. This man asked Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib who these three people were and about the strange movements they were doing. Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib told him that the first one was his nephew (Muhammad saws), the second one Muhammad's (saws) wife Khadijah (*radi>Allaahu anha*) and the young man who followed was Muhammad's (saws) cousin, Ali bin Abi Talib (*radi>Allaahu anhu*) and they were praying because Muhammad (saws) had claimed to be the Prophet of Allaah (saws) who was teaching a new religion. These words were said while the *da'wah* was still done secretly but the news was out and the *Quraish* knew that Muhammad (saws) was preaching a new message. This is why when the Prophet (saws) called them whilst standing on the mountain of *Safa*, the people already knew what message Rasul Allaah (saws) was calling to.

Abu Lahab (*la'natallah alaih*) was a business man and strongly opposed the message that Muhammad (saws) came with. At the time the Rasul (saws) called out to them from mount *Safa*, it was mid-day and so he had taken his time out and gone to listen to Muhammad (saws), thinking that it was an emergency. He left his money making time and went to listen to Muhammad (saws). When he went (since religion was obviously not on his mind), he uttered his words of disapproval to the Prophet (saws). Abu Lahab is not unique in this. Usually we find people do not want to give religion a lot of time. They do not want to think about their salvation and they do not want to think about what will happen to them after they die². If we ask people to give us just half an hour for religion, they will tell us that they are busy. However, the same people do not have a problem spending hours and hours reading newspapers, searching for information on how to buy material things, how to save a few bucks here and there, etc. Days and days are wasted away all in worldly pursuits, yet no attention is given to the reality that is soon to hit. Those who are similar to Abu Lahab (in regards to their priorities) should be warned, because Allaah (swt) revealed about him,

كَبَّ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab (an uncle of the Prophet), and perish he! His wealth and his children (etc.) will not benefit him! [Surah Lahab: Verse 1-2]

Rasul Allaah (saws) chose the words, "*I am a warner to you in face of a terrible punishment.*" in order to proclaim his message. He (saws) is warning them; he (saws) did not choose an interfaith activity or any other similar activity in order to convey the message. He (saws) wanted to make it very plain and clear because Allaah (swt) laid out his job description as clear as can be. Allaah (swt) told him,

...فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَيَّ رِسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

“...Then if you turn away, you should know that it is Our Messenger's duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest way. ” [Surah Al Mai'dah: Verse 92]

Allaah (swt) did not just tell the Prophet (saws) to convey the message; rather He (swt) told him that his duty is to convey the message in the clearest way, so that there is no confusion in the mind of the listener. The path to Paradise is made very clear and the path to the Hellfire is made very clear

² Look at the faces of the people during rush hour, when they are all busy going about in their work. It is as though they are like wolves chasing their prey.

without any ambiguity³. It is sad to see that today we are reluctant to speak about *Jannah* and *Naar* when we are calling people to the truth.

There is a hadith from Nu'man bin Bashir, found in the Musnad of Imaam Ahmed: *“The Rasul (saws) stood on the pulpit and delivered a speech to us. (His speech was): I warn you (of) Hellfire! I warn you (of) Hellfire! I warn you (of) Hellfire! He (saws) was repeating it again and again; his volume was going up and up. If there was someone in the market place they would be able to hear Muhammad (saws) from the masjid!”*

As can be seen from the above hadith, the Rasul (saws) had no setback in blatantly warning the people about the evil consequences of not accepting the truth. In our times we may not bring up the topic of Hellfire for numerous reasons, one of the reasons being not to hurt the person's feelings. This can be a misleading assumption. We should ask ourselves: ‘What is worst, the person being hurt temporarily or having the person burn in the Hellfire for eternity?’

Rasul Allaah (saws) says in a hadith found in Muslim, *“The analogy of me and you is like someone sitting in the bonfire in the wilderness and insects and bugs are trying to fly into it.⁴ While I am holding your clothes, dragging you away from the fire, you are rushing into the fire without thinking about it.”*

This is how the Rasul (saws) viewed his mission; he (saws) was taking the drastic measure of trying to drag the people away from danger even though they wanted to jump right into it without any second thoughts.

