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Turmoil and Tribulation Everywhere

And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. And may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions and followers.

Every Muslim can see that the Ummah is in a state of turmoil, factionalism and tribulation. Muslims are suffering, facing oppression and dying in conflicts around the world. We see tens of thousands rising up against the rulers, protesting and marching in the streets that lead to violent clashes with the authorities and the destabilisation of Muslim societies. In the midst of this, the enemies invade the Muslim lands, take their treasures and add to the ruin and desolation initiated by the Muslims in their own lands. This article will show that the trials that the Muslims are facing today are due to what their own hands have earned and to remedy the decline and weakness of the Ummah requires following the Methodology of the Quran and Sunnah. Every other approach will fail, and has proven to fail.

The truth is that most Muslims have never studied the 'Aqīdah (Creed), the Sunnah of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the Path of the Righteous Predecessors¹. They wander in the dark aimlessly jumping from one cause to another, and moving from one calamity to another because they have no guidance. They throw their

¹ The Pious Predecessors known in Arabic as the "Salaf". This refers to the earliest generations of Muslims.

religion and lives into ruin by following the innovators and the deviated preachers who stand at the gates of Hell, inviting the heedless, careless and inattentive Muslims.

I will make reference to the injustices, torture and death the Companions suffered at the hands of the pagans and how the Prophet would guide them, advise them and command them, and which in the end resulted in honour, safety, victory and glory for Islam and the Muslims.

So, the Muslims in the time of Prophethood suffered great oppression and trials. Some of the Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) complained to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) whilst they were being persecuted by the polytheists of Makkah as is narrated in the following hadīth:

عَنْ خَبَّابِ بْنِ الْأَرْتِّ، قَالَ شَكُونَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ بُرْدَةً لَهُ فِي ظِلِّ الْكَعْبَةِ، قُلْنَا لَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَنْصِرُ لَنَا أَلَا تَدْعُو اللَّهَ لَنَا قَالَ كَانَ الرَّجُلُ فِيمَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ يُحْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهِ، فَيَجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ، فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيَشَقُّ بِأُثْنَتَيْنِ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَيُمَشِّطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ، مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ مِنْ عَظْمٍ أَوْ عَصَبٍ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَاللَّهُ لَيَتِمَّنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّأَكِبُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى حَضْرَمَوْتِ، لَا يَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ أَوْ الذَّنْبَ عَلَى غَنَمِهِ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

Khabbāb bin Al-Arat (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: We complained to Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) of the persecution while he was sitting in the shade of the Ka'bah, reclining on his cloak. We said to him, **"Will you not seek Allah's aid for us? Will you invoke Allah for us?"** He replied, **"Among the nations before you, a man would be brought and put in a ditch that was dug for him. A saw would be put over his head and he would be cut into two pieces, yet that would not cause him give up his religion. A man's body would be combed with iron combs that would remove his flesh and veins from his bones. Yet that would still not cause him to abandon his religion. By Allah, this religion will prevail until a man will travel from San'ā to Hadramaut and he will not fear except Allah, or that a wolf should attack his sheep. But you are a hasty people."**²

This was a period wherein Allah tested the believers with severe hardship, and so they sought guidance from Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). They listened and obeyed, and then they bore the hardship with patience, and they persevered upon the worship of Allah, knowing that He would give them victory just as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had promised. The Sahābah worshipped Allah alone, they shunned idolatry and followed their Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Then a time came when Allah blessed them with safety and countless blessings, to which the Sīrah and history bears witness.

² Al-Bukhari, no. 3612.

Treasures from Allah's bounty were bestowed upon them, they were given victory after victory, oppression was replaced with justice and people lived in safety and security as Allah had willed.

It was due to the establishment of Tawhīd and Sunnah, piety, worship and obedience to Allah that they were given the glad tidings of an eternal life of happiness in Paradise. Allah (جَلَّوَعَلَا) said about them:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens in Paradise under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.” (At-Tawbah: 100)

After the death of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the Sahābah remained steadfast upon the truth, united upon the same 'Aqīdah (belief) and the principles of the Sunnah, free from innovations and misguidance. Many thousands of scholars and righteous Muslims in next two generations followed their example. They did not fear the blame of the blamers and they stood firm

against those who tried to pollute and corrupt the Religion from among Ahlul-Bid'ah.³

By the end of the time of the Sahābah, there began to appear sects that deviated from the path of the Sahābah, they innovated into the Religion and they disobeyed Allah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

Causes of Weakness in the Ummah and Jihad in the Path of Allah

The more Muslims started to oppose the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, the more they divided and their power began to ebb away, which in turn emboldened their enemies. So the Ummah faced humiliation at their hands which only increased with the increase in misguidance, innovated beliefs, disobedience and sins of the Muslims.

This is proven by the hadīth of Ibn 'Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) who narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعِيْنَةِ وَأَخَذْتُمْ أذْنَابَ الْبَقَرِ وَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالزَّرْعِ وَتَرَكْتُمْ
الْجِهَادَ سَلَطَ اللهُ عَلَيْكُمْ ذُلًّا لَا يَنْزِعُهُ حَتَّى تَرْجِعُوا إِلَى دِينِكُمْ

³ Imām Al-Baghawī (d. 535H) stated: "And there has already transpired the speech of the Sahābah, the Tābi'ūn, then those who followed them, from the scholars of the Sunnah, that they united and agreed upon having enmity towards Ahlul-Bid'ah and to boycott them." Sharhus-Sunnah (1/227)

“When you partake in usury, hold on to the tails of cattle, become satisfied with cultivation and abandon Jihād, Allah will send upon you humiliation and He will not remove it until you return back to your religion.”⁴

In this hadīth, we can see what brings about Allah’s humiliation upon the Muslims. We also see the cure, which is to return back to the Religion as it was practised in the time of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). As for Jihād, and its types, then Imām Abdur-Rahmān As-Sa’di (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated in some amazing speech:

“Jihad is of two types: Firstly, Jihad by which is intended the rectification of the Muslims, rectification of their ‘Aqīdah (beliefs), their manners and conduct, and all of their religious and worldly affairs. And likewise their cultivation in terms of knowledge and action. This type of Jihād is the foundation of Jihad and its backbone.

