Volunteering in Islam

DR. BILAL PHILIPS

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ABOUT DR. BILAL PHILIPS

(An introduction based on the information available from the official website of Islamic Online University, established by Dr. Bilal Philips as well as his biography published in the Saudi Gazette)

Early Life

ABU AMEENAH BILAL PHILIPS is a Jamaican – Canadian Islamic scholar. Born in Jamaica in 1947, he comes from a family of educationists. Both his parents are teachers, and one of his grandfathers was a church minister and Bible scholar. When Dr. Bilal was eleven, his family migrated to Canada. It was that time when he started to notice various perspective about human life and the suffering people had to go through.

Bilal Philips – The Guitarist
Bilal’s first contact with a Muslim society came when his parents moved to Malaysia in the capacity of teachers and advisors to the ministry of education under the Canadian Colombo Plan. Bilal hardly noticed that he was in a Muslim country as the British had left their traces behind in Malaysia. His friends were either Euro-Asians or anglicized Muslim Malaysians. Bilal formed a rock group and began to play the guitar professionally. He had a motorbike and was quite popular in the community.

**Exploration of various political philosophies**

When he went back to Canada, Dr. Bilal was motivated to become a medical artist. However, while studying at the university, he came across a lot of situations which prompted him to think differently. Bilal stepped right into the volatile student movements of the late sixties and early seventies. The drug culture and hippy movement were being propagated by renowned figures such as Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary. In certain classes, the lecturers would pass marijuana cigarettes to the students. They would smoke together and then start the classes. These things and other situations at that time prompted Dr. Bilal to get involved with student movements. There were sit-ins and strikes, sometimes there were more violent protests and the police would be called in. Professors were introducing socialism into their classes. Impressed by this, Bilal began a detailed study of the work of Marx, and soon
considered himself to be a Marxist-Leninist. His search for a political solution led him to California where he worked with black activist movements like the Black Panthers. This was the time when he was also introduced to the ‘nation of Islam’ – a movement that carried the name ‘Islam’ but was far from the religion of Islam. One of the beliefs of this group was that all black men are gods and all white people are devils. At that time, Dr. Bilal read the biography of Malcolm X who was one of the notable Muslim figures who originally belong to the Nation of Islam. This sowed the seed for the true Islamic faith in his heart. Not finding the type of movement that he was looking for in the United States, he returned to Canada.

From here, the next phase of his life began. He got involved with a socialist-oriented group in Toronto. In the early seventies, there was an influx of blacks from the States and from the West Indies into Canada. Bilal and his group were trying to educate the blacks as to their position in society and motivate them to make efforts to change the laws on discrimination. Bilal taught African history and social movements in the community center organised by the group. He used his musical abilities to collect donations for the center. His art too followed the direction in which he was heading; he drew political cartoons for movement newspapers and posters for rallies. In accordance with his desire to help society, he took up a job as a councilor for delinquent children.
Gradually, he started to question socialism. This resulted in him in exploring communism. But he found out that communism was not the solution to mankind’s problems either. This search for a solution also took him to China.

**Conversion to Islam**

At that moment, he came to know that one of the ladies in the groups he was working with had accepted Islam. He then decided to study about Islam too. The first book he read was ‘Islam, The Misunderstood Religion’ by Muhammad Qutub. Muhammad Qutub was the brother of Syed Qutub, one of the leaders of the Ikhwan movement of Egypt. Muhammad Qutub’s book was a comparison of Islam, Socialism, Communism, and Capitalism from a social, economic and moral point of view. For a more spiritually-minded person, it might seem a bit dry, but since Bilal was politically oriented it was exactly what he needed.

He became convinced that Islam was the best way to bring about an economic and social revolution in Western society. As he avidly read all that was available on Islam in English, another point began to impress him the revolution began not with the toppling of the existing socio-economic order but with the change of the individual himself. Bilal had decided that if he became a Muslim he would do so totally; there would be no half measures for him. Since that day in 1972, he has never looked back and is one of the
leading scholars of Muslims ummah today. At his hands, thousands of people have accepted Islam.

