98668 - Ruling on cooperation among Muslims, and different aspects of that, and how to achieve that

the question

Allaah says “Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety)” [al-Maa'idah 5:3]. How should Muslims cooperate or help one another in the light of this verse? In the absence of any organized effort, what should the person who wants to do organized work do with the circumstances and opportunities that are available to him?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Allah has created man weak, and he needs to cooperate continuously with others throughout his life. This is clear in worldly affairs. Man needs someone to sow for him and harvest for him, and he needs someone to make tools, and market goods, and buy things. To sum up, people cannot live unless they cooperate with one another.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Tis’eeniyyah (1/125):

The sons of Adam cannot live in this world unless they help one another in word and deed. End quote.

With regard to matters of religion and sharee’ah, this is also the case. No Prophet could call people without needing others to help him to convey the message of Tawheed and defeat shirk. The effects of that are particularly clear in the case of jihad, and the same may be said with regard to teaching, looking after the poor and taking care of widows and orphans.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And many a Prophet (i.e. many from amongst the Prophets) fought (in Allaah’s Cause) and along with him (fought) large bands of religious learned men. But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allaah’s way, nor did they weaken nor degrade themselves. And Allaah loves As-Saabiroon (the patient)”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:146]

In Saheeh Muslim (86) it is narrated from ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mas’ood that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There is no Prophet whom Allaah sent to any nation before me, but he had disciples and companions from among his nation who followed his path and obeyed his commands…”

The Muslims need one another with regard to both worldly and religious affairs, hence cooperation among Muslims is something important that Allaah has enjoined and He has made cooperation the basis for religious and worldly well being. The Muslims – if they achieve this cooperation – are described as a strong, integrated structure, and as a single body. All of that confirms that cooperation and mutual support among them is something essential. That includes many aspects in the lives of Muslims, which are summed up in the words birr (righteousness) and taqwa (piety) , as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment” [al-Maa’idah 5:2]. These are two words that sum up all the attributes of goodness, such as belief, conduct, rulings and so on. Allaah says, explaining the meaning of birr (righteousness) (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allaah) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allaah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to Al-Masaakeen (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs As-Salaah (Iqaamat-as-Salaah), and gives the Zakât, and who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people

of the truth and they are Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)”

[al-Baqarah 2:177]

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It is well known that people’s interactions cannot be sound, and their interests cannot be achieved and they cannot be united and their enemies cannot feel any awe of them except by means of Islamic solidarity, the reality of which is cooperation in righteousness and piety, and mutual support, love, sincerity, and urging one another to follow the truth and be steadfast and patient. Undoubtedly this is among the most important of Islamic duties and obligations. The verses of the Qur'aan and the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) state that Islamic solidarity among the Muslims – individuals, societies, governments and peoples – is one of the most important of ideas, and one of the duties which are essential to the welfare of society and the well being of their religious affairs and the soundness of their interactions and to united them against their common foe. There are many verses and ahaadeeth which speak of this, if not in these exact words then in similar meanings. Islamic solidarity means helping one another, standing shoulder to shoulder, supporting and advising one another and other such phrases. That includes enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, calling others to Allaah, and guiding people to that which will lead to their happiness and salvation, in this world and the Hereafter. That also includes teaching the ignorant, helping the destitute, supporting the one who is wronged, stopping the wrongdoer from wronging others, establishing the law of Allaah, maintaining security, stopping miscreants and mischief-makers, protecting roads, providing means of transportation by land, sea and air, and providing means of communication both land-based and wireless, so that their common worldly and religious interests may be achieved, and so as to facilitate cooperation between Muslims in everything that may protect the truth, establish justice and spread peace and security in all regions.

Mutual support also includes reconciling between Muslims, resolving armed conflicts between them and fighting the offending party until it complies with the command of Allaah, in accordance with the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning):

“So fear Allaah and adjust all matters of difference among you”

[al-Anfaal 8:1]

“And if two parties (or groups) among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which outrages till it complies with the Command of Allaah. Then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily, Allaah loves those who are the equitable.

10. The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allaah, that you may receive mercy”

[al-Hujuraat 49:9-10].

Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (2/192, 193)

He (may Allaah have mercy on him) also said:

Among the things that are mentioned in the ahaadeeth about solidarity as enjoined in Islam, which means cooperating in righteousness and piety, are the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “Religion is sincerity” They said, “To whom, O Messenger of Allaah?” He said, “To Allaah and to His Book, to His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.” Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh. And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The relationship between one believer and another is like a structure, parts of which support other parts,” and he interlaced his fingers. Agreed upon. And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is that of the body; if one part of it complains, the rest of the body joins it in staying awake and suffering fever.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim in their Saheehs.

These ahaadeeth and others like them clearly indicate that mutual support, compassion and care among Muslims, and cooperation in doing good, are obligatory. Likening them to a single structure or a single body indicates that by supporting and helping one another and showing compassion to

one another, they will become united and integrated, and they will be saved from the evil of their enemies. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma‘roof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:104]

The leader of them all in this call and their example on this path is their Prophet and greatest leader, our Prophet Muhammad the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He was the first one to call this ummah to affirm the Oneness of its Lord (Tawheed) and hold fast to His rope, and to unite in truth and form a single rank against the common enemy and to achieve its interests and serve its just causes, in accordance with the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning):

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلىالله عليه وسلم) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islâm) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur’aan) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better”

[al-Nahl 16:125]

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): 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)”

[Yoosuf 12:108]

This straight path was also followed by his noble Companions and those who followed them in truth (may Allaah be pleased with them all), and they attained the ultimate success, and Allaah granted them the honour and victory that He had promised them.

Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (200, 201).

This may all be summed up by noting that it is essential for the Muslims to cooperate in righteousness and piety, and the Muslims must do all that they can in order to achieve this cooperation, such as founding charitable organizations, da'wah centres, Qur'aan study circles, and so on, which will help to unite and organize their efforts. The Muslims must help them and devote their energy and wealth to establish true cooperation in righteousness and piety. The Muslim should not fail to offer something to his brothers and help them with what they need in worldly or religious terms.

Secondly:

The Muslim can serve Islam and strive so that the Word of Allaah will become supreme without joining a party or group. Our scholars and imams nowadays are doing a great service for Islam and there is hardly any spot on earth that their knowledge has not reached, and they are not doing organized activities, nor do they belong to groups and parties.

If you want to serve Islam and work for it, then do that yourself in whatever way you are able, such as delivering speeches, teaching, calling people in villages and provinces, distributing books and tapes, or giving financial support to those who do these things. You can work with Sunni groups and organizations who are serving Islam.

As for sects, groups and parties that adopt beliefs other than the belief ('aqeedah) of the Salaf, or a way that is other than the way of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah, there is nothing good in them, and a Muslim should not cooperate with them in anything that will support their beliefs and ways. As for groups which call people to Islam, but they have some things that go against sharee'ah, the Muslim may cooperate with them in matters that are in accordance with sharee'ah.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

Each of these groups have things that are wrong and things that are right. So you should cooperate with them in matters in which they are right, and avoid the matters in which they are in error, whilst advising them and cooperating with them in righteousness and piety.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzaaq ‘Afeefi, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Qa’ood

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (2/237, 238).

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

Do you regard establishing Islamic organizations in Islamic countries to guide the youth and teach them about Islam as something good in this day and age?

He replied:

Establishing these Islamic organizations is good for the Muslims, but they must strive to explain the truth with evidence and not fight one another. They should strive to cooperate with one another and love one another, advising sincerely and speaking of the good points of the others, and overlooking matters that may disrupt their relationships with one another. There is no reason why there should not be such groups if they call people to the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (5/272).

But if there is no organized effort at all, or there is no effort in which the good outweighs the bad, and a person cannot cooperate with any organization, that does not mean that a person cannot cooperate with others around him, of his own choosing, to advise one another and remind one another to seek beneficial knowledge and do righteous deeds, and spread good among the Muslims. All of these are among the greatest aims of cooperating with Islamic groups. This is how the command to cooperate in righteousness and piety should be understood, not just belonging to some organization or party, because the command to cooperate is more general in meaning than that.

If a person cannot do that, which is unlikely to be the case, then he himself can be a caller to good and a leader of guidance to the people around him. This is how the calls of many reformers and daa’iyahs began, so let him adhere to that. If he cannot find anyone to help him, then he should

remember that some of the Prophets will come on the Day of Resurrection with no followers.

And Allaah knows best.