And upon this is built the second type of Jihad, and the intent of this Jihad is to repel those who transgress against Islam and the Muslims, from among the unbelievers, the hypocrites, the heretics, and the rest of the enemies of Islam and their oppositions.”⁵ Al-Imām Ibnul-Qayyim (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated: “Jihād with evidences and speech takes precedence over Jihād with the sword,

⁴ Abu Dāwūd, no. 3462. Declared saḥīḥ by Al-Albāni, see As-Saḥīḥah, no. 11.

⁵ Wujoob at-Ta’āwun baynal-Muslimeen, pp. 7-8

arrows and spearheads.”⁶ Striving against corruption in the belief takes precedence over striving against the non-believers. Shaikh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) stated: **“From the well-known narrations that have reached us is that Shaikh Abu ‘Amr Ibn As-Salāh (died 643H) commanded that the school of learning that was in the hands of Abul-Hasan Al-Āmidi be seized. Ibn Salāh said: ‘Seizing it from him is more virtuous than seizing control of Acre from the Crusaders.’”⁷** So the Jihād with proofs in the defence of Islam and Sunnah from the corruption of the sects of Ahlul-Bid’ah takes precedence over Jihad with the sword.

Blessings are sent from Allah to those who deserve them and are removed due to disobedience and sins. And Allah will not return except to those who are deserving of them because they rectify themselves. Allah stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ مِّنْ وَّالٍ

“Verily Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it.

⁶ Sharh An-Nooniyyah of Al-Harrās (1/12) Al-Jawāb As-Sahīh of Ibn Taymiyyah (1/237).

⁷ Majmoo’ al-Fatawa (28/232). Abul-Hasan Al-Āmidi was a Sufi, philosopher and misguided doubter.

And there is not for them besides Him any protector.” (Ar-Ra’d: 11)

A Group from this Ummah that Enjoins what is Good and Forbids what is Evil

Islam teaches that people should not be left to do as they please. Muslims must enjoin the truth and forbid falsehood. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَبْلِي إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ حَوَارِيُونَ
وَأَصْحَابٌ يَأْخُذُونَ بِسُنَّتِهِ وَيَقْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِنَّهَا تَخْلَفُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
خُلُوفٌ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا لَا يُؤْمَرُونَ فَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ
بِيَدِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ بِلِسَانِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ بِقَلْبِهِ
فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ حَبَّةٌ خَرَدَلٍ

“Never was a Prophet sent by Allah before me to a nation except that he had among his Ummah helpers and companions who followed his Sunnah and obeyed his commands. Then there came after them people who would say what they did not practise⁸, and they practised what which they were not commanded⁹. So whoever strives against them with his hand is a

⁸ They know the truth and claim attachment to it but do not act on it.

⁹ They innovate into the Religion that which is not from it.

believer, and whoever strives against them with his speech is a believer and whoever strives against them with his heart is a believer. And beyond that there is not even a mustard seed of īman.”¹⁰

Forbidding evil with the hand is for those in authority among the rulers. Forbidding evil with one’s speech is for those who have knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah such as the scholars and those who have studied with them. Forbidding evil with the heart is for every Muslim to whom the truth has become clear. Beyond that is lowest level of īmān. A Muslim who truly wants good for himself should stay away from sinful gatherings where Allah is disobeyed and His verses and signs are belittled and desires are followed. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) stated:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Let there arise from amongst you a group who invite to all that is good, that you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And those will be the successful.”
(Āli ‘Imrān: 104)

Then a few verses later, Allah informed the Companions and those who precisely followed them of good news:

¹⁰ Muslim, no. 50.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“You are the best nation brought forth for mankind. You enjoy what is right and forbid what is wrong and you believe in Allah...” (Āli ‘Imrān: 110)

The Rectifiers: The Saved Sect, the Jamā’ah, the Aided Group and the Strangers

The Saved Sect are the Sahābah and those who follow them as mentioned by the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي مَا أَتَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ حَتَّىٰ إِنْ
كَانَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَتَى أُمَّهُ عِلَانِيَةً لَّكَانَ فِي أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِائَةً وَتَفَرَّقَ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ
وَسَبْعِينَ مِائَةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِائَةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

“What befell the Children of Israel will befall my Ummah, footstep by footstep, such that if one of them had intercourse with his mother in the open, then there would be someone from my Ummah who would do the same! Indeed the Children of Israel split into seventy-two sects, and my Ummah will split into seventy-three

sects. All of them are in the Fire Except one sect." They asked: "And which sect is it, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "What I am upon and my Companions."¹¹ In a narration, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْمِلَّةَ سَتَفْتَرِقُ عَلَيَّ ثَلَاثَ وَسَبْعِينَ ثِنْتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ
وَوَاحِدَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ

"Verily this Religion will divide into seventy-three. Seventy-two of them will be in the Fire and one in Paradise and that is the Jamā'ah." And in an additional wording, he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

وَإِنَّهُ سَيَخْرُجُ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ تَجَارَى بِهِمْ تِلْكَ الْأَهْوَاءُ كَمَا يَتَجَارَى
الْكَلْبُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا يَبْقَى مِنْهُ عِرْقٌ وَلَا مَفْصِلٌ إِلَّا دَخَلَهُ

"There will appear from my Ummah people who will be overcome by these desires¹² just like rabies of a dog overcomes its victim. Not a vein or a joint will remain except that it will penetrate it."¹³

These narrations prove that sectarianism will occur due to the people following their desires and innovating practices that are foreign to Islam. Those who are saved are the ones who adhere to the Jamā'ah (the Main Body), and they are the Companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and then those who follow their

¹¹ At-Tirmidhi, no. 2642, declared hasan by Al-Albāni.

