

Religious Extremism

in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

الغلوفي الدين
في حياة المسلمين المعاصرة

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Translator's Introduction

In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. All praises are due to Allah; we praise Him; we seek His help; we seek His forgiveness; and we seek His guidance. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and the badness of our deeds. For whomever Allah guides, there is none to lead him astray. And for whomever He allows to go astray, there is none to guide him. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, for whom there is no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. To proceed:

Recently, religions, in particular the Islamic religion, have received a great deal of criticism due to the extremists in their midst. In reality, though, for virtually every ideology or thought, there are extreme adherents—extremists who often are violent. The labor movement has seen its share of union extremists in the past. Environmentalists certainly have their share of extremists and propagators of vandalism. Pro-democracy advocates are certainly sometimes extreme. The same is true for the feminist movement and the gay rights movement. Even art has its extremists, such as individuals who become very aggressive to support a person's "expression of art," while many others would consider said art to be nothing more than child pornography, as has happened in the recent past in the United States. However, it must be once again noted that Islam has been particularly heavily criticized for its extremists, even though other religions have adherents who could be rightly called extremists.

In reality, though, Islam recognizes extremism as a disease. It is something that the teachings and practices of Islam caution against. Indeed, from an Islamic perspective, it is something that should be purged from society.

However, extremist views are bound to appear now and then, even within the relative small Muslim minorities in the West. Often, these extremist views come from zealous youth or newer Muslims who have the enthusiasm but who are lacking in-depth knowledge and maturity of scholarship. The problem is often exacerbated by the fact that very few detailed commentaries on the Quran exist and virtually no detailed commentaries on the standard

hadith collections exist in English. What happens, therefore, is a person reads a verse or hadith and, being unfamiliar with other relevant verses, hadith or explanations by the Companions that further explain or restrict the application of that text, apply that text in its most general sense and directly to the people around him. This does and has led to many extremist views. The problem is usually not a lack of sincerity but a lack of an in-depth understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

In this particular work, the noted author Dr. Shaikh Abdul Rahmaan al-Luwaihiq has concentrated on many of the manifestations of extremism found in the Arab world and, in particular, in Egypt. However, upon closer inspection, one will readily note that many of the ideas which Dr. al-Luwaihiq critiques can be found in many Muslim communities. Indeed, Dr. al-Luwaihiq touches upon many topics of direct concern to Muslim minorities living in the West. For example, he addresses the following topics:

- The definition of extremism and its parameters from a Shareeah perspective,
- The place and importance of the *hijrah*,
- The ruling for the *hijrah* under different circumstances,
- The definition of *taqleed* and the limits of its acceptability,
- The concept of the *jamaah* and the question of making an oath of allegiance to a group's leader,
- The ruling of taking a governmental post under a tyrant Muslim ruler,
- The Shareeah conditions and parameters for declaring another Muslim a disbeliever.

These are the kinds of issues that Muslims are often confused about. Dr. al-Luwaihiq has also done an excellent job in the way that he handles these issues. He does not simply present the views of the extremists and then critiques them. Instead, he presents the issue from the point of view of the scholars of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. If there is a difference of opinion on an issue, he presents the issue in detail, giving all of the relevant proofs for each viewpoint. Then he tries to determine the strongest view on the issue. It is only after presenting the correct view on an issue that Dr. al-Luwaihiq presents the views of the extremists. He allows them, by quoting them at length, to present their own viewpoint. After that, he gives a critical analysis of their viewpoint and clearly shows where and how they have erred. This is indeed an excellent and very beneficial approach that he has followed.

In fact, it should be noted that the author has given this translator complete freedom to abridge or comment upon any portion of this work. However, the quality of the author's work is such that it is, in reality, in no need of abridgement or comment. It is truly a well-written dissertation and a greatly needed work. Therefore, it was left in as close to its original form as feasible.

This translator must express his gratitude to Dr. Shaikh Abdul Rahmaan al-Luwaihiq for his permission to translate this very important thesis. Thanks must also be expressed for Br. Homaidan al-Turki for his relentless efforts in getting these works published. Sister Iman also deserves a great deal of credit for her editing and proofreading. A note of personal thanks must also go to Br. Mustapha Iles for his assistance in translating some passages of this work. And last but not least, this translator must thank his beloved wife for her continual support, help and patience. May Allah reward all of them with a great reward in both this life and the Hereafter.

Finally, all praise and thanks are to Allah alone, the Lord of the Worlds.

The translator,

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Preface

by Professor Shaikh Zain al-Aabideen al-Rukaabi

True religiousness has two criteria:

[First,] the criterion of responding to the requirements and demands of the methodology and way of life [of the religion]. [Allah has said,]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ﴾

“O you who believe! Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life” (*al-Anfaal* 24).

Secondly, the criterion of using one’s ability and capacity. [This is based on Allah’s saying,]

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا ۤإِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

“Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capability” (*al-Baqarah* 286). These two criteria are interrelated and complementary to one another. Responding to the demands of the way of life is conditional, with respect to actual deeds, upon having the necessary ability.

As for extremism, it is a trend of a different nature. It is something that is contrary to both of these standards. Indeed, it is incompatible with the two of them. With respect to the understanding of the religion, the extremist’s way of thinking is continually void of the scholarly, methodological and rightly-guided principles. When he follows a path of action within the religion, he does not cease in overburdening himself with acts that he cannot bear. He, therefore, then follows a path other than the path of the believers. Even though he may do that with a good intention, good intention in itself is not sufficient without the proper methodology nor is it acceptable as a substitute for it.

For example, it is part of the determination of the believers, part of their beloved requests and part of the ardent hopes by which

they supplicate their Lord and God not to burden them with anything beyond what they can bear. The covenant they made with Allah is concerning the deeds and path that they have the means to fulfill. The believers say, as is stated at the end of *soorah al-Baqarah*,

﴿ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ﴾

“Our Lord! Place not upon us a burden like that which You did place on those before us. Our Lord! Place not upon us a burden greater than we have strength to bear” (*al-Baqarah* 286). They also say, as is stated in the leading words of asking for forgiveness,

أَنَا عَلَىٰ عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ

“I am according to Your covenant and Your Promise to the best of my ability.”¹

But the extremist swerves so far from the path that it is as if he asks Allah to burden him beyond what he can bear or it is as if he has made a covenant with Allah to do deeds that he cannot perform. There is no doubt that this is a turning away from the path of the believers.

Allah would not leave mankind without guidance, without clearly showing them the straight path.

The foundations of Islam and the pillars form three truths:

(1) [The first truth is] the reality of the transcendent origin and protection from error concerning the sources of knowledge: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him). [Allah says,]

﴿ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلْقَىٰ الْقُرْآنَ مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾ ﴾

“As for you, the Quran is bestowed upon you from the presence of One Who is Wise and All-Knowing” [*al-Naml* 6]. [Allah also says,]

﴿ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾

“Nor does he [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] say anything of (his own) desire. It is not other than inspiration sent down to him” [*al-Najm* 3-4].

¹ [This phrase is found in a hadith recorded by al-Bukhari.—JZ]

What is definitively known is that these two sources [the Quran and Sunnah] do not advocate extremism. Indeed, what they contain is the antithesis of extremism. That is, they call to moderation and forbid extremism.

Allah says,

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ﴾

“Thus have We made of you a justly balanced nation, that you may be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves” [al-Baqarah 143]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا...

“Verily, this religion is easy. No one overburdens himself in the religion except that it overcomes him [and he will not be able to continue in that manner]. So, seek the straight path and come close to it...” [Recorded by al-Bukhari.]

(2) [The second truth] is the reality of clarity with respect to methodology and the path that is to be followed. [Allah says,]

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

“Say: ‘This is my Way: I do invite unto Allah—on evidence clear as the seeing with one’s eyes—I and whoever follows me. Exalted and Perfect is Allah. And never will I join gods with Allah’” [Yusuf 108].

(3) [The third reality] is the reality of [being obliged] to remain steadfast to that methodology and path. [Allah says,]

﴿ فَلِذَٰلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴾

“Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the faith), and stand steadfast as you are commanded. And do not follow their vain desires” (al-Shoora 15).

It is part of the methodology itself to know that extremism is misery and hardship. It is also part of the methodology to understand that Islam came so that mankind would not have to be

miserable. It came so that mankind would not have to suffer the consequences of suffering and hardship. Indeed, it came to bring mankind its true solace, happiness and ease. [Allah says,]

﴿ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ ﴿١﴾ ﴾

“We have not sent the Quran down to you to cause you unhappiness” (*Taha* 2). [Allah also says,]

﴿ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾

“And We will make it easy for you (to follow) the simple (Path)” (*al-Ala* 8). Ibn Kather stated in his commentary to this verse, “In other words, good deeds and speech will be made easy for you to perform; the law that is obligated upon you shall be easy, agreeable, straightforward and just, with no crookedness, hardship or difficulty to it.”

Although the methodology and path is of extreme clarity, the history and culture of the faith have been afflicted by two destructive diseases: (1) The first is the disease of turning away from the guidance of the religion or trying to flee from it. (2) The second is the disease of extremism in the religion without compassion, calm, moderation or mercy, either with respect to understanding and beliefs or with respect to deeds and behavior; this is the essence of extremism in religion.

Groups of people have fled from the true religion and have become confused concerning their relation to it. This was not because they disliked it; nor was it because they were not ready to undertake its requirements and virtuous acts. They got entangled in that state due to going beyond the limits in the relationship with the religion, with respect to understanding, belief and practice.

[For example,] the Khawaarij were adamant worshippers and fighters for Allah’s sake, in general. However, their extremism in their beliefs and practices made them renegades from the religion like an arrow pierces through a game.

And why did the Mutazilah stray? They exaggerated in their extolling of Allah to the point that they denied all of His divine attributes, save a few. They argued, “If something has attributes, it is a body. This is because attributes are [philosophical] accidents and accidents cannot exist except in a body.” Based on that [rational argument], they deny the fact that Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgment. The eye cannot see anything except physical bodies, they claimed. They also went to an extreme in their concept of the

relationship between faith and deeds, to the point that they declared Muslims disbelievers due to sins and transgressions.

There are also groups of worshippers and ascetics who continue to go to extremes with respect to their understanding of putting one's trust in Allah. In fact, they have gone to the point that they consider putting one's trust in Allah as the antithesis of planning and taking the needed causal steps.

[The existence of all of these groups] is evidence that sincere intentions and beautiful motives do not suffice when the proper methodology is missing.

People have differed in their stance towards extremism, diverging into [the following] various trends:

(1) One trend continues to call towards extremism in all of its forms. They consider it adherence to the necessary parts of the religion and a competent means to counter the tendency to flee from Islam.

(2) Another trend criticizes extremism in such a way that they thereby reach the point of negating Islam itself.

(3) Another trend criticizes extremism, however, without knowledge, guidance or a light-giving scripture.

(4) A fourth trend criticizes extremism and negates it in order to support "the moderate and balanced [true] Islam and to bring the people back to the path of proper adherence with respect to beliefs, thought and behavior."

We believe that the author of this book, Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mualla al-Luwaihiq al-Mutairi, has taken his place—deservedly so—among that group which discloses the truth and presents the approach of moderation and fairness.

The basis for this book that we introduce to the reader is a scholarly research by which the researcher attained a Master's Degree from Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia.

In this thesis, the author has responded to a number of very serious and important questions, including:

Is there extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims?

What is the root of this extremism?

What is its extent?

How is it demonstrated?

By what balance or standard can this extremism be exposed, critiqued and abolished?

These are the questions that our researcher has striven to answer, the type of striving representative of a student of knowledge and truth, a faithful striving for the sake of his religion and sincere advice for his community.

I was very happy to be the advisor for this thesis for two main reasons. First, the subject matter of the thesis is characterized by profoundness, seriousness and benefit in an attempt to resolve one of the most important and detailed problems of contemporary Muslim life. Second, advising such a distinguished student of knowledge fills the soul with hope for a stronger and wiser future for the Muslim nation, by the will, power and strength of Allah.

As I was happy to be the advisor for the master's research of Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mualla al-Luwaihiq al-Mutairi, I am ever more pleased today to introduce his book which is filled with knowledge, clear in meaning and gentle in its style. It shall take its respected place in contemporary Islamic literature.

I ask Allah to provide us, the author and all Muslims with a pure intention and purity in our religion for His sake. I also ask that He provide us with a sincere purpose to adhere to the straight path in our words and deeds.

Zain al-Aabideen al-Rukaabi

Author's Introduction

All praise be to Allah, the One who honored us by the light of knowledge, the vanquisher of the darkness of ignorance. He is the One who rescued us by revelation from falling into the depths of misguidance. He also blessed us by sending messengers (peace and blessings upon all of them) as guides and leaders for humans. He made the Straight Path the path of seeking success and of intending justice. He made the path clear for those seeking the path. By His guidance, the path of happiness has been made manifest for the successful. He has established the evidence against all of mankind.

O Allah, to You is the praise with everything that the most noble of the servants have praised You and the most pious have thanked You.

In You alone I seek help, and in my knowledge that none is worthy of worship except You and that there is no Lord besides You.

It is in You alone that I seek protection from lowly desires and misguided heresies. The one who is under Your protection will never fail. I ask You to guide me to the path of the people who received Your bounties, without straying and without earning Your anger.

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except You, alone, without any partner with You. I bear witness that Muhammad is Your servant and Your messenger, the bearer of good tidings and warnings, the illuminating source of light and a bright lamp, the one having the best position among the prophets and the most sincere in his speech. He was the final brick of the perfect structure and the seal of truth. He removed the chains and hardships. He called to the best of manners and the easiest of deeds. Allah sent Him while mankind was in two parties: those cold of heart who had the anger of Allah upon them and those extremists who went astray.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came with the middle way. He warned about falling short of its requirements and of exceeding its limits. The servants never come across a bounty except he is its path. The intelligent ones do not reach their goal except by his guidance. May Allah bless

Muhammad and his family as You blessed Abraham and his family; He is the Praiseworthy, the Majestic.

To proceed:

Undoubtedly, those problems that overcome the understanding, due to ignorance sometimes or due to mistaken notions at other times, are the most deserving to be written about and the most enriching to research in order to determine the truth about such matters in the light of Shareeah (Islamic Law)—the key to guidance and the path of happiness. Such research is from the most virtuous of voluntary deeds and of the greatest benefit and good.

All praise be to Allah, I progressed in the stages of education at this blessed university—Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University—until I finished the first year of my Master's Degree. At that stage, it is required for the student to present a research proposal in which what is old and new concerning a topic is presented and its vague and obscured aspects are uncovered. I gave this matter a great deal of profound thought. What suggested itself most to me was a principle concerning which no one who is familiar with Islamic sciences is ignorant. It has to do with the relationship between the human and what Allah has ordered or prohibited. I knew that people were following various paths concerning this matter. The majority of these paths have deviated from that which Allah wants in His creation. In general, people have fallen into two opposing paths. These are, one, the way of negligence and laxity and, two, the way of extremism and fanaticism.

Concerning the topic of negligence and laxity, I noticed that a number of hands have already produced studies and research on that topic. Therefore, I rushed to discuss its opposite. I saw that many who have attempted to tackle this topic have actually missed the mark, except on a limited number of points. This topic has been discussed by the noble and the inferior, by the scholar and the ignorant, by the believer and the impious; in fact, it has even been discussed by disbelievers. Each of them drew from their own well of information. And although there have been great scholars and talented savants who have touched on this topic, most of them merely fulfilled the obligation of advising others on this issue or they simply pointed out some particular matters. Therefore, I found it a duty upon myself to research this topic in detail and muster up all the ability I had for that goal. Even though I am limited in my experience and knowledge, I relied upon help from Allah, the Exalted. Noting that this topic is very much related to today's reality, I have decided to restrict the history of this topic by

concentrating on contemporary times and concentrating on the adherents to Islam. Therefore, I have named it, *Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims: A Critical Study*.

The Research Topic

Before contemporary times, the research on extremism concerned grave worshippers, Sufis, Shiites and other extremists. However, nowadays, it has turned toward a different direction. This is because certain phenomena have occurred among those who align themselves with Islamic *dawah* (calling people to Islam) and it has led to those who adhere to Islam being accused of “extremism,” “fanaticism” and rigidity.

Various factions have entered into the discussion of this topic:

(a) There are the uncouth who have accused those who adhere to the religion with extremism.

(b) There are the enemies who are using an attack on extremism as a means to attack Islam itself.

(c) There are also the extremists themselves who deny that they are extremists and who accuse others of laxity in the religion.

The captivation of those groups with this topic during this era of mass media has brought the topic of extremism from the specialists to the general public. It has reached the point that it is a topic of discussion for both the scholar and the layman alike, without it being guided by proper guidelines and principles. So the research topic is this phenomenon with its aforementioned aspects.

The Era Covered by the Research

A phenomenon of this nature cannot be restricted to a specific time period. However, I have specified the period of my research to be from 1385 A.H. [or approximately the mid 1960s] to the present day. The selection of this time period is not an arbitrary one. In fact, this choice is due to that period being the time in which extremism itself began to grow as well as the time in which people began to accuse those who adhere to the religion of being extreme.

The Goals of the Research

The goal of this research is to reach two very important matters which are of great importance. They are:

- (1) The reality or exact nature of extremism, which includes:
 - (a) The meaning of extremism.
 - (b) Its extent and size.
 - (c) Its nature.

- (2) A critique, in the light of the texts [of the Quran and Sunnah] and principles of the Shareeah, of the existing phenomenon of extremism.

Hence, this is a critical study, in accord with what is stated in its title. For that reason, the causes and cures have not been placed in a chapter by themselves. These have not been forgotten. Instead, I have listed the general causes while discussing the roots of extremism. In addition, I have mentioned general points as remedies for extremism in the conclusions of the research. That is in addition to what is distributed throughout the body of the research of refutations exposing the causes of mistakes and errors. With the help of Allah, I shall discuss the topic of causes and remedies in a separate research.¹

The Importance of the Research

This research is of extreme importance in its essence, its timing and its relationship to the future of Islamic *dawah*.

As for the nature of the topic itself, it is related to the beliefs of the Muslims. It purifies their faith from the blemish of extremism. It is also related to the Islamic *dawah* as well as the callers themselves.

As for the timing of the research, it has been written under the following circumstances:

- (1) Some of the acts of extremism have emerged and become apparent and some extremist opinions have appeared among some

¹ [By the grace and mercy of Allah, the author completed and published his Ph.D. dissertation in three volumes. In that work, he concentrated on the causes, effects and remedy for religious extremism in modern times. It is available as Abdul Rahmaan al-Luwaihiq, *Mushkilah al-Ghulu fi al-Deen fi al-Asr al-Haadhir: al-Asbaab, al-Athaar, al-Ilaaj* (published by its author, 1998).—JZ]

of the members of the Islamic movement. These acts and opinions must be criticized out of sincerity to the Muslim nation as a whole.

(2) The meaning of extremism according to the Shareeah is absent from the minds of most of the people. Instead, they have taken on the understanding of the Christians (which is fundamentalism) or of the secularists (which is radicalism). Therefore, there is a great need to explain its correct meaning such that one will not slip after being firm in knowledge.

(3) Fighting against extremism has been taken as a means to fight against Islam itself. It is, therefore, a must to remove the veil flung over the battle, which is among the most dangerous of the battles between Islam and disbelief.

With respect to the future of the *dawah* (calling to Islam), it is a must that the tendency of the Islamic *dawah* be corrected [and set along the right path]. A study of religious extremism may assist that by basic attributes in three aspects:

(1) Returning to and establishing the firm foundations: Fundamental, Shareeah research built upon the basics of the religion and the principles of extracting conclusions is necessary for those many points concerning which people have become confused, slipped or strayed in their understanding. The overstepping of the bounds by extremism may then be made clear, as well as the lifelessness [and incorrect lack of action] of the lackadaisical.

(2) Fortifying and protecting: Extremism is not a momentary problem. It is true that what is occurring today may be removed. However, it could occur again if its driving forces appear. Therefore, in order to cut off this problem and to protect the callers against it, it is necessary to clarify exactly what is extremism and what are its roots so that it will not reoccur.

(3) Defending and sheltering: The existence of extremism causes the Islamic *dawah* to be hampered and it leaves openings for it to be attacked. Therefore, it is necessary to distance the obstacles from the path of the true Islamic *dawah* and shelter it from anything that may hamper it or block it along its path.

Reasons for Selecting This Topic

Given the importance of this topic, I chose this topic, after praying to Allah for guidance and consulting with others about registering for this topic, for the following reasons:

(1) My desire to do research on a topic that is beneficial and useful for Islam and the Muslims.

(2) The seriousness of the topic and the scarcity or non-existence of serious studies on this topic.

(3) My desire to research a topic that has a strong connection to the texts of the Shareeah in order for it to be fundamental guidance for me in my future days, by the will of Allah.