If you have a ditch and you see a blind person walking towards that ditch and you know that after a few steps the person can fall into the ditch and die, you will not be very soft and take your time in trying to prevent the person from going any further. Rather you will take drastic action to try and prevent the person from going any further. If you were to scream or take drastic action when there is **no** danger then in that case it would seem as an act of aggression. However because the danger **is** severe in such a situation, you would be thanked and praised for your concern for that person. This is exactly how a Muslim should be. We should be concerned about what is happening to our neighbours, to our friends, to our co-workers, to the people whom we live with, etc. It is a sign of ingratitude and of unconcern if we know that all or some of these categories of people whom we know are heading towards the hellfire and we are doing nothing about it.

Our first role in living as a minority amongst non-Muslims is to proclaim the message publicly in a very clear way, without any confusion. It is not justice to deliver the message to a person and not tell them about the ultimate consequences because this same person may come on the Day of Judgment and tell Allaah (swt) that they were not given a fair warning. Allaah (swt) says:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

“Truly, the only religion (acceptable) with Allah is Islam...” [Surah Ali-Imraan:Verse 19]

³ This is an important point to note because many times we make our message very confusing or we use a method that does not get the right point across.

⁴ During the night time if there is a source of light, insects and bugs can be seen being attracted to the light. If there was fire, the insects would be misled into jumping into it, thinking that it was light. Thereafter burning them-selves.

b) Delivering the message with *hikmah* (wisdom)

On one hand, we must convey the message of Islaam in a clear way but on the other hand we must also use *hikmah* (wisdom) because Islaam is a balanced religion. There are two extremes; one of sugar-coating and not being honest and the other is becoming arrogant or committing aggression when conveying the message. The balance needs to be kept in order for the best results to be achieved.

An example that can be given when it comes to *da'wah* is to think about your-self in the delivery business, delivering packages. You have a package with you that needs to be delivered to someone. You have no right to pamper with the package in any way because the package is from Allaah and must be delivered in its entirety. The wisdom comes in on **how** (the method with which) the package is delivered. Rather than using a hammer to knock on the door and then throwing the package into the face of the person who opens the door, the door should be knocked on politely and the package delivered in a polite manner. A sense of confidence should be felt when giving the package. The package is basically like the message of Islaam. Appropriate methods need to be used whilst delivering the message of Islaam as well.

2) Focusing on building a solid foundation

Mark the following words and remember them: 1) أَقْرَأُ, 2) قُمْ and 3) قُمْ. It can be said that these three words were the manual for the early Muslims in *Makkah*.

The first *ayah* that was revealed to Rasul Allaah (saws) was,

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

'Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists)' [Surah Alaq: Verse 1]

The word '*iqra*' in Arabic could mean either read or write. In the case of the Prophet (saws), he was commanded to recite and not read. He was illiterate and remained illiterate until his death (saws). Why would Rasul Allaah (saws) need to learn to read when he is being taught directly by Allaah? What purpose would the ability to read serve to him (saws) when he was receiving the knowledge straight from Allaah (swt) through the angel Jibreel (*alaihis salam*)? Allaah (swt) states in the Quran that if he (Muhammad saws) was literate, then the disbelievers would claim that he learned it from another source. There was a great wisdom in the Prophet Muhammad (saws) being illiterate.

For us, we are never going to receive any revelation from Allaah (swt) therefore we must learn how to read in order to understand the revelation. When Islaam came, it made a revolution amongst the Muslims. It turned a whole nation of illiterates into being the scholars of the world in a very short time. It is incumbent upon us to carry on with this revolution and continue to learn and devote our time to studying the deen and acquiring knowledge.

The first and only institute that the Rasul (saws) established in Makkah was *Daar-ul-Arqam*, which was the centre for collective learning. The first institute that the Rasul (saws) established in *Medinah* was *Masjid an-Nabawi*, which was also a centre for learning and worshipping. From these establishments, it sets an example for us that *I'lm* is something that we must acquire and it must be our priority living as a Muslim minority.

