75099 - How should he call his friend to the way of al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa’ah?

the question

How can I call a Muslim brother of mine who is a Sufi? He has been very kind to me, and he always attends lessons with the scholars, but I have no one among the scholars who could help me in that. You know how difficult it is to convince the Sufis, especially when the whole environment is Sufi and he accuses the Salafis of being quick to label people as kaafirs etc.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allaah to reward you with good for your keenness and your interest in guiding your brother in matters of religion. Undoubtedly one of the greatest blessings of Allaah to His slave is when He makes him active in da’wah, calling others to Him and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.

The daa’iyah who calls people to Allaah needs knowledge and insight when he calls people.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

O youth who seeks to call people to Allaah, ponder the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): This is my way; I invite unto Allaah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allaah — Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allaah, i.e. to the Oneness of Allaah — Islamic Monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted be Allaah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikoon (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah; those who worship others along with Allaah or set up rivals or partners to Allaah)”

[Yoosuf 12:108]

i.e., with insight into the message to which you are calling, and with insight into the state of the one who is called, and with insight into the manner of calling, for there are conditions to which you must pay attention, including the following:

1 – The daa'iyah must have insight into the message to which he is calling people. He should have knowledge of the Islamic ruling on that to which he is calling others, because he may think that he is calling them to something that he thinks is obligatory when in Islam it is not obligatory, so he is obliging the slaves of Allaah to do something that Allaah does not oblige them to do. Or he may call them to give up something that he thinks is haraam, when in the religion of Allaah it is not haraam. So he is forbidding to the slaves of Allaah something which Allaah has permitted to them.

2 – He should have insight into the state of the one whom he is calling. It is essential to know the situation of the one whom he is calling: what is his level of knowledge, what is his ability in arguing, so that you can prepare yourself to debate with him. Because if you enter into a discussion with such a one, and you lose the argument because of his skill in arguing this will be a great disaster for the truth and you will be the cause of it. You should never think that the one who argues in support of falsehood will fail in his argument in every case.

3 – He should have insight into the manner of calling. I encourage my brother daa'iyahs to use wisdom and deliberation, for they know that Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"He grants Hikmah [wisdom] to whom He wills, and he, to whom Hikmah is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding"

[al-Baqarah 2:269]

End quote.

Fataawa al-Haram al-Makki, p. 1063-1066.

See also question no. 2023.

Here we would like to point out several things:

1 – Do not generalize, such as saying that the original idea behind Sufism is innovation and misguidance, or that all Sufis are misguided. Rather you should be cautious in your speech, such as saying: Whoever does such and such or says such and such, whether he is a Sufi or otherwise, has fallen into bid'ah, etc.

The scholars have not ruled that all Sufis are misguided, rather they have divided Sufism into various categories, and explained what is in accordance with the Sunnah and what goes against it.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem said:

Sufis fall into two categories: Sunni Sufis and innovator Sufis. The good ones among them have only a little bid'ah, but some of them have a great deal of bid'ah, and some understood Sufism as supporting the belief in wahdat al-wujood (a form of pantheism). End quote.

Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Ibraaheem, 1, no. 192.

But most Sufis nowadays have fallen into innovation and misguidance.

This has already been discussed in the answers to questions no. 4983, 47431 and 20375

You can start with him in this manner, then measure the kind of Sufism that your friend follows against the Qur'aan and Sunnah. If it is true, then praise be to Allaah, but if it is false he will leave it in sha Allaah.

Secondly:

With regard to his accusation that Salafis are quick to label others as kaafirs, this is an accusation that we have heard often. Regarding as a kaafir one for whom there is proof that he is a kaafir is not wrong or shameful, rather it is wrong not to regard as a kaafir one for whom there is proof that

he is a kaafir. We do not deny that some of those who claim to be Salafis hasten to label others as kaafirs, but this is not the way of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah. Ahl al-Sunnah (those who adhere to the Sunnah) do not label anyone as a kaafir merely because of a sin that he commits, even if it is a major sin. Rather it is essential to establish shar'i proof that this action constitutes kufr, then certain conditions must be met and certain impediments avoided in order for a person to be judged to be a kaafir.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The view of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah is that they do not regard any of the people of the qiblah as kaafirs simply because of sins, or because of misinterpretations, rather if an individual has both good deeds and bad deeds, then his case is up to Allaah. End quote.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 27/478

And he (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

No one has the right to regard any of the Muslims as a kaafir, even if they make mistakes or do wrong things, until proof is established. If it is proven for certain that a person is a Muslim, that cannot be altered by doubt alone, rather it can only be altered after establishing proof and dispelling doubt. End quote.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 12/466

And he explained that Ahl al-Sunnah do not describe as kaafirs those who differ from them, even if the one who differs from them may hasten to label Ahl al-Sunnah as kaafirs.

He said:

The imams of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah and the people of knowledge and faith have the qualities of knowledge, justice and mercy. They know the path of truth and they know that if they follow this path they will be in accordance with the Sunnah and free from innovation, and they treat justly those who differ from that, even if they wrong them, as Allaah says (interpretation of

the meaning):

“Stand out firmly for Allaah as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety”

[al-Maa’idah 5:8]

They are merciful towards people and they desire good, guidance and knowledge for them, and they do not wish them ill. Hence the people of knowledge and Sunnah do not regard as kaafirs those who differ from them, even if the one who differs from them regards them as kaafirs, because what constitutes kufr is the matter of shar’i rulings. End quote.

Al-Radd ‘ala al-Bakri, p. 256-258

Thirdly:

If you do not have enough knowledge to convince him and answer the doubts that he has, then you can convey the truth to him by means of useful books and tapes, or by visiting scholars in your own city or elsewhere, to listen to them and ask them questions. The means of good are still available to all people these days – praise be to Allaah – so do not scorn such things. Perhaps a tape that you tell him about may be the means of his being guided.

Fourthly:

Do not despair of calling him and guiding him, even if it takes a long time. How many people have repented and come back to the truth after years of being called and reminded.

And Allaah knows best.