Outline of the Research

I sought guidance from Allah and exerted myself to arrange the topics and divide them in the most organized and related fashion. The most important aspects of the outline are as follows:

I. An introduction containing:

- A. An opening statement
- B. The topic of the research
- C. The era covered by the research
- D. Goals of the research
- E. Importance of the research
- F. Reasons for selecting the topic
- G. Outline of the research
- H. Methodology of the research
- I. Sources for the research
- J. Difficulties encountered by the researcher
- K. Thanks and acknowledgements

II. A preparatory chapter covering five topics:

- A. Defining the terminology of the research
- B. Islam's attribute of balance and moderation
- C. The ease and simplicity of Islam
- D. Lexical meaning of "extremism"
- E. Shareeah definition of "extremism"

III. The roots of extremism and its nature in the lives of contemporary Muslims

A. The roots of religious extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims

- i. Historical roots
- ii. Intellectual roots
- iii. Psychological roots

B. The nature of religious extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims

C. The size and extent of religious extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims

- D. The conception of extremism among contemporary scholars
- E. The conception of extremism among secularists
- F. The conception of extremism in the West

IV. Credal and Shareeah-related manifestations of extremism

A. Extremism with respect to loyalty and disassociation

- i. Extremism with respect to the conception of *jamaah* (“group, community”)
- ii. Extremism with respect to strict adherence to a *jamaah* (particular Muslim group or organization)
- iii. Extremism in establishing the *jamaah* as the standard and source of truth
- iv. Extremism with respect to the leader
- v. Extremism with respect to disassociating oneself from the Muslim society

B. Extremism with respect to declaring others disbelievers

- i. The meaning of *kufr* (“disbelief”) and the danger of *takfeer* (“declaring others disbelievers”).
- ii. Declaring others disbelievers due to sins
- iii. Declaring, without exception, as disbelievers the rulers who do not rule in accord with what Allah revealed
- iv. Declaring, without exception, as disbelievers those who follow the rulers who do not rule in accord with what Allah revealed
- v. Declaring disbelievers those who leave the *jamaah* (“community, group”)
- vi. Declaring disbelievers those who live in such settings without emigrating
- vii. Declaring a specific person an unbeliever without regard to the Shareeah principles [related to the question of *takfeer*]
- viii. Declaring disbelievers those who do not declare others as disbelievers—whom they claim are disbelievers
- ix. The innovation of suspended judgement and investigating people
- x. The statement declaring the contemporary Muslim societies *jaahili* (“ignorant, non-Islamic”)
- xi. Extremism with respect to making a judgment about a residence or land

C. Introducing new Shareeah principles

D. Extremism in censuring *taqleed* (following of the schools of fiqh)

- i. Extremism with respect to the understanding of *taqleed* and the rejection of consensus

- ii. Extremism with respect to censuring those who practice *taqleed*
- iii. Requiring everyone to make *ijtihaad* (“personal juristic reasoning”)

E. Being harsh upon the people

V. Practical and real manifestations of extremism or the practical and behavioral manners in which extremism is manifested

A. Extremism in individual behavior

- i. Being harsh upon oneself
- ii. Forbidding the good things

B. Extremism in social behavior

- i. Revolting against the rulers
- ii. Forbidding education and calling to illiteracy
- iii. Forbidding performing the prayers in the mosques
- iv. Stopping the Friday Prayers
- v. Separating from and leaving the societies
- vi. Emigrating from and fleeing the societies
- vii. The claim that laws are implemented according to the stage or the innovated claim that we are currently living in the “Makkan era.”
- viii. Forbidding work in government agencies and posts

The Methodology of the Research

I exerted my efforts to follow a pure scientific approach, free of any personal or intellectual biases. In fact—and all praise be to Allah—I was very careful to study every detailed point without being driven by an opinion that I supported or a thought I was zealous about. In fact, I came to some conclusions that I had thought I would oppose.

I do not claim myself to be free of any taints of urgency, dispositions or enthusiasm to resolve particular issues. However, in my estimation, all of them have resulted from being convinced that what I have concluded is the truth that results from following the path of sound argumentation and evidence. The evidence was the guide. Opinion was never the guide or the source of interpreting the evidence.

In this research, I have used the following methodologies:

(1) Historical approach: This is “an approach relying upon texts and documents that are the sources for the original history. Based on them, one can make a strong judgment, verifying their

authenticity, understanding them in their proper context, not giving them more of an interpretation than what they actually give... In this way, one can have the truest and most reliable picture of what truly was."¹

(2) Scientific, analytical approach: This uses organized steps to uncover realities and prove them. This is done by dividing a whole into its parts and decomposing the whole into its constituent parts and analyzing them.²

(3) Content analysis approach: Content analysis is one of the ways of scientific research used by researchers, in particular in the field of media and communications, in order to describe the substance of the apparent phenomena and the clear contents of the topic one wants to analyze. This is done in response to the research arguments presented in the thesis statement or hypothesis. It is done in order to uncover the intellectual, cultural, political or ideological background from which springs forth the topic one is trying to analyze. It is also used to understand the intentions and goals of the writer. Hence, content analysis has two major components: quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.³

As for the drafting and composing of this present research, the methodological approach may be summarized in the following points:

(1) For the opinions of every individual or group, I relied on original sources and did not use secondary sources. I quoted from the books of the Westerners and secularists concerning their understanding of extremism. I quoted the opinions of the extremists from their own books and writings. Only on particular occasions was there any exception to this practice, such as wherein the evidence used by extremists was well-known through oral transmission from them but I needed to verify it, so I quoted it from those debating with them.

(2) I concentrated on the most important issues, opinions and evidences and turned away from what I saw as trivial issues and opinions. I noted that the mistakes and errors of the extremists or those who critiqued them are many. Had I discussed everything they said, I would not have been able to complete this work.

(3) When there were differences of opinion among the scholars on a particular issue, I attempted to analyze the dispute,

¹ *Majma al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* of Egypt; *al-Mujam al-Falsafi*, section on *al-Minhaaj al-Tareekhi*.

² *Ibid.*, section on *Minhaaj al-Ilmi wa Tahleel*.

³ See Dr. Sameer Husain, *Tahleel al-Madhmoon*, p. 22.

presenting the statements and evidences, and noted what I considered to be the strongest opinions.

(4) I intentionally quoted the statements of scholars often while discussing the opinions of the extremists. In particular, I quoted those scholars who are well-trusted among most of the sects, such as the Companions, the leaders of the Followers, al-Tabari, ibn Taimiyyah and others.

(5) The study of the different phenomena of extremism resulted in clarifying Islam's middle stand on those issues in which extremism has taken place. This was the necessary result of many causes, among the most important being:

(a) The phenomenon of extremism is contended over by two sides: the extremist and its opposite of inaction. If the researcher only presents, critiques and refutes the opinions of the extremist, his opposite may then take the words of the researcher as support for what his desires lead him to. This fact is obvious to those who read refutations. [Hence, it is necessary to explain both extremes and to clearly point out Islam's moderate stance.]

(b) One must judge deviations by a certain standard or criteria. Therefore, this standard had to be pointed out and the deviations had to be judged in its light and guidance.

(c) Reading the opinion of a deviant could possibly strike a chord in the person's heart that would make it difficult for that opinion to be removed from his heart. Hence, one must present the true position with its evidence before explaining the deviant position.

(6) I used the Hijri Calendar except on those occasions when it was difficult to determine the Hijri date, as when the event was stated in the references according to its Western date and that date corresponded to one of two possible Hijri years.

(7) When I use the phrase, "Shaikh al-Islam," I am referring to Shaikh al-Islam ibn Taimiyyah. And when I use the term, "al-Haafidh," I am referring to Haafidh Ibn Hajar.¹

¹ [In order to avoid confusion, in the translation, in general, the names Ibn Taimiyyah and Ibn Hajar will appear instead of these titles. At this point in the introduction, the author discusses his use of footnotes and punctuation as well as the indices he included in his work. Since the translation will sometimes deviate from the exact presentation of the Arabic text, due to what is normal procedure while writing in English, this portion of his work is not translated here. Furthermore, some of the author's footnotes containing hadith references have been summarized in this translation but with no essential information being left out.—JZ]

The Sources and References for the Research

The sources for this research can be divided into three categories:

The first category is comprised of the fundamental source works, meaning the Quran, Sunnah and writings of the scholars of the earlier generations of this nation. The Book of Allah was the first spring from which I sought nourishment and guidance. Then I referred to *Jaami al-Usool* (a compendium of hadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him). I compiled together from it the relevant texts and arranged them in order for them to be easily referenced. I placed every text in its appropriate place, such that they are the bright lights in the sky of this research.

Secondly, I then went to the books of the people of knowledge. I eagerly read them and reviewed what they contained. I quoted what was relevant to this research. This research was beautified by those quotes which included: (a) what was an explanation for what was taken from the texts of the Quran and Sunnah; (b) what was supporting evidence for an opinion of the differing opinions among the scholars; and (c) what was a refutation of the earlier extremist groups and which also serves as a refutation of comparable contemporary groups.

The second category is the works of the extremists and those who have been accused of extremism. A number of their published works and unpublished manuscripts are available to me. As for the published works, one is not in need of proving their ascription to their authors. As for unpublished manuscripts, I came across a number of books by Shukri Mustafa¹, the leader of the group whose members call themselves *Jamaat al-Muslimeen* (The Community of Muslims) and which the media calls *Jamaat al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah* (The Group of Declaring Others Disbelievers and Emigrating from Society). I have chosen to call them the Group of Shukri Mustafa. I

¹ Shukri is Mustafa Ahmad Shukri who was born in Asyut in 1362 A.H. He was imprisoned in 1385 A.H., being accused of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood. He was released in 1391 A.H. In prison, he established a group that spread greatly after his release from prison. Its name was *Jamaah al-Muslimeen* (the community of the Muslims). It is known by the name *Jamaat al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra* (the community of declaring other Muslims disbelievers and of emigration). He was executed [by the Egyptian government] in 1398 A.H. Cf., Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi Ghair ma Anzalallah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, pp. 10, 304-306.

was able to ascertain the veracity of those manuscripts through the following means:

(1) Numerous others who are concerned with the topic of extremism have ascribed those works to Shukri Mustafa.

(2) I obtained those works from a person who was at one time a member of that group. In fact, he was one of their leading members. Now, he has returned to the way of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah.

(3) Some of the people who have debated for the Group of Shukri Mustafa have accepted that those are his books and that the opinions, upon viewing them, are his opinions.

(4) I used the content analysis approach to verify the ascription of these books to him by comparing them with the cassette tapes in his voice and what those who debated him have relayed.

(5) The content, with respect to style and wording, is consistent in all of those books.

(6) The transcripts of the trial of Shukri Mustafa attest to the veracity of these manuscripts by his own statements and the statements of his lawyers as well as the members of the Group.

(7) However, given all of that, I did not present any opinion mentioned in these books without confirming its ascription to him by one of the following means:

(a) The statement of one or some of the members of the Group.

(b) The statement of one or some of those who debated the Group.

(c) The statement of the people of knowledge and callers to Islam who wrote about that group in their books.

It will be clear that I quote that group a lot. This is due to two reasons: (1) Their extremism is very clear, such that there is no way that one could debate that their opinions are extreme. Others make statements that are much more ambiguous and, hence, open to interpretation. (2) The extremism of this group can be taken as an example of the extremism of other groups who are not known to have writings.

The third category of sources is those works dealing with the topic of extremism among contemporary Muslims. I ran into a big problem with respect to these sources because, first, I came across thousands of articles in the press, especially those from Egypt, concerning extremism and the groups of extremists. Secondly, I came across tens of books discussing the problem of extremism.

As for the newspapers and articles I came across, I did not benefit from them at all. They are like froth [not having any

substance to them]. It became clear to me that the topic was discussed as a means of arousing emotions and causing alarm. They were not meant for evaluation and resolving the problem. The most that I got from them was a good conception of some of the aspects of the topic.

As for the books, the majority of them were published solely for business goals. A number of them were collections of interviews and debates that were published in the press that were collected together by the columnists who were specialized in this topic.

Very few of the books analyzed the topic based on knowledge of the Shareeah (Islamic Law) and knowledge of current events. They vary in the quality of their presentation and excellence of their analysis. I benefited from those books but I did not treat them as the main source for my research.

Difficulties Encountered by the Researcher

I encountered a number of difficulties while preparing this research. Perhaps the most prominent of these were:

(1) The first difficulty encountered when the project was begun was an obstacle in obtaining some references, particularly the books written by those accused of extremism and many of the books written on the topic of extremism. Allah made it easy for me, by His grace and generosity, to travel for scholarly purposes to some of the Arab countries, wherein I came across most of the books of those accused of extremism and many of the books written on this topic as well as a number of articles and media reports. Then I encountered a second problem as it took me a long time to sort through those varied books and articles. Unfortunately, the effort was exhaustive and the fruits were few. I benefited very little from them.

(2) There are a number of hadith recorded in this research and they had to be properly verified. This process in itself took a great deal of time and effort.

(3) There were a number of pieces of information that I exhausted myself to collect, but I then noted that there was no veracity to them such that I could not record them in a research work, for a number of different reasons. This turned out to be a great difficulty as I spent a great deal of time and effort to collect that information.

(4) The different phenomena of extremism merge into one another. Hence, a research on this topic necessarily must repeat

itself at times. I tried my best to limit such repetitions, discussing each topic in its appropriate place and simply referring to its related topics.

(5) The topic is very complicated and it contains a number of confusing aspects to it. For that reason, many researchers have abstained from undertaking a rush into its abyss. Many of the people I know pitied me due to its difficult nature. However, due to the help and assistance of Allah, what was difficulty was made easy for me. And all praise and gratitude is for Allah.

(6) The researcher, in this research, must take the position of a judge and ruler over Muslims, in the sense that he has to conclude that a certain person or group is extremist, which is a difficult task psychologically. However, being conscious of the following words of Allah makes it an easier task:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ﴾

“O you who believe, stand firmly for Allah as just witnesses” (*al-Maaidah* 8).

There are a number of issues in this research that were very difficult for this researcher to comprehend completely until Allah made their understanding easy and allowed the researcher to determine the strongest opinion on various issues. This was achieved through discussions with the advisor of this researcher and through the answers various scholars gave in questions addressed to them.

Acknowledgements

I see it as a duty on the one who produced this research, myself, to extend great thanks and beautiful gratitude to everyone who helped me in this work in any way, shape or form.

The first of thanks and the last of thanks, the beginnings of praise and the limits of praise go to the Lord of Praise and the One deserving of it, full of grace and bounty, my Creator, Sustainer and Lord. His is the praise, to Him is the praise that has no end.

Second, I would like to express my thanks to my generous parents. Their graciousness towards me was great. This research and, in fact, this researcher are but the result of their goodness by which I ask Allah to make their scales of good deeds heavy. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to my father, Shaikh and colonel Mualla ibn Mueedh al-Luwaihiq, whose graciousness and grace upon me after that of Allah was great indeed.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the esteemed professor and shaikh Zain al-Abideen al-Sayid Ahmad al-Rukaabi who was very mild mannered and polite. His direction and opinions greatly influenced the value of this research.

I must also express my thanks to the two noble professors in front of whom I defended this thesis. I would like to thank them for their time and efforts they spent in reading this research in order to evaluate it and improve it.

At the end of this introduction, I would like to admit that this attempt is a first step in the practice of serious, scholarly research. I am still at the beginning of the path. Therefore, my conclusions may be in some need of correction. My efforts may be in need of more effort and support. If I did succeed in reaching my goal and for those purposes I traversed, that is completely by the bounty of Allah. If I fell short of my goal and strayed from the path, that is due to me and Satan.

I ask Allah to forgive me for what has passed of sins and vices. I rely on help only from Him for He is the only One who can provide assistance. And upon Him is the reliance and trust.

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

Abdul Rahman ibn Mualaa al-Luwaihiq al-Mutairi
The mid-morning of Saturday
Jumaadi al-Ula 7, 1411 A.H.

Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

Chapter One: Introductory Matters

Defining the Terms of the Research

Understanding the terminology of a research is a key in understanding the direction of the researcher and his purpose. This is because those technical terms, in most cases, are comprehensive terms upon which many of the research topics and questions are built. In this particular research, there are a number of technical terms. However, they may be divided into two main categories:

The first category of terms consists of those terms that are mentioned in the research and which are the core of the research itself, such as “extremism,” “*takfeer* (declaring another person to be a disbeliever), “*al-jamaah* (the group).”

The second category of terms consists of those general terms that are used in the major headings in this research, terms like “critique,” “contemporary,” and so on.

Both categories of terms are deserving of clarification and explanation. Whereas the first category is inseparable from a number of portions of this research, it is best not to separate those terms from their proper contexts. Hence, they are elaborated upon in sections devoted entirely to them. As for the terms of the second category, I have dedicated this part to explain those terms. In general, they are six such terms and here is their explanation:

(1) Contemporary (المعاصرة): This comes from the sound, three stem root of the Arabic letters *ain*, *saad* and *raa*. Its best-known meaning is “time, period.”¹ [From this root is the word] in Allah’s saying,

﴿ وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ ﴾

“By the time, verily man is in loss” (*al-Asr* 1-2). The word *asr* is used to refer to a period of time. The meaning of this word in this research is: the contemporary time in which we are currently living.

¹ See ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, under the heading عصر.

Therefore, the study will concentrate on the period in which some of the callers to Islam have been labeled with the characteristic of extremism. Approximately, this ranges from the time of the late [thirteen hundred] and eighties of the Hijri calendar until today [or approximately 1960 until today].

(2) Criticism or critiquing (النقد): “[The Arabic letters] *noon*, *qaaf* and *daal* is a sound root indicating something becoming prominent, making something prominent and clear, exposing. This includes scrutiny of the quality of animals... and separating the good money from the poor quality coins. This is done by revealing its excellent or other qualities.”¹ It is said that one does a critique of something when he examines it or distinguishes its good features from its base features.²

The researcher here is studying extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims as a critic with respect to two facets: The first facet regards the conception of extremism among contemporary Muslims and its definition from their point of view with an explanation of what is correct or incorrect. The second facet concerns the works of those who have been accused of extremism, their origins and appearance. This is in order to delineate what extremism truly entails and to point out exactly what the phenomenon consists of in reality. In addition, the proofs cited by the extremists are presented and debated.

(3) The roots or foundations (الجذور): [The Arabic letters] *jeem*, *dhaal* and *raa* form one root in the language, [meaning] the root or foundation of anything. One even says, “The base of the tongue is a root.” Hudhaifah³ said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated to us,

أَنَّ الْأَمَانَةَ نَزَلَتْ فِي جَذْرِ قُلُوبِ الرِّجَالِ

“The trust has descended into the bottom of the hearts of men.”⁴ Al-Asma’ee¹ said, “*Al-jadhr* is the root (or foundation) of

¹ See ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, under the heading نقد.

² See *al-Mujam al-Waseet*, under the heading نقد.

³ Hudhaifah ibn Hasal (al-Yamaan was his nickname) ibn Jaabir al-Abasi was a noble Companion who was the keeper of the secrets of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He was a governor and a war hero. Umar appointed him governor over al-Madaain. He conquered some of the lands of Persia. He narrated 225 hadith. He died in al-Madaain in 36 A.H. Cf., al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 171; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, p. 219; al-Zirkili, *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 361.

⁴ Part of a hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

anything.”² It is said “The roots of understanding” in reference to the fundamentals and basic axioms.³

What is meant by “the roots” here is a study of the historical sources of extremism and a study of underlying causes. However, it is not an important part of this thesis or part of its outline to explain the causes in great detail.

(4) The innate nature (الطبيعة): [The Arabic letters] *taa*, *baa* and *ain* form a sound root that indicates the end that something goes to, being sealed, as it were, in that situation. From that meaning comes the expression, “The innate nature of man and his natural disposition.”⁴

Among the meanings of *al-tabeeah* is the essence of something. “It is all the characteristics that distinguish things from one another, such as the nature of life, the nature of the soul, the nature of the individual and society.”⁵

In this research, I explain under the title, “The nature of extremism,” the particular and defining characteristics of the phenomena of extremism.

(5) Manifestations or expressions [of a phenomenon] (المظاهر): “[The Arabic letters] *dha*, *haa* and *raa* form a sound root indicating strength and manifestation... Something is *dhaahir* if it becomes uncovered and apparent.”⁶ *Al-dhuhoor* is the emergence of something.⁷ *Al-Madhaahir* is the plural of *madhhar* and it is “the form in which something emerges or manifests itself.”⁸ It is also used to refer to a characteristic or quality of something. For example, one says about different plants as “spring, fall or summer blooming.”⁹ In this research, “phenomenon” means the shape and aspects that together make up extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims.

¹ Al-Asma'ee (122-216 A.H.) was Abu Saeed Abdul Maalik ibn Quraib al-Baahili, the “narrator” of the Arabs and one of the leading scholars of the Arabic language. He traveled extensively through different lands to gather their knowledge and collect their news. Cf., al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 175; al-Zirkili, vol. 4, p. 162.

² See ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqayees al-Lughah*, under the heading جذر.

³ See al-Tahaanawi, *Kishaaf Istalahaat al-Funoon*, vol. 1, p. 286; Jameel Saleefa, *al-Mujam al-Filsifi*, vol. 1, p. 397.

⁴ See ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqayees al-Lughah*, under the heading طبع.

⁵ Jameel Saleeba, *al-Mujam al-Filsifi*, vol. 1, p. 13.

⁶ Ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqayees al-Lughah*, under the heading ظهر.

⁷ Cf., ibn Mandhoor, *Lisaan al-Arab*, under the heading ظهر.

⁸ *Al-Mujam al-Waseet*, under the heading ظهر.

⁹ *Ibid.*

(6) Conception (المفهوم): “Understanding” is “your knowledge of something in your heart.”¹ Conception is the mental image one has of something that exists in reality. “Conception and meaning are one and the same. Both of them refer to the image that exists in the mind. However, they differ with respect to the purpose and consequence, in the sense that the image meant by wording is called meaning while that which is constructed in the mind is called conception.”² Conception is also used to refer to all of the attributes that are included in one’s perception of something.³

Its usage here is the exposition of the image of extremism that is stamped in the minds of those who study this topic, such as the secularists⁴ and Westerners.⁵ It also includes the exposition of the extent of extremism and some of its phenomena according to their point of view. [In other words, it is in reference to their understanding and conceptualization of the phenomena of extremism.]

The Balanced Approach of Islam

The balanced approach of Islam is one of its most manifest characteristics. Naturally, then, it is also one of the most manifest characteristics of the nation who accepts the call to Islam. Allah says,

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ﴾

“Thus have We made of you a nation justly balanced, that you may be witnesses over the people and the Messenger a witness over yourselves” (*al-Baqarah* 143). Therefore, one finds that Islam presents the moderate way in every aspect of life. Not only that, it

¹ Ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, under the heading فهم.

² Jameel Saleeba, *al-Mujam al-Fisli*, vol. 2, p. 403.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 404.

⁴ Secularism is a Western philosophy. Literally, it means “non-religious” or the establishment of this worldly life on a non-religious basis. Cf., al-Balabaki, *Mausooh al-Maurid*, vol. 9, p. 17; al-Nadwah al-Aalimiyyah li-Shabaab al-Islaami, *al-Mausooh al-Maisarah li-l-Adyaan wa al-Madhaahab al-Muaasirah*, p. 367.

⁵ What is meant by this term are those thinkers, politicians and media people who direct the public opinion in the liberal countries (Europe, the United States and those who follow their paths).

also warns against heading towards either extreme: the extreme of too much zealotry and the extreme of too much nonchalance. Allah says,

﴿ أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝ ﴾

“Guide us to the straight way, the way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, not those whose (portion) is wrath nor those who have gone astray” (*al-Faatihah* 6-7).