**Islamic Education:**

Dr. Bilal studied at the University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia for six years. For the first two years, he studied the Arabic language and then completed a BA degree. He followed this up with an M.A. degree in Islamic theology from King Saud University in Riyadh, and a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Wales, UK (1994).

**Teaching career:**

Dr. Bilal spent ten years teaching Islamic studies in an Islamic high school in Riyadh, and another 18 years lecturing in Arabic and Islamic studies in the American University in Dubai, UAE, the Islamic Studies Academy in Doha, Qatar, Knowledge International University of Riyadh, and Preston International College, Chennai, India.

His whole life has been exemplified by his goal of seeking and conveying Islamic knowledge in order to “Change the Muslim Nation through Islamic Education.”

**Publications:**

Dr. Bilal Philips has written, translated and commented on over 50
published books on various Islamic topics, as well as edited and published the 56-volume Eemaan reading series for children.

**Media works:**

He has presented Islamic programs on Riyadh Channel 2TV, Sharjah TV, Peace TV, Huda TV, Islam Channel, UK, and the Deen Show, Chicago, USA, and GuideUS TV, from Washington USA.

**Establishment of Islamic Online University:**

But perhaps his greatest achievement, and the one for which he was listed in the Jordanian publication, among “The 500 Most Influential Muslims”, is his historic founding of the mega-university, the Islamic Online University, which has in only 7 years since its inception over 270,000 students registered from 228 different country around the world!

**An year by year journey of Dr. Bilal Philips’ educational revolution:**

- 1986: Began the first translation of the Friday Sermon into English in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia at the Mosque of Dr. Abdur Rahman Al-Luwaihiq.
- 1988: Participated in the establishment of the first Islamic
Center in Bat’ha, Riyadh, and his book “The True Religion of God”, was among the first books used to propagate Islam among foreign workers.

- 1989: Published first books: Polygamy in Islam, The Devils Deception, The Mirage in Iran, Khomeini: Moderate or Fanatical Shi’ite


- 1991-2: Led a team of Islamic propagators which converted over 3,000 American soldiers in Khobar, Saudia Arabia, after the 1st Gulf War.

- 1993 – 2002: Set up and ran the first Islamic Center in the UAE for Dar al-Birr Charity, in Dubai.

- 1993 – 2003: Taught Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University in Dubai.

- 2001: Established the first Friday sermon (Khutbah) in English in the UAE, at Qasbah Mosque, Sharjah, UAE.

- 1993 – 2002: Set up and ran the English Department of Dar al Fatah Islamic Press, in Sharjah, UAE. Published more than 80 books.

- 2001 – 2004: Dr. Bilal established and headed the faculty of Islamic Studies at Preston University Ajman, UAE, and lectured in the University of Ajman.

- 2003 – 2010: Consulted for and lectured at the Qatar Guest
Center of Sh Eid Al Thani Charity, Doha, Qatar

- 2007 – Present: Launched and headed the Islamic Online University (IOU) Free Islamic Studies Diploma, online from Doha, Qatar.

- 2007 – 2011: Established and was Dean of the Islamic Studies Academy, affiliated with Omdurman Islamic University, Omdurman, Sudan.

- 2008 – 2009: Established and lectured in the English Islamic Studies section of Knowledge International University founded by Sh. Dr. Sa’d Al Shithri.

- 2009 – 2010: Director of PERF, and as Supervising Director he founded the first Islamic University in India “Preston International College (www.prestonchennai.ac.in)” and along with it, Al-Fajr International School (www.al-fajrinternational.com), in Chennai, India.

- 2010 – Present: Launched the BAIS (Bachelors of Arts in Islamic Studies) online. Affiliated IOU with Wishes University, Davao, Philippines.

