

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

As Salaamu Alaikum,

About 7 years ago I wrote a book which was based upon the letter that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had written to an-Najaashi - the Ethiopian King. As we know, an-Najaashi embraced Islam, protected the Sahaabah (companions), married the Prophet to Umm Habeebah, gave 'Amr ibn al-'As his *shahaadah* and accepted his *bay'ah* to the Prophet, and the list goes on. We concluded this book by mentioning some of the implications of the above-mentioned facts for us in general and the African-American Muslims in particular.

The article attached is an updated version of a section that we've decided to call Adhering to the 'Doctrine of Selective Seclusion'. This was also included in a booklet we've published called "5 Important Points Regarding Seeking Knowledge." We have the luxury of our recent history behind us so that we can see the disastrous effects of allowing others to invade the indigenous landscape and chart the course of our development for us.

It seems as if all - or most - of our leaders are calling for the same thing. The theme for MANA's upcoming conference is "Forging an American Muslim Agenda". Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah of the Nawawi Foundation has published a paper called "Islam and the Cultural Imperative". *Imam* Luqman Ahmad has written several articles wherein he clearly states that we must chart our own course. He has written an article called "Tabaqaat al-Amrikiyyeen: Recording History for American Muslim Generations" wherein he calls for the documenting of our history and emphasizes its importance. *Shaykh* Muhammad Shareef often made mention of the need for the indigenous Muslims to have a "Monroe Doctrine". I could go on listing the statements and writings of many of our leaders and scholars who are calling for Muslims in America to be more independent. I think all of this is good, *alhamdulillah!* Some leaders and *Jamaa'ahs* have been saying this for decades - like *Imam* Warithuddeen Muhammad and the National Community led by *Imam* Jamil al-Amin.

While all of these leaders are calling for the same thing, the details of their programs differ dramatically and some seem to have no program at all - but at least recognize the harm of letting outsiders control their communities. We can find fault with all of these programs, based upon our varying understandings of Islam, but I don't think that should prevent all of us from supporting each other. For example, I attended a lecture and the presenters on the panel were emphasizing the need for us to cut off our dependence on Arab scholarship, etc... We were being reminded of many brothers who have wrecked havoc upon return to our communities armed with their '*new knowledge*'. In short, it was a Salafi-bashing session (in my opinion). While I agree with what was being said at first, the solution that they offered - in my opinion - was more disgusting than the problem. One panelist made comments like: "The Islamic state never existed it was only theoretical!" Without being too specific - because I'm trying my best not to reveal their identities - they basically were calling for a version of Islam which would recognize the superiority of the American civilization; the type of Islam where we would all be American first and foremost and thereafter inject Islam into the equation here and there. Of course, they didn't word it that way but that was the way that I and many others (particularly the younger ones in attendance) understood it. When one brother politely and respectfully challenged a point made by one of the presenters, the presenter became defensive and clearly offended by the fact that someone questioned his opinion. The other presenter hastily

closed the session under the pretense that we had to prepare for Salah (Maghrib) which was about an hour away.

I mentioned this incident only to illustrate that not everyone is going to agree with this or that program. Our ideas are not *wahy* (revelation); therefore the believers are free to differ, disagree, criticize, and build upon what we present to the public. If we feel that it is not proper to have our ideas challenged then we need to keep them to ourselves. It is with this intention that I submit this paper to the public for criticism. I wish to develop this line of thought further. I want the believers to highlight its weak points, build upon its strong points and offer any advice they deem beneficial. Even if the whole idea is disagreed with, I'd like to hear that argument as well. Please remember that this article was part of a larger work and not yet meant to stand on its own.

Please send your comments to: imamnaem@nuruzzamaaninstitute.org

Your Brother,

Imam Na'eem Abdullah

Adhering to the 'Doctrine of Selective Seclusion'

An important point that must be realized is the fact that the African-American Muslims (and by extension all Muslims who were born, raised, and consider America to be their home) need to enact a '*A Doctrine of Selective Seclusion*' regarding who we allow to have an influence upon our communities.