¹² i.e. misguidance and innovation.

¹³ Abu Dāwūd, no. 4597, declared hasan by Al-Albāni.

methodology and path precisely. The Jamā'ah are the people upon the truth in this Ummah. They can be few or many. The Jamā'ah is not about numbers, it is about adherence to the truth as Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) stated: "The majority of the people abandon the Jamā'ah." Then he said:

الجماعة ما وافق الحق ولو كنت وحدك

"The Jamā'ah is whatever agrees with the truth even if you on your own."¹⁴ Nu'aym ibn Hammād (d. 239AH رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said regarding this narration, **"Meaning, when the people become corrupt, then you are obligated to follow the Jamā'ah as it was before they became corrupt, even if you are alone because in that situation, you are the Jamā'ah."**¹⁵ It is not for intelligent Muslims to follow the masses or to answer the call of political agitator that calls out to them. Rather the pious, sure-footed Muslim adheres to the Sunnah and remains patient and steadfast upon that.

So, the Jamā'ah are the people of truth. They are not harmed or intimidated by the large numbers that

¹⁴ Al-Lālikā'ī in Sharh Usūlil-I'tiqād (1/121, no. 160), declared saḥīḥ by Al-Albānī in his notes on Mishkāṭ Al-Masābīḥ (1/61).

¹⁵ Ibn 'Asākir in Tārīkh Dimashq, 46/408-409.

oppose them.¹⁶ They are the Aided Group (*At-Tā'ifah Al-Mansūrah*), apparent and manifest in every generation just as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَائِمَةٌ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَدَلَهُمْ أَوْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ ظَاهِرُونَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

“There shall not cease to be a group from my Ummah obedient to the orders of Allah. They are not harmed by those who betray them or those who oppose them. They will remain as such until the Decree of Allah comes [close to the Hour], and they will still be manifest over the people.”¹⁷ In a wording he said:

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي عَلَى الْحَقِّ ظَاهِرِينَ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ يَخْدُلُهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ

“There will not cease to remain a group from my Ummah manifest upon the truth. They cannot be harmed by those who betray them. They will be like that until the Decree of Allah comes.” At-Tirmidhi said

¹⁶ Fudayl Ibn 'Iyād (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated:

عليك بطريق الهدى وإن قل السالكون، واجتنب طريق الردى وإن كثر الهالكون

“Stick to the path of guidance even if only a few traverse it. And avoid the path of ruin even if there are many who perish upon it.” Cited by Ash-Shātibi in *Al-I'tisām* (1/183); An-Nawawi in *Al-Majmū* (8/275) and others.

¹⁷ Muslim, no. 1037.

that he heard 'Ali Al-Madīni (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) recite this hadīth and say: **"They are the People of Hadīth (Ahlul-Hadīth)."**¹⁸

And they are the Ghurabā (the Strangers) who call to the rectification of the Ummah among the large number of misguided and corrupted people. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

بدأ الإسلام غريباً وسيعود غريباً كما بدأ فطوبى للغرباء

"Islam began as something as something strange and it will return to being strange just as it began so glad tidings [of Paradise] is for the Strangers." The scholars of hadīth have collected various wordings of this hadīth. In one narration, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was asked:

يا رسول الله! من الغرباء؟ قال: الذين يصلحون إذا فسد الناس

"O Allah's Messenger! Who are the Strangers?" He responded: **"Those who rectify when the people are corrupted."**¹⁹ In another narration he said:

يصلحون ما أفسد الناس من سنتي

"They rectify what the people have corrupted of my Sunnah." In another narration, he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

هم النزاع من القبائل

"They are individuals that come from each of the tribes." In another narration, he said:

¹⁸ At-Tirmidhi, no. 2229, saḥīḥ.

¹⁹ Muslim, no. 145-6; At-Tirmidhi, no. 2629.

هم أناس صالحون قليل في أناس سوء كثير

“They are a small number of righteous people among a large number of evildoers.”²⁰ The point being that they are the rectifiers, they follow the Sunnah, and they are few among many who oppose the truth.

The great scholar, Shaikh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) stated: “Islam began in Makkah as something small. Not many believed in it and most of the people displayed enmity towards it and they stubbornly rejected the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and caused him harm. They also harmed his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ), those who had embraced Islam. Then he migrated to Madinah and so did his Companions along with him. Even there they were strangers until their numbers swelled in Madinah and in the rest of the lands. Then the people entered Islam in huge numbers after Allah had opened Makkah to His Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and given him victory. So in the beginning, Islam was something strange among the people and most of them disbelieved in Allah, committed shirk (polytheism), and they worshipped the idols, the prophets, righteous men, trees, rocks and so on. Then Allah guided whom He guided at the hands of His Messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and at the hands of his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ). So people entered Islam,

²⁰ Ahmad, no. 6650; Al-Ājurri in Sifatul-Ghurabā minal-Mu’minīn, p. 6 and p. 25; At-Tabarāni in Al-Awsat, no. 8986. And Al-Albāni declared the chain of narration to be good in As-Sahīhah, no. 1619.

and they worshipped only Allah. They abandoned the worship of idols, prophets and righteous men. They made their worship purely and sincerely for Allah, worshipping none but Him alone. They would not pray except to Him and they would not prostrate except to Him. They would not direct their supplications except to Allah, nor seek deliverance except with Allah, nor seek to be healed except by Allah (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى). They would not ask the inhabitants of the graves for help or rescue, nor the idols, the trees, the rocks, the stars, the jinn or the angels. Rather, they worshipped none but Allah alone (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى). So, these are the Strangers. This is likewise the case at the end of time. They are the ones who remain steadfast upon the Religion of Allah when the people fall behind in the Religion and disbelieve, or when their sins and evil deeds increase. Through all this, the Strangers remain upright upon obedience to Allah and His Religion. For them is Paradise and happiness, a praiseworthy recompense in this world and the next.”²¹