The second revelation to the Rasul (saws) was:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

“O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad SAW)! **Arise and warn!**” [Surah Muddathir: Verse 1-2]

When Rasul (saws) first had contact with Jibreel (*alaihis salam*), he (saws) rushed home to his wife Khadijah (*radiAllaahu anha*) and asked her to cover him up. The narration is as follows:

Narrated By Jabir bin 'Abdullah: *That he heard Allah's Apostle describing the period of pause of the Divine Inspiration, and in his description he said, "While I was walking I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up towards the sky, and behold! I saw the same Angel who came to me in the Cave of Hira', sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I was so terrified by him that I fell down on the ground. Then I went to my wife and said, 'Wrap me in garments! Wrap me in garments!' They wrapped me, and then Allah revealed: "O you, (Mubammad) Wrapped-up! Arise and warn... and desert the idols." (74.1-5) Abu Salama said... Rujz means idols." After that, the Divine Inspiration started coming more frequently and regularly.*” [Sahih Bukhari]

Allaah (swt) tells the Rasul (saws) now that he has learned the knowledge (been informed about it), so he must now teach it to the people. Knowledge is not something that can be kept for oneself, it must be spread.

The third set of *ayat* that were revealed to the Prophet (saws) was:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمَلُ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“O you wrapped up in garments (i.e. Muhamamd saws)! **Stand** (to pray) **all night, except a little**” [Surah Muzzammil: Verse 1-2]

Once the knowledge had been acquired and the Rasul (saws) started calling others to it, the next thing Allaah (swt) commanded was to stand in prayer. This is because *ibadah* must go hand in hand with *da'wah* and *I'lm*. Otherwise the heart would become solid like a rock. There can be no learning and no *da'wah* without a strong backbone of *ibadah*.

In *Makkah* the Muslims were in the stage of setting the foundation, Salah for them was not only the five daily prayers. Salah for them was praying for the whole third of the night. *Qiyaam-ul-layl* (*Tabajjud*) was mandatory upon them. This was a special requirement from them because they needed that special dose of *ibadah* in order to make their foundation strong. For us it became a voluntary deed that is strongly recommended. For the *duaat* (plural of *daee*), *ibadah* becomes important just like it was for the *Sahabah* because they are the ones who are leading the *ummah*.

For us living as a minority, these three components are very important as this forms the manual for any *da'wah*. Knowledge which is food for the mind/soul, *da'wah* which is paying the taxes for this knowledge (by conveying it) and *ibadah* which is food for the heart (reaffirms and strengthens one's belief).

3) Correcting the understanding

Allaah (swt) corrected the understanding of the Muslims in *Makkah* by giving new meanings to many of the terminologies/concepts that already existed. One of these corrections was the understanding of victory and what constitutes a true victory. For the Arabs of that time, victory meant raiding a neighbouring tribe and taking over their wealth. The more oppressive you are, the more victorious you are seen to be- that was the rule of the jungle (or the Arabian era of that time). In fact they even had poetry showing pride in oppression. Allaah (swt) speaks in Surah Burooj about *Ahlul Ukblood* (the people of the ditch):

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ قَتَلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَخْدُودِ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوُقُودِ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“By the heaven, holding the big stars. And by the Promised Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection); And by the witnessing day (i.e. Friday), and by the witnessed day [the day of Arafat (Hajj) the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah]; Cursed were the people of the ditch (the story of the Boy and the King). Fire supplied (abundantly) with fuel, when they sat by it (fire), And they witnessed what they were doing against the believers (i.e. burning them). They had nothing against them, except that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, Worthy of all Praise! Who, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth! And Allah is Witness over everything.” [Surah Buruj: Verse 1-9]

Ahlul Ukblood were the people who accepted the message of Isa (*alaihis salam*). They became his followers. The king and his people were followers of the Jewish faith so they persecuted the true Christians. It is reported that this story happened in the northern parts of Yemen. The king wanted to force the people to leave their religion⁵. The king, after he saw that the people became Muslim (followers of Isa) commanded his soldiers to build trenches and to fill them with fire and anyone who refused to give up their religion would be thrown in the fire. He burned alive all of the believers (they were all killed). In worldly terms or when viewed from the worldly aspect, this king is the one who prevailed and acquired victory. The Muslims were killed; they did not establish any *Khilafah*. Was this truly victory or was it loss? Allaah (swt) not only called it victory for the Muslims, but He (swt) called it:

... ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ

“That is the great success.” [Surah Buruj: Verse 11]

These people attained the greatest victory; they attained the Pleasure of Allaah (swt). Therefore it can be seen that victory does not necessarily mean that you ‘win’ in the world rather it means that you are able to hold firm to the religion of Allaah until death comes to you. Whether you establish *Khilafah* or