The Muslims in this environment need to take a critical posture regarding who we choose as the leaders of our communities, where we seek our legal opinions (*fataawa*), and how/if we implement information that comes from sources that aren't familiar with our situation. This position must be taken because it is a principle in the *Shari'ah* and was practiced by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the early community – *as-Salaf*.

Allah, the Most High, says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who believe! Obey (*atee'uu*) Allah, and obey (*atee'uu*) the Messenger and those in authority among you (*uul al-amri minkum*). If you should disagree, about anything, refer it to Allah, and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better, for you and more excellent in interpretation.¹

In many of our communities, this verse is used by the leader(s) to demand obedience from the followers. The emphasis is laid upon '*and those in authority among you (uul al-amri minkum)*.' However, we wish to use this verse as the premise or foundation of our discussion.

Firstly, the subject of the verse are the believers, because Allah says, '*O you who believe!*' The next statement is an imperative or a command (*fi'l ul-amr*), '*Obey (atee'uu) Allah!*' Obedience to Allah is achieved by having absolute and unquestioning obedience to and being in absolute compliance with His Book – the Qur'an. The next statement is similarly a command. He says, '*and obey (atee'uu) the Messenger!*' This obedience is accomplished by uncompromising adherence to his ﷺ *Sunnah* or tradition. The next statement is also a command; however its tone is a

¹ Qur'an an-Nisaa', ayat 59.

little weaker. He says, '*and those in authority among you (uul al-amri minkum).*' The reader should notice the absence of the imperative verb - obey (*atee'uu*). The conjunction (*'atf*) that precedes it connects it with the previous subject and verb. Therefore, obedience to those charged with authority is conditioned upon that authority being in obedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Obedience to that authority is conditional whereas obedience to Allah and His Messenger is absolute and unconditional. Allah ends this phrase with two words - (*minkum*) from among you. This, first and foremost, means '*from among the believers*', because Allah is addressing the '*believers*' in this verse. Furthermore, it goes without saying that this verse cannot be used to support the false-notion that the authority of the disbelievers must be obeyed. Because, once again, that authority must be in obedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. However, upon closer examination of this verse and how the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ practiced and implemented it, one would discover something else. Before elaborating, we will first mention what the scholars say about this.

Amir ul-Mu'mineen Muhammad Bello, the son of *Shaykh* 'Uthman Dan Fodio, said in his book *Risaalat lil-Amraad Shaafiyah* (A Letter of Healing for Spiritual and Social Diseases).

"It has been related by the two *Shaykhs* as well as Abu Dawuud, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nisaa'i, Ibn Jareer, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Khaatim, and al-Bayhaqi in his *ad-Dalaa'il* by way of Sa`eed ibn Jubayr on the authority of Ibn Abbaas concerning His words: "*O you who believe obey Allah obey the Messenger and those who possess the authority from among you.*" He said: "This verse was revealed concerning Abdullah ibn Hudhaafa ibn Qays ibn `Adiyy when the Prophet ﷺ sent him in authority over the military detachment (*sareeyah*)."

It has been related by Sa`eed ibn Mansuur Ibn Abi Shaybah his servant Ibn Humayd, Ibn Jareer, Ibn Mundhir and Ibn Abi Khaatim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah concerning His words: '*... and those who possess authority from among you.*' Those are the *amirs*." Furthermore in another narration: "Those are the *amirs* of the military detachments.""

Shaykh Abdullahi Dan Fodio, the younger brother of *Shaykh* 'Uthman Dan Fodio, said in his *tafseer* called *Diya' at-Ta'weel fi ma'ani at-Tanzeel* about the words of Allah *ta'ala*:

"...'*and those in authority among you (uul al-amri minkum).*' This means those from among the righteous *khalifs*, those who followed their way in justice from among the governors (*al-wulaat*), the scholars (*al-`ulamaa*), the judges (*al-qudaa*), and the *amirs* of the military detachments. The majority of the scholars of the *Taabi'uun* have said that this verse refers to the scholars. This was the opinion preferred by *Imam*