The Closer the Hour, the Greater the Tribulations

As we approach the Hour, the fitan (tribulations) will increase and those who follow way of the Salaf and Sunnah will be few. Those who rectify will be seen as strange. Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) stated: **“There is not a year except that the year that comes after it is**

²¹ <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/7301>

worse than it. I do not say it is a year followed by a year with less rain, or a year followed by a year with less crop nor a leader followed by a worse leader. Rather it is due to the disappearance of your scholars and your virtuous ones. Then there will appear people who will judge matters according to their opinions so they will destroy Islam and damage it.”²²

In reference to the times of hardship and trials that were to come, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, **“Ahead of you are days of patience, when holding onto the religion will be like holding onto hot coals, and whoever holds onto his religion in that time, then his reward will be the reward of fifty men.”** The Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) said, **“O Messenger of Allah, fifty times the worth of their reward?”** He said, **“Rather fifty from you.”**²³

Who are these people in our times? Those who patiently hold on to truth whilst responding to the onslaught from the people of bid’ah and opposition. Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qāsim Ibn Salām said: **“The follower of the Sunnah is like the one who holds onto hot coals. In**

²² Ibn Waddāh in Kitāb Al-Bid’ah wan-Nahiy ‘Anhā (1/17); Ad-Dārimi in As-Sunan (no. 194), Al-Haythaimi in Majma’ Az-Zawā’id (no. 849), Ibn Hajr declared the isnād as good (jayyid) in Fathul-Bāri (13/26-27). Meaning it will be destroyed and damaged in the hearts of the people.

²³ Abu Dawūd, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah, Al-Hākim who declared it authentic and Adh-Dhahabi agreed. Al-Albāni declared it saḥīh in As-Sahīhah (no. 494).

this age, I see that it is better than fighting with swords for Allah's sake."²⁴

These are the brothers whom the Prophet (ﷺ) described and desired to see. And they are the ones who will drink from his lake on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **"Would that I had seen our brothers."** They said: **"O Messenger of Allah, are we not your brothers?"** He said: **"Rather, you are my Companions. My brothers are those who have not yet come. And I will reach the lake before them."** They said: **"O Messenger of Allah, how will you know those of your Ummah who come after you?"** He said: **"Don't you think that if a man has a horse with a white blaze and white feet among horses that are completely black, he will recognise his horse?"** They said: **"Of course."** He said: **"They will come on the Day of Resurrection with glittering white faces, glittering white hands and feet because of ablution, and I will reach the Lake (Hawd) before them."**²⁵

The people who hold on to the truth in times of hardship are the allies and beloved ones of Allah and his Messenger (ﷺ) in this life and the next. They are the ones whom Allah will aid and make victorious.

So if the Muslims (or a group of them) return to Islam as it was practiced in the time of the Messenger (ﷺ)

²⁴ Tāreekh Baghdād, 12/410.

²⁵ Muslim, no. 249, An-Nasā'ī 150.

and his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) and they recognise the true scholars of Hadīth, Sunnah and Salafiyah, and they take knowledge and guidance from them, they avoid innovations and stay well-clear of the callers to misguidance, then Allah will return to the Ummah its honour and glory, and He (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will remove the oppression, provide safety and establish justice.

However, so long as the Muslims oppose the Quran and Sunnah and the methodology, creed and manners of the Salaf, their lives, honour, land and wealth will be violated and exploited by other nations who harbour enmity towards the Muslims.

Thawbān (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

يُوشِكُ الْأُمَمُ أَنْ تَدَاعَى عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا تَدَاعَى الْأَكْلَةُ إِلَى قَصْعَتِهَا. فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ وَمِنْ قَلَّةٍ نَحْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ قَالَ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ كَثِيرٌ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ غُتَاءٌ كَغُتَاءِ السَّيْلِ وَلَيَنْزِعَنَّ اللَّهُ مِنْ صُدُورِ عَدُوِّكُمْ الْمَهَابَةَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَيَقْذِفَنَّ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمُ الْوَهْنَ. فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا الْوَهْنُ قَالَ حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَاهِيَةُ الْمَوْتِ

“The nations are soon to invite one another, and come upon you just as one is invited to eat from a platter of food.” Someone asked: **“Is that because we will be few in number on that day?”** He replied: **“Rather in that time you will be many, but you’ll be the scourge like the scourge carried upon the flood water. And Allah**

will remove the fear your enemies once held in their hearts for you, and He will throw weakness into your hearts.” Someone asked: **“What is that weakness?”** He replied: **“Love for this world and dislike of death.”**²⁶ The true well-being of this Ummah, therefore does not revolve around numbers, or wealth, or weapons. Rather, true strength and honour is in the quality of the Muslims and not their quantity.

The Method of Rectification is not open to Opinions, Desires and Reasoning

Since we know the means of rectification established in Revelation from Allah, recourse to innovated ideologies is nonsensical. Rectification of the Ummah will not come about through opinions, or by following ideologies that are foreign to Islam such as Communism, Socialism or Western Liberalism. Success of the Muslim Ummah lies in following the Quran and Sunnah, and its detailed explanation as understood by the early Salaf. Nothing else will bring about rectification. In fact, all of these innovated approaches have been tried and tested, and have resulted in utter failure.

Is it conceivable that Allah did not inform His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) about the means of rectifying the

²⁶ Abu Dawud, no. 4297.

Ummah when it is weak, splintered, oppressed and downtrodden?

Muslims know that Allah perfected His Religion through the Prophet (ﷺ) such that he (ﷺ) taught the believers the minutest details of hygiene, the rites of the newborn baby and even toilet-manners. Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said:

تركنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وما طائر يقرب جناحيه في
الهواء إلا وهو يذكرنا منه علما

“Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) left us, and there was not a bird that flapped its wings in the air except that he gave us some knowledge concerning it.” Then he said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

ما بقي شيء يقرب من الجنة ويباعد من النار إلا بين لكم

“There does not remain anything that brings one closer to Jannah or distances one from the Fire except that it has been explained to you.”²⁷

So it is ignorance, careless negligence and misguidance that leads a Muslim to think that the Quran and Sunnah do not give clear guidelines for the rectitude of the Ummah in its times of tribulation, weakness and differing.