This balanced approach that distinguishes Islam from the other religions is the true justice and excellence. The words in the verse above, “a nation justly balanced (*ummah wasat*’),” means “fair and most excellent.” This is its explanation in the Quran and Sunnah and as stated by the scholars of Quranic exegesis and Arabic language, to the point that such an interpretation has become agreed upon.

As for the explanation of that verse via the Quran itself, one should note the following:

(1) This is the interpretation that is most consistent with the remainder of the verse. The “balanced approach” is the reason why this nation has been assigned the role of witness against the other nations, “that you may be witnesses over the people.” Testifying is only to be performed by just people as it is not acceptable from anyone except a just person.²

(2) Allah says,

﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ ﴾

“You are the best nation raised for mankind” (*ali-Imraan* 110). Parts of the Quran explain each other. Since the Quran describes this nation as “the best,” its description as “moderate and balanced” must necessarily follow because “moderate and balanced” in the Arabic language means “the best, most excellent,” as shall be explained shortly, Allah willing.³

¹ [*Wasat* can literally mean “middle.” In the following passage, the author is trying to demonstrate and stress that its meaning is not only “middle,” but being “middle” or “balanced” implies, linguistically and logically, that it is the just and best nation.—JZ]

² Cf., what Ibn Hajar quoted from ibn Bataal, *al-Fath*, vol. 13, p. 613; also see Muhammad Abu Shaqrah, *Tanweer al-Afshaam*, p. 54.

³ See al-Shanqeeti, *Adhwa al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, p. 87.

The Sunnah also clearly explains the “balanced approach of this nation” as meaning its just and excellent position. Abu Saeed al-Khudri¹ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

يُجَاءُ بِنُوحٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيَقَالُ لَهُ هَلْ بَلَغْتَ فَيَقُولُ تَعَمْ يَا رَبِّ فَتُسْأَلُ
 أُمَّتُهُ هَلْ بَلَغْتُمْ فَيَقُولُونَ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ نَذِيرٍ فَيَقُولُ مَنْ شُهُودُكَ فَيَقُولُ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَأُمَّتُهُ فَيُجَاءُ بِكُمْ فَتَشْهَدُونَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ (وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا) قَالَ عَدْلًا (لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى
 النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا)

“On the Day of Resurrection, Noah will be brought and asked, ‘Did you convey [the message]?’ He will say, ‘Yes, O Lord.’ His nation will be asked, ‘Was the message conveyed to you?’ They answer, ‘No warner came to us.’ He [the Lord] will say [to Noah], ‘Who are your witnesses?’ He will answer, ‘Muhammad and his nation.’ Then you [that is, the followers of Muhammad] will be brought and will give witness.” Then the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) read the verse, “Thus have We made of you a nation justly balanced,”—he stated, “[That is,] just,”— “that you may be witnesses over the people and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.”²

This explanation [for the above verse] is also what the early scholars of Quranic exegesis stated, including ibn Abbaas,³

¹ He was Saad ibn Maalik ibn Sanaan al-Khudri al-Ansaari al-Khazraji. He was among those who constantly stayed in the company of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). 1170 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He participated in twelve of the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He died in Madinah in the year 74 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 168; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 479; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 87.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad.

³ He was Abdullah ibn Abbaas ibn Abdul Mutalib, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He was the great scholar of Islam and the interpreter of the Quran. He was born in Makkah. He was from those who narrated a large number of hadith; 1660 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He was at the Battle of the Camel as well as the Battle of Sifeen on the side of Ali. He lost his sight at the end of his life. He lived in Taif. He died in 68 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 331; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 276; and *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 95.

Mujaahid,¹ Saeed ibn Jubair,² Qataadah,³ as well as others of the later Quranic commentators.⁴ This usage is customary in the speech of the Arabs, that is, that “moderate, balanced” means just. Al-Tabari, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, said, “The meaning of ‘moderate, balanced (الوسط)’ in the speech of the Arab is ‘best, choice.’ One says [for example,] ‘So and so is of the best lineage among his people’ when he wants to raise a person’s lineage.”⁵ He also said, “It also comes that ‘the moderate’ means ‘the just,’ and that is the meaning of ‘best, choice,’ because the best of the people are the just among them.”⁶ This usage is also indicated by the words of Abu Bakr⁷ (may Allah be pleased with him) when he described the Muhajireen (the Emigrants) on the day of Saqeefah of Banu Saadah⁸ in the following manner, “They are the best (*ausat*)

¹ Mujaahid was Abu al-Hajaaj Mujaahid ibn Jabr al-Makki, a freed slave of the tribe of Makhzoom. He was from the generation of the Followers and was a commentator on the Quran. Al-Dhahabi said, “He was the ‘shaikh’ of the Quranic reciters and commentators. He learned Quranic commentary from ibn Abbas.” He died in 104 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 449; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 10, p. 42; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 278.

² He was Saeed ibn Jubair ibn Hishaam, through clientage from the tribe of al-Asadi, originally from Kufah, from the generation of the Followers. He was an Imam, reciter of the Quran and Quranic commentator. He learned from ibn Abbas and ibn Umar. Al-Hajaaj captured him and killed him in 95 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 21; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 11; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 93.

³ He was Abu al-Khataab Qataadah ibn Duaamah al-Sadoosi, a Quranic commentator and memorizer (*haafidh*). He was a leader in Quranic commentary, hadith and Arabic vocabulary. He died in Waasit during the pestilence of 118 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 5, p. 269; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 351; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 189.

⁴ See the following Quranic commentaries: al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 2, pp. 7-8; al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, pp. 153-154; ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 1, p. 190; al-Raazi, *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer*, vol. 4, p. 97; al-Shaukaani, *Fath al-Qadeer*, vol. 1, p. 150.

⁵ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 2, p. 7.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ He was the rightly guided caliph Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Abi Qahaafah Uthmaan Aamir ibn Kaab al-Taimiy al-Qurashi, the first caliph, the first man to believe in the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He was born in Makkah and grew up in a rich, respected family. He was knowledgeable of the lineage and history of the Arabs. He was nicknamed “the scholar of Quraish.” 142 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He died in 13 A.H. Cf., Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 155; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 12.

⁸ The Saqeefah of the Tribe of Saadah was a place belonging to a people of the Khazraj tribe, the clan of Saadah ibn Kaab ibn al-Khazraj, the grandfather, living in pre-Islamic times, of many of the Companions, including Saad ibn Ubaadah. Cf., ibn Hazm, *Jamhura Ansaab al-Arab*, p.

inhabitants of the Arabs.”¹ He stated that to express their excellence. Similarly, Zuhair ibn Abi Salmaa² said [roughly, in lines of poetry], “They are just (*wasat*), the people being pleased with their judgment when a calamity strikes them on any night.”

The above is also expressed by the specialists in Arabic, such as al-Khaleel,³ Qutrub⁴ and others.⁵ It is a given that the word *wasat* means the [middle] portion [or position] between two ends. However, there is no contradiction between *wasat* meaning “just” and *wasat* meaning the portion between two ends. This is because the middle portion centered between two ends is the place of moderation, avoiding the two extremes. Al-Tabari stated,

I opine that Allah describes them as being *wasat* (middle, balanced) due to their moderation and balance in religion. They are not from those who go to extremes in the religion, such as the extreme of the Christians who practiced monasticism and in what they said about the person of Jesus. Nor are they from those who are lackadaisical in the practice of their religion, such as the Jews who altered the Book of Allah, killed their prophets and lied in speaking about their Lord. Instead, they [the nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him)] are the people of balance and moderation in the religion. Allah

365; ibn Qudaamah, *al-Istibsaar*, p. 93. [It is the place in which many of the Companions gathered immediately following the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).—JZ]

¹ Part of a lengthy hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* dealing with the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

² He was Zuhair ibn Abi Salma Rabeeah ibn Ribaah al-Mazani, from the poets of pre-Islamic times. He was born in the outskirts of Madinah thirteen years before the Hijrah. He has a collection of poetry that has been published. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 52. The Quranic commentators have attributed the line quoted above to him but I did not find it in his published collection.

³ He was al-Khaleel ibn Ahmad ibn Amr ibn Tameem al-Faraaheedi al-Azdi, one of the leading scholars of language and literature. He was considered one of the most intelligent of the Arabs. He laid down the principles of prosody. He was born in Basrah in 100 A.H. and died in 170 A. H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 7, p. 429; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 413.

⁴ He was Muhammad ibn al-Mustaneer ibn Ahmad. He was a grammarian and scholar of literature and language. He was from the “clients” of Basrah. He was the first to put the three diacritical points in the language. He was given the nickname Qutrub by [the famed grammarian] Seebawaih. He died in 206 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 95.

⁵ Cf., al-Raazi, *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer*, vol. 4, p. 97.

described them in that manner because the most beloved of matters to Allah are those that are balanced and just.¹

In most cases, the just position is the median between two blameworthy positions. Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan said, "Beware of Allah, O Quranic reciters [that is, religious scholars]. Follow the path of those before you. Then you will be the best of leaders. But if you go right or left, then you will go far astray."²

Umar ibn Abdul Azeez³ wrote to one of his workers, saying, after advising him to follow the path of the early predecessors, "There is no room to fall short of them and there is no room to go beyond them. Some people shortened the matter and fell short. Some people went above them and therefore went to extremes. They [the pious predecessors] were between that [those two extremes] upon a straight guidance."⁴ This is something that is established in the statements of the people of knowledge. [For example,] ibn al-Qayyim⁵ wrote,

Allah does not make any command except that Satan has two incitements [toward it], either to negligence and neglect or to excess and exaggeration. The religion of Allah is in a middle position between being aloof from it and exaggerating in it. It is like a valley between two mountains, guidance between two astray positions and

¹ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 2, p. 6.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Abdullah ibn Ahmad in *al-Sunnah* and others.

³ He was the caliph Umar ibn Abdul Azeez ibn Marwaan al-Umawwi al-Qurashi, the pious caliph known as "the fifth of the rightly guided caliphs." He was born and raised in Madinah. He was a governor for al-Waleed and then worked for Sulaimaan in al-Shaam. He became the caliph after Sulaimaan. Numerous people, including ibn al-Jauzi, have written works about him. He died in 101 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 5, p. 114; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 7, p. 475; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 50.

⁴ Recorded by Abu Dawood. It is a lengthy quote but only the relevant portion was quoted here. The first two sentences have been explained in *al-Aun al-Mabood* as meaning, "The pious predecessors would refrain themselves from revealing what was not necessary to be revealed of the matters of the religion, withholding without going beyond. Similarly, they would reveal what was needed of the religion without going beyond." *Al-Adheemabaadi*, *Aun al-Mabood*, vol. 12, pp. 369-370.

⁵ He was Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ayyoob al-Damashqi, one of the well-grounded scholars. He was born in 691 A.H. in Damascus. He was a student of ibn Taimiyyah. He was a reformer. He wrote numerous beneficial works, including *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen* and others. Numerous people have written biographies about him, including Abdul Adheem Sharf al-Deen and Bakr Abu Zaid. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 56.

the middle, just position between two blameworthy positions. In the same way that one who is aloof from a matter loses that matter, the one who exaggerates also loses that matter. The first by his not meeting the minimum requirements and the second by going beyond the limits.¹

The statement, "Virtue is being in a moderate position between two vices," is mistaken in that it makes human criteria the judge of vices and virtues. This is not correct due to the following:

(1) The determination of what is virtue and what is vice rests with Allah. And it is the result of what is just and it is not a matter that is left to the whims of humans.

(2) The real moderation is a divine decree,

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

"We have made you a balanced, moderate nation" (*al-Baqarah* 143).

(3) Delineating what is a middle position is difficult. Those who say that moderation is the standard for virtue admit this fact. Aristotle² stated, "To discover the moderate, middle position of everything is very difficult."³ Al-Ghazaali⁴ stated about knowing the middle position, "It is one of the most complicated and difficult of matters."⁵

(4) The delineating of the middle position is actually a relative matter [when it comes to humans] that changes with different people. For that reason, ibn Seena⁶ said, "The middle of something

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij al-Saalikeen*, vol. 2, p. 496. Also see ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Fawaaid*, pp. 139-140; al-Shanqeeti, *Adhwa al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, p. 494.

² Aristotle was the most famous of the ancient Greek philosophers, nicknamed "the prince of philosophy." He was born in 384 B.C. and died in 322 B.C. See Muhammad Fareed Wajdi, *Daairah Maarif al-Qarn al-Ishreen*, vol. 1, p. 164.

³ *Al-Akhlaaq*, Book 5, Chapter 5, Section 14, quoted from Dr. Ahmad Ibraaheem, *Al-Fadhaail al-Khuluqiyyah*, p. 273.

⁴ He was Abu Haamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazaali, a legal theorist, jurist, philosopher and Sufi. He produced about two hundred writings. He was born in 450 A.H. He travelled in search of knowledge and to teach. He has many famous books, including *Ihya Uloom al-Deen*, *al-Mustasfa* and others. See *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 22.

⁵ *Meezan al-Amal*, p. 273.

⁶ He was al-Husain ibn Abdullah [known in the West as Avicenna], the philosopher. He wrote works on medicine, logic and nature. He was originally from Balkh. He wrote numerous works but had a number of discrepancies—that cannot be explained away—when it came to matters of

is not the exact middle but it is the middle with respect to us [and our perspective].”¹

This makes it clear that moderation cannot be a human criterion for virtues. Instead, it is a distinguishing characteristic by which this religion of Islam and its law are distinguished. It is the religion and its adherents who are truly the people who are free of deviation, with respect to both extremism and negligence.

The shapes and manifestations of this balance and moderation are many in the religion as it is inclusive of all aspects of life. Every facet of the aspects of Islam has come in a manner that is consistent with justice. Here I shall only mention one example, as numerous other examples will be mentioned throughout this research since each phenomenon of extremism will be exposed by presenting the just and moderate correct view.

With respect to the material world, historically people have taken to extreme approaches. One group strayed and saw wealth as the main goal and ultimate aim. Those are the Jews whom Allah describes with the words,

وَلْتَجِدْنَهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ

“And verily, you will find them the greediest of mankind for life” (*al-Baqarah* 96). Another group, the Christians, also strayed and they denied themselves their rights of life and they invented monasticism. [Allah says about them],

﴿ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ
فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ﴾

“But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them. (We commanded) only the seeking of Allah’s Pleasure; but that they did not tend to as they should have” (*al-Hadeed* 27).

In the face of those two divergent paths, Islam came with the true justice and it gave everything its due right. Allah says,

belief. Ibn Taimiyyah discussed a number of those issues in his great work, *Dar al-Taaradh al-Aql wa al-Naql*. He died in 428 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 17, p. 531 and *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 241.

¹ *Ilm al-Akhlaaq*, p. 245. See Ahmad Abdul Rahmaan Ibraaheem, *al-Fadhaail al-Akhlaaqiyyah*, p. 272. In that work is an excellent critique of the view that moderation is the sole criterion for virtue.

﴿ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

“But seek with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, yet do not forget your portion in this world” (*al-Qasas* 77).¹ Allah also says,

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

“Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah that He has produced for His servants and the things clean and pure (which He has provided) for sustenance?” (*al-Araaf* 32).

Allah has also prohibited one from going to the extreme in loving wealth by saying,

﴿ اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَمًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ ﴾

“Know that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth delight (the hearts of) the tillers; yet soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away, but in the Hereafter is a penalty severe as well as forgiveness from God and His Good Pleasure. And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?” (*al-Hadeed* 20).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also forbade being very strict upon oneself and intimidating oneself as the Christians did. He said,

¹ Cf., the commentary on this verse in ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem*, vol. 3, p. 399.

لَا تُشَدُّوْا عَلٰی اَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيُشَدِّدَ عَلَيْنَكُمْ فَاِنْ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوْا عَلٰی اَنْفُسِهِمْ
فَشَدَّدَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاِنَّكُمْ بِقَايَاَهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالْدِّيَارِ (وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ
اَبْتَدَعُوْهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ)

“Do not be very strict on yourselves for then Allah will be strict upon you. Verily, a people were strict upon themselves so Allah was strict upon them. It is the remnants of those people in the hermitages and monasteries. [Then he quoted the verse,] ‘But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them.’”¹

This shows that the foundation of the religion itself is the antithesis of extremism. It is the religion of moderation and justice. This is its distinguishing feature among all of the ways of life.

The Ease and Facility of Islam

The Religion Is Built upon Ease

The ease and simplicity of Islam are among its distinguishing features that differentiates it from all other religions. One of the reasons for sending the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was to remove the fetters and chains that had captured the previous nations. Allah says,

﴿ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّبِعُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ النَّبِيَّ الْاُمِّيَّ الَّذِيْ يَجِدُوْنَهُ مَكْتُوْبًا
عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْاِنْجِيْلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood and Abu Yala. Its chain contains Saeed ibn Abdil Rahmaan ibn Abi al-Umyaa. He was considered trustworthy by ibn Hibbaan. Al-Dhahabi states in *al-Kaashif*, “He was trusted.” Ibn Hajar stated in *al-Taqreeb*, “Acceptable [if he has supporting evidence].” Al-Haithami stated, “Recorded by Abu Yala and its narrators are from the *Sahih* collections, save for Saeed ibn Abdil Rahmaan ibn Abi al-Umyaa, and he is trustworthy” (*Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 6, p. 256). Cf., ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem*, vol. 4, p. 316; al-Suyooti, *al-Durr al-Manthoor*, vol. 4, p. 178; al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummaal*, #5346; the editor of *Musnad Abi Yala* said (vol. 6, p. 365), “Its chain is *hasan*.”

الْمُنْكَرِ وَحِجْلٌ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ
 إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ
 وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
 الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures), in the Torah and the Gospel, he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil. He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them, [and those who] help him and follow the light which is sent down with him, it is they who will prosper” (*al-Araaf* 157).

Experiencing hardship is not one of the goals of the Shareeah. However, ease and facility are parts of its goals. This is something stated in a number of the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. Here I shall mention a number of such texts:

(1) Allah says, while mentioning the blessings bestowed upon this nation,

﴿ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ﴾

“He has imposed no difficulties on you in religion” (*al-Hajj* 78).

(2) Allah also says while discussing the obligation of fasting,

﴿ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ﴾

“Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties” (*al-Baqarah* 185).

(3) Allah also says while discussing another obligation, that of ablution,

﴿ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
 وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴾

“Allah does not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete His favor upon you, that you may be grateful” (*al-Maaidah* 6). Abu Bakr al-Jasaas¹ said,

Since hardship is also restriction and tightness, and He has denied about Himself that He desires hardship for us, it is then permissible to use the apparent meaning of this verse as evidence to deny hardship and to establish the wideness and flexibility in every matter concerning which people differ related to the laws that come from the texts. Therefore, if anyone argues in favor of aspects that are hardships and difficulties, the clear meaning of this verse will defeat them.²

(4) Abu Hurairah³ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ

“Verily, this religion is easy. No one overburdens himself in the religion except that it overcomes him [and he will not be able to continue in that manner].”⁴

(5) Ibn Abbaas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

¹ He was Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali al-Raazi, a Hanafi scholar and their leading scholar at his time. He was from the people of Rayy but he lived and died in Baghdad. He has a number of books, including *Ahkaam al-Quraan*. He died in 370 A.H. See *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 171.

² *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 39. [The Arabic text of this work was obviously missing something here. Hence, this translator resorted to al-Jasaas' work (the edition published by Daar Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Arabi, n.d., vol. 4, p. 33) to come up with the translation as above.--JZ]

³ He was Abdul Rahman ibn Sakhr al-Dausiri. There is a difference of opinion concerning his actual name, but this is the strongest opinion. He was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He came to Madinah in the year of the Conquest of Khaibar. He embraced Islam and remained in the company of the Prophet (peace be upon him), being satisfied with whatever he got to fill his stomach. He later became the governor of Madinah. Umar also appointed him the governor of Bahrain (present day al-Hasa). He spent most of his life in Madinah and died therein in the year 59 A.H. 5374 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 578; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 262; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 308.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and al-Nasaai.

أَحَبُّ الدِّينِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْخَنِيفِيَّةُ السَّمْحَةُ

“The *Haneefiyah* (true monotheism with devotion to Allah alone) and easy way is the most beloved religion to Allah.”¹

I will also mention a number of hadith that show how the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with those who sinned or went against the commands:

(1) Abdullah ibn Masood² narrated that a man kissed a woman. He then came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and informed him of that. After that, the following verse was revealed,

﴿ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيْ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرٌ لِلذَّكِرِينَ ﴾

“And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night. Those things that are good remove those that are evil: be that the word of remembrance to those who remember (their Lord)” (*Hood* 114). The man said, “O Messenger of Allah, is this for me alone?” He replied, “It is for whoever acts upon it from among my nation.”³

(2) Ibn Abbaas narrated: Some polytheists had committed a large number of murders and acts of illegal sexual intercourse. They came to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, “What you are calling people to is good. However, we need you to tell us if there is any expiation for what we have done.” The following verses were then revealed,

¹ Al-Bukhari mentioned it without its chain in a chapter heading in the *Sahih*. He mentioned it with its complete chain in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*. Ibn Hajar mentioned a number of supporting evidences for it in *Taghleeq al-Taleeq*, vol. 2, p. 41.

² He was Abdullah ibn Masood ibn Ghaafil ibn Habeeb al-Hadhali, Abu Abdul Rahmaan, a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the greatest of the Companions with respect to his virtue, knowledge and closeness to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the first to embrace Islam. He was the first to publicly recite the Quran in Makkah. After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he was in charge of the public treasury in Kufah. He came back to Madinah during the caliphate of Uthmaan and died there in the year 32 A.H., at about sixty years of age. 848 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 461; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 6, p. 27; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 137.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah.

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ﴾

“And those who invoke not any other god along with Allah, nor kill such life that Allah has forbidden, except for such cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse” (*al-Furqaan* 68).

﴿ قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ﴾

“O My servants who have wronged their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah” (*al-Zumar* 53).¹

(3) Abu Hurairah said: A man who had drunk alcohol was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he said, “Beat him.” We beat him with our hands, shoes and clothing. When he went away, one of the people said, “May Allah disgrace you.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

﴿ لَا تَقُولُوا هَكَذَا لَا تُعِينُوا عَلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانَ ﴾

“Do not say that. Do not help Satan against him.”² Al-Bukhari³ entitled the chapter containing this hadith and others similar to it, “Chapter on what is reprehensible concerning cursing the one who consumes alcohol and that he does not fall outside of the fold of the religion.”