Malik. Ibn al-'Arabi said in his Ahkaam: 'The sound opinion with me is that ***those who possess the authority from among you***', are the *amirs* and the scholars (*al-umaraa' wa l-'ulamaa'*). As for the governors (*umaraa'*) it is because the government lies in their hand. As for the scholars it is because they are questioned about those things which are individually obligatory upon the people. Thus, responding to the first is incumbent and following the legal judgments of the second is obligatory. However, when the affair of the authority falls into the hands of those who are ignorant, then the scholars should be preferred. This was the ruling that *Imam* Malik gave about that. Thus, the affair (of obedience) stops with the scholars and is withdrawn from the governors due to their ignorance and exceeding the limits. Moreover, those governors who are upright are in need of the scholars just as others are in need of them.' In the al-Jawaahir it states: ***Those who possess the authority*** are the *amirs* based upon the words of the majority of the scholars. The word '*authority*' based upon the above is the opposite of prohibition (*an-nahyi*) and it is from this root that the term 'the governor' (*al-amir*) derives. Or it means the people of knowledge who follow the *Sunnah*.' Included in this meaning is the authority which the husband has over the wife."

When we examine how this was implemented by the Prophet ﷺ we find that he not only placed people in charge who were believers, but he placed people in charge of their own tribes and clans. For example, when he organized the army before the battle of Uhud, he divided them into three battalions. He placed the *Muhaajireen* (the emigrants) under the command of Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr – who was himself an emigrant. The Aws tribe was placed under the command of Usayd ibn Hudayr. The Khazraj were placed under the authority of Al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir. Again, six years after the *hijrah* the Prophet mobilized an army against Bani Mustaliq – who were planning to attack Madinah. He then appointed Zayd ibn Haarithah as the *amir* of Madinah, Abu Bakr as the *amir* of the *Muhaajireen*, and Sa'd ibn 'Ubaada as the *amir* of the *Ansaar* (the Helpers). If we continued in this vain, we would see a pattern emerging. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would appoint *amirs* over the people and these *amirs* would be from those very same people.

This pattern becomes even more apparent when we examine the dynamics that took place as those outlying tribes came to Madinah to embrace Islam. When tribes entered Islam, if their leader entered Islam his leadership was affirmed. However, if only some members of a tribe embraced Islam, with the exception of their leader, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would appoint one of the new Muslims as their leader. This was the case with the major tribes as well as the smaller ones. Many times these people came to Madinah to affirm their faith, then after a short period of time they would return to their native land. When this happened the Prophet ﷺ would send

some of his companions along with them in order to teach and instruct them in the matters of the religion (*deen*).

This is clearly illustrated when Banu al-Haarith embraced Islam. Khaalid ibn al-Waleed was dispatched to them and ordered to invite them to Islam for three days before he attacked them. They accepted Islam and Khaalid stayed with them for a while instructing them in the *deen*. After this Khaalid sent a message to the Prophet ﷺ informing him of his compliance with his orders. Upon receiving Khaalid's message, he ﷺ responded and ordered him to return to Madinah along with their deputation. This deputation consisted of Qays ibn al-Husayn, Yazeed ibn 'Abdul-Madaan, Yazeed ibn al-Muhajjal, 'Abdullah ibn Quraad al-Ziyaadi, Shaddaad ibn 'Abdullah al-Qanaani, and 'Amr ibn 'Abdullah al-Dibaabi. After having an audience with the Prophet ﷺ he appointed Qays ibn al-Husayn as their leader (*amir*). When they returned to their homeland he sent 'Amr ibn Hazm to instruct them in religion, teach them the *sunnah*, the institutions of Islam, and to collect the alms (*zakah*). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ even sent him a letter in which he gave him his orders and injunctions.²

Again, upon further and deeper examination of our beloved Prophet's *seerah* or biography one will notice a similar pattern emerging. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not subject a people to unfamiliar leadership. The leaders who were chosen to govern the affairs of the people were from those same people. The Prophet understood the nature of people and realized that people function better with a leader from among themselves. Ibn Khaldun even elaborates on this in his famous al-Muqaddimah. He said,

"Sovereignty (*al-mulk*) and large-scale dynastic power (*al-dawlah al-'aammah*) are attained only through a group feeling (*al-qabeel wa al-'asabeeyah*).³ This is because aggressive and defensive strength is obtained only through group feeling (*al-'asabeeyah*) which means affection willingness to fight and die for each other...Religious propaganda (*ad-da'wah ad-deeniyyah*) gives a dynasty (*ad-dawlah*) at its beginning another power in addition to that of the group feeling

² A. Quillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 645-648.