- 2011: Affiliated IOU with Muhamadiyyah University, Sukabumi, Indonesia.

- 2012: Established the first office of IOU in Hargeisa, Somaliland, and obtained accreditation for IOU from the Ministry of Education of Somaliland. Ranked among the
500 most influential Muslims in the world

- 2013: Established the first learning Center for IOU in the Gambia and launched the IEC (Intensive English Course) for madrasah graduates as a bridge to IOU’s BAIS.

- 2014: Obtained accreditation for IOU from the Ministry of Education of Somalia, Mogadishu.

- 2014 – Present: Launched the Bachelors of Arts in Education and Islamic Banking and Finance, and the Bachelors of Science in Psychology at IOU.

- 2015 – Present: Launched the Bachelors of Science in Business Administration and Information Technology. Also launched the Masters of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS). Obtained degree recognition and a license for operation for IOU in the Gambia. Launched the IEC in Somaliland in collaboration with the government. Established an IOU Learning Center in Sierra Leone.

- 2016: Established the official headquarters on the ground for IOU in Banjul, Gambia. Established an IOU a Learning Center and obtained provisional accreditation from the NCHE of Malawi, East Africa. Established an IOU Learning Center in Luzon, Philippines.

- 2017: Established an IOU Learning Center in Marawi City, Mindanao, Philippines.
This book is a transcription of a lecture delivered by Dr. Bilal Philips to a session organized by Multicultural Reverted Muslims, Malaysia. The lecture aimed at highlighting some of the key areas of focus for the volunteers in a short span of time. In order to ensure broader utilization of the advice given by the Shaykh in that session, we have prepared this booklet for use around the globe inshaAllah.

It is to be noted that this booklet is not a word-to-word translation of the lecture. During the transcription, a need was felt to reword some of the sentences in order to convert them to a written style as opposed to the verbal form of delivery. This was done, to the best of our ability, without any impact on the underlying message and guidelines presented by the Shaykh.
All praise is due to Allah and May Allah’s peace and blessings be on the last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and those who follow the path of righteousness until the last day.

The topic for today is ‘volunteering in Islam’; this is an issue which those Muslims who are engaged in Islamic work have to consider because the work of establishing Islam, learning Islam, conveying Islam in an effective manner depends, to a large degree, on volunteers!

**What is a ‘volunteer’**

If we look at the basic definition of what is a volunteer, we come to know that it's basically one who freely gives of himself or herself for a cause, an event, or an activity. It is freely giving one’s self; meaning that they don't get any obvious reward for it. It could
include some payments to cover costs but the idea is that this work is not like a job. You're being paid for doing a job, but this work you do freely. Some of your expenses may be covered. Otherwise, it is a sacrifice of some form.

**Examples of volunteering from early generations**

**THE CASE OF TEACHING THE QURAN**

Let’s take an example. Teaching the Quran for money is considered something objectionable. The Muslim Ummah from the earliest of times never consider the Quran teachers as workers that who were on a job per se (for the duty of teaching the Quran) but rather those who are teaching the Quran were volunteering their time to teach the Quran. The money was given to them, where applicable, to cover up for their expenses because if they dedicate their whole time to the teaching, then they have no time to earn their living. So the money was given as support and not as payment of salaries. So this is the way of thinking that Muslims developed with regards to teaching the Quran in particular. However, when it came to teaching other things, people didn't have any problem with being paid for. This is because the Quran is the word of Allah and the idea of charging people in return of teaching it was considered objectionable.

**VOLUNTEERING BY EARLY GENERATIONS OF MUSLIMS**
If we look from the early generation of Muslims, i.e. the first generation the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, we see that those who were engaged in promoting Islam in Mecca all did so voluntarily. There was nobody who was hired to do the job of promoting faith. Islam spread on that basis. Islam spread to Madina through volunteers going to Madina from Mecca. Musab Ibn Umair was the first to be sent out to Madina out of Mecca. He stayed there and propagated Islam among the people of Madina. Now, this was voluntary on his part but they did provide for him food, and a place to stay because he would not have been able to do what he did otherwise for his living.