⁵ There is a long hadith in Sahih Muslim that narrated about the boy and his encounter with this oppressive king

not, whether you win in a certain battle or not, as long as you are steadfast on the religion, you have won. Allaah (swt) says:

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

“From among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah [i.e. they have gone out for Jihad (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers], of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e. have been martyred), and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed [i.e. they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allah] **in the least. [Surah Ahzab: Verse 23]**

Allaah (swt) is telling us that we have a covenant with Allaah and this covenant will be there as long as we live. If we stick to this covenant until we die, no matter what happens in this world we would have won. The *Sahabah* used to say that one of those who fulfilled their covenant with Allaah is Musab ibn Umayr (*radi>Allaahu anhu*). He died in one of the battles that the Muslims lost in, yet he was considered to be victorious because he held onto the covenant of Allaah (swt) and died upon such a state.

You bring a Muslim and give him the banner of Islaam. Then have him experience a hurricane and have a tornado go over his head. Once the dust comes off, he should still be holding the banner- this is steadfastness. We do not think in terms of the worldly and material aspects, rather we think in terms of what will happen in the Hereafter. Our competition is not for the worldly matters but rather for the Hereafter. As Allaah (swt) says:

حَتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

“The last thereof (that wine) will be the smell of musk, and for this let (all) those strive who want to strive (i.e. hasten earnestly to the obedience of Allah).” [Surah Mutaffifeen: Verse 26]

Living as a minority, we will go through the trials that the Muslims living in *Makkah* had to go through. Every single method of trying to turn the Muslims away from their *deen* was used in *Makkah*. The people of *Quraish* used the methods of persecution, the method of trying to compromise, etc. Compromising is not at all an option in our religion because as Muslims we are submitting ourselves exclusively to Allaah (swt), not half to Allaah and half to the creation. We do not have the authority to change the religion of Allaah.

Utbah bin Rabiah came to the Prophet (saws) and said, “*You have criticized our religion, you have reviled our forefathers, and you have caused descend among us. We have never seen someone who has caused so much harm as you did and we have never seen such an evil omen on his people such as we have from you. Now listen Muhammad, your elders have got together and they have decided to offer you a few things. O Muhammad if you are presenting us this message because you are searching for power, we will make you the leader among us. If you are presenting us with this message because you want to become a king, we will appoint you to be the first king among us. Oh Muhammad if you are presenting us with this message because you are in need of wealth then we will collect money for you and make you the wealthiest among us. O Muhammad if you are presenting this message because of desire of worldly things, we will choose for you the best looking ten women in Makkah and marry them all to you. O Muhammad if you are presenting us with this message because you are obsessed with demons then we will bring the best healers to heal you even if we have to spend all of our money in the process...*”

Look at all of these offers. Imagine if these were presented to you. People may think that they would not be tempted by such offers. However, how many people attend Salaatul Fajr at the Masjid everyday? Very few do. If there was an offer made to pay a person for each day that he attends Salaatul Fajr, the numbers would obviously go soaring up. Just a few bucks can make the difference on whether a person will attend the masjid or not, then what about if a person is offered high positions, the most beautiful of women, all kinds of material pleasures, etc? All of these temptations were presented to the Muslims in *Makkah*. When offers did not work then persecution came into play. They also went through physical torture as can be seen in the lives of Bilal (*radiAllaahu anhu*), Ammar ibn Yasir (*radiAllaahu anhu*), Sumayya (*radiAllaahu anha*), etc. As Muslims we will go through this; this is the Sunnah of Allaah (swt). We have to be prepared to give up whatever we have for the *deen* of Allaah (swt) whenever the call for it comes. Whether it is time, wealth, life- we should be willing to give up everything and anything in order to attain the Pleasure of Allaah (swt). Truly, Paradise has a price; the ticket to Paradise is not free.

4) Working together in an organized way as a Jama'ah

This is a lesson that we can learn from the Muslims living in *al-Habashah*, the *hijrah* to *Abyssinia*. One thing we notice about the Muslims living in *Abyssinia* is that even though they were not under an official authority (i.e. they did not have a Muslim government, their situation was like us- they were living in an established society with an established government), nevertheless they were organized. They were not loose like the majority of the Muslims today. They had a *Jama'ah* and an *Ameer*. They were not living alone or doing their own thing. Like as is the situation in most of the societies today, everyone considers themselves to be 'free' and therefore do as they want.