(4) Abu Hurairah narrated: A Bedouin stood in the mosque and urinated. The people were about to pounce upon him and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told them,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaai and al-Haakim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawood.

³ He was Imam Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ismaa'el ibn Ibraaheem al-Bukhari. The great scholar of Islam and preserver of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was the compiler of *al-Jaami al-Saheeh*. He was born in Bukhara and grew up as an orphan. He traveled in order to attain knowledge. He recorded his book, which is the most authentic work after the Noble Quran. He died in 256 A.H. in Khartank, a village in Samarqand. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 12, p. 391; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 9, p. 47; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 34.

دَعُوهُ وَهَرِيْقُوا عَلَى بَوْلِهِ سَجْلًا مِنْ مَاءٍ أَوْ ذَنْبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ فَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ
مَيْسِرِينَ وَلَمْ تَبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ

“Leave him and pour a container or vessel full of water over his urine. Certainly, you have been sent to be easy [on the people] and not to be hard [on them].”¹ The Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear to them that their abusing the person and almost pouncing upon him are types of harshness which contradict the ease and simplicity of the faith.

(5) Muawiyah ibn al-Hakam al-Salami² said, “While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a man from the people sneezed. I said, ‘May Allah show you mercy.’ The people began to glare at me. I said, ‘May my mother be bereaved of me. What is wrong with you that you are staring at me?’ They then started striking their hands against their thighs. I understood that they wanted me to be silent. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) finished his prayer—and may my father and mother be sacrificed for him, I have never seen any teacher before or after him who taught better than he did, as he did not show any disgust for me, strike me or abuse me—he said,

إِنَّ هَذِهِ الصَّلَاةَ لَا يَصْلُحُ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّاسِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ التَّسْبِيحُ
وَالتَّكْبِيرُ وَقِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ

‘The mundane speech of people is not befitting for the prayer. It should only consist of extolling Allah’s perfection, extolling Allah’s greatness and reciting the Quran.’”³

These hadith are but a practical picture that show the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in dealing with sinners and violators. Otherwise, all of the religion is evidence that the sinner is not to be dealt with by being accused of unbelief. If such a person is to be punished, he is punished by the *hadd* (defined punishment)

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood.

² He was a noble Companion from the Tribe of Saleem. Al-Bukhari said, “He accompanied [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] and is considered one of the people of Hijaz.” Ibn Hajar noted that his hadith is confirmed in *Sahih Muslim*, that is the hadith that is about to be presented above. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 9, p. 299.

³ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaai and Ahmad.

and that acts as an expiation and purifying act for him as well as a means of purification for society as a whole. If Allah conceals his act and he repents to Allah, then his matter rests with Allah. If Allah wills, He may forgive him and if He so wills, He may punish him. Ubaadah ibn al-Saamit said, "We were with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a gathering and he said, 'Pledge allegiance to me that you will not associate any partner with Allah, nor will you steal, nor will you commit illegal sexual intercourse...' and he read the entire verse.¹ [He then said,]

فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ بِهِ
فَهُوَ كَفَّارَتُهُ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَسَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ غُفِرَ
لَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَذِّبَهُ

'Whoever fulfills that will have his reward with Allah. Whoever falls into any of those acts and is punished, that is his expiation. And whoever falls into any of those acts and Allah conceals it for him, then if He will He may forgive him and if He will He may punish him.'"²

(6) Jaabir ibn Abdillah³ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَبْعَثْنِي مُعْتَنًا وَلَا مُتَعْتَنًا وَلَكِنْ بَعَثَنِي مُعَلِّمًا مَيْسِرًا

"Allah did not send me as someone causing hardship [for the people] or one who seeks out their mistakes, but Allah has sent me as a teacher and one who brings ease [to the people]."⁴

In addition to the above, the following two points further indicate the ease of this religion:

First, there is the sanctioning of exceptions [Ar., *rukhsah*] to general rules [that make matters easier upon the people].¹ This is

¹ He is referring to the verse, "O Prophet, if the believing women come to you..." (*al-Mumtahinah* 12). Cf., Ibn Hajar, *al-Fath*, vol. 8, p. 640.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaai.

³ He was Jaabir ibn Abdillah ibn Amr ibn Haraam al-Ansaari al-Khazraji, one of the people who narrated the most hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He participated in ten battles with the Prophet (peace be upon him). 1540 hadith are narrated on his authority. He died in 78 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 2, p. 54; *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 189; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 104.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim.

something definitive and known by necessity to be part of the religion. This form of the law definitely indicates the goal of removing hardships and difficulties. If the goal of the Shareeah were to overburden and cause hardships, there would have been no easing exceptions and lightening of burdens [that one finds throughout the texts of the Shareeah].

Second, there is a consensus that there is to be no overburdening. This indicates that the Shareeah does not have overburdening as its goal. This conclusion is established through deduction from the individual laws and rulings.²

What further corroborates the proofs from the text of the Shareeah regarding ease in this religion are those texts of the Shareeah related to the prohibition of being hard or harsh. This prohibition “on harshness is well-known in the Shareeah, to the extent that it becomes a definitive principle in the Law.”³

The practical way of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was in accord with the principles of ease and facilitation. Taking the simplest way was a principle in his life. “Whenever he had a choice between two matters, he would take the easiest one, as long as it did not involve any sin.” He also was very gentle and called others to be gentle. Aishah⁴ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

“Gentleness is not found in something except that it beautifies it. And it is not removed from something except that it mars it.”⁵ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

¹ [A *rukhsah* can be defined as a “concession or easing of a particular ruling as given in the law itself.” For example, when traveling, one is allowed to break one’s fast.]

² Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 122.

³ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 133.

⁴ She was the mother of the believers Aishah bint Abi Bakr. She was the most knowledgeable and wisest of Muslim women. Her “nickname” was Umm Abdillah. She married the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the second year of the Hijrah and she was his most beloved wife. She was a source for religious questions and verdicts. She died in Madinah in 58 A.H. 2210 hadith have been narrated on her authority. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 13, p. 38; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 240.

⁵ Recorded by Muslim.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرِّفْقَ وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرِّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى
الْعُنْفِ

“Verily, Allah is kind and gentle and He loves gentleness. He gives upon being gentle what He does not give upon being harsh.”¹

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also ordered his callers and messengers to exhibit ease and facility. He said to Muaadh² and Abu Musa³ while sending them to Yemen,

يَسْرًا وَلَا تَعْسْرًا وَبَشْرًا وَلَا تَنْفَرًا

“Be making things easy and not making things hard. Be giving good tidings to the people and not making them flee.”⁴ However, this facility and flexibility must be in accord with the Shareeah and justice and not according to the desires and whims of the people. If that were supposed to be the case, there would be no legal responsibility and required acts, as such legal responsibility automatically entails hardship.⁵

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² He was Abu Abdil Rahmaan Muaadh ibn Jabal ibn Amr al-Ansaari al-Khazraji. He was a noble Companion and the most knowledgeable of what is permissible and what is forbidden. He embraced Islam as a youth. He witnessed the pledge at Aqaba and all the important events. After the Battle of Tabook, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent him to Yemen as a teacher. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) died, he returned to Madinah. Umar appointed him governor of al-Shaam. He died in 18 A.H. 157 hadith have been attributed to his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 443; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 10, p. 186; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 258.

³ He was Abdullah ibn Qais from Yemen. He came to Makkah when Islam first appeared and embraced Islam. He then migrated to Aabyssinia. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) appointed him to a position in Zabeed and Adan. Afterwards, Umar appointed him governor of Basrah. He had the most beautiful voice among the Companions. 355 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He died in Kufah in 44 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 380; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 362; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 114.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁵ [This is a very important point that the author has just made and it cannot be overemphasized. Many people, especially “callers to Islam,” go to an extreme when it comes to making things easy for the people, including expressing opinions that are obviously not in accordance with the clear meaning of the Quran or Sunnah. This extreme can be as dangerous for the long-term health of a convert, for example, as the

Anas ibn Maalik¹ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تَعَسِّرُوا وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تَنْفُرُوا

“Facilitate things for the people and do not make things difficult for them; and give them glad tidings and do not drive them away.”² The wisdom behind this facility that the Shareeah presents is that Allah has made this religion compatible with human nature. The matters in accord with human nature are well-established in the soul and they become very easy for the human to accept. It is part of human nature to flee from harshness and sternness. Allah willed for this Shareeah to spread all over and to exist forever. This required that it be very easy to be spread among the nation. This would not have occurred unless harshness was removed from it.³

The Ease and Magnanimity of Islam

Islam is not only a religion of ease but it is also one of kindness and gentleness. This is most notably seen in calling others

opposite extreme. It is interesting to note that al-Bukhari recorded the above hadith concerning Muadh and Abu Musa along with a story concerning Muadh and Abu Musa in which they had to put someone to death for apostasy. Indeed, in that incident, when Muadh met Abu Musa, he refused to come down from his steed until Abu Musa had fulfilled the prescribed punishment. This prescribed punishment was insisted upon by those two whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had told to be easy and not to drive people away. However, the demands of the law and justice are more important and more deserving to be fulfilled.—JZ]

¹ He was Anas ibn Maalik ibn al-Nadhr al-Najaari, a very close Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He spent almost all of his time with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and continued to serve him until the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away. He participated in the battles of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and pledged allegiance to him “under the tree.” 2286 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He was one of the last Companions to die in Basrah. He died in 91 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 395; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 376; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 24.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

³ Cf., Muhammad al-Taahir ibn Ashoor, *Maqaasid al-Shareeah al-Isaamiyyah*, p. 61. At the present time, such is sufficient as a presentation of the facility and ease of Islam. More details shall be given later upon discussing the forms of extremism.

to Islam and in spreading this religion as well as in how one deals with sinners and violators of the law. These points are explained below.

(1) Gentleness in Calling People to the Straight Path:

The basic aspect of calling others to the straight path is gentle speech, even if the one who is being called is from the most insolent of people. When Allah sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh [for example], He said to them,

﴿ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى ﴾

“But speak to him mildly; perhaps he may take warning or fear (Allah)” (*Taha* 44). Ibn Katheer¹, after presenting the views of the Quranic commentators, states, “The conclusion from their statements is that their (Moses’ and Aaron’s) preaching to him was to be with soft, gentle, easy and friendly speech such that it would have more effect on his soul, be more far-reaching and more effective.”²

Allah says, etching the path and methodology of calling others for His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all callers who come after him,

﴿ ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْهُمْ
بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance” (*al-Nahl* 125). The Lord showed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to call others by one of three means:

- (1) Wisdom,
- (2) Beautiful exhortation, and

¹ He was Abu al-Fidaa al-Haafidh Ismaa'el ibn Katheer al-Busri al-Damashqi. He was a scholar of the Quran, history and fiqh. He was born in Busra, al-Shaam and moved with his brother to Damascus. He traveled in search of knowledge. He died in 774 A.H. in Damascus. He left behind very beneficial writings. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 320.

² *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem*, vol. 3, p. 153.

(3) Debate or contest with them in a goodly manner.

Exhortation and debate were characterized by “goodly, beautiful” only to stress the meaning of gentleness and ease in calling others, without using harshness as a means of calling others. Ibn Jareer al-Tabari stated,

Allah says to His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “Call,” O Muhammad, to the obedience of Allah those to whom your Lord has sent you. “To the path of your Lord,” that is, to the Law of your Lord that He has sanctioned for His creation, which is Islam. “With wisdom,” that is, by using the revelation that Allah has revealed to you and His Book that He has descended upon you. “And beautiful exhortation,” that is, beautiful expressions that Allah has made a proof against them in His book and has reminded them with in His revelation... “And argue with them in a goodly manner,” that is, debate with them with arguments that are better than theirs by pardoning what harmful things they have said concerning your honor and person. Do not fail in performing the obligation upon you of conveying the message of your Lord to them.¹

The directive to debate with the People of the Book in a goodly manner had also come in Allah’s statement,

﴿ وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ ﴾

“Do not debate with the People of the Book except in a way which is best, except [when dealing with those] who do wrong among them” (*al-Ankaboot* 46). Al-Tabari said, “O believers in Allah and His messenger, ‘Do not debate’ the Jews and Christians, and they are ‘the People of the Book,’ ‘except in a way which is best,’ that is, except with fine speech, which is none other than calling them to Allah by using His verses and alerting them to His arguments.”²

As for jihad to spread Islam, it is a jihad seeking to spread Islam and a jihad in defense of religions, sanctified places, honor and wealth. It does not contradict the magnanimity of Islam, as it is only resorted to when all other means fail. It is for the purpose of

¹ *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 14, p. 194.

² *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 21, p. 1.

spreading Islam and repelling those who block the way to the path of Allah. In that sense, its magnanimity is obvious and shall be discussed further in the next section.

(2) The Magnanimity of Islam with Respect to Jihad:

Before discussing this issue, I shall present a hadith wherein the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave words of advice to his military leaders, those whom he was directing to make jihad for the sake of raising the word of Allah and spreading Islam. Buraidah¹ said, "Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would appoint a commander for an army or expedition, he would advise him personally to have fear of Allah and to treat the Muslims with him in a good way. Then he would say,

اغزُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ اغزُوا وَلَا تَغْلُوا
وَلَا تَغْدِرُوا وَلَا تَمْتَلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وَلِيدًا وَإِذَا لَقِيتَ عَدُوكَ مِنْ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَادْعُهُمْ إِلَى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ أَوْ خِلَالٍ فَأَيُّتَهُنَّ مَا أَجَابُوكَ فَاقْبَلْ
مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ فَإِنْ أَجَابُوكَ فَاقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ
عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى التَّحَوُّلِ مِنْ دَارِهِمْ إِلَى دَارِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَأَخْبِرْهُمْ
أَنَّهُمْ إِنْ فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ فَلَهُمْ مَا لِلْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَعَلَيْهِمْ مَا عَلَى الْمُهَاجِرِينَ فَإِنْ
أَبَوْا أَنْ يَتَّحَوَّلُوا مِنْهَا فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ يَكُونُونَ كَأَعْرَابِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يَجْرِي
عَلَيْهِمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي يَجْرِي عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَكُونُ لَهُمْ فِي الْغَنِيمَةِ
وَالْفِيءِ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا مَعَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَبَوْا فَاسْلُفْهُمْ الْجَزِيَّةَ
فَإِنْ هُمْ أَجَابُوكَ فَاقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَبَوْا فَاسْتَعِنَ بِاللَّهِ

¹ He was Buraidah ibn Abdullah ibn al-Haarith al-Aslami, one of the elders of the Companions. He embraced Islam before Badr, but he did not participate in that battle. He witnessed the Battle of Khaibar and the Conquest of Makkah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) employed him in the collecting of the alms of his people. He died in 63 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 469; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 432; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 50.

وَقَاتِلْهُمْ وَإِذَا حَاصِرْتَ أَهْلَ حِصْنٍ فَأَرَادُوكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ
وَذِمَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ فَلَا تَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا ذِمَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ وَلَكِنْ اجْعَلْ لَهُمْ ذِمَّتَكَ
وَذِمَّةَ أَصْحَابِكَ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَنْ تَخْفِرُوا ذِمَّتَكُمْ وَذِمَّةَ أَصْحَابِكُمْ أَهْوَنُ مِنْ أَنْ
تُخْفِرُوا ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَذِمَّةَ رَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا حَاصِرْتَ أَهْلَ حِصْنٍ فَأَرَادُوكَ أَنْ
تُنزِلَهُمْ عَلَى حُكْمِ اللَّهِ فَلَا تُنزِلَهُمْ عَلَى حُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ أَنْزِلَهُمْ عَلَى
حُكْمِكَ فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَدْرِي أَتُصِيبُ حُكْمَ اللَّهِ فِيهِمْ أَمْ لَا

“Fight in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah. Fight whoever disbelieves in Allah. Fight and do not steal from the booty, do not commit any treachery, do not mutilate and do not kill a child. When you meet your enemy polytheists, call them to one of three matters. If they agree to any of them, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. Invite them to Islam. If they accept, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. Ask them to move from their residence to the land of the Emigrants [in Madinah]. Inform them that if they do that, they will have the same rights and responsibilities as the Emigrants. However, if they refuse to move, inform them that they will be treated like the Bedouin Muslims, for whom the law of Allah will be implemented among the believers but they will not be given any war booty or bounties unless they participate in the jihad with the Muslims. If they refuse [to embrace Islam], ask them to pay the *jizyah*.¹ If they accept that, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. If they refuse even that, seek help in Allah against them and fight them. If you encircle a people of a fortress and they want you to make for them a pact with Allah and His Messenger, do not make a pact with them in the name of Allah and His Messenger. But make with them a pact in your name and the name of your companions. Certainly, if they break the pact of you and your companions that will be a lighter matter than if they break the pact of Allah and His Messenger. If you encircle a people of a fortress and they want to surrender according to the judgment of Allah, do not accept their surrender according to the judgment of Allah. Instead, accept it according to

¹ [This is the payment that non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic State pay to the government in lieu of military service.—JZ]

your judgment, for you do not know if you have correctly applied the judgment of Allah concerning them or not.”¹

In the light of this hadith and other texts, features of the magnanimity of jihad are made clear. They include:

(1) Transgression and wrongdoing are prohibited. Allah says,

﴿ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ﴾

“Fight for the sake of Allah those who fight against you and do not commit any transgression” (*al-Baqarah* 190). Fighting in Islam is for a noble cause, notably spreading this religion. When this fighting takes place, it is not allowed to commit any transgression. This is clear in the Prophet’s prohibition of mutilation and of killing of children.

(2) No one is to be forced or compelled to become a Muslim. Indeed, three options are open to them: (a) accept Islam, (b) pay the *jizyah* [while remaining non-Muslims] or (c) fight. The enemy, if not pleased by Islam, is given the choice to be under the protection of the Muslim ruler, safe and secure with respect to his life, wealth, honor and religion. The condition for that is that he must pay the *jizyah*. If he refuses both Islam and the *jizyah*, the Muslims had offered him his choices and now nothing is left open except to fight him.

(3) Whenever a pact is concluded or the others enter under the protection of the Muslims, it is obligatory to fulfill that pact and protection. The Muslims must be faithful to their covenants, pacts and treaties as long as the unbelievers are. For that reason, the hadith prohibits any kind of treachery. There are many verses in the Quran itself that also demonstrate that Muslims must fulfill their covenants and pacts. For example, Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ﴾

“O you who believe, fulfill your pacts” (*al-Maaidah* 1). Allah also says,

﴿ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقِيمُوا لَكُمْ

فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾

“Save for those with whom you made a pact at al-Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah]. As long as they abide by it with you, then you abide

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi.

by it with them. Certainly, Allah loves the God-fearing, righteous folk” (*al-Taubah* 7).

(4) Islam calls for righteous and good dealings with those who do not fight the Muslims, as a way of making Islam more beloved to them. Allah says,

﴿ لَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴾¹ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿

“Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just. Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances) that do wrong” (*al-Mumtahinah* 8-9).

(5) Forgiveness and pardon are from the most prominent aspects of the magnanimity of Islam with respect to warfare. The conquests are witness to that. Most notable is the position the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took in pardoning the people after the conquest of Makkah.¹ In that situation, if he had willed to spill their blood, they would not have been able to do anything about it. Similar was the case during the conquests at the hands of the Companions. They greatly exhibited this magnanimity because their souls had been rooted in such a character at the hands of the teacher *par excellence*, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).²

¹ Cf., ibn Hishaam, *Seerah*, vol. 4, p. 41.

² See the examples of that nature that were compiled in Muhammad al-Saadiq Arjoon, *al-Mausooh fi Samaahah al-Islam*, vol. 1, pp. 433-450.

(3) The Magnanimity of Islam in Dealing with Sinners and Transgressors:

In the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), there is approval for showing magnanimity and ease with respect to those who sin. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made it clear that falling into sin is one of the natural characteristics of humans. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَوْ لَمْ تُذْنِبُوا لَذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ وَلَجَاءَ بِقَوْمٍ يُذْنِبُونَ فَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ فَيَغْفِرُ
لَهُمْ

“If you were not to commit sins, Allah would take you away and bring another people who would sin and then seek Allah’s forgiveness. He would then forgive them.”¹

The Sunnah also clarified that sins are of different levels and magnitude. Every sinner is to be dealt with according to the magnitude of his sin. If every sinner were to be treated as an unbeliever, shunned, harshly rebuked, beaten or stoned, this would have been a cause for people to flee from the religion and to escape from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all callers to Islam after him. However, the mercy of Allah has preceded and intervened:

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَأَنْفَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ﴾

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you” (*ali-Imraan* 159). The sinner and errant person is not to be harshly rebuked or declared a disbeliever. Instead, he should be invited to repent and change his ways and the error that he fell into should be made clear to him.

All of this bears testimony that magnanimity or ease is one of the fundamental foundations of Islam and one of its manifest pillars. People did not embrace Islam in throngs except as a result of this great magnanimity, and not by being driven to it with a sword.

¹ Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

A number of hadith have already been presented in this section indicating that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself followed the principle of magnanimity and forbearance and he ordered his Companions and those after them of his nation to do the same.

The Lexical Definition of “Extremism”

Introduction: Importance of the Shareeah Expressions and Islamic Terminology

The knowledge of the reality of things and correct perceptions are considered fundamental openings to the lessening or removal of differences of opinion. That is true because one rarely finds a difference of opinion except that behind it there is either a difference in perception, an unsound perception or an ignorance concerning the reality of the thing concerning which there is a difference of opinion. Ibn Taimiyyah¹ said, “Many of the disputes among people are due to unclear words and ambiguous meanings. It gets to the point that one can find two people arguing and disputing over the meaning of a word or denying its implication while, if each were asked the meaning of the words they were saying, they have no clear perception of them, not to speak of what the words actually indicate.”²

People’s evaluation of thoughts or of others goes back to the perception. It is narrated from the statements of the early scholars,

¹ He was Taqiyy al-Deen Abu al-Abbaas Ahmad ibn Abdul Haleem ibn Abdul Salaam ibn Taimiyah al-Haraani al-Hanbali, the famous Imam and leading scholar in both the rational sciences and reported information. He was born in Haraan in 661 A.H. and moved to Damascus. He distinguished himself and became very famous. He was a source for religious verdicts (*fatawa*). He was persecuted for some of his religious verdicts and was imprisoned more than once. In fact, he died in prison. He was an expert in Quranic exegesis and legal theory. He was also excellent in language. He had many writings, including *Dar` Taarudh al-Aql wa al-Naql*. Abdul Rahman ibn Qaasim combined together a number of his verdicts [and writings in a thirty-six volume set]. He died in 728 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 144.