After Islam spread in Madina, the continual spread of Islam was always done by individuals on a voluntary basis. There was nobody hired working as a full-time Da’i (caller to Islam).

**Conveying Islam is a duty, not an ‘optional’ volunteer work**

We can say, in general, we do have a responsibility to convey the message of Islam to those around us as we learn from the Prophet’s ﷺ instruction, ‘Convey (whatever you've learned) from me even if it's only a single verse (of the Quran)’. This is an instruction which the Prophet ﷺ gave based on the command in the Quran from Allah swt Who said, ‘call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair-preaching’. In the light of these instructions, it is clear that
this job of conveying Islam is a duty on Muslims. To do so is not in and of itself something ‘voluntary’; It is an obligation which has been placed by Allah swt on all Muslims. Whatever we have learned from the Prophet ﷺ, we have the duty to convey that message to others. Had others not conveyed this message to us or our fore-parents, we would not have been Muslims today! This is the reality.

**Who is responsible for this?**

The conveyance of the message and spreading the teachings of Islam is an ongoing responsibility of the Muslim community as a whole. But for those in the community who have the best knowledge and the best abilities to speak and so on, this obligation becomes even heavier on their shoulders. It's on everybody in general, but those who are more capable, it becomes there responsibility more than the others.

**Supporting those who take this duty as their mission**

There will always arise in Muslim communities some individuals who will take this job, go ahead, and try to do it with the best that they can do. It is the duty of the rest of the community to support them and to help them with whatever means they can, since it is a communal responsibility and not just the responsibility of those who are actively pursuing it. This help and support can be in many
forms such as helping them financially, or politically, or to help them from a physical volunteering perspective. If you see that some from the Muslim community have stood up and have taken the responsibility and going ahead with that, and the rest of you see yourself not able to give that kind of time and effort at that level, you can support them with whatever is possible for you. So, the volunteering spirit comes in support of those who have taken up this responsibility which was on the community as a whole.

**A common cycle of volunteer commitment**

With the above being established, it is now to be understood that as a volunteer, we have to have the right mindset otherwise our voluntary commitments will not last long. Volunteers are known for coming for a while in the beginning, very much geared up, and then as the time passes they get weaker and weaker and the commitment starts to dry off till the time that we don't see them anymore. This is a cycle that volunteers seem to go through wherever we are in the world whether it's for religious activities or any other activities. This is a cycle perhaps we can never stop; that's just how life is.

**What can you do to not be a part of this cycle**

For those who do join, we encourage you to consider what in fact is your commitment and why you made this commitment. Though
the project you are committing yourself to, may benefit others when you join it voluntarily, but in reality, you are benefitting yourself. You have to see the benefit for yourself. If you can't see the benefit for yourself and you only see it as benefitting others then it's more likely that you will fall away. You will lose your enthusiasm. It is because of human nature; when you help a person, then another one, and then another and so on, you ultimately get tired because you are doing it for ‘others’. This is our nature. So, it is important to have the correct perspective of volunteer work. The reality of the matter is that we are helping ourselves when we volunteer in a Dawah organization or any Islamic project etc; we are helping ourselves first and foremost because we are earning through it valuable good deeds for our onward journey. The Prophet ﷺ said that the one who guides others gets the reward of whatever good they do. If we guide somebody to do the right thing or to do a good thing, we get the same reward that they earn for doing that thing. So it is for our benefit! We stand to benefit the most. Therefore, we have to treat the voluntary work as beneficial first and foremost to ourselves and when we look at it that way, then we'll be more likely to look after it and keep it going. It is very important for us to have the right mindset with regards to voluntary work.

