



The Splitting of the Ummah

By Imaam Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (d.1421H)

Translated by Ahmad Assing¹

[Q]: The Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) informed of the splitting of his *Ummah* after his death. We hope for an explanation of this from you.

[A]: The Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) informed in what has been authenticated from him, "The Jews will split into seventy one sects, and the Christians into seventy two sects, and this *Ummah* will split into seventy three sects. And all these groups are in the Fire except one, and it is that which is in agreement with what the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his Companions were upon."² And this group is the Saved Sect (*Firqatun-Naajiyah*) which will be saved in this world from innovation and it will be saved in the Hereafter from the Fire. And it is the Victorious Sect (*Taa'ifatul-Mansoorah*) up to the Hour of Standing, which will remain clearly upon the command of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic.

And these seventy three sects from which, one is upon the truth and the remainder is upon falsehood, some of the people used to try and numerate them. The people of Innovation grouped out into five groups, and from every group came its branches, joining to this number that the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) specified. And some people are of the opinion that it is better to stop counting, because these sects are not the only ones that have become misguided. Rather, mankind is more misguided than it was before. And they said that this counting will not cease and it is not possible to know its ending except in the end of time at the Hour of Standing. So it is better for us to leave as general whatever the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) left as general. We say that this *Ummah* will split into seventy three sects, all of them being in the Fire except one. Then we say that everyone who opposes what the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was upon and his Companions, then he has entered into these sects. And the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to point out the main sects (*usool*), which we have not come to know of, except what reaches ten of them in number. And he used to point out that there will be branches of these main sects (*furoo'*), as is the view of some of the people. And the knowledge is with Allaah the Mighty and Majestic.

¹ Taken from *Fataawaa Arkaanul-Islam* of al-'Allamah Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (p. 21-22)

² Related by Aboo Daawood (no. 4596), at-Tirmidhee (no. 2642) and Ibn Maajah (no. 3991)