² *Al-Fataawa*, vol. 12, p. 114.

“The judgment concerning something is derived from how it is perceived.”¹

Muslim scholars have paid great attention to Shareeah terms and Islamic terminology.² They have been very keen on this point for a number of reasons, most important of which are:

(1) In order that those terms and wordings could not be relative terms, not specifically defined, used by every sect in the way that pleases them, according to what their whims desire and their false teachings lead them to. They tried to avoid this because this actually occurred in our Islamic history. The *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (“People of the Sunnah and Congregation”) were branded with contradictory, non-compatible tags. For example, “those who denied the attributes of Allah”³ called the *Ahl al-Sunnah* anthropomorphists⁴ while the anthropomorphists considered the *Ahl al-Sunnah* as being from those who denied the attributes of Allah. In reality, the *Ahl al-Sunnah* is between both of those extremes, upon a straight path, that is not repudiated by their desires.⁵

(2) In order that those Shareeah terms are not understood to mean the newly introduced understandings of a people or a large sector of a population. [In other words,] a group of people may begin to use a term in a specific way and then they note that such term appears in the Shareeah texts or in the words of a scholar.

¹ This is a famous statement in the field of logic; however, I have not been able to find the name of the person who first said it.

² It is good to point out that there is a difference between the “Shareeah meaning” and the “terminological meaning.” The “Shareeah meaning” is that which comes directly from the Lawgiver while the “terminological meaning” is that which is determined by groups of scholars specialized in certain fields. Therefore, one does not say, “a terminological definition of the word ‘prayer’”; instead, one says, “a Shareeah meaning of the word ‘prayer.’” See Bakr Abu Zaid’s discussion of this point in *al-Muaadhia fi al-Istilaah*, p. 30.

³ The *muatilah* are those who denied Allah’s attributes and denied their being with His essence. [It also refers to] those who denied some of Allah’s attributes. This term is used for sects with beliefs of that nature, such as the Jahamiyyah. See Abdul Azeez Salmaan, *al-Kawaashif al-Jaliyyah*, pp. 87-89.

⁴ Anthropomorphists is a term used for many groups and sects. They are the ones who made Allah similar to His creation. They are basically of two types: those who likened the essence of the Creator to the essence of others and those who likened the attributes of Allah to the attributes of others. See al-Baghdaadi, *Al-Farq bain al-Firaq*, p. 214; al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nahl*, vol. 1, pp. 103-108.

⁵ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, vol. 3, pp. 925-955.

They, therefore, believe that the meaning of that term in those texts is the same as the meaning that has become common among the people while, in reality, the Shareeah meaning is something very different.¹ The importance of this goal has been made exceedingly clear in this day and age wherein the media has a great effect in influencing and changing the usage of specific words by using them repeatedly in a new fashion.

Another aspect that highlights the importance of the Shareeah terms and Islamic terminology is that they have become tools in intellectual and cultural warfare. The enemy pays close attention to ideas or principles of the others in their ideological warfare. They then do their best to distort the true meanings of those principles and terms. This way, they are able to conceal the truth about them.

This action of theirs centers upon two main pivots:

First, they constantly bring up, in reference to the ideas or thoughts they oppose, reprehensible words and terms to drive people away at the very sound of them—not to speak of keeping them from their true meanings or what they may contain of truth. This was one of the ways in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was opposed. “One of the toughest strategies used by the enemies of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to drive people away from him was the use of offensive terms and demeaning expressions [used when referring to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)]. They would use terms that were reprehensible to the people and those who listened to them would be deceived and fooled, such that these reprehensible terms permeated their hearts and kept them away from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, this is the way of everyone who tries to befuddle the truth.”²

If you were to look into the lives of the Prophets, you will find that they were called insane, ignorant, misguided and so forth. All of this was done in order to mislead the people and make the messengers hated. An example of this strategy as a tool of ideological warfare can clearly be seen in the history of the Islamic sects. The other sects called the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* a number of names and terms in order to drive people away from it and its adherents.³

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 1, p. 243.

² Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, vol. 3, p. 944.

³ For some of those terms and names, see ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, vol. 1, p. 925-955.

Second, another strategy they implement is to use terms that are clean and good and they take them as slogans of what their opponents dislike of them. They do this so that they can easily penetrate and spread their beliefs and thoughts without anyone fleeing from them or disliking what they say. An example of this nature from the history of ideological disputes in Islam concerns the word *tauheed* (meaning the oneness of Allah). "*Tauheed*, which is in reality the affirmation of the attributes of perfection for Allah and negation of what is contrary to them, as well as worshipping Him alone without ascribing any partner to Him, was used as a term by the people of falsehood to mean a pure denial of the attributes. Then those people called others to '*tauheed*' and they were able to deceive those who did not know what they meant by the term *tauheed*."¹

An example from the contemporary ideological warfare is in relation to the Arabic word for "secularism", العلمانية.² In reality, secularists separate religion from life³ but they clothe themselves in a garment of "science" and attach themselves to it to make it easier for them to enter into the Muslim lands.

History provides evidence that there is a relationship between the state of the Muslim nation and its concern with Shareeah terms and Islamic terminology. When the Muslim nation was strong, mighty and well-respected, the Shareeah terms were dominant and were the main references when opinions differed. However, when the Muslim nation came under the control of its enemies,

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, vol. 3, p. 929.

² [The Arabic word for secularism gives the impression that secularists live their lives on the basis of science. This is a gross distortion and incorrect translation of the term "secularism." The English source for "secularism" does not give that meaning. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines "secularism" as, "The doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state." Of the many definitions given for "secular," most revolve around the meaning, "Belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the church and religion; civil, lay, temporal. Chiefly used as a negative term, with the meaning non-ecclesiastical, non-religious, or non-sacred." *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1989) vol. 14, pp. 848-849. Another Arabic term for secularism, used by many Muslim scholars, means "non-religious." This is much closer to the real meaning of the term and movement. However, had this movement presented itself with this true term for itself, it would have been immediately rejected by the Muslim masses. Hence, they took on a neutral or positive term, implying that they were just following the dictates of science.—JZ]

³ Cf., Muneef al-Balabaki, *Mausooh al-Maurid*, vol. 9, p. 27.

subjugated and defeated, the Shareeah terms became abandoned and rejected. Instead, the lingo of the enemies was quickly used and the children of the nation pounced upon them. Indeed, to use such terms was considered the essence of progress and culture.¹

If one were to look at Islamic history, he would find that the Shareeah terms became something strange when the religion itself became something strange. However, one can scarcely find any time or era in which the true meanings and terms of the Shareeah were as strange as they are in the current era.

The Sources that Explain the Meanings of the Shareeah Terms

The source of knowing the meaning of the speech of the Lawgiver is two matters: (1) The language in which He spoke, and (2) the specific meaning of the words as stated by the Lawgiver.

“Knowing the Arabic by which we have been addressed helps in understanding the meaning meant by Allah and His Messenger in their speech. Similarly, understanding the manner in which the words express their meanings [is also very helpful and important]. Most of the misguidance of the heretics was due to this reason. They interpreted Allah’s and His Messenger’s words according to what they claimed such words indicated, while, in reality, the matter was not so.”²

Understanding the meaning of the Lawgiver in His use of specific terms comes about by realizing the customary manner in which He speaks and uses such terms, and by bringing together all of the relevant texts and studying them. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “One must intend, whenever using a Quranic term or Prophetic term or something similar to them, what is meant by Allah and His Messenger when using those terms. In that way, the language of the Quran and hadith becomes known.”³

This is an invariable principle even with respect to the speech of humans. One cannot know the connotation of a word forthwith. One knows it from the person and contextual evidence. Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi⁴ stated, “The text’s indicating of a meaning is through

¹ Cf., Bakr Abu Zaid, *al-Mawaadhah fi al-Istalaah*, pp. 73-90.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 116.

³ *Al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 115.

⁴ He was Ali ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi from Damascus. He was jurist and head of the judges of Damascus and later of Egypt. He wrote a number of works. He died in 792 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 313.

the means of its indicating what the speaker means and intends. But his meaning and intention is in his heart. One does not know at first its wording but he knows the meaning without the wording until it is known, first, that this intended meaning is the one that he meant by those words and intended by them.”¹

The one spoken to does not understand the meaning of the words until he understands the exact purport and he will not understand the exact purport in the speech of the Lawgiver save by gathering together the texts. Ibn Abi al-Izz said, “One must realize that the person addressed does not understand the meaning of what is expressed in words unless he knows the exact thing being referred to or what is related to it, such that there must be some measure of commonality or similarity in their original meanings. Otherwise, the two speaking to each other will never be able to understand each other.”²

Take, for example, the word *salaat*. We could not know simply by the literal command to perform the *salaat* that it refers to specific words and actions, beginning with the *takbeer* and ending with the *tasleem*. We only know that by the combination of the texts concerning the *salaat* and its *shareeah* description.

The discussion about lexical meaning and intended meaning is something that was needed after the time of the Companions. They were of clear thought and deep understanding—in addition to the fact that they lived with the one who received the Law and were knowledgeable of his language—such that it helped them to know the meanings of the words of the Lawgiver without going to extremes or exaggeration. It was sufficient for them when they heard the word *salaat* to understand its meaning because they saw with their own eyes what the speaker himself (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) meant by those words. Witnessing the intended meaning of something leads one to the greatest level of understanding of its proper meaning.

In his book *al-Saahibi*, ibn Faaris³ has a practical and useful passage that emphasizes what has just been said—that the statements and *Shareeah* reality of words are built upon their

¹ *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 65.

² *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 64.

³ He was the grammarian and linguist Abu al-Husain Ahmad ibn Faaris ibn Zakariya al-Qazweeni. He was a leading scholar of language and literature. He was originally from Qazween, lived in Hamadhaan and moved to Ray, where he died. He has a number of beneficial works, including *Mujam Maqayees al-Lughah*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 17, p. 103; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 193.

linguistic meanings but used by the Lawgiver in the way that He intends them. He stated, "When Islam came, it mentioned the *mumin* (believer), *muslim* (Muslim), *kaafir* (disbeliever) and *munaafiq* (hypocrite). The Arabs knew the word *mumin* [for example] from the root *al-amaan* ("security") and the word *imaan* meaning assent or verification. However, the *Shareeah* added some conditions and attributes to these meanings by which the believer may be unconditionally called a *mumin*."¹

The following points further emphasize the fact that one must go back to the intent of the Lawgiver when there is a difference of opinion concerning the *Shareeah* meaning of any term:

(1) An agreed upon principle is that whenever there is a difference of opinion, regardless of whether it be on a ruling or meaning, the matter is to be referred to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). [Allah says,]

﴿ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴾

"If you differ over any matter, take it back to Allah and the Messenger if you are truly believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and more seemly in the end" (*al-Nisaa* 59). This is particularly true if the disputed word is something related to the religion. An example of that nature is the emotionally charged issue of "extremism in the religion." Since this is something ascribed to the religion, it is of extreme importance that it be understood in the light of the texts, to perceive it according to its true perception. The judgment concerning it can then be made in the light of those texts and correct perception.

(2) The wording and terminology concerning which there are differences of opinion—such as "extremism"—must have a fixed and confirmed source that one turns to [in order to understand them properly]. If the issue were left up to humans, the matter would have become a relative matter determined by their different opinions, environment, leanings, association and following of desires that would lead to differences that would never end and evil that would never be extinguished. [As Allah says,]

¹ *Al-Saahibi*, p. 79.

﴿ وَلَوْ أَتَبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ﴾

“And if the truth had been in accordance with their desires, verily, the heavens and the earth and whosoever was therein would have been corrupted” (*al-Muminoon* 71).

What makes it clear that when the matter is left to humans to explain it will then become a relative matter looked at differently based on emotions and desires is the issue of extremism that we are currently discussing. Those who turn away from the law of Allah claim that sticking to the basic and well-known obligations of the faith, such as praying regularly, is a kind of extremism that goes beyond a balanced way of life. On the other hand, those who are truly extreme claim that the path they are on is the path of moderation and justice and what the others are doing is being negligent.¹

Establishing the criterion, by whose balanced stance one can view and under whose light one can view the reality, is a necessity for which there is no escape. Abandoning said criteria will only produce widespread evil.

Continuing upon this methodology of explaining Shareeah terms in the light of their lexical meanings and their Shareeah usage, the next sections will be the following: (a) Linguistic meaning of *al-ghulu* (الغلو) or “extremism,” (b) the meaning of *al-ghulu* in the texts of the Shareeah. This approach is taken in order to define the meaning of *al-ghulu* in this research.

Lexical Meaning of *al-Ghulu*

The source root and the derivations of this word all revolve around one meaning: going beyond the limit and measure. Ibn Faaris stated, “[The letters] *ghain, laam* and the weak letter [waw] form a sound root that indicates ‘rising above and going beyond the appropriate measure.’”²

One says *غلا* or *غلاء*. In reference to a person, he is *غال*. One says, *غلا في الأمر غلوا* “he went to an extreme [exceeding the proper

¹ See Yoosuf al-Qardhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah baina al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 35; Kamaal Abu al-Munajjid, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, pp. 1-2.

² *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, section *غلوي*.

due] in that matter,” meaning he went beyond its limits. For going beyond a measure or amount, one says تغلي غليانا. One says, غلوت بالسهم غلوا “He went beyond [and above the normal course] with the arrow.” Therefore, الغلو (*al-ghulu*) is going beyond the limit. One says, “He went to an extreme in the religion,” when one becomes very hard and strict beyond the proper limits.¹

Lexical Meaning of *al-Tatarruf* (“Radicalism”)

The one who researches the linguistic meaning of the word *al-tatarruf* (التطرف) will find that it revolves around two meanings: (1) the limit of something, and (2) [a reference to] the movement of some body parts.² What is of importance to us here is the first meaning, “the limit and edge of something.” But what is the meaning of “limit”? What is the limit of something in general? Is it the end and utmost reaches of something? The lexical reference works make it clear that its meaning is the end and utmost limit of something. This is if the two ends are not equal, wherein it would be proper for either of them to be the beginning or the end, such as the two ends of a string. Therefore, one says, تطرفت الشمس when the sun is getting “close” to setting. A poet said, “It has come down and the horn [rim] of the sun has come to its end.”³ Shimr⁴ said, “Its ends are known by its expulsion.”⁵ It is well known that when something is expelled or ejected, it reaches its utmost limit and end. Similarly, when a camel eats from the boundaries or very end

¹ Cf., al-Jauhari, *al-Sihaah*, entry غلا; ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, entry غلو; al-Fairoozabaadi, *al-Qaamoos*, entry غلو; al-Zabeedi, *Taaj al-Aroos*, entry غلوا. [For further clarification, Lane has defined this term as, “He, or it, exceeded the proper, due, or common limit; was excessive, immoderate, or beyond measure... it is said of anything as meaning it exceeded or was excessive... He exceeded the proper, due, or common, limit in the affair; was excessive, or immoderate, therein... He acted, or behaved, with forced hardness, or strictness, or rigor, in religion, so that he exceeded the proper, due, or, common limit.” Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, 1984), vol. 2, p. 2287.—JZ]

² See ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, entry طرف. [It seems, Allah knows best, that it is only in reference to the movement of the eye.—JZ]

³ I did not find who was the one who made this statement. It was recorded in al-Zabeedi, *Taaj al-Aroos*, entry طرف.

⁴ He was Shimr ibn Hamduwiyah al-Haruwi ibn Amr, a linguist and litterateur. He was from Khuraasaan. He visited Iraq and studied with their scholars. He died in 255 A.H. Cf., Yaqoot al-Hamawi, *Mujam al-Adibaa*, vol. 11, p. 247; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 175.

⁵ Quoted in al-Azhari, *Tahdheeb al-Lughah*, entry طرف.

of a pasture [not mixing with the other camels], one says, طرفت الناقة or, similarly, تطرفت الناقة. This is the necessary conclusion from al-Fairoozabaadi's¹ discussion wherein he says, in explaining the word *tarf*, "it is the utmost limit of anything." In *Taaaj al-Aroos* it states, "The conclusion from ibn Saidih's context is that the *taraf* is a mover." In *al-Mujam al-Waseet* it states, "The *taraf* of anything is its utmost edge, end or side."²

Al-Tatarraf, then, is the derived form تفرّف from the root طرف³. Something is referred to as *mutatarraf* when it is coming close to the edge or limit of something. For example, one uses this term with respect to the sun when it is close to setting. Regardless of whether we say that *al-tarf* is the utmost edge of something or simply something's limit, for whoever goes beyond the limit of justice and goes to an extreme, it is lexically properly to use the word *tatarraf* for him. In *al-Mujam al-Waseet*, it states, "He went beyond the limits of justice and was not moderate."⁴

Lexical Meaning of *al-Tanatta'*

The letters of the root of [the word *al-tanatta'* (التنتع)] revolve around the meaning of something spread out, expanded and smooth. Ibn Faaris stated, "[The letters] *noon*, *ta* and *ain* form a root that indicates something being spread out and smooth. From it comes *al-niti* and *al-nati*."⁵ Its original meaning comes from having an extremely strong voice. It refers to the upper palate of the mouth, which appears when the person makes his speech very

¹ He was Majd al-Deen Muhammad ibn Yaqoob ibn Muhammad al-Sheeraazi al-Fairoozabaadi. He was one of the leading scholars of language and literature. He was born in Shiraz and traveled throughout different lands. He was appointed judge in Zabeed. He was the main scholarly reference for the people of his time. His most famous book is *al-Qaamoos al-Muheet*. He died in 817 A.H. Cf., al-Shaukaani, *al-Badr al-Taali*, vol. 2, p. 280; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 146.

² *Al-Mujam al-Waseet*, entry طرف.

³ [This is the derived or increased form of the verb that the Western Arabists call "Form V."—JZ.]

⁴ *Al-Mujam al-Waseet*, entry طرف. [*The Hans-Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* gives the following relevant modern definition for derived Form V of the verb طرف, "To be on the extreme side, hold an extreme viewpoint or position, go to extremes, be radical, have radical views." J. M. Cowan, ed., *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1994), p. 652.—JZ]

⁵ *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, entry نتع.

strong and intense. Afterwards, it has been used for every kind of exorbitance or extravagance, whether in speech or action.¹

Lexical Meaning of *al-Tashaddud*

The root of this word, *al-tashaddud* (التشدد), gives the meaning of strength, rigidity and inflexibility. “[The letters] *sheen* and *daal* are a root indicating power or strength of a thing.”² The word *al-shiddah* is a noun come from *al-ishtidaad*, and from it comes *al-shadeed* and *al-mutashaddid*. Tarfah³ said, “I see death easily taking the generous and leaving the extreme (*al-mutashaddid*) misers who cling to their wealth.” A hadith states,

لَنْ يَشَادَ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلِبَهُ

“No one overburdens himself in the religion hard except that it overcomes him [and he will not be able to continue in that manner].”⁴ That is, the religion will overpower and outlast him. *Al-mushaadah* is trying to overcome and overpower another. *Al-mushaadah* in something means to be very forceful and powerful in it.⁵

Lexical Meaning of *Al-Unf*

[*Al-unf* (العنف) comes from the root of] “*ain*, *noon* and *fa*, a sound root indicating the opposite of softness.”⁶ One says, اعترف

¹ Cf., ibn al-Atheer, *al-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth*, vol. 5, p. 74; al-Azhari, *Tahdheeb al-Lughah*, entry نطع; ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, entry نطع.

² Ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, entry شد.

³ He was Tarfah ibn al-Abd ibn Sufyaan al-Bakri al-Waaili, a poet from the Days of Ignorance. He was born in the deserts of al-Hasa and was killed by al-Mukaabar, the governor of al-Hasa, in 60 A.H. Cf., *Al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 225.

⁴ This is a portion of the hadith discussed earlier, “The religion is easy...” [Recorded by al-Bukhari.]

⁵ Cf., al-Zamakhshari, *Asaas al-Balaaghah*, entry شد; ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, entry شد; al-Fairoozabaadi, *al-Qamoos*, entry شدة. [Lane has given the following definition for *tashaddad*, “He acted, or behaved, with forced hardness, firmness, strength, vigor, hardiness, courage, vehemence, severity, strictness, or rigor; he exerted his strength, force, or energy; strained, or strained himself, or tasked himself severely.” Lane, vol. 2, p. 1518.—JZ]

⁶ Ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, entry عنف.

الأمر if the matter is dealt with by harshness. *Al-Aneef* is the one who is stern or mean in his speech. With respect to harshness in deeds, one uses the word *anuf* or *unf*. The one who rides his steed without any gentleness is called *aneef*.¹

Upon inspection of these different words, we find closeness between the words *al-ghulu* and *al-tatarruf*. In essence, there are of one and the same meaning, as one uses the word *al-tatarruf* when one comes to the utmost limit or extreme end of something. The relationship between them, though, is one of generality and specificity. *Al-Tatarruf* is used for coming to the extreme end or limit of something in general. Hence, its meaning is more general than *al-ghulu*.

As for the remaining words, *al-tanatta'*, *al-tashaddud* and *al-unf*, these are simply tantamount to attributes and expressions of extremism (*al-ghulu*):

The extremist is characterized by taking to his religion in a very strict and severe manner (*al-tashaddud*).

He is also characterized, in his relations with others, by harshness and incivility (*al-unf*).

He is also characterized by going deeply and beyond the needed limit when it comes to the actions of the religion.

All of these words, save *al-tatarruf*, have been mentioned in the texts of the Shareeah, as shall be discussed in the next section.

The Meaning of “Extremism” According to the Quran and Sunnah

The Command to Remain along the Straight Path and to Avoid Extremism

One of the realities that are apparent to anyone who has studied the history of the messengers is that the people of each era have differed with respect to their level of response to their call.