³ This term usually carries a negative connotation in Islamic literature as evidenced by the following Prophetic tradition collected by Ibn Maajah in his Sunan:

عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ كَثِيرٍ الشَّامِيِّ عَنْ امْرَأَةٍ مِنْهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهَا فُسَيْلَةٌ قَالَتْ سَمِعْتُ أَبِي يَقُولُ سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَمِنَ الْعُصْبِيَّةُ أَنْ يُحِبَّ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ قَالَ ((لَا وَلَكِنْ مِنَ الْعُصْبِيَّةِ أَنْ يُعِينَ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ عَلَى الظُّلْمِ))

Ubaadah ibn Kathir reported from a woman from among them called Faseelah who said: "I heard my father say: 'I asked the Messenger of Allah, "O Messenger of Allah, is it *al-'asabeeyah* (racism & tribalism) that a man love his own people?" He said 'No! But *al-'asabeeyah* is that a man helps his people in oppression and wrong-doing.' However, Ibn Khaldun uses *'asabeeyah* in a more literal sense – divorcing it from its negative connotation given by the Prophet ﷺ. He uses the term to refer to people who are connected to each other by blood and this blood relationship in turn instills within them a strong sense of solidarity and brotherhood.

(*al-'asabeeyah*) it possessed as the result of the number of its supporters. As we have mentioned before, the reason for this is that religious colouring (*ad-deeniyyah*) does away with mutual jealousy (*at-tanafusi*) and envy (*at-tahaasudi*) among people who share in a group feeling (*fee ahli al-'asabeeyah*), and causes concentration upon the truth (*al-haqq*). When people come to have the (right) insight into their affairs, nothing can withstand them, because their outlook is one and their object one of common accord. They are willing to die for (their objectives). The members of the dynasty they attack may be many times as numerous as they. But their purposes differ, inasmuch as they are false purposes, and (the people of the worldly dynasty) come to abandon each other, since they are afraid of death. Therefore, they do not offer resistance to (the people with a religious colouring), even if they themselves are more numerous. They are overpowered by them and quickly wiped out, as a result of the luxury (*at-tarafi*) and humbleness (*adh-dhulli*) existing among them, as we have mentioned before...Religious propaganda (*ad-da'wah ad-deeniyyah*) cannot materialize without group feeling (*'asabeeyah*). This is because every mass (political) undertaking by necessity requires group feeling (*al-'asabeeyah*). This is indicated in the sound *hadith*: 'Allah sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people.'⁴ If this was the case with the prophets, who are among human beings those most like to perform wonders, one would (expect it to apply) all the more so to others. One cannot expect them to be able to work the wonder of achieving superiority without group feeling (*'asabeeyah*)."⁵

Ibn Khaldun was a master at understanding how Allah's *sunnah* works in relation to how mankind organizes itself into societies, etc. Even he realized that people with differing backgrounds and orientations will not enjoy the same success as those groups who share similar backgrounds – even with religious motivations.

African-American Muslims (and by extension all Muslims who were born, raised, and consider America to be their home) have embraced true Islam. However, they have been tricked into believing that it is a sin to embrace their heritage. They quote slogans like "*Islam is my race*" or "*Islam is my nationality*." They ignore the Prophetic definition of racism or nationalism. They even ignore the clear verses from the Qur'an in which Allah mentions our different languages and colors as one of His signs (Qur'an 30:22).

⁴ ((مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا فِي مَنَعَةٍ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ))

⁵ Franz Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldun: The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History (Princeton University Press, 1967), 123-127.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ
وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And from among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.

They also ignore the fact that Allah acknowledges our division into nations and tribes. In fact, He, the Most High, says that *He made us* into nations and tribes (Qur'an 49:13).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ
شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.