**What Islam prescribes as ‘Obligatory’ prepares us for the ‘voluntary’**
We know in Islam we have the obligatory and the voluntary acts. Under the voluntary acts come the acts that we know as masnoon, mustahab and so on. It is important to note that ‘voluntary’ work is in and of itself a goal too. The obligatory acts train us to do the voluntary. If you think about our day to day prayers and our fasting in Ramadan and so on, this is to get us to pray outside of obligatory timings and to fast outside of Ramadan and so on. That's the ultimate goal; because the voluntary act of righteousness is greater in reward ultimately than the obligatory act.

**The diligence required of you when doing the volunteer work**

What you are obliged to do; you have to do it no matter what. If you don't do it, you're in sin. Whereas when it comes to the voluntary act, you're not obliged. If you do it, you're rewarded. If you don't do it, you're not punished. It's not considered a sin. So, the challenge in doing voluntary is far greater. We have to look after it even more meticulously. We have to be very careful with the voluntary. What is obligatory is obvious; it's clear in front of us. However, the voluntary is more subtle because it requires us to commit to something we didn't have to commit to. So, when we make that commitment we should do so with the strongest of intentions. We should make a greater effort to preserve the voluntary while taking care of the obligatory at the same time. For
the obligatory, we know we have to do it and if we leave it, it is a sin; so we have to do them if we are practicing Muslims. So, we are going to definitely take care of the obligatory and do them, however, the voluntary is something which has to come from ourselves. You have to be committed to it for your own benefit. This is the choice you will make yourself for your own good.

**Time Management for volunteer work**

So, when we realize that this volunteer work is something for our own benefit, we are required to do it with due diligence, and this is what we have been prepared to go through the obligatory acts, then we have to make an effort to preserve it. One of the very important factors in this regard is to manage our time properly. Why do people end up dropping out of voluntary work? Because they find other things that they want to do or attend to and they don't have time for them. Then they say things such as ‘they got busy and don't have any more time for the voluntary effort’ and so on. So, it becomes an issue of time management.

Shaitaan is busy to keep us occupied and to believe that we don't have time to do the extra good deeds. That's why the Prophet ﷺ said that there are two blessings (or two gifts) from Allah which most people are deluded about - good health and spare time.

We are tricked by a state of good health to think we will always
have good health or that things will always be good until you lose your health. When you lose your health then you realize the value you lost.

The second blessing that we keep ignoring is spare time. You think you will always have time to do things that you are required to do. We keep telling ourselves, ‘let me put this thing off for some time, I'll do it later’, ‘I'll find time for this tomorrow or the day after’ and so on. And then the time passes and we're not able to do it. It is easy to become deluded with regards to voluntary work and the time that it has to be done in. So, we have to be very very conscientious about looking after that voluntary commitment by scheduling it in the right manner. Set a schedule and put it on your wall in order to remind yourself. As long as you can keep things in the schedule, you can keep it going. When it slides out or when you procrastinate, Shaitaan tells us that it is okay to delay it or postpone till a later time. If we listen to him, then that is the beginning of a downward slope in commitment. So, we have to keep that voluntary spirit alive and stick to our schedules. Whatever schedules were made, stick to them and give them their proper time. Stay behind your schedule. So, this is just a brief reminder for all of you working for the dawah organizations and so on. We all do need reminders from time to time. So this is just a reminder about the importance of managing time. I am sure you all are hard-working.
Be considerate with your team

I have met some of you and it's clear that you are all very dedicated. You're trying to do the right thing, but at the same time we're all human beings and we do have our own weaknesses. It is very important for us to work closely together and to keep track of our fellow brothers and sisters. When a team member doesn’t show up, give him or her a call to check if they are okay, rather than calling up and say thing like ‘why aren't you here’ [in an angry or inappropriate tone] as if you are assuming that they could have come but they chose not to come. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Ask if they okay, if their health is fine, if you can help them in some way and so on. This would make them feel good and they would be encouraged to come back. We have to be very careful in terms of the words and the language we use when trying to keep volunteers active. Because they are making a sacrifice, we should recognize that sacrifice. Give them the benefit of the doubt and offer them support and that will help to encourage them.