¹ Cf., al-Jauhari, *al-Sihaah*, entry *عنف*; ibn Mandhooor, *al-Lisaan*, entry *عنف*; al-Fairoozabaadi, *al-Qaamoos*, entry *عنف*; al-Zabeedi, *Taj al-Aroos*, entry *عنف*. [Lane defines *unf* as, “Ungentleness, roughness, harshness, rigorousness, severity, violence, or vehemence.” Lane, vol. 2, p. 2174.—JZ]

Those who have been invited to the truth differ in their levels of attachment to that path in the following ways:

(1) There are those who adhere to the truth and remain steadfast along its path.

(2) There are those who become very negligent and lackadaisical, not coming up to the limits set by Allah.

(3) And there are those who go to the extreme, above and beyond the limits set by Allah.

All three of these types are present in the religious communities that existed before the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). All three types also exist among his nation. For that reason, the Shareeah texts have warned about following the path of those who earned Allah's wrath or those who have gone astray, not respecting or staying within the limits set by Allah. Furthermore, there is also a call, via various means, to remain along the straight path. These referred to means include the following:

(1) Teaching the Muslims to pray to Allah to keep them free of the strayings of either extreme. This has been sanctioned for the Muslims a number of times in every prayer [as the Muslim recites]:

﴿ أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٥٠﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ
الْمَعْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴾

“Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom You have blessed, not of those whose portion is wrath nor of those who have gone astray” (*al-Faatihah* 6-7). [Ibn Taimiyyah noted,] “When Allah ordered us to ask of Him in every prayer to guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom Allah has blessed... this made it clear that the human should fear for himself lest he deviates to either of those two divergent paths [of those who earned Allah's wrath or those who have gone astray].”¹

(2) There have also been strong warnings not to go beyond the prescribed limits as well as the command to abide by them. [For example, Allah says,]

﴿ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmoo al-Fataawa*, vol. 1, p. 65.

“These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them. If any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, such are the wrongdoers” (*al-Baqarah* 229).

The limits are the furthest boundaries of what is permissible from the allowable acts, regardless of whether they be commanded or not commanded.¹ Transgressing the limit means going beyond it and not stopping at it.² Such transgression is actually one of the goals of Satan. In general, he seeks either one of the deviations: exaggeration or lackadaisicalness. “Allah does not order anything except that Satan has, with respect to it, two ways to temptation: either through laxity and squandering the act or through extremism and excessiveness. The religion of Allah is, in reality, a balanced position between the lax person and the extremist like a valley between two mountains, guidance between two positions of misguidance and a moderate position between two blameworthy extremes. The one who is lackadaisical with respect to a command has squandered it. And the one who goes to extremes has also squandered it. The former by not meeting the minimum limit and the latter by going beyond the maximum limit.”³

(3) There is also the call to remain steadfast and abide by the commandments without exaggeration or addition. [Allah says,]

﴿ فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطَّغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا

تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾

“Therefore stand firm (along the straight path) as you are commanded, you and those who with you turn (unto Allah); and do not exceed the proper bounds. He sees well all that you do” (*Hood* 112). Allah commands remaining firm along the straight path, which is the way of moderation, and to continue along that path without deviating. This command is followed [in the verse] by the prohibition of exceeding the proper bounds. This implies that Allah wants one to remain firm in the way that he has been commanded, without excess or exaggeration which would transform this religion from one of ease to one of difficulty.⁴

¹ Cf., Ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmoo al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 362.

² Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 2, p. 472.

³ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Mudaaraj al-Saalikeen*, vol. 2, p. 517.

⁴ Cf., Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Dhilaal al-Quran*, vol. 4, p. 1931.

(4) One also finds [texts concerning] the prohibition of going to extremes and beyond the established limits. In particular, these are addressed to the People of the Book. [For example, Allah says,]

﴿ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْإِلَهَ الْحَقِّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴾

“O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion, nor say of Allah anything but the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not ‘Trinity.’ Desist. This will be better for you, for Allah is One God. Far exalted is He above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs” (*al-Nisaa* 171). [Allah also says,]

﴿ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴾

“Say: O People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the straight way” (*al-Maaidah* 77). In other words, followers of the *Injeel*, do not exceed the bounds in your religion and go beyond the truth. Your statement that Jesus is the son of Allah is simply a statement from

yourselves about Allah with no basis in truth. You have raised him to a position of divinity and you have made him a lord and god.¹

“There is much excessiveness among the Christians. They went to an extreme concerning Jesus. They transferred him from the limits of prophethood until they took him as a god other than Allah whom they worship like they worship Allah.”² It was this excessiveness and going to extremes that produced most of the deviations in the Christian religion.³

That extremism produced the monasticism by which they supposedly worshipped God. This was not prescribed for them nor were they ordered to behave in that fashion. [Allah says,]

﴿ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾

“Monasticism they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe it for them” (*al-Hadeed* 27). The Christians were not the only ones who committed excesses. Indeed, the Jews also committed such. However, the verses above were first and foremost directed to the Christians, as is clear from their context. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “The Christians committed more excesses than the other groups with respect to matters of belief and worship. Therefore, Allah explicitly forbids them in the Quran from committing excesses.”⁴

Although these texts are directly related to the People of the Book, their purpose is to serve as an admonition for this nation to remain away from the causes that resulted in Allah’s anger upon the previous nations.⁵

(5) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself prohibited his nation from committing excesses so that they would not be afflicted with the same results that afflicted the earlier nations who had received messengers. Along with forbidding extremism, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also explained the consequences and results of extremism. Ibn Abbaas said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him to

¹ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 6, p. 43; al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 6, p. 21; Abu al-Saood, *Irshaad al-Aql al-Saleem*, vol. 1, p. 821; ibn Juzayy, *al-Tasheel*, vol. 1, p. 165.

² Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Wahaab, *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 265.

³ Cf., Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Dhilaal al-Quran*, vol. 2, p. 496.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 289; also see al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 6, p. 24; ibn Juzayy, *al-Tasheel*, vol. 1, p. 165.

⁵ Cf., Muhammad al-Taahir ibn Ashoor, *Maqaasid al-Shareeah al-Islaamiyyah*, p. 60.

collect some pebbles for him to use during the stoning of the pillars during the pilgrimage. He brought him small sized pebbles. When he put them into the Prophet's hand, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

نَعَمْ بِأَمْثَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغُلُوفَ فِي الدِّينِ فَإِنَّمَا هَآكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ
بِالْغُلُوفِ فِي الدِّينِ

“How fine are like this size. Beware of going beyond the bounds of the religion. The people before you were destroyed by going to extremes in the religion.”¹ The prohibition here, even though it has a particular cause behind it, is a prohibition of every form of extremism and excessiveness. Ibn Taimiyyah said, “This [instruction] is general for all forms of extremism in matters of beliefs or deeds. The cause behind that general statement, the throwing of the pebbles, is included in the prohibition, such as throwing larger stones on the basis that they are greater than smaller ones. Then he explained it in such a way that means that one must avoid following their way [lit., guidance], that is, the way of the people before us, as a means of distancing us from what destroyed them. The one who joins with them by acting in a similar fashion to their behavior must fear destruction for himself.”²

(6) [The texts of the Shareeah] clearly explain the path and end result of the extremist. Different hadith explain that extremism ends in destruction. In fact, such is stated three times in one hadith. This demonstrates how great and dangerous this matter is. Ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said three times,

هَآكَ الْمُتَطَّعُونَ

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, ibn Khuzaimah, al-Nasaa'ee and ibn Maajah. Al-Haakim recorded it and said that it is *sahih* according to the standards of al-Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Ibn Taimiyyah also declared the hadith *sahih* in *al-Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 289, as did al-Nawawi in *al-Majmoo*, vol. 8, p. 138.

² Quoted from Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah, *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 275. I did not find this passage in any of ibn Taimiyyah's works available to us, save a similar passage in *Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 289.

“The *mutanattaoon* are destroyed.” (Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood and Ahmad.) Al-Nawawi¹ said, “‘The *mutanattaoon* are destroyed’ refers to those who go into depths, extremes, and go beyond the proper bounds in their speech or actions.”²

Another hadith states that a person being hard upon himself is a cause for Allah in turn being hard upon him. Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَشَدُّدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيَشَدَّدَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِنَّ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
فَشَدَّدَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَبَقَايَاهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالْدِّيَارِ (وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ)
ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ)

“Do not be very strict on yourselves for then Allah will be strict upon you. Verily, a people were strict upon themselves so Allah was strict upon them. It is the remnants of those people who are in the hermitages and monasteries. [Then he quoted the verse,] ‘But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them.’”³

Being hard and extremely strict upon oneself is a type of extremism. The sunnah makes it clear that in the end, such a person will discontinue his acts and not be able to keep them up. No one makes this religion difficult except that it will overcome him and he will be cut off. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يَسْرٌ وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا
وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالرَّوْحَةِ وَشَيْءٍ مِنَ الدَّلْجَةِ

“Certainly, the religion is easy. No one puts hardship in the religion except that it overcomes him. Seek the straight path, come close

¹ He was Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Sharf al-Hoorani al-Nawawi, a scholar of fiqh and hadith. He was born and died in Nawa in the district of Hauraan, from which comes his name. He taught in Damascus and stayed there for a long time. He has numerous famous writings. He died in 676 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 149.

² Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 16, p. 220.

³ Discussed earlier. [Recorded by Abu Dawood and Abu Yala with a *hasan* chain.]

and accept the good tidings. And seek help in going out in the morning and midday and something of the night time.” [Recorded by al-Bukhari.] Another wording states, “Moderation and moderation will take you to your goal.” Ibn Hajar’ said, “The meaning is that anyone who goes deep [beyond what is required] into the religious actions and neglects gentleness [upon himself] will be incapable and will discontinue his acts. Thus, it will overcome him.”² In order for this not to occur, the end of the hadith orders moderation and trying to come as close to the straight path as one has the means. “This means acting moderately and in a balanced manner concerning acts of worship: neither falling short of what is obligated nor bearing upon oneself what is beyond one’s capabilities.”³

The Forms of Extremism

Extremism is not of one form only. It differs with respect to what it is related to of the acts of the human being. In general, though, there are two major types: (1) Related to beliefs and (2) related to deeds or actions.⁴ Explaining these forms helps in understanding the reality of extremism and will define its conception. This explanation is as follows:

Comprehensive, General, Belief-Related Extremism

What is meant by “comprehensive, general, belief-related extremism” is that extremism that is related to the general principles of Islamic Shareeah and its most important issues. “Belief-related” means it is related to one’s belief system or creed, which is the source or fountainhead for one’s physical actions. There are many examples of this nature: Extremism when it comes

¹ He was Abu al-Fadhl Shihaab al-Deen Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Kinaani al-Asqilaani, known as Ibn Hajar. He was one of the great scholars of the Islamic sciences and history. He was originally from Asqilaan in Palestine. He was one of the greatest scholars of hadith. His most famous work was *Fath al-Baari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari* [a commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*]. He also has a number of works concerning hadith narrators, the most famous being *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* and *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*. He died in 852 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 178.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 94.

³ Ibn Rajab, *al-Muhijah fi Siyar al-Mudalijah*, p. 51.

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 289.

to one's *Imam* or leader and claiming perfection or freedom from error for him; extremism when it comes to disassociating oneself from a sinful society; and extremism when it comes to declaring an individual an unbeliever and separating oneself from him.

Included in this category of comprehensive, belief-related extremism are a number of secondary issues. This is because the opposition to or dissent with the Shareeah that occurs in those issues is the result of the extremism with respect to a comprehensive issue.¹

The general, belief-related extremism is the most dangerous form of extremism. It is much more harmful than deed-related extremism. This is because general, belief-related extremism leads to division and hatred. It is what develops into factions and groups that fall outside of the straight path. "These sects become sects by their differing from the saved sect with respect to a general understanding of the religion or a basic principle of the Shareeah, not due to some minor point. The irregular minor point or secondary issue does not lead to the kind of differing that results in factions or sects. Division and sectarianism occurs when there is a difference concerning a general, comprehensive issue."² Do you not see how in the extremism of the groups like the Khawarij³ and Shiah⁴ in general, comprehensive issues led them into developing sects and factions while the extremism of particular individuals in matters of worship and behavior did not lead them into developing new sects, except after they also began to go to extremes in matters of general beliefs? A perfect example of that nature can be seen in the Sufis.⁵ They were present in the early history of Islam [as simply

¹ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 201.

² Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 200.

³ They are called Khawarij because they rebelled against Ali ibn Abi Taalib. They are of various sects themselves. They declare those who commit grave sins to be disbelievers and believe in rebelling against unjust rulers. They even declared some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be disbelievers. They also held a number of other beliefs. Cf., al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 114-139.

⁴ The Shiah were those who sided with Ali in particular and claimed for him the right of Imam and caliph. They believed that the Imam or leader can only be from his descendants. They have also divided into many sects. Cf., al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 146-191.

⁵ The scholars have differed as to what this name is attributed to. The most famous opinion is that it is related to the wool (*al-soof*) that they would usually wear. The Sufis passed through many stages. At first, they were people who simply forsook worldly pleasures and devoted themselves to acts of worship. Later, they entered into blasphemy and disbelief by their

people devoted to acts of worship]. However, they did not form a sect that posed a danger to the Muslim society until after they fell into some heresies, such as the belief that their shaikhs were infallible and other matters of a general, belief-related nature.

The following points make the difference between comprehensive, belief-related extremism and specific extremism related to particular acts even clearer:

(1) The explicit statements in the text referring to extremism of a comprehensive, belief-related nature speak of it as sectarianism or breaking off into groups, such as the hadith,

إِنَّ مِنْ ضَيْضِيِّ هَذَا قَوْمٌ

“From his descendants shall be a people who...”¹ However, when discussing the extremism in one’s deed of a specific nature, the texts refer to their doers as individuals, such as in the hadith,

لِيُصَلِّ أَحَدُكُمْ

“One of you should pray...”²

(2) The harm of the comprehensive, belief-related extremism affects the entire Muslim nation while the harm of the extremism related to specific acts is restricted only to the extremist himself.

(3) The harm of the comprehensive, belief-related extremism is invariable [in the sense that it is going to exist and cause harm]. However, the harm of the extremism related to particular acts is relative; it may have an effect on one person, thus becoming an aspect of extremism with respect to him, and the same act may not have a negative effect on another person, thus not constituting extremism in his case.³

The researcher of extremism and extremist sects finds that throughout the ages they have some particular characteristics that bind them all together. These common characteristics are a persistent trait among them. The scholars have noted some general and detailed characteristics, including the persistent and inevitable

belief in pantheism and other false beliefs. Cf., al-Raazi, *Itiqadaat Firq al-Muslimeen wa al-Mushrikeen*, pp. 87-115; Ali al-Dakheelallah, footnotes to *al-Sawaaiq al-Mursalah*, vol. 2, p. 417.

¹ This hadith shall be presented in its entirety shortly.

² This hadith shall be presented in its entirety shortly.

³ This principle shall be explained in more detail later.

characteristics, of many of the extremist sects.¹ There are two attributes that are mentioned together in the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that was related by Abu Saeed al-Khudri regarding the man who objected to the Prophet's distribution of the booty, giving some people more than others. Abu Saeed mentioned that when the man had turned away, someone, he thought it was Khaalid ibn al-Waleed², asked permission to kill that man. [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declined and said,]

إِنَّ مِنْ ضَيْضِيٍّ هَذَا قَوْمًا يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَا يُجَاوِزُ حَنَاجِرَهُمْ يَقْتُلُونَ
أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ وَيَدْعُونَ أَهْلَ الْأَوْثَانِ

“Verily, from the descendants of that [person] there will be a people who recite the Quran but it will not penetrate beyond their throats; they will slaughter the people of Islam and invite the idol worshipping people.”³ In this hadith, two of their attributes are specifically mentioned:

(1) Not Understanding the Quran Properly:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “[They] recite the Quran but it will not penetrate beyond their throats.” That is, they recite and read the Quran but they do not understand it and they do not recognize what its meanings are.⁴ Al-Nawawi said, “The meaning is that they have no portion of the Quran except its rolling on their tongues. But it does not reach to their throats, not to speak of it reaching their hearts although the

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 72; al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 231; al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafiqaat*, vol. 4, p. 72.

² He was Saifullah Khaalid ibn al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomi. He embraced Islam before the conquering of Makkah. He was one of the Muslim generals who conquered many lands. He fought against the apostates during the time of Abu Bakr. He participated, as an obeyed leader and then an obedient soldier, in the victories over al-Shaam and Iraq. He died in his bed [and not in the battlefield] in 21 A.H. Some say he died in Hims while others say it was in Madinah. See *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 366; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 124; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 300.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim. [The scholars agree that this hadith refers first and foremost to the Khawaarij who rebelled against Ali ibn Abi Taalib.—JZ]

⁴ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 226.

goal is to understand it and ponder over it by its being in the heart.”¹

Due to their lack of proper understanding of the Quran, they took the verses revealed concerning the disbelievers and applied them to the Muslims. Abdullah ibn Umar² said about the Khawaarij, “They go to the verses revealed about the disbelievers and apply them on the believers.”³ Part of not understanding the Quran properly is the [misapplication and] following of the equivocal verses of the Quran. For example, the Khawaarij used the following verse as proof that one may not resort to any kind of human arbitration:

﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾

“Verily, the rule is for none but Allah” (*al-Anaam* 57; *Yoosuf* 40 and 67). The meaning that they took from the verse is, in general, correct. However, with respect to its application to specific incidents, it needs some clarification. For that reason, Ali ibn Abi Taalib⁴ said in refuting them, “A true statement by which falsehood is intended.”⁵ Ibn Hajar said, “The first words that came from their

¹ Quoted from Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 12, p. 293; I did not find this passage in *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*. However, for a passage with its meaning and Qaadhi Ayyaadh’s view, see *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 7, p. 159.

² He was the noble Companion, Abu Abdul Rahmaan Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khataab al-Adawi. He grew up in Islam and emigrated to Madinah with his father. He witnessed the conquering of Makkah. He was born and died in Makkah. He gave religious rulings for the people for sixty years. He was the last Companion to die in Makkah, in the year 73 A.H. 2630 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 203; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 328; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 108.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari in *mualliq* form [that is, without a complete chain]. However, Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 282, noted that al-Tabari recorded it with a complete, sound chain in *Tahdeeb al-Athaar* from the narrations of Ali.

⁴ He was Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Abi Taalib ibn Abdul Muttalib al-Haashimi al-Qurashi, the leader of the believers and the fourth caliph. He was one of the most knowledgeable in judgments. He was the first to embrace Islam from among the youth. He was born in Makkah and grew up in the household of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He embraced Islam and emigrated to Madeenah. He was killed in Kufah in the year 40 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 57; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 295.

⁵ Recorded by Muslim. This statement was quoted while a narrator was giving the hadith about the Khawaarij and Ali’s experience with them.

mouths were, 'Verily, the rule is for none but Allah.' They tore this out of the Quran and applied it not in its proper place."¹

Their lack of understanding of the Quran led them to violate the Sunnah. It also led them to consider what was not a vice to be a vice and what was not a virtue to be a virtue. They believed the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning what he conveyed of the Quran but not concerning that which he legislated which, according to their claims, contradicted the apparent meaning of the Quran.² Indeed, the man's objection to the Prophet's division of wealth was of this nature. He went against the Sunnah and considered what was not a vice to be a vice. "This might be done mistakenly by some scholars on some issues. However, the heretics go against the Sunnah which is clear and known."³

(2) Declaring Others to be Unbelievers and Considering the Spilling of Their Blood to be Permissible:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said [in the hadith quoted earlier about the Khawaarij], "They will slaughter the people of Islam and call the idol worshipping people." They do this based on their declaring the Muslims to be disbelievers, which is a characteristic virtually shared by all of the heretical and extremist groups and sects. Ibn Taimiyyah said, "The second characteristic of the Khawaarij and heretics is that they declare people disbelievers due to sins and vices. Based on their declaration of disbelief due to sins, the blood and wealth of the Muslims become lawful for them. The land of Islam is the land of disbelief [in their eyes] and their land [alone] is the land of faith. The majority of the Raafidha [Shiah] said the same, as did the majority of the Mutazilah⁴ and Jahamiyyah.⁵ Even a group of those

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 619.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 73.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 72.

⁴ The Mutazilah ["those who separated themselves"] are so-called because they separated themselves from the session of al-Hasan al-Basri. They call themselves "the people of justice and *tauheed*." They are also called the Qadariyyah. They denied the attributes of Allah and stated that the Quran is created. For a general presentation of their beliefs, see al-Shahrastaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 43-85.

⁵ The Jahamiyyah are the followers of al-Jahm ibn Safwaan who was put to death by Salam ibn Ahwaz in 127 A.H. They are from among those who deny Allah's attributes and say that the Quran is created. Imam Ahmad, al-Daarimi and others wrote refutations of their beliefs. Cf., Abdul Rahmaan

who ascribe themselves to the people of hadith, fiqh and scholastic theology said the same.”¹ Their permitting taking the blood of the Muslims is a result of their extremism and heresies, as they believe that anyone who is not on their path has left the religion and his blood is permissible. This is the case with holders of every type of heresy. Abu Qilaabah² said, “No person innovates a heresy except that he also makes permissible [the use of] the sword.”³ Ayyoob al-Sakhtiyaani⁴ used to call the heretical groups Khawaarij, saying, “The Khawaarij differ in their names but they all agree on the [permissibility of the use of] the sword.”⁵

Therefore, they bring together in themselves two great evils and tribulations: ignorance of the religion of Allah and wrongdoing towards the servants of Allah. Ibn Taimiyyah said, “The path of the heretics is to combine ignorance and wrongdoing. They invent a heresy that contradicts the Quran, Sunnah and consensus of the Companions. Then they declare as non-believers all who oppose them in their innovation.” Built upon this declaration of disbelief is their allowing the spilling of the blood of the Muslims and killing them, while they leave the idol worshippers alone.

These two characteristics are at the root of heresy. They are the two distinguishing signs of the heretics and extremists. However, I must make the following remarks:

(1) The existence of these two characteristics is not a necessary condition; it simply refers to what is true in most cases.

(2) These two characteristics are not necessary conditions such that extremism does not exist without them. However, they usually appear with comprehensive, belief-related extremism.