²⁷ At-Tabarāni in Mu’jam Al-Kabīr (2/155); Al-Haythami in Majma’ Az-Zawā’id (8/266). Declared saḥīḥ by Al-Albāni in As-Silsilah As-Saḥīḥah, no. 1803.

Know that the true rectitude lies in returning to the Methodology (Manhaj) of the Salaf, and that is the path of the Companions and the early pious generations. Imām Mālik Ibn Anas (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) d.179H) stated this Methodology clearly when he said:

لَنْ يَصْلِحَ آخِرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا بِمَا صَلَّحَ بِهِ أَوْلَاهَا، فَمَا لَمْ يَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
دِينًا، لَا يَكُونُ الْيَوْمَ دِينًا

“The latter part of this Ummah will never be rectified except by that which rectified its first part. So, whatever was not religion that day cannot be considered as religion today.”²⁸

It is the Ghurabā (the Strangers) who bring about rectification by correcting what the people have corrupted of the Religion. They call them to return to the Book and Sunnah. So when the people respond to the call, and then cultivate themselves upon the pure Religion, Allah will bring them success, safety and honour.

Furthermore, the statement of Imām Mālik (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) is proven by the Quran and Sunnah. We have, for

²⁸ This narration is established from Imām Malik. Qādi Iyād cited it in Ash-Shifā (2/87-88). Ibn Taymiyyah stated in Majmū’ Al-Fatāwā (1/353, 27/118) that it is established from Mālik. Shātibi cited it also in Al-l’tisām (1/111) with a slightly different wording.

example, the hadīth of Al-'Irbād bin Sāriyah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) who said:

وَعَظَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - مَوْعِظَةً ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ
وَوَجَلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَمَوْعِظَةٌ مُودَعٌ
فَمَاذَا تَعْهَدُ إِيْنَا قَالَ قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيْضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارِهَا لَا يَزِيغُ
عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسِيرِي اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ
بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا
بِالنَّوَاجِدِ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا فَإِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُ كَالْجَمَلِ
الْأَنْفِ حَيْثَمَا قِيدَ انْقَادَ

Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) delivered to us an admonition that caused our eyes to shed tears and our hearts to tremble. So we said: **"O Messenger of Allah! This was a farewell admonition. So what is it that you enjoin upon us?"** He replied: **"I have indeed left you upon clear proof, its night is like its day. No one strays from it except that he is destroyed. And whoever from among you lives for long will see great differing and controversy. So you must cling to whatever you know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me. Hold on to that with your molar teeth. And you must be obedient to the ruler, even if he is an Abyssinian slave, for indeed the believer is like a subservient camel, he goes wherever he is led."**²⁹

²⁹ Ibn Mājah, no 43.

So when tribulation, differing and splitting occurs in this Ummah, the cure for it lies in returning to the Religion as it was in the beginning, just as Mālik Ibn Anas (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) stated. For sure, rectification is not attained through newly invented methodologies and ideologies for which there is no proof in the Quran, Sunnah and the understanding of the Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ). There is no place in the rectification of the Ummah in the ideologies of the Khawārij³⁰, the Shī'ah³¹, Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimūn³², Jamā'at At-Tablīgh³³, the Sufi grave-worshippers³⁴, the

³⁰ An early sect that called for rebellion against the rulers whom they deemed to be tyrannical and they make takfir, i.e. declare Muslims to be unbelievers unjustly. Modern-day terrorists groups and cells are offshoots of the Khawārij.

³¹ A rebellious early sect who regard the fourth Caliph 'Ali (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) and their chosen leaders to be divine. They declare the majority of the Companions to be unbelievers.

³² A deviated political group that was founded in Egypt in the 1920's that calls to protests and rebellion against the Muslim rulers. They share the methodology of the Khawārij.

³³ A group founded in India in the 1920's that innovated in the field of da'wah along with upholding the corrupted beliefs of the Deobandi sect.

³⁴ Those who innovate acts of of worship into Islam such venerating the graves and worshipping at them and calling upon the dead for intercession.

modern-day Mu'tazilah³⁵ and the other sects of misguidance.

The early generations were the best of all the believers in this Ummah and it is their example that the Muslims are expected to follow. They were the ones about whom the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ

“The best of mankind is my generation then, those who come after them, then those who come after them.”³⁶

There is no era of Muslims that comprehended this Religion and the Revelation better than the Companions and the generations of scholars of Sunnah and Hadīth who came after them. Whoever contradicts the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and oppose the Path of his Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) in Islam and in the Methodology (Manhaj) of calling to rectification is astray and threatened with Hellfire:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

³⁵ A misguided sect that arose in the early part of Islam that denied the attributes of Allah. They give precedence to their corrupted intellects over the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. They remain till this day calling to disregard the clear texts in favour of Western ideologies and philosophies.

³⁶ Muslim, no 2533.

“And whoever contradicts the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the Path of the believers (i.e. the Companions), We will leave him in the path he has taken and drive him into Hell, what an evil destination.” (An-Nisā: 115)

Some of Ahlul-Bid’ah outwardly attach themselves to the Sunnah and the early Salaf but that is only to deceive the people and lead them astray. When one investigates their methodology and da’wah, it is found to be at odds with the Methodology and Creed of Sahābah and early Salaf.