This type of thinking weakens and undermines any attempt or effort to establish Islam in our communities. History has proven that even when pseudo-Islamic groups like the Nation of Islam, Moorish Science Temple, Nubian Islamic Hebrews, etc... seek to establish communities Allah allows them some level of success – even though they ascribe partners unto Allah (*shirk*). This is because their methodology was based upon an ethnic solidarity and strengthened by a religious call. We have abandoned that solidarity and embraced the true religion of Islam. By doing this we have achieved varying levels of ‘*individual*’ salvation or success, but *communally* we have taken several steps backwards.

The point being made here is that a *jamaa'ah* functions better without outside control. This is not to say that the *jamaa'ah* cannot take advice or learn valuable lessons from outsiders. However, history has shown that when an indigenous community ignores or otherwise supersedes its own internal leadership and seeks guidance from seemingly more qualified/knowledgeable sources from outside their own community disaster is usually not far off. We will mention two examples to illustrate this point.

“Darul Islam has been the main and the largest indigenous Sunni organization in America, gaining membership rapidly during the sixties. In doctrine it was a typical mainstream movement, though in organization it was a novelty. The name was derived

from the classical Muslim division of the world into the realm of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the realm of war (*dar al-harb*). Imam Yahya Abdul Karim was accepted as *Amir al-Mu'mineen*, leader of the faithful, ministries of defense, finance, education, external affairs, social services, mosques, and so forth, were established to provide services for the community. *Darul Islam* soon became a national organization with some twenty mosques in the New York area alone, and even crossed the border to Canada. Like many black movements of the sixties *Darul Islam* was a militant movement, with occasional outbreaks of violence.

In the early eighties a Pakistani Sufi Shaykh named Jaylani arrived in New York and started teaching in one of the *Darul Islam* mosques. A few members gathered around him, and news of this *shaykh's* knowledge and miracles spread rapidly to the other mosques. People started migrating to the *shaykh's* lectures, and many stayed with him. The community leadership was gradually abandoned in favor of the more charismatic leadership of this 'holy man.' Eventually Imam Yahya was asked to concede leadership to the more knowledgeable *Shaykh* Jaylani **and the community fell apart.** Those who favored the leadership of *Shaykh* Jaylani formed a new group, the *Fuqara*, with a strictly "Sufi" orientation. Others who stayed with the demoralized Imam Yahya soon disbanded and joined other organizations."⁶

Interestingly enough, an *Imam* who is no longer affiliated with either of the above-mentioned *jamaa'ahs* told the author that some brothers from *Darul Islam* actually went to India (or Pakistan – the author can't remember) and, upon returning to the United States, introduced the *jamaa'ah* to the *shaykh*. Allah knows best regarding the truth. In any case, this shows how members of a group often participate in their own destruction.

One of the most sad and harmful calamities which has afflicted many Muslims in the western hemisphere is the increase in the consumption of *haram* or unlawful meats. For years Muslims struggled on every level to pave the way for Muslims to have *halaal* or lawful meats available to them. Muslims have even fought and won legislation in the various prison systems to eat *halaal* meat. However, over the past few years certain scholars have declared the meats found in the markets in the United States and similar countries to be permissible for Muslims to eat. These scholars have based their opinions on the notion that the United States is a Christian or Judeo-Christian society. After these *fataawa* became widespread, it had become commonplace to see Muslims eating McDonald's cheeseburgers, Perdue's chicken, and other similar meats.

⁶ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddaad, *The Muslims of America* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 20.

We do not wish to mention any of these scholars by name or expose their identities by quoting them directly. Even though they are well known to many, it is not our intent to bring shame upon them.