(3) As for the hadith, although it is in reference to the Khawarij, two points must be made:

Umairah, introduction to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Radd ala al-Jahamiyyah wa al-Zanadiqah*, pp. 38-48.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 73.

² He was Abdullah ibn Zaid ibn Amr al-Jarami. He was knowledgeable of judgments and rulings. He was also devoted to worship. He was from Basrah. To avoid being appointed as judge, he fled to al-Shaam where he died in 104 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 13, p. 177; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 224; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 88.

³ Recorded by al-Daarimi.

⁴ He was Abu Bakr Ayyoob ibn Abi Tameemah al-Sakhtiyaani al-Basri. He was the leading jurist during his time, the time of the Followers. He was also devoted to worship. He was a scholar of hadith who was considered accurate and trustworthy. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 15; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 397; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 38.

⁵ Recorded by al-Daarimi. Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 81.

(a) The Khawaarij are not only those militaristic, well-known people who appeared in the history of Islam. Instead, they will continue to appear until the time of the anti-Christ.¹

(b) The extremist heretics share these two characteristics with the Khawaarij: they fail to understand the texts properly and they declare their opponents to be unbelievers.² The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) specifically referred to that group that appeared during the time of Ali ibn Abi Taalib. He did so for a specific purpose that was needed at that time. However, everyone that appears who has those same characteristics is to be joined with those people. Their particular mention was not because their ruling applies only to them but because those he was speaking to at that time were in need of that specific information and identification of that group.³

Extremism with Respect to Particular Deeds

The meaning of “particular” or “specific” here is that it is in relation to only parts and portions of the Shareeah. The meaning of “deeds” or “practical aspect” is that it is related to specific deeds only, regardless of whether they be spoken words or acts done by the body. Deeds here also implies that that is just an act and not the result of an improper belief; if it were otherwise, it would be belief-related. An example may make this clearer:

(1) The one who prays the entire night is considered an extremist in his deed.

(2) The one who remains away from the mosques of the Muslims because he believes that they are mosques built on a wrong, harmful intention is an extremist in a general, belief-related sense.

However, if the specific deeds become many, a comprehensive type of extremism ensues. This is because the harm resulting from these various deeds is similar to the harm that results from a comprehensive, belief-related extremism. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) solved these kinds of incidents often during his lifetime. These incidents clearly demonstrate the understanding and definition of extremism in the light of the texts of the Shareeah. Here are some examples:

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 495-496.

² As was noted in the earlier quotes from Ayyoob al-Sakhtiyaani and ibn Taimiyyah.

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 476-477.

(1) Anas ibn Maalik narrated that a group of three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked about his acts of worship. When they were told of his actions, it was as if they considered them little. They then said, "Where are we with respect to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Verily, Allah has forgiven for him his past and later sins." One of them then said, "As for me, I shall pray the whole night long." Another said, "I shall fast continuously without breaking my fast." The third said, "I shall remain away from women and will never marry." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then came and said,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ
وَأَتَزَوِّجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي

"By Allah, I am most fearful of Allah and most conscious of Him. However, I fast and break my fast, pray and sleep and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my way of life is not from me."¹ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) objected to what they had in mind and treated it as something outside of his way of life and guidance.

(2) Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered the mosque and found a cord hanging from two poles. He asked, "What is this?" They said, "This is Zainab's² cord. When she gets tired, she holds on to it [to support herself]." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

حُلُوهُ لِيُصَلَّ أَحَدُكُمْ نَشَاطَةً فَإِذَا فَتَرَ فَلْيَقْعُدْ

"Untie it. One of you should pray while he has energy. When he gets tired, he should sit."³ In this hadith, as Ibn Hajar stated,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² She was the mother of the faithful Zainab bint Jahsh al-Asadiyyah. She was married to Zaid ibn Haarithah and Zaid divorced her. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then married her. Eleven hadith have been narrated on her authority. She died in 20 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 12, p. 275; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 66.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim. [The original Arabic text had, "he should sleep." That seems to have been a typographical error as this translator could not find that wording in either al-Bukhari or Muslim. Allah knows best.—JZ]

“There is an encouragement to be moderate in the acts of worship and not to overextend oneself therein.”¹

(3) Ibn Abbaas narrated that while the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was delivering a speech there was a man who was standing. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked about him and they said that it was Abu Israaeel² who had taken a vow to stand in the sun and not to sit, nor seek shade, nor speak and he also vowed to fast. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

مُرَّهُ فَلْيَتَكَلَّمْ وَلْيَسْتَظِلَّ وَلْيَقْعُدْ وَلْيَتِمِّمْ صَوْمَهُ

“Order him to speak, seek shade and sit. And let him continue his fast.”³ Ibn Hajar stated, “[This hadith indicates] that everything by which a person hurts himself, even if in the long-run, and for which there is no sanction in the Quran or Sunnah, such as walking barefoot or sitting in the sun, is not an act of obedience to Allah. Therefore, a vow of that nature is not to be fulfilled.”⁴

(4) Aishah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to her while another woman was with her. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked who that was and Aishah answered that it was so and so. Then Aishah began to speak about how much that woman prays. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

مَهْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا تُطِيقُونَ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يَمَلُّ اللَّهُ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا وَكَانَ أَحَبَّ الَّذِينَ
إِلَيْهِ مَا دَامَ عَلَيْهِ صَاحِبُهُ

“That shouldn’t be done. You should do what is within your ability. By Allah, Allah will not get bored until you get bored. The most beloved way of action to Him is what the person does continually.”⁵ Ibn Hajar stated, “You should do what is within your ability’ means

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 37.

² He was Abu Israaeel, a Companion who was well known by his *kunya* [father of...]. Some scholars said that no other Companion had the *kunya* Abu Israaeel. It is said that his name was Yaseer while other say that it was Qasheer. There is also a difference of opinion concerning his lineage; some say that he was from the Quraish while others say he was from the Ansar. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 8, p. 160 and vol. 11, p. 12.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawood.

⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 11, p. 590.

⁵ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

that one should busy himself with the acts that he is able to do on a continual basis. The literal meaning implies a command to do only the acts of worship that are within one's ability. The further understood meaning implies that one is prohibited from burdening oneself beyond what one can bear."¹

There are also other hadith in which some Companions were very hard upon themselves and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to solve those situations, such as the well-known hadith² of Abdullah ibn Amr.³ Therefore, there is no call for a Muslim to oblige anything new upon himself as a means of getting closer to Allah. In fact, that would be going beyond the limits that Allah has set and made clear. In fact, it is not permissible for a Muslim to forbid the good things that Allah has made permissible for him. [Allah says,]

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿﴾

“O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, but commit no excess. Allah loves not those given to excess. Eat of the things which Allah has

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 102. [These types of hadith and comments must not be misinterpreted lest one go to the opposite extreme of inaction. There are certain acts that the Shareeah states are not overburdening under normal circumstances. These include prayer five times a day, fasting the month of Ramadhaan and so forth. These all fall within the realm of what the Shareeah states a normal human can bear under normal circumstances.—JZ]

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Nasaa'ee and al-Tirmidhi. [The referred to hadith is the one in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that a person's body, wife and guest all have a right over him.—JZ]

³ He was Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As of the Quraish. He was one of the Companions greatly devoted to worship from the people of Makkah. He knew how to write even before the time of Islam. He embraced Islam before his father. He asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for permission to write down everything he heard from him and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him that permission. He performed a large number of acts of worship. He became blind toward the end of his life. 700 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 79; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 337; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 111.

provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, in Whom you believe" (*al-Maaidah* 87-88). Leaving the good and wholesome things out of a type of rite and worship, thereby torturing oneself and being hard upon it, is one of the misconceptions that afflicted many of the worshippers and Sufis of the past who did that in imitation of the Christian monks before them. However, they are the ones who invented that monasticism and it was never prescribed for them.¹ "Renunciation of this world is neither by forbidding what is permissible nor through wasting wealth."² All acts of this nature are forbidden in the Shareeah and, furthermore, the Shareeah has warned about falling into them.

On the other hand, there are other texts that clearly prohibit extremism and which rectify certain situations that occurred. There is clear evidence that show that this religion is built upon ease and removing hardship. The Muslim is ordered not to intentionally go against what is easy simply in order to make things difficult upon himself or others.³

Defining Extremism in the Light of the Shareeah

In light of the preceding texts, one is able to define the meaning of extremism according to the Shareeah as well as identify its general rules. We can also define, in its absence, a relative meaning that changes with circumstances and peoples. Before delving into that matter, I shall present some of the definitions given by the scholars for extremism.

(1) Ibn Taimiyyah stated, "Extremism is to go beyond the proper limits concerning a matter, beyond what it is deserving, either in praising it or disparaging it."⁴ A similar definition was given by Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab.⁵

¹ Cf., Muhammad Rasheed Ridha, *Tafseer al-Manaar*, vol. 7, p. 19.

² This is a hadith narrated of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it is very weak. Al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah recorded it. Al-Tirmidhi declared it weak due to the presence of Amr ibn Waaqid, a rejected narrator. However, that same statement has been narrated from more than one of the early scholars, including Yoonus ibn Maisarah and Abu Muslim al-Khulaani. Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikam*, p. 254.

³ This topic was discussed in more detail earlier.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 289.

⁵ He was the jurist and scholar of hadith Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab. He was born in al-Duriyyah in 1200 A.H.

(2) Ibn Hajar defined extremism as, "Exaggeration in something and being stringent in that matter by going beyond the proper limit."¹ Al-Shaatibi² has also given a definition similar to that.³

Those definitions are very close to each other. Their conclusion is that extremism means to go beyond the Shareeah limits by some kind of addition. And, "the limit is the end all of what is permitted, whether it be commanded to be performed or not commanded [such as permissible acts are not commanded]."⁴

Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab made the matter even clearer by stating some parameters of extremism. He stated, "The parameter is to go beyond what Allah has ordered. This is the *tughyaan* (overstepping the bounds) that Allah has prohibited in His saying,

﴿ وَلَا تَطْعَمُوا فِيهِ قَبِيلًا عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي ﴾

'Commit no transgression therein, lest My anger should justly descend upon you' [Taha 81]."⁵

This is because the truth is a medium position between the two ends of extremism [going beyond the maximum and not meeting the minimum]. Umar ibn Abdul Azeez stated in a letter he wrote to a man who had asked him about *qadar* [preordainment], "Some people shortened the matter and fell short. Some people went above them and therefore went to extremes. They [the pious predecessors] were between that [those two extremes] upon a

He was a judge in Makkah for Imam Saood ibn Abdul Azeez. He was a scholar well known for his virtues, dedicated to study. He used to say, "My knowledge of the narrators of hadith is greater than my knowledge of the people of al-Duriyyah." He surpassed his comrades in knowledge. He died while still young in 1233 A.H., as a martyr—in our estimation and Allah is the one who will reckon him. He was killed by Ibraaheem Pasha. He left no descendants. Cf., *Ulamaa Najd Khilaa Sittah Quroont*, vol. 1, p. 293; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 129. The reference above was to *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 256.

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 278.

² He was Abu Ishaq Ibraaheem ibn Moosa ibn Muhammad al-Lakhami al-Gharanaati, known as al-Shaatibi, from the scholars of Granada, Andalus. He was a legal theorist, jurist, *mujtahid* and opponent of innovations. He wrote a very original work entitled *al-Muwaafiqaat*. He had other works, including *al-Itisaam*. He died in 790 A.H. Cf., *al-Fath al-Mubeen*, vol. 2, pp. 204-205; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 75.

³ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 3, p. 304.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 362.

⁵ *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 256.

straight guidance." Al-Hasan¹ said, "Your way, by Allah besides whom there is no other god, is between those two, between the extreme going beyond and the coarse not meeting the minimum."²

"The scholars have declared that the truth is a medium position between the two ends of extremism [going beyond the maximum and not meeting the minimum]. This is the meaning of Mutarrif ibn Abdullah's³ statement, 'The virtue is between two evils.'⁴ By this one knows that if he avoids the extremes, he has been rightly guided."⁵

We can now clarify the features of extremism in light of the texts of the Shareeah and divide it into categories in relation to the following:

(1) When the extremism is related to the understanding of the texts. This is via one of two means:

(a) Explaining the text in a very strict manner that is not consistent with the general features of the Shareeah and its primary goals, thus causing hardship upon oneself and upon others.

(b) Delving deeper into the meaning of the revelation, beyond what is needed or required of a Muslim [and beyond what one is capable of understanding, thus ending up in mistaken interpretations due to overexamination]. "The soul's yearning for what is beyond what it can bear or comprehend is the fountainhead of all or most sects."⁶

(2) When the extremism is related to the rulings. This is also via one of various means:

(a) Obliging oneself or others to do what Allah has not obligated as an act of worship and monasticism. The measuring

¹ He was Abu Saeed al-Hasan ibn Yasaar al-Basri, of the Followers. He was the leading scholar of his time and one of the jurists, linguists and pious worshippers. He was born in Madinah and lived in Basrah. He was greatly respected by those around him. He was born in 21 A.H. and died in 110 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 563; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 226.

² Recorded by al-Daarimi.

³ He was Abu Abdullah Mutarrif ibn Abdullah ibn al-Shukhair al-Harashi al-Aamiri, a devoted worshipper of the Major Followers. He was trustworthy. He was born during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He lived in Basrah. He died in 87 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 187; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 10, p. 172; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 250.

⁴ His complete statement was, "The best of matters is its middle path. Virtue is between two evils and the worst of matters is exerting oneself to the utmost [thereby fatiguing oneself]." See ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, *al-Muhijjah fi Siyar al-Dulijah*, p. 18.

⁵ Al-Shanqeeti, *Adhwaa al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, p. 494.

⁶ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 89.

stick for this is what one is able to do without overburdening himself. When one goes beyond that limit, even if the nature of the practice itself is something sanctioned by the Shareeah, it is considered extremism. This is clear in the stories of Zainab and Abu Israaeel.¹ The relative ability and what a person can easily withstand are the issues here. Al-Shaatibi wrote, "The difference between the hardship that is not normally considered hardship and that which is to be considered unacceptable hardship is whether or not the practice, if done on a continual basis, would lead to its being discontinued, totally or partially, or lead to some harm or defect in the person, his wealth or his circumstances. If [any of the latter occur], then it would be considered a type of hardship that falls outside of the normally accepted hardship. If none of those latter matters usually occurs, it would not normally be considered hardship."² The abilities of people differ. If a person burdens himself beyond his ability or if his continual performance of something would lead him to stop performing that act or any other Shareeah sanctioned acts related to the rights of humans, he is then being extreme.³

(b) Forbidding some of the good things Allah has permitted as an act of worship is also a type of extremism, as is made clear in one of the narrations of the hadith of the three, wherein one of them forbade for himself the eating of meat.

(c) Neglecting all or some of the necessities, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, or marrying, is considered a type of extremism. This was also made clear in the hadith mentioned earlier of the three as well as the previously mentioned story of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As.

(3) When the extremism is related to one's attitude toward others. For example, when one praises another to such an extreme that he treats him as being perfect and free of all sin or mistakes. Or, when one censures others to such an extent that he considers all who differ from his way to be disbelievers and outside of the fold of Islam although they are from the people of Islam.

Now, it would be good to make a few comments based on what has preceded:

(1) In reality, extremism is a movement in the direction of the general Shareeah principles and divine commands. However, it is a

¹ These stories were presented earlier. Zainab would hold herself up by a rope when she got tired praying while Abu Israaeel had vowed to fast and stand in the sun and so forth.

² Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafiqaat*, vol. 2, p. 123.

³ This point shall be further elaborated later.

movement that has gone beyond the limits established by the Shareeah itself.¹ It is an exaggeration in the application of the religion and it is not a leaving from the religion in its essence. Indeed, it is a fruit of one's desire to adhere to the religion.²

(2) Extremism is not necessarily always in the form of some act. It can also be in the form of some inaction or avoidance of some act. This would include avoiding what is permissible and considering it to be forbidden, which is a type of extremism when done as a religious act or as a supposed observance of the religion.

(3) Attributing extremism to the religion by saying, "religious extremism" or "religious fanaticism" is truly a misnomer and improper.³ This is because the extremism is in the practice of the religion [by some adherents] and not of the religion itself.⁴ This is why the Quran states it in the following manner,

﴿ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ ﴾

"Do not exceed the bounds in your religion" (*al-Maaidah* 77). And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said it as,

وَأَيَّكُمْ وَالْغُلُوفُ فِي الدِّينِ

"Beware of extremism in the religion."⁵

¹ Cf., Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *al-Tatarruf Ghair al-Jareemah*, pp. 36-37.

² [The author is arguing that the extremist accepts the religion but wants to do even more than what the religion itself requires or allows. However, this statement by the author cannot be taken as true in all cases. In some cases, it is one's complete disapproval and dissatisfaction with the religion that leads one to extremism. In other words, one is not satisfied with what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought and believes that "religion" should have more or be stricter. This could lead to one's complete rejection of the Sunnah, for example, as the way of purification and worship. This is the motive behind the extremism and is, in reality, a rejection of the religion in its essence. Allah knows best.—JZ]

³ [Although the author makes this point, it was decided not to title the work, "Extremism in the Religion..." as his analysis would imply. This decision was made because in English, that makes it sound like there is some aspect of extremism that is found in the religion itself. However, the reality is that the religion of Islam is free of any form of extremism and prohibits extremism. Hence, it was decided to keep the name, "Religious Extremism..." meaning that the extremists' false notion of their religion was the driving force behind their extremism. Allah knows best.—JZ]

⁴ Muhammad Saeed al-Ishmaawi, "*Al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*," *Majallat al-Manaar*, no. 36, p. 81.

⁵ Recorded by Ahmad, ibn Khuzaimah, al-Nasaa'ee and ibn Maajah. Al-Haakim recorded it and said that it is *sahih* according to the standards of al-

(4) The declaration that a particular act is “extreme” requires careful thought and a detailed analysis. One may declare an act “extreme” while in fact it is sound. However, sometimes the means to that act are a type of extremism; this is where the confusion starts. An example of this nature will be given under note (6).

(5) It is not extremism to be as complete and perfect in one’s worship as one can be. Instead, extremism is where one weighs himself down by his acts to an extent that he becomes bored or listless [and desires not to perform them anymore]. One scholar stated, “The meaning is not preventing the seeking of completeness in one’s worship. [Completeness of one’s worship] is obviously a praiseworthy affair. What is meant to be prevented is going to the extreme such that it leads one to boredom or such exaggeration in one’s voluntary deeds that he leaves what is more virtuous.”¹

(6) It is clear in light of what is truly extremism according to the Shareeah that it is neither just nor fair to describe a person as extreme simply because he follows a fiqh opinion that is very strict—at least in the eyes of the one who differs with it—as long as his following of that opinion is built on one of two matters:

(a) a permissible *ijtihaad* made by he who is qualified to make *ijtihaad*, or

(b) for the one who is not qualified to make *ijtihaad*, he is following the statement of a scholar who is considered trustworthy with respect to his religion and knowledge.

If either of these two conditions is met, this is an indication that the person’s following of that opinion is sound and it is free of any whims or desires. This is because the follower of truth does what he is ordered to do with a good intention via *ijtihaad* by one who is qualified to make *ijtihaad* or by following a scholar when one is not qualified to make *ijtihaad*. He then follows the act that he believes is correct. This is a different approach from that of the people of desires, for,

﴿إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ﴾

“They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire” (*al-Najm* 23). They are definitive about what they conclude based on conjecture or desires with a definiteness that is not open

Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Ibn Taimiyyah also declared the hadith *sahih* in *al-Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 289, as did al-Nawawi in *al-Majmoo*, vol. 8, p. 138.

¹ Stated by ibn al-Muneer; quoted from Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 94.

to any critique even though they have no knowledge of that matter. Therefore, they believe what they are not commanded to believe in. They intend what they have not been ordered to intend. They make an *ijtihaad* that is not permissible. In these matters, they are doing evil and exposing themselves to the punishment of Allah. It also should be noted that in addition to desires they have added doubts; hence again they truly deserve to be described as wrong and sinful.

Following a stricter opinion among various opinions is not an indication of extremism. This is so because the stricter opinion may be the correct [or stronger] opinion. Extremism occurs in a very different fashion. For example, it is when a person follows an opinion and then declares those who differ with it to have gone out of the fold of the religion. Or it is when one turns away from the Book of Allah or elevates the opinion of the person he is following to the same level as that of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he supports it without any guidance from Allah. In cases like that, extremism is present. However, the extremism is with respect to the means of achieving a conviction. The conviction itself is not a type of extremism. This is something the early Muslims understood, starting with the Companions themselves. For example, Abdullah ibn Umar was known to be very strict with respect to his *fiqh*. However, he was never labeled with extremism.

Many contemporary Muslims, due to their neglect of this principle, have become amazingly confused concerning the reality of what is extremism, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Principles Related to an Unconditional Declaration of Extremism

The one who analyzes the words of the Lawgiver will find that the attributes used for those who have deviated from the law of Allah, no matter what level of deviation it may be, are not always general, unconditional statements. Instead, the matter differs depending on the level of deviation. If the deviation is great, it is permissible to describe its adherent with a general, unconditional term. If the deviation is less than that, it is not allowed to use such an unconditional term; one may only use a term conditioned by the act he is performing.

[For example,] one can consider the different attributions related to *shirk* (associating partners with Allah), *kufir* (disbelief), *fusooq* (immorality), *dhulm* (wrongdoing), *jahl* (ignorance) and *bidah* (innovation).

Shirk, for example, is of two types. There is a *shirk* that takes one out of the fold of Islam, called the “greater *shirk*.” There is also a type of *shirk* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam, the “lesser *shirk*,” or the *shirk* with respect to some deed, such as acting for the sake of show.¹ In this case, it is not proper to use the attribute of *shirk* [uncategorically calling someone a *mushrik*] except for the one who commits the greater *shirk* that takes him out of the fold of Islam. After giving a number of examples making this point clear, ibn al-Qayyim said, “Note how *shirk*, *kufr*, *fusooq*, *dhulm* and *jahl* are divided [like the case of unbelief is divided into] unbelief that takes one out of the fold of Islam and what does not take one out of the fold of Islam.”²

This same principle applies to the word, “extremism.” It is not proper to describe something as “extremist,” like saying, “So and so is extremist,” or, “Such and such group is extremist,” unless their extremism is so great that it touches the foundations of the religion, regardless of whether it be related to beliefs or to practices. Al-Shaatibi stated while explaining what groups are considered outside of the fold of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, “These sects became sects due to their differences from the saved sect in matters of a general nature related to the religion or general principles of the Shareeah, not simply due [to differences related] to minor or secondary issues.”³

Therefore, the term “extremism” can be applied to the Christians who went to an extreme concerning Jesus and raised him to a divine status. Similarly, it can be used for the Khawaarij and other such groups. Ibn Taimiyyah said, “The heresy that reckons a person to be from the people of desires, according to what is well-known among the people of knowledge of the sunnah, is that which contradicts the Book and the Sunnah, such as the heresy of the Khawaarij, Raafidhah and Murjiah.”^{4,5}

¹ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaat*, p. 52.