The Prophet (ﷺ) described these people of deviation to Hudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) when he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) whether there would be any evil after a period of good. The Messenger (ﷺ) responded:

نَعَمْ، دُعَاةٌ عَلَىٰ أَبْوَابِ جَهَنَّمَ، مَنْ أَجَابَهُمْ إِلَيْهَا قَذَفُوهُ فِيهَا قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صِفْهُمْ لَنَا. قَالَ هُمْ مِنْ جِلْدَتِنَا، وَيَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِنَا قُلْتُ فَمَا تَأْمُرُنِي إِنْ أَدْرَكَنِي ذَلِكَ قَالَ تَلْزَمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِمَامَهُمْ قُلْتُ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ جَمَاعَةٌ وَلَا إِمَامٌ قَالَ فَاعْتَزِلْ تِلْكَ الْفِرْقَ كُلَّهَا، وَلَوْ أَنْ تَعَضَّ بِأَصْلِ شَجَرَةٍ، حَتَّىٰ يُدْرِكَكَ الْمَوْتُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكَ

“Yes, there will be callers at the gates of Hell and whoever responds to their call, he will be thrown by them into the Fire.” Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنه) asked, “O Allah’s Messenger, describe them to us?” So he

(صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, "They will be from our own people and will speak our language." I said, "What do you order me to do if that should take place in my life?" He said, "Stick to the Jamā'ah of the Muslims and to their ruler." I said, "What if there is neither a united body (Jamā'ah) nor a ruler?" He said, "Then turn away from all of those sects even if you have to bite onto the roots of a tree till death overtakes you while you are in that state."³⁷ This is clear proof that the Muslims are to remain clear from the sects of innovation and misguidance. They are to adhere to the Sunnah and bite on to that with their molar teeth until death reaches them.

The Manhaj of the Salaf was to warn against sitting with the sects of bid'ah and to cling to the Jamā'ah (i.e. to the truth and its people). Al-Lālikā'ī (d. 418H) brings his chain of narration to Thābit Ibn 'Ajlān, who said: "I reached Anas Ibn Mālik, Ibn Musayyib (d. 94H), Hasan Al-Basrī (d.110H), Sa'īd Ibn Jubair (d. 95H), Ash-Sha'bī, Ibrāhīm An-Nakha'ī (d. 96H), 'Atā Ibn Abī Rabāh (d. 114H), Tāwūs (d. 106H), Mujāhid (d. 104H), 'Abdullāh Ibn Abī Mulaikah (d. 117H), Az-Zuhrī (d. 124H), Mak-hūl (d. 112H), Al-Qāsim Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān, 'Atā Al-Khurasānī (d. 135H), Thābit Al-Bunānī (d. 120H), Al-Hakam Ibn 'Utbah, Ayyūb As-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131H), Hammād, Muhammad Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110H), Abū 'Āmir - and he met Abū Bakr As-Siddīq, Yazīd Ar-Raqāshī (d. 119H) and Sulaymān Ibn Mūsā: 'All of them

³⁷ Bukhari, no. 7084.

commanded me to stick to the Jamā'ah and they all forbade me from the People of Desires."³⁸

Starting Point: Tawhīd and 'Aqīdah

So, the rectification of the Ummah, its beginning and foundation is the belief in Tawhīd, which is to single out Allah alone with worship and to understand this well and in detail through the study of the books of 'Aqeedah and Tawhīd. Tawhīd was the purpose behind the sending of the Prophets (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) and the foundation of their call. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

"And We sent to every nation a Messenger, calling them to the worship of Allah alone and to abandon the false deities." (An-Nahl: 36)

Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) mentioned regarding the Messenger Nūh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ):

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And we sent Nūh to his people. So he said to them: 'O my people worship Allah! You have nothing worthy of worship other than Him. Indeed I fear for you the punishment of a severe day.'" (Al-A'rāf: 59)

³⁸ Al-Lālikā'ī, no. 239.

Regarding the other Prophets (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ), such as Hūd (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ):

وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۖ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِهِ
أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

“And to the people of ‘Ād, We sent their brother Hūd. He said to them: ‘O my people worship Allah, you have nothing worthy of worship other than Him.’” (Al-A’rāf: 65).

And this was the same message that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sent his Companions with. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) stated:

لَمَّا بَعَثَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُعَاذًا نَحْوَ الْيَمَنِ قَالَ لَهُ إِنَّكَ
تَقْدُمُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ فَلْيَكُنْ أَوَّلَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى أَنْ
يُوحِدُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فَإِذَا عَرَفُوا ذَلِكَ فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ فَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ
خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمِهِمْ وَلَيْلَتِهِمْ، فَإِذَا صَلَّوْا فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ زَكَاةً فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ تُؤْخَذُ مِنْ غَنِيِّهِمْ فَتُرَدُّ عَلَى فَقِيرِهِمْ،
فَإِذَا أَقْرَبُوا بِذَلِكَ فَخُذْ مِنْهُمْ وَتَوَقَّ كَرَامَةَ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ

“When the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sent Mu’ādh Ibn Jabal to Yemen, he said to him: ‘I am sending you to a people from Ahlul-Kitāb (Jews and Christians), so invite them first and foremost to the sole worship of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). If they acknowledge that, then inform them that Allah has obligated upon them the five prayers throughout day and night. If they establish the pray,

inform them that Allah has obligated upon them Zakāh on their wealth, to be taken from their wealthy people and given to their poor. If they accept that, then take it from them but avoid taking the best property of the people.”³⁹

From the benefits of this hadīth is that it explains the priorities of the caller to Islam. We recognise that Islam calls to the fulfilment of many essential duties but how do we prioritise where one begins his da’wah to the people? From these proofs, we know that the most important affair is the belief in the Tawhīd of Allah, upon which the rest of the affairs of Islam are built. So Tawhīd is the starting point and the purpose for which mankind and Jinn were created:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ
مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ

“I did not create the Jinn and Mankind except to worship Me alone. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me.” (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 56-57)

In these times, there are callers (du’āt) who claim that they are rectifying the Ummah and calling people to guidance but they are the severest in opposition to this methodology of the Prophets (عليهم السلام). Even their understanding of Tawhīd is corrupted. Some of them,

³⁹ Bukhari, no 7372.

such as the Ash'aris and Deobandis, negate and deny the Attributes of Allah, they explain them falsely and metaphorically, they deny the Highness of Allah, they believe that He is everywhere, and they direct aspects of their worship to the dead in their graves and seek intercession from them. Other deviated sects spread ideas of revolution and rebellion, mobilising the Muslim youth into political activism, sending them out on street demonstrations, protests and to the downfall of nations leading to further weakening of the Ummah. Then they have the audacity to claim that they are "calling people to Islam and rectification."