The Muslims living in *al-Habashah* had a leadership who was Jafar ibn Abi Talib and they were a group called '*Al-Muhajiroun elal-Habashah*' (those who migrated to *al-Habashah*). You would not find any of them going through their back door in order to go visit a *Najashi*, they had a systematic group and worked in an organized way under it. They made sure to get permission from Jafar ibn Abi Talib before doing things whilst in *al-Habashah*. They understood the fact that Islaam is a social religion, not an individual religion⁶.

However, in today's times the Muslims have become sensitive to the idea of working collectively or having a title over an organization; this is over-reacting. It may be a plot by the Arab politicians in order to continue to divide the Muslims and move them far away from organising themselves because they know that this religion cannot proceed unless it is organized. Sometimes the enemy knows you better than you know yourself. Governments know full well that organized work is a threat to them and therefore try and propagate the idea of being Muslim only on an individual level and never working collectively. Such fallacies need to be removed from the minds of the Muslims. We cannot march forward unless we are organized.

⁶ Our Salah is done in Jama'ah, Hajj is done in Jama'ah, fasting during Ramadan and many other acts of worship are done in Jama'ah.

5) The Sunnah of Allaah (swt) in His ways

Allaah (swt) was teaching the Muslims in *Makkah* His laws and ways of doing certain things. Like the 'laws of nature'⁷ that are commonly known by everyone, Allaah (swt) was trying to set certain laws that should be known by the Muslims. There are numerous laws that govern our lives. As Muslims we need to study the laws of Allaah (swt). When Muhammad (saws) first received the revelation from Allaah (swt), Khadijah (*radiAllaahu anha*) took him to Waraqah bin Naufal (an old man with experience and knowledge). The narration goes:

"...Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the PreIslamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Apostle described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Apostle asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while." [Sahih Bukhari]

Muhammad (saws) was surprised to hear that Waraqah was telling him that he (saws) would be driven out of his home by his people. Muhammad (saws) had known through out his whole life that his people loved him and viewed him in great esteem⁸; he (saws) never had a quarrel with his people and he (saws) was from the noblest family of the *Quraish*. He was the grandson of Abdul Muttalib. How could the same *Quraish* drive him out of his land? When Muhammad (saws) asked Warqah ibn Naufal if they would truly drive him out, Waraqah replied in the affirmative. Waraqah was a learned man; he knew the history of the other prophets who passed away before. He knew that any prophet who came with a similar message in the past⁹ was driven out of his land. They all made *Hijrah*. *Hijrah* was the life of most of the prophets of Allaah (swt). Waraqah was telling Muhammad (saws) about these laws of Allaah.

Another lesson that can be seen is that even though our neighbours may seem like nice people, we do not know if those leading these people are the same as them. The head of the people are not the same as the people themselves and it is the head group that makes the decisions. Not everyone in *Makkah* was evil but the leadership was evil. Not every one among the people of *Thamud* was evil but the leadership was evil. Among the whole society of the *Thamud* only nine people were planning, carrying and executing plans. These nine people who were in charge were corrupting the rest of people. Allaah (swt) says:

وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ

⁷ In reality, there is no such thing as 'law of nature'. All of nature is a part of Allaah's Law.

⁸ Muhammad (saws) knew that his people called him 'As-Saadiq' (the truthful) and 'Al-Amin' (the trustworthy)

⁹ Whether it is Ibrahim (a.s), Lut (a.s), Dawud (a.s), Nuh (a.s), Hud (a.s.), Saalih (a.s), Shuaib (a.s), Isa (a.s), etc.

“And there were in the city nine men (from the sons of their chiefs), who made mischief in the land, and would not reform.” [Surah Naml: Verse 48]

Furthermore, regarding the small amount of criminals or wrong doers being present in all kinds of societies, Allaah says:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

“And thus We have set up in every town great ones of its wicked people to plot therein. But they plot not except against their own selves, and they perceive (it) not.” [Surah Anaam: Verse 123]

Therefore, it is not the laymen who are the main problems, rather it is the head who are planning and carrying out the evil plans. The wicked that plan in each society can be different. In Egypt it was Pharaoh, in Rome it was the Roman Emperor, in Persia the leadership of Persia, etc. Even though they may be different in some ways, they all have a common denominator, they all have certain things in common and Allaah (swt) was trying to inform the believers regarding these similar qualities.