Create a caring culture within the organization

When people feel that others care about you, then you want to be around those people. That's the psychology behind it. We want to be a group that cares. You should care about each other.

Being with the jama’ah will keep you strong
It is very important that the strong should help the weak when you're around others – whether that strength in terms of physical aspects, Iman or motivation for volunteer work. That's why even if you feel yourself getting weak, then try to be around those who are committed, the hard-working ones. Try to be around them more; that will help to strengthen your own will and keep you working for the sake of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ told us to be careful about who we choose as our friends because we'll be raised on the day of judgment with our friends. So, we try to develop and build on our friendships which come from the group of volunteers. Try to be close to the most hard-working ones for yourself; and be close to the weaker ones for them and for yourself. In general, you should try to be close to everybody, but you should be more conscious that you're close to those who are in the leadership, not because you want to be in the leadership yourself or because you want to be recognized, but because you want to benefit from their enthusiasm and so that some of it would rub off on you and make you more enthusiastic too. The same way you should treat those who are weaker than you and become a source of motivation for them.

**Be consistent with the dawah effort**

The effort that you are doing is a great effort - calling to the way of Allah. This is a major responsibility in the Muslim community which is not being fulfilled and for you to step up to do this, there
is a great reward that Allah swt has promised for you. So, know that you're in sha Allah on the right track. Allah’s reward is with you. It might happen that you invite a lot of people and only a few respond to your dawah or show up at your events, but ultimately the reward is with those who stick to this effort.

**Think about the sustainability of the effort**

Try to schedule your activities well and be consistent, as the Prophet ﷺ told us that Allah loves the deed which is done consistently even if it is small. Give yourself the amount of time that you can afford, a reasonable amount. Don't overdo it; don't overburden yourself. Take what you know you can handle, assign that and stick with it. Later on, if you want to add, you can add; but it's better than taking a large amount from the very start and then not able to sustain it. Sometimes, the volunteers become too enthusiastic and they keep taking work after work and they want to be in every team, but then they realize that they don't have the strength to keep that going. Maybe initially, the first week or the first month, you can; but then you start to decline. So better to take that much load which is reasonable and sustainable that you know you can do. Just stick with it. Later on, when you become stronger or when you realize that you have more capacity, you can add to it. It is better to be adding the work later than taking away from the large chunk that you take initially and are unable to handle.
Question and Answer Session

About Riya

Question:
How can we protect ourselves from doing this work for the wrong reasons such as popularity, fame, for people to clap for us and says that this person is great, and so on.

Answer:

1) As I advised in the beginning, we should try to be around those who we know to be sincere, those we know are working for the Deen sincerely; try to be around them because their sincerity in sha Allah will rub off on us. Keep them as the example; we all need examples and that will help us to recognize where we are and do a self-analysis.

2) It's also about our prayers. Ask Allah to protect our hearts
from Riya, and from doing righteous deeds to be seen and praised by others.

3) It is good for us to take stock of ourselves from time to time. We should look at ourselves and ask why are we doing this effort. Do this analysis and try to be sincere and honest to ourselves, If we find that actually, we're doing it because we want to be known, then we seek refuge in Allah from it and try to remove that from our minds. Our intentions can be reset. If such thoughts enter our heart, it doesn't mean that we are off the track or off the path. What we need to do though is to purify our intentions and keep doing the good efforts. As we're human beings, these thoughts may enter into our minds and may find a route and start to grow. The key is as long as we find them, we catch them and we correct them by seeking repentance from Allah. By changing our intention and in sha Allah we can overcome Riya.