It is as Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf said,

"Many people assume that the United States—and, for that matter, Canada, the UK, and many other European countries—are Christian nations. This is erroneous. Although many of the inhabitants of these countries profess to be Christian, this affiliation of theirs does not extend much past a personal or perhaps communal level. On the state level, these countries are openly secular, promote separation of church and state, and would hardly accept being labeled Christian nations. Some Muslim scholars from abroad, many of whom are not accurately informed of the religious composition of the US, sometimes pass the *fatwā* that the meat in the United States is lawful, citing that the country is Christian. No doubt, meat slaughtered by a Christian or Jew in accordance with the injunctions of their scriptures cannot be considered impermissible, as Allāh has made it lawful in the Qur’ān: “And the food of those who have been given the Book is permitted to you” (Qur’ān 5:5). However, carelessly purchasing or eating meat from any source in the US with the excuse of being in a Christian country and thus eating the meat of the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) is a gross error in judgment born out of ignorance of the true circumstances."⁷

In his book Adab al-Fatwa wal Mufti wal Mustafti, Imam an-Nawawi, may Allah be pleased with him, said

قَالَ إِمَامُ النَّوَوِيِّ فِي كِتَابِهِ ، آدَابُ الْفُتُوَى وَ الْمَفْتَى وَ
المستفتى: لَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُفْتَى فِي الْإِيمَانِ وَ الْإِقْرَارِ وَ
نَحْوِهِمَا مِمَّا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِالْأَلْفَافِ ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَلَدِ
الْأَلْفِظِ ، أَوْ مُتَنَزِّلًا مَنْزِلَتَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَةِ بِمُرَادِهِمْ مِنْ
الْفَافِظِ ، وَ عَرَفِهِمْ فِيهَا .

"It is not permissible (*laa yajuuzu*) for a person of one area or country, not aware of the customs and the circumstances of another area to issue *fatwa* in that place, until he is fully acquainted with the people of it,

⁷ Written by Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf (Edited and Expanded by Amir A. Toft) as an appendix for *The Islamic Laws of Animal Slaughter* published by White Thread Press.

their style of speaking and what they mean by their words and expressions."⁸

Had these scholars restrained themselves and adhered to this principle, thousands of Muslims may have been saved from eating the *haraam* and all of the evil which emerges from that. Eating *haraam* is one of the main causative factors which prevent ones prayers from being answered. Ingestion of the *haraam* opens the door for the commission of other sins, creates laziness in the performance of religious obligations (like *salaah* – prayer), and the list goes on. Actually, books can and have been written on the effects of eating *haraam* foods. It is not within the scope of this book to enumerate all of them. We only mentioned a couple to illustrate the harm which emerges from seeking guidance from people who are not familiar with our situation.

We could narrate many more real-life events from our contemporary experience that would illustrate the crippling harm which takes place when the indigenous Muslims receive their orders from others. However, this would make this chapter into a book of its own.

In light of all that was mentioned, it is hoped that the Muslims begin to embrace the idea of communal *khalwah*. It is hoped that we can begin to look at the statement of Allah, the Most High (*and those in authority among you (uul al-amri minkum)*), along with its application by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and isolate our communities from those outside influences that have always proven to be destructive.

It should go without saying that we must, first and foremost, isolate ourselves from the negative influences of the disbelievers. We did not spend any time addressing this issue because this discourse is limited to the context of seeking religious knowledge (and where this knowledge should come from). This last point regarding isolation is meant to illustrate how the right information given in the wrong context and circumstances can (and has) brought more harm than benefit.

Our *Doctrine of Selective Seclusion*’ should include the following points.

1.

The American Muslims of African descent will no longer blindly accept the religious verdicts (*fataawa*) of scholars from another land who are not familiar with their history, customs, and ways of speaking.

2.

The African-American Muslims would consider any attempt by any Muslim who immigrates to America – especially for material reasons – to force their own culture or political interpretation of Islam upon them as a threat to African-American Muslim unity and their struggle to regain the religion and culture that was taken from them during slavery.

3.

African-American Muslims agree to support any Islamic effort undertaken by the immigrant Muslim community. However, the African-American Muslim

⁸ Imam an-Nawawi, The Etiquettes and Qualifications of Issuing Islamic Judgment, of a Mufti, and of the one seeking his opinion, (Al-Fardani Publishers and Distributors, Birmingham, UK, 1997), 31 (40).

community agrees that they will not attempt to interfere with, change or alter the goals and direction of such efforts.

Thus, the need for the '*A Doctrine of Selective Seclusion*' should be clear.