5) Muslims living in West should give special attention to *ahadith* pertaining to the West

Muslims who are living in the West should give special attention to the different *ahadith* related to the West. The Rasul (saws) spoke about *al-Habashah*, he (saws) gave descriptions of at-Turk, of Persia, of *Yajuj* and *Majuj*, etc. Those living in the West should be concerned with the *ahadith* that talk about the Romans¹⁰ because they are living amidst them¹¹. A hadith from Musnad of Imaam Ahmed helps in giving a clearer idea on how we should take the *ahadith* regarding *fitaan* (so as not to feel as though there is no hope): One of the *Sababah*, Al-Mustawrad narrated that he heard the Rasul (saws) say, “Your toughest rival would be the Romans and they will not perish until the Day of Judgment.” Amr bin al-Aas (r.a) told al-Mustawrad, “Did I not tell you not to say such things?” Amr bin al-Aas did not want Al-Mustawrad to go around propagating this hadith because he did not want it to lead to creating a fatalistic view amongst the Muslims. Especially because at that time he was in a conflict with the Roman Empire and he was winning, he did not want the Muslims to think that it was a worthless fight.

The *ahadith* that talk about *fitaan* tell us the future and what will be happening/they convey news to us. These *ahadith* are not related to *Shariah*. However, we should not let these *ahadith* change our view of the *Shariah*. The *ahadith* related to *fitaan* have their own place and *Shariah* has its own. Irrelevant of what will happen, the *Shariah* is binding upon us; we must continue to fulfill the obligations *Shariah* puts on us. An example would be the fact that we need to continue making *da'wah* even if we know the person in front of us will not become Muslim¹².

¹⁰ The word Romans (*ar-Rum*) in hadith refers to Europe (and its extensions such as Australia, America, Western Hemisphere) and the European people.

¹¹ A warning to when we are dealing with the *ahadith* of *fitaan* is that emerging too much into the *ahadith* of *fitaan* could make the person fatalistic so we need to be careful when we are dealing with these *ahadith*. Completely ignoring them is not right and too much emphasis is also not right, we need to take a middle path.

¹² When Allaah (swt) revealed that Abu Lahab would be of the people of the Hellfire, did that mean that the Rasul (saws) would stop making *da'wah* to him? No.

The Western world tends to be the furthest away from the natural disposition of *fitrah*. The reason for this is that the Western world has been the furthest away from the message of Allaah. Even when we look into history, we will find that the Islaamic *Da'wah* in the West is very weak. Before that the brand of Christianity that reached the Western shores was already a distorted and tampered version. Europe has been living away from light of Allaah for a long time and that is why it is in the position it is in now. Looking at the situation of the Western world or the *abadith* in which the Rasul (saws) speaks about Rome, it is very clear that Rome (Western world) will be the spear-head of the effort in fighting the light of Allaah (swt).

The West can also be given credit for being the first society in the world to produce enough weapons to wipe out the people in the entire world. It has never happened or occurred in history that one society would produce enough weapons to cause the whole of civilizations to come to a halt. It is ironic that we find that the same government with such weapons is talking about the small bombs that Saddam Hussein and his government have; while it is the United States that has in her stockpile enough weapons to wipe out the whole of the human race.

The West or Europe can also be credited with wiping out the indigenous population of three continents of the world- North America, South America and Australia. They only left a few for anthropologist studies. The form of Christianity (distorted form), that existed in the time of the Rasul (saws) was a very peaceful religion even though it was distorted. When Christianity reached to the West it became a violent religion. Now we can fairly say that there is no religion in the history of mankind that has caused more bloodshed than Christianity. It is also ironic to see that the Western world is accusing Islaam of being a violent religion. If you study Christianity objectively, you will find the real history and marks that it has left behind and continues to leave. This is why when Rasul Allaah (saws) speaks about Rome he (saws) did not refer to them as Christians, but rather as the Romans because there is a huge difference between the Christians who lived during the time of the Rasul (saws) and the present ones.