4) We don't want Riya to become so big that it stops us from doing good deeds; that's the other way Shaitaan. If he doesn’t succeed in stopping you from good deeds one way, he will try another way. He might entice you to give up the good deeds out of a fear of falling into Riya. So these are both the channels by which Shaitaan and the satanic forces trick us into losing our good deeds - either ‘losing the value
of our deeds because of the Riya in them’ or ‘not doing the deeds altogether by giving up the deed because you're afraid of Riya’. Keep in mind that it is better to do a good deed and not getting the reward for it than not doing it at all. So don’t let the Shaitaan deceive you into stopping a good deed altogether. When you think you have fallen in Riya, purify your intentions and continue on.

**About correcting someone publicly**

**Question:**

If we are in a mixed WhatsApp group where there are Muslims as well as non-Muslims and we see some Muslims making posts which are un-Islamic, should one correct those Muslims publicly in the group?!

**Answer:**

The better thing is to address that person outside the group. You can get their personal email or WhatsApp number and send them the message and advise them separately from that group unless this is an issue that you are discussing in the group and you need to give clarification. In that case, you can enter into it. Otherwise, it's

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1 In this question, the questioner asked about the greeting over Christmas. However, in order to keep it generic and applicable to other situations as well, we have presented the generic guidelines presented by the Shaykh.
better not to correct that publicly where others may be offended by it.

**Dr. Bilal Philips’ reason for becoming a Muslim**

**Question:**

Why you chose Islam?

**Answer:**

In summary, it was after I got dissatisfied with communism and what the effectiveness of communism in fixing the problems of the world was; because I joined communism believing that it was the answer to human problems. They had a system which was supposed to eradicate the evil and promote the good. So when I found that it wasn't eradicating the evil, it was just adding more evils and the good was not being promoted as it should have been, then it caused me to look elsewhere. Islam was presented to me when I was in that state of dissatisfaction. It was Allah’s will that I was given a book that dealt with the topic of a comparative study looking at communism, capitalism, Islam, Buddhism and so on. It seemed from what I read that all the good things that were promoted in all these others systems were there in Islam and all the bad things which made them inferior or made them not a good choice were not found in Islam. Islam seemed to be inclusive of everything good. So that was what intellectually convinced me that
Islam was the way. Of course, spiritual conviction took some time after being a communist for so many years.

**The difference of opinion and splitting of organizations**

**Question:**

What is the best way to handle a difference of opinion and prevent splitting of organizations?

**Answer:**

This is the problem that most of the group efforts are faced with. What shaitaan wants is that you split into two, and then after another year you split into four, and after next year it becomes eight, and so on and so forth. He wants that you splinter because, with the splitting, you get weaker. You split your strength and your energy, your resources, your manpower and all. The split means that you can't be as effective as you were and which you could have been when you were together. So this is one of the ways of undermining the dawah work that the ranks of those who are involved in the Dawah are become split.

The main reason for this is an inability to handle differences of opinions. We need to be is flexible and be able to tolerate different opinions. Even if you have other people with you in your decision-making, but the majority opinion is in the favour of another way,
then you go with that way. If you see, as a leader, that the majority are holding a different position than you and you have to consider that different position and correct yourselves relative to it. But if you as leader decide, for whatever reason, that the decision you have in your mind is the way to go and is better for the cause, even though those who favor your decision are in a minority, the majority have to be flexible enough to understand that since you're in given the trust of leadership, you may have information that they don't necessarily have. People working in organizations have to understand that when they accept someone or a group of people as their leaders, they have to go with their decisions, even though they think that their idea is better; they have to go along with the leaders and hope that they will come around to their idea later on, or maybe they won't. We need to keep working with them anyway. The strength is with the group as we have been told by the Prophet ﷺ. The hand of Allah or the support of Allah is with the group – the jama’ah. As long as you stay united, then Allah’s support is there for you. Allah swt has told us not to split like those before us! Don’t allow yourself to split up in groups, each group thinking that what they are holding on to is the right thing. Don't split up; this is from Shaitaan. We should accordingly work against it and preserve unity.