These modern-day orientations do not adhere to the Methodology (Manhaj) of the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the Salaf (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ).

The Prophetic Methodology

When the Muslims rectify their beliefs and establish the Tawhīd (pure monotheism) that the Prophets and Messengers (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) called to, abandon shirk (polytheism) and bid'ah, and work righteous deeds sincerely and in accordance to the Sunnah, then Allah will establish the Muslims on the earth in safety and security. He will protect them and make firm their Religion. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has enjoined upon us this Methodology in His Book:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي

ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلِيًّا لَّيْسَ لَهُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۖ يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“Allah has promised those among you who believe and perform righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession (and authority) in the earth just as He granted it to those before them. And He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them safety and security after they had lived in fear. This is so long as they worship Me, and they do not associate anything alongside Me in worship. But whoever disbelieves after this, they are the disobedient wrongdoers.” (An-Nūr: 55)

This is the precise and true Methodology established by Allah that will lead to the rectification of the affairs of the Muslims. If the Muslims wish to be successful, then they must:

- a) Establish the belief (the ‘Aqīdah) as it was in the era of Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions.
- b) Work righteous deeds in accordance the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ).
- c) Worship Him alone and establish Tawhīd in all its categories.
- d) Associate none in worship alongside Allah.

Based upon this, Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) will:

- a) Establish the Muslims on the earth and give them victory.
- b) Remove their fear and give them safety and security from their enemies.

This requires a change in the condition of the Muslims and this is in accordance with the saying of Allah (جَلَّ وَعَلَا):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ

“Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is inside themselves.” (Ra’d: 11)

Rectitude begins with oneself, then his family, then his relatives, then it will spread to the community and the nations. If each Muslim was to take this approach, then Islam, the Sunnah and Salafiyah would spread throughout the Ummah. Allah (عَزَّجَلَّ) stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are appointed angels, harsh and severe. They do not disobey Allah in what He orders but do what they are commanded.” (At-Tahrīm: 6)

Rectification is built upon Knowledge

And this da'wah is built upon Sharī'ah knowledge, not upon innovated beliefs and practices, tribalism, racism, partisanship, philosophy, theological rhetoric (kalām) or political agitation. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Say (O Muhammad): This is my path. I call to Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me. Glorified and Exalted be Allah, and I am not of the polytheists.” (Yūsuf: 108)

So the call to Allah is based upon knowledge that begins with learning, then practicing, then teaching, following precisely the Messenger's Path (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Rectification requires knowledge of the Religion, action upon knowledge, calling to the truth, being patience and being able bearing the harm that comes in that cause. The downfall of the groups in the arena of da'wah is because they do not know the Sunnah and Salafiyah, or pretend not to know – they are misguided and they they misguide others. Therefore, instead of bringing about rectification, their methodologies cause further discord and corruption in the Ummah.

Ahlus-Sunnah hold that whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah makes easy for him the path to success in his da'wah and to Paradise. Kathīr bin Qays said: "I was sitting with Abu Dardā (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) in the Mosque of Damascus when a man came to him and said: "Abu Dardā, I have come to you from the city of the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) for a hadīth that I have heard you narrate from the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and I have come for no other purpose. So Abu Dardā (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said to him: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) say:

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا مِنْ طُرُقِ الْجَنَّةِ
وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِمَطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ
لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْحَيَاتَانِ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ وَإِنَّ
فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ
وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا
وَرَّثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ

"Whoever take a path in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the paths leading to Paradise. The angels lower their wings in their pleasure with one who seeks knowledge. The inhabitants of the heavens and the Earth and the fish in the deep waters seek forgiveness for the scholar. The superiority of the scholar over the devout worshipper is like the brightness of the full moon over the twinkling of the stars. The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave as inheritance neither dinārs

nor dirhams (currency), rather they leave only knowledge. And he who takes it takes an abundant portion.”⁴⁰

Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) stated in His Book regarding the people of knowledge:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ

“Say [O Muhammad], ‘Are those who know equal to those who do not know?’ It is only men of understanding who will remember.” (Zumar: 9)

Sharī’ah knowledge is acquired from the Scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā’ah, Ahlul-Hadīth, and they are the ‘ulamā of Salafiyah. Knowledge gives an individual a discerning insight in times of affliction, it allows him to act in the wisest manner and in harmony with the texts, not in opposition to them. He does not act upon good intentions alone, rather he supports his sincere intentions with knowledge and understanding. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

“It is the people of knowledge (‘ulamā) who fear Allah from among His servants.” (Fātir: 28)

⁴⁰ Abu Dawud, no 3641.

Who are the people of knowledge in our times? They are without doubt the Salafi Scholars, those who patiently hold fast to truth whilst bearing the onslaught from the people of bid'ah and the opposers. They do not fear the blame of the blamers:

يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“They strive in the path of Allah, and they do not fear the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower.” (Al-Mā'idah: 54)

When the Ummah is in a State of Weakness, should it refrain from Fighting the Enemies?

In the early period of Islām when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was in Makkah, the Muslims were forbidden from fighting, forbidden from physical Jihād and they were not given permission to fight. In fact we have the well known hadīth cited above where the Companion, Khabbāb Ibn Aratt (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: “I came to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) whilst he was resting on a cloak in the shade of the Ka’bah. We were suffering much at the hands of the idolators in those days. So I said to him: **“Will you invoke Allāh to help**

us?" He sat up with a red face and said: **"A believer among those who came before you was torn apart with iron combs so that nothing of his flesh or nerves or veins would remain on his bones, yet that would not cause him to desert his religion. A saw would be placed over the centre of his head and he would be sawn apart splitting him into two parts, yet that would not make him abandon his religion. Indeed, Allāh will cause this religion to prevail so that a person will travel from San'ā to Hadramaut (in Yemen) and not fear anyone except Allāh, or the wolf, lest it should harm his sheep."**⁴¹

So in this period the Messenger was ordered to command his Companions with patience and forbearance. The first migration to Abyssinia had taken place, but they were not yet commanded with the migration to Madīnah. So this was the **first stage** as it relates to Jihād upon the battlefield. And the Sunnah of withholding from fighting in a state of weakness remains in every period the Muslims are weak and unable. And this is even more-so the case when they are ignorant of the Religion and worship, weak in īmān, weak in practice or have abandoned practicing, deviated in belief ('aḳīdah) and when they are militarily weak and divided in their various innovated sects.