Islaam has never entered into a society and then left; especially when it enters into a society in the form of a government. Islaam entered Egypt when it was Christian and now the Egyptians are one of the most enthusiastic Muslims. Islaam entered in North Africa and now the majority of them are Muslims. Islaam entered India and was ruled by the Moguls (Muslims), even though in their practice they were not very Islaamic but Islaam remained in India even after the Moguls left. Now there are about 115 million Muslims in India. Islaam never reached to the shores of South East Asia in a form of an army or government, nevertheless the largest Muslim country is Indonesia. There is only one exception to this rule. There is only one part of the world in which the Muslims went and stayed and they left with no traces of Islaam remaining- that is Spain. Never in the history of the world has Islaam entered into a place and been diminished except in Europe. The Muslims stayed in Spain for 800 years, it was also the centre of the Muslim Civilization for a while. Among the best scientific writings were produced by the Muslims in Spain and Islaamic Law flourished in Spain for 800 years; it was the hotbed of *Maaliki Fiqh*. A large proportion of the *Maaliki* books come out of Spain. Conversely, now there is barely any Muslim that remains in Spain and can trace them-selves back to Spain. We are dealing with a unique culture. Now if the West is very tolerant, liberal and a democratic society; the fact remains that morally it has never left the dark ages.

There is a book written by Naeem ibn Hamad, Sheikh al Bukhari. The scholars of hadith accept his *abadith*. He wrote a book about al-Fitaan. The *abadith* in his book are both strong and weak. Our early

scholars, when it came to matters of *Shariah*, would only use strong *ahadith* as evidence; but when they were dealing with history or the end of time, some of them tended to be a bit more flexible. Some scholars stick to the rule of accepting only authentic *ahadith* all through and some do not¹³.

In an authentic hadith it is narrated that *Da'wah* will flourish in the West and many Westerners will come into Islaam and be with the Muslims. This has been mentioned in an authentic hadith, however the majority will not and this majority who will not come into Islaam will be in the spearheads in the effort of fighting Islaam.

What will be the fate of the Muslims in the West?

The following hadith is from the book by Naeem bin Hamad, it may be true (authentic) or it may be false (weak)¹⁴. Rasul Allaah (saws) says: *"The Romans are going to approach all of the Arabs who are living in their midst and every Arab man, woman and child will be killed. They will all be exterminated (a Holocaust)."*

The hadith did not say Muslims, it said Arabs but it is acceptable in Arabic to use a part of a group to describe the group. It makes sense that the Arabs would go through an added persecution for a few reasons: 1) You find that in the Western literature there is a strong dislike to the Arabs [whether it be their culture, lands, way of living etc.] 2) The focal point of the events of end of time is going to be Palestine. Palestine will be the centre of events to happen during the end of time. The *ahadith* of *fitaan* revolve around Palestine. Naturally, the people who are closest to this focal point are going to be effected the most. However this does not mean the other people will not be effected as well. It is just to add emphasis to the Arabs being amongst the Muslims and how they will have to go through the added amount of trials from the Westerners.

The authentic hadith in which Rasul (saws) mentioned that many Westerners will become Muslim, it goes onto say that the leader of the Muslim army will be asked (by the Roman leaders) to give up all the Romans who became Muslim so they can be killed. The Muslims leaders will decline, saying that they will never give up their brothers. Islaam does not recognize ethnicity; if one is a Muslim then they are part of the *Ummah*. The persecution will not strictly be only for the Arabs, it will include others as well.

To conclude on a positive note, we should not forget that Islaam will flourish all over the world. The Rasul (saws) said that Islaam will enter into every home. He (saws) said, *"The whole world was shown to me and Allaah told me that my religion (i.e. Islaam) will reach all of it."*

¹³ For example Ibn Kathir, who is a scholar of hadith, when it came to al-Fitaan and history he would include *al-ahadith* that are weak. So this is mentioned just as a disclaimer. Some of the ahadith in the book may not be strong. Looking through the book to distinguish the ahadith has not been done so we cannot be sure until the book is thoroughly reviewed.

¹⁴ However, Sheikh Anwar believes that regardless of the *sanad* (chain of narrators) of the hadith, the meaning of it is true. He believes that if one studies history they will reach the same conclusion.