When the Muslims gained authority and strength after the migration to Madinah, the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)

⁴¹ Bukhārī, no. 3852

and the rulers after him were commanded to fight but not against those with whom there are treaties and agreements of peace. The verses of warfare are directed to the rulers and their armies and not towards individual citizens, vigilante groups and so on. It is the rulers of countries and their governments who sign treaties and makes pacts of peace on behalf of their citizens, and they are the ones who make declarations of war. There is no place in Islam for terrorism and terrorist groups.

Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ، d. 728H), Ibn Kathīr (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ، d. 774H), a group from the Salaf and a body from the latter-day scholars held that the verses of fighting do not abrogate one another.

So the performance of Jihād on the battlefield is dependent upon the relative strength or weakness of the people of Islām and the Muslim countries. So if the Muslims are in a position of weakness, then it is legislated withhold from fighting and they are to be patient. They are not to encourage with fighting since they are not able to fight.

Look at the condition of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) whilst they were in Makkah. They were oppressed, mocked, beaten, boycotted and some were killed. Many had to flee to Abyssinia for fear of their lives and to safeguard their religion. They did not fight and they were not commanded to fight as they were weak and unable. The Prophet himself was

humiliated, beaten, strangled and mocked yet still no-one was commanded to fight an insurgency or carry out assassinations! Bukhārī reported in the Saḥīḥ (no. 3854) from Abdullāh stated: **“While the Prophet was prostrating near the Ka’bah in Makkah, he was surrounded by some of the Quraish. ‘Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu’ait brought the rotting abdominal contents of a camel and threw them on the back on the back on the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). The Prophet did not raise his head until his daughter Fātimah came hurrying and took it off his back and she supplicated against ‘Uqbah.”** The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) himself supplicated against the chiefs of Quraish who caused so much harm to the innocent Muslims. He said: **“O Allāh! Deal with the chiefs of Quraish, Abu Jahl Ibn Hishām, ‘Utbah Ibn Rabāh, Shaibah Ibn Rabāh and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf.”**⁴²

He did not call for their assassinations in Makkah, or for an insurgency to be raised against them. That was a time of weakness for the Muslims, even though the Messenger was among them receiving Revelation. Years later, after the migration to Madīnah when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was the head of state, and the Muslims were able to fight due to their strength, they had a ruler, a leadership, all four men were killed at the battle of Badr when the two armies met.

Look at the authentic reports regarding the descent of ‘Īsā (Jesus) the son of Maryam (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) before the Last

⁴² Bukhārī, no. 3854. All of them later perished.

Hour. He will descend and kill the Great Liar, the Dajjāl, the “Anti-Christ”. ‘Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) will rule by the Sunnah and Sharī’ah of the Messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). He will pray behind a ruler from this Ummah. He will lead the Muslims as their ruler. Then, when Gog and Magog (Ya’jūj and Ma’jūj) appear with their great corruption and killing in the land, Allāh will command ‘Isā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) to flee: **“I have brought forth some creation of mine against whom no-one will be able to fight. So take my servants [O ‘Īsā] to safety in Mount Tūr.”**⁴³ Meaning: You do not have the strength to fight them. The Prophet ‘Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) will be commanded not to confront them. So the affair returns back to how the Messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions were in Makkah when they were unable to fight, so they withheld and some migrated to Abyssinia to safety, and then to Madinah. So neither ‘Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) nor the believing servants will fight in this particular situation due to their inability. This is merely following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

So one should not be surprised when he hears the great scholars stating that the state of the Muslims today in the affair of Jihād and fighting resembles that

⁴³ Muslim, no. 2937.

of the Muslims in Makkah due to their weakness.⁴⁴ Therefore, the Muslims, when in a state of weakness, show patience just as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did in Makkah. This does not mean that Makkah period holistically is applied wherein a Muslim imagines that therefore there is no Prayer, no Zakāh, no fasting, no hijāb, etc. Rather, the issue here is specific to the weakness of the Ummah in its inability to fight in each and every situation on the battlefield behind a Muslim ruler. One must not think that just because the Muslims are too weak to fight or defend themselves at the present time, they should therefore abandon the rest of the Islamic duties such as the Prayer, charity, fasting, Hajj, hijāb, etc. No at all. The preservation of Islām and the lives of the Muslims when they are oppressed, is given precedence over their annihilation, and this is why the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did not fight back in Makkah and 'Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) will be commanded to seek safety in Mount Tūr. And know that the actual legislated Jihād will remain in effect until the last Hour if the conditions for it are met such as rulership, ability, etc.

⁴⁴ The weakness of the Muslims and their humiliation is not due to lack of numbers as is cited in the hadīths of Thawbān and Al-'Irbād (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا). Rather it is due to their sins, innovations, splitting and following desires.

Conclusion

So, the ones who will raise the Ummah from its troubles are those aided by Allah, they are Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah, they are the Saved Sect, Ahlul-Hadīth, the Aided Group, the Salafis, those who follow the Path of the Salaf in every age and place, the Strangers – they are one and the same people, they are the true Rectifiers. They are the brothers whom the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) described and desired to see, and they will drink from the lake on the Day of Resurrection. May Allāh make us from them.

We ask Allah to grant us success to worship Him, and obey Him as He deserves - we ask Him to forgive us and show us His mercy. And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. And may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions and followers.