² Ibid., p. 52.

³ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 200.

⁴ The Murjiah refers to those who believe that as long as a person has faith, he cannot be in any harm due to any sin. Similarly, one in disbelief cannot be availed by any act of obedience. The original term Murjiah comes from the fact that they “delay” the ruling concerning the one who commits great sins until the Day of Judgment without making any judgment concerning him in this life [that is, as to whether he is a believer, a disbeliever or some middle position]. They also make up a number of sects themselves. Cf., al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, p. 139. Note that al-Shahristaani himself has some Murjiah tendencies.

⁵ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, p. 414.

This does not mean that the other groups have no deviation whatsoever. The point is that minor heresies or innovations [that do not touch the core of the religion] do not reckon a person among the people of heresies in an unconditional sense. Instead, one would say about such a person, "He has gone to an extreme with respect to such and such act," or, "He has a heresy in such and such matter." To simply describe him as an extremist without making such a conditional statement would be an incorrect use of terms. In fact, it would be a generalization in judgment that is similar to what the extremists themselves are accused of, as it is a generalization of disbelief or immorality without adhering to the Shareeah restrictions and parameters on this issue.

Another point that should be mentioned with respect to the terms that are used is that one should do one's best to use the same terms that are mentioned by the Shareeah. In particular, one should use the word الغلو ("extremism") as it is the term that is used in the Quran and Sunnah. "To express truths by the expressions of the prophetic and divine Shareeah is the way of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*."¹ On the other hand, the word التطرف (*al-tatarruf*) is a modern term that is not from the expressions of the Shareeah and I also do not find it used by the people of knowledge save in a very small number of passages by ibn Taimiyyah.²

At the same time, there is no prohibition in discussing with people according to their own terminology and language. But only if such is needed and if the meanings expressed are correct and sound.³ However, I would recommend staying away from such terminology because most times their usage becomes a usage that is not completely consistent with the intentions of the Lawgiver. Furthermore, the terms of the Shareeah are recommended on a religious basis. Hence, they are better and safer to be used.

Take for example the word الأصوليين "the *usooliyeen*" ("fundamentalists"). This is a word that was taken from foreign languages without completely realizing its meaning. In English, this refers to fundamentalists, which is a reference to a particular religious group among the Christians who have their own characteristics and beliefs.⁴

It should also be recognized that there are some other Shareeah terms that have some proximity to the term "extremism,"

¹ Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 70-71.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 375; vol. 13, p. 358.

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 306.

⁴ Cf., Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 5. This will be discussed further later.

such as *al-tanata'*, *taamaq* and *al-tashaddud* [discussed earlier]. Furthermore, there are also other terms that have a more general-more specific relationship with "extremism," such as the words *al-bidah* (heresy) and *al-baghi* (transgression). Similarly, the way the early scholars used the term "people of desires" was inclusive of both the people of heresies and the people of extremism.¹

As for the word *Khawaarij*, it also has a *Shareeah* usage. It includes anyone who revolts against a rightful ruler, whom the community has agreed to accept, concerning any type of pledge. However, it is often used incorrectly. The most important condition for someone to be called one of the *Khawaarij* is if he revolts against the rightful ruler that the community has agreed to accept.²

¹ For the use of those terms, see *Sunan al-Daarimi*, vol. 1, pp. 44, 50 and 90; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 278; *al-Mausooah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, vol. 7, p. 100.

² Cf., al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, p. 114; ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 476 and 495-496.

Chapter Two: The Roots of Extremism in the Religion and Its Nature in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

The Roots of Extremism in the Religion in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

Historical Roots

Extremism is an ancient phenomenon predating the divine messages.¹ Those who were invited to respond to the divine message were of different leanings, and some of them went to an extreme. Noah (peace be upon him) was sent due to the appearance of extremism among his people wherein they went to an extreme with respect to their admiration of a group of pious people in the past, to the point that they raised them to divine status. Great forms of extremism also appeared among the Tribes of Israel. This is why two verses prohibiting extremism were directly addressed to the Tribes of Israel.²

During the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) extremism first appeared in many different instances. However, it basically took one of two forms:

¹ [The author here is referring to Noah (peace be upon him) is the first messenger. Otherwise, the divine message via the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) had existed since the beginning of the creation of man. Allah knows best.—JZ]

² Those verses are *al-Nisaa* 171 and *al-Maaidah* 77.

(1) The seeds of belief-related extremism: This is manifested in the [earlier discussed] hadith concerning Dhu-l-Khuwaisirah who objected to the Prophet's distribution of the war booty. In that hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated,

إِنَّ مِنْ ضَيْضِيِّ هَذَا قَوْمًا يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَا يُجَاوِزُ حَنَاجِرَهُمْ يَقْتُلُونَ
أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ وَيَدْعُونَ أَهْلَ الْأَوْثَانِ

“Verily, from the descendants of that [person] there will be a people who recite the Quran but it will not penetrate beyond their throats; they will slaughter the people of Islam and invite the idol worshipping people.”¹

(2) Extremism with respect to certain deeds: This occurred on numerous occasions during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). [Examples of this nature have already been given.]

Extremism with respect to certain deeds is something that will be done by specific individuals in virtually any time and place. It is not what concerns us when we wish to speak about the historical roots of extremism as it is an individual affair that could occur in any environment.

It is the belief-related extremism whose historical roots need to be studied because it is an entity in and of itself. It was the cause for the shedding of blood and beginning of wars. Furthermore, its events and occurrence are connected to each other in a variety of ways. For example, there may be a historical connection between them in the sense that some forms of extremism grow out of other forms. Or there may be an intellectual connection, wherein the form of the new is the same as the old, even though there is no historical connection between them. This extreme is the remains of the seed that was witnessed during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the person of [above mentioned] Dhu-l-Khuwaisirah. However, it lay dormant behind a barrier until that door was broken and the trials and tribulations followed one after another. That barrier was Umar ibn al-Khattaab.² Hudhaifah

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² He was the rightly-guided caliph and just ruler Umar ibn al-Khattaab ibn Nufail ibn Abdul Uza, the second of the rightly-guided caliphs. He was a very brave and serious man. Due to his justice, he would punish anyone no matter what their status. He was the first to designate the Hijri calendar,

ibn al-Yamaan narrated that they were with Umar when he said, "Who has memorized the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning the trials and tribulations exactly as he expressed it." Hudhaifah said, "I have." Umar said to him, "You are indeed bold. What did he say?" Hudhaifah said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say,

فِتْنَةُ الرَّجُلِ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَمَالِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَجَارِهِ تُكَفِّرُهَا الصَّلَاةُ وَالصَّوْمُ
وَالصَّدَقَةُ وَالْأَمْرُ وَالنَّهْيُ

'The trials of a man with respect to his family, wealth, children and neighbor are expiated by the prayer, fasting, charity, ordering [good] and eradicating [evil].'" Umar said, "That is not what I want. I am talking about [the trials] that will surge like the waves of an ocean." Hudhaifah then said, "What do you have to do with that, O Commander of the Faithful? Between you and it there is a barrier." Umar said, "Is the barrier going to be broken or opened?" Hudhaifah said, "No, it certainly will be broken." Umar said, "Then it will never be closed again." The people said to Hudhaifah, "Did Umar know who was the barrier?" Hudhaifah said, "Yes, just like one knows that before tomorrow is tonight. I narrated to him a hadith that contained no errors." The narrator of the hadith said, "We quickly wanted to ask Hudhaifah who was the barrier. We told Masrooq¹ to ask him and he replied, 'It was Umar.'"²

The breaking of that door was the murder of Umar and the beginning of the tribulations, civil war and division. The biased opportunists took advantage of the situation. They kindled a hatred for Uthmaan ibn Affaan³ until their sinful hands reached him and

have a public treasury and institute the public registrar. During his rule, many lands were conquered, including al-Shaam, Iraq, al-Madain, Egypt and al-Jazeera. He was killed by Abu Luluah, the Magian, in 23 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 74; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 46.

¹ He was Masrooq ibn al-Ajda ibn Maalik al-Hamadaani, a trustworthy Follower. He was from Yemen and came to Madinah during the time of Abu Bakr. He also lived in Koofah. He was a jurist who was knowledgeable of religious verdicts (*fatwas*). He died in 63 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 63; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 215.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi.

³ He was Uthmaan ibn Affaan ibn Abi al-As ibn Umayyah al-Qurashi, the third rightly-guided caliph. During his rule, Armenia, Quqaz and Cyprus were conquered. He gathered the people together on one *mushaf*. He was killed, after being surrounded for forty days, while he was reading the

they killed him. His killing was the fuse that lit the fire of the disastrous *fitnah* (trials and division) wherein even the Companions themselves differed. A group of them felt that it was a must to immediately get retribution for the death of Uthmaan. However, another group felt that that needed to be postponed until the government could regain its control and strength after which the proper authorities could seek the killers of Uthmaan.¹ This difference of opinion was played out in the Battle of al-Jamal. But those who ignited the trials and tribulations played a great role in this as it was after the Companions had reconciled that the civil war and the fighting took place. It was neither of the two mentioned groups who started this confrontation. It was the biased opportunists with their personal interests who started it.² After the Battle of al-Jamal there occurred the Battle of Siffeen between Ali and his supporters and Muawiyah³ and his supporters. That era had the greatest effect on spreading the trials and tribulations as well as initiating sects. Indeed, the incident of the arbitration [to bring an end to the fighting] is considered the event that led to formation of the two greatest extremist sects in the history of Islam, the Khawaarij and the Raafidhah (Shiah).⁴

Quran on the morning of *Eid al-Adha* in 35 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 391; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 210.

¹ Cf., Ahmad Muhammad Jali, *Diraasah an al-Firaq fi Tareekh al-Muslimeen*, pp. 29-30.

² Cf., Ahmad Raatib Armoosh, *al-Fitnah wa Waqiah al-Jamal bi-Riwaayah Saif ibn Umar al-Dhabi*, pp. 144-179. Also see Ahmad Muhammad Jali, *Diraasah an al-Firaq fi Tareekh al-Muslimeen*, pp. 29-30.

³ He was the noble Companion Muaawiyah ibn Abi Sufyaan ibn Sakhar ibn Harb al-Qurashi al-Umawwi. He was born in Makkah and embraced Islam on the day it was conquered. He used to record the revelation [from the Prophet's dictation]. He was appointed governor over Jordan during the time of Umar. Uthmaan gave him jurisdiction over all of al-Shaam. When Ali became the caliph, he removed Muaawiyah from his post. There then started a war between Ali and Muaawiyah, wherein both of them were *mujtahideen*, seeking to do what was right. Afterwards, he was given the oath of allegiance as caliph. He died in Damascus in 60 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 119; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 262.

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 13, pp. 32 and 208. It should be noted that the Khawaarij had a very clear beginning as a separate entity in the incident of the arbitration. On the other hand, the Raafidhah did not really have a clear historical beginning. Indeed, the historians differ greatly as to their beginnings. In any case, after the Khawaarij appeared, the two warring factions were clearly evident and set upon their diverging ways. Cf., Ahmad Jali, *Diraasah an al-Firaq*, pp. 88-101; Irfaan Abdul Majeed, *Diraasaat fi al-Firaq*, p. 25.

Both of those groups were extremists. However, on some points they were on opposite sides of the spectrum of the same issue. For example:

(1) With respect to having loyalty and disassociation (*al-walaa wa al-baraa*), the Khawaarij went to an extreme by disassociating themselves from the Companions, including Ali ibn Abi Taalib. However, the Raafidhah went to an extreme concerning their loyalty to Ali ibn Abi Talib and his descendants.

(2) They agree [in both going to an extreme] with respect to declaring others disbelievers, as they both did that. However, they disagreed about what makes a person a disbeliever and who is a disbeliever.¹ After them followed the different sects of Islamic history [revolving around this issue], such as the Murjihah, Qadariyyah, Mutazilah and others.

However, the question that concerns this researcher is whether or not the contemporary extremism is a child of this past extremism. The factor that prompts this question is that the views of the contemporary extremists are to a great extent consistent with the views of those extremists of the past, in particular the Khawaarij and Raafidhah in a general sense. This is what most of the contemporary writers on this topic have also concluded.²

To make the matter clearer, I shall present a number of the views of contemporary extremists that are the same in principle with the views of the Kharaawij or Raafidhah, which are ascribed to both of these sets of extremists:

- (1) Declaring the performer of a great sin to be a disbeliever.³
- (2) Completely separating oneself from the society.⁴
- (3) Declaring the one who lives [in the evil society] without emigrating to be a disbeliever.⁵

¹ For the general beliefs of the Khawaarij, see al-Shahrastaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 114-138; for the general beliefs of the Raafidhah, see al-Shahrastaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 146-190.

² See, for example, Ahmad Muhammad Jali, *Diraasah an al-Firaq*, pp. 79-82; Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *Hawaar La Mawaajahah*, p. 67; Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukm wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 77.

³ See the views of the Khawaarij on this point in al-Shahrastaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, p. 115, and the views of the contemporaries later in this work.

⁴ See the views of the Azaariqah of the Khawaarij in Muhammad Ridha al-Dakheeli, *Firqah al-Azaariqah*, p. 80, and the views of the contemporaries later in this work.

⁵ See the views of the Khawaarij on this point in al-Shahrastaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, p. 121, and the views of the contemporaries later in this work.

(4) The belief that the land of the Muslims is the land of disbelief and it is permissible to shed blood therein.¹

(5) What they term, “the psychological or sensory detachment.”²

Although this similarity is clear, does it mean that the contemporary extremists took from the Khawaarij and the Shiah? On this point, there is a difference of opinion among the researchers.

Some of them conclude that the extremists of today took from the Khawaarij and their thought. Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd³ wrote, “We can conclude that Khawaarij thought was and still is one of the springs which produce many of the opinions of these new extremists from the youth.”⁴ Al-Bahinsaawi⁵ also leans to that conclusion, as he said, “The source of this thought was from the Khawaarij.”⁶ Another contemporary author concurs with that conclusion in a work entitled [what can be translated as,] “*The Roots of the Fitnah among Islamic Sects from the time of the Messenger until the Assassination of Sadat.*”⁷

¹ See the views of the Azaariqah of the Khawaarij in al-Baghdaadi, *al-Farq bain al-Firaq*, p. 84, and the views of the contemporaries later in this work.

² This concept among the Raafidhah is what they call *al-taqiyyah* [wherein they blatantly lie to non-Raafidhah to deceive them and live among them while in their hearts they harbor hatred and want to have nothing to do with them]. Cf., Moosa ibn Jaarullah, *Al-Washeeah fi Aqaaid al-Sheeah*, p. 116. Also see the views of the contemporaries later in this work.

³ He is a contemporary Egyptian writer who researches the topic of extremism. He was a minister of information. Currently, he is a professor and head of the Law Department, Cairo University. He has many writings, including *Hawaar la Muwaajahah*. See the cover of his research *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu* [for more on his life].

⁴ *Hawaar la Muwaajahah*, p. 67. It is important to note that the greatest tie that Abu al-Majd makes between the Khawaarij and contemporary extremists deals with *al-Haakimiyyah* [the concept that the law of Allah must prevail]. He treats that as equivalent to the [Khawaarij] slogan, “There is no rule except by Allah,” although there is some difference between these two as shall be detailed and critiqued later in this work.

⁵ Saalim al-Bahinsaawi is a contemporary Egyptian author. He was imprisoned during the time of Gamal Abdul Nasser and he witnessed the beginnings of the [contemporary] extremism. He had debates with its proponents. He has produced a number of works, including *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*. He is currently working as an advisor in Kuwait.

⁶ *Al-Hukm wa Qadhiyah al-Takfeer*, p. 77.

⁷ Its author was Lieutenant Hasan Saadiq. Sadat was the previous president of Egypt. Muhammad Anwar Sadat was born in 1918 C.E. and was an officer among the “freedom fighters” who overthrew the government in Egypt. He was killed in 1981 C.E. Cf., Moosa Sabri, *al-Saadaat al-Faqeeqah wa al-Asatoorah*.

One professor is of the view that the contemporary extremists did not take anything from the thoughts of the Khawaarij or Shiah. It is simply, "a type of strange coincidence in thought that leads to the exact same results."¹ At the same time, he does not deny that some extremists, "studied those sects and were influenced by their beliefs and what they reached of thought and what they used as evidence."²

The opinion that is evident to me from my research on the roots of extremism and its connection with the sects, in particular the Khawaarij, is made clear in the following:

First, the [current] extremism in its earliest stage had no connection with the thought of the Khawaarij, Raafidhah or any other sect. In fact, there was no connection whatsoever between them, as proven by the following facts:

(1) In the time and place in which this phenomenon appeared, it was not easy for them to have been in touch with the books that discussed the deviant sects. When a professor was discussing their opinions and their roots with one of the people accused of extremism and that the Khawaarij had the same views, the professor said, "That is impossible. These rulings are the child of prison cells and the understanding that is distant from any book. There was not with any of them any book, not even a copy of the Quran, as they were taken from us. What these youth concluded was the result of their own thinking based on what they had memorized of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."³

(2) The extremism occurred after there was a new discussion of recent issues. Hence, it was a child of the circumstances and events. Its first members had no agreed upon principles that they were starting from.

(3) Most of the members who began the extremist movement—although not all of them—were ignorant and not specialized in Islamic sciences. They had never seen any of those books. That is why, when someone was discussing with them their opinions that could be found in *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* by al-Shahristaani⁴ and other books on the sects, some of the extremists

¹ Numan al-Samura'a'ee, *al-Takfeer: Judhooruhu, Asbaabuhu wa Mabruaatuhu*, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴ He was Abu al-Fath Muhammad ibn Abdul Kareem ibn Ahmad al-Shahristaani. He was born in Shahristaan in 479 A.H. He was a scholar of philosophical schools and religions. He lived in Baghdad. He died in

said that they had never heard of those books. Others said that they had heard of them but had never seen them.¹

(4) Among those who fell into extremism were some who recanted from their views once they found out that they were rooted in the Khawaarij. This is an indication that they thought they were the first with those ideas.²

Secondly, in the later stages, the extremists, especially those who took the role of leaders, became familiar with the thoughts of the Khawaarij. Perhaps they took from them in some fashion. The following facts may indicate this:

(1) Those who debated with the extremists made it clear to them that the Khawaarij and other sects had already had those opinions and this drove the extremists to study those sects.³

(2) The leaders of the extremists would forbid their followers from reading history books. The only explanation for this is their fear of the knowledge of the Khawaarij and their opinions as discussed in those books.⁴

(3) The evolution of their thought and strengths of their arguments in their later stages indicate their reliance upon those who predated their opinions.

(5) Some of the beliefs that the extremists held, such as their extremism in considering the doer of major sins to be a disbeliever, were "proven" by them in virtually the same manner that the Khawaarij argued their point.

Similarly, their extreme of censuring the *muqallid* [the one who sticks to the opinion of his Imam] was virtually consistent with what al-Shaukaani⁵ and ibn Hazm⁶ wrote censuring the *muqallid*,

Shahristaan in 548 A.H. One of his books was *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 20, p. 286; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 215.

¹ Cf., al-Samura'a'ee, *al-Takfeer*, p. 12.

² Al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 179.

³ Cf., al-Sumara'a'ee, *al-Takfeer*, p. 17; al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 179.

⁴ Cf., Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi-ghair ma Anzala-Allah wa Ahl al-Ghuloo*, p. 260.

⁵ He was Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, jurist, *mujtahid*, from the leading scholars of Yemen. He was born in Khulaan and grew up in Sana. He was its chief judge. He wrote one hundred and fourteen works, including *Nail al-Autaaar* and *Irshaad al-Fahool*. He died in 1250 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 298.

⁶ He was Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Saeed ibn Hazm, the scholar of Andalusia. He was born in Cordoba. He held opinions for which he was highly criticized. He was strong in argument and vicious against his opponents. He had a number of writings, the most famous being *al-*

although the extremists differed with those two Imams [with respect to the final conclusion] on that issue, without ascribing these views to those two.¹

This shows that the influence of the ancient sects upon the contemporary extremists came later not earlier. Its influence was limited to lending supporting arguments to the extremist movement and had nothing to do with bringing about its formation. Its existence was the result of other factors. This is not meant as exoneration for the sphere of the extremists nor is it a vindication for what they were involved in. It is simply a presentation of the historical roots of their thoughts that helps in getting a concept and understanding of this issue and which, afterwards, may help lead to the sound and right cure.

If this is clear, then the key behind the similarities between the thoughts of the Khawaarij and those of contemporary extremists is made evident in the following aspects:

(1) Similarity in the methodologies of thinking in the two groups: The thought methodologies that both groups employed to come to their conclusions were amazingly similar. This is what made many of their opinions very similar, if not exactly alike. This shall be demonstrated later.

(2) Similarity in the intellectual climates of the two groups: The intellectual circumstances in which the Khawaarij and the contemporary extremists lived are very similar in some ways. Both groups are clearly characterized by one aspect: ignorance. [As in the hadith quoted earlier,] "They recite the Quran but it will not penetrate beyond their throats." Furthermore, the evolution of their thought was also parallel, in that they began by going to an extreme in declaring others disbelievers and evolved into other extreme views. It appears that the contemporary extremists did not meet together at the beginning upon some clear, general principles. The beginning of their extremism was simply the declaring of the ruler to be a disbeliever. Then their form of extremism evolved from that in the course of their practical experiences.

Similarly, the Khawaarij of old did not come together on a particular principle. "In fact, at the beginning they gathered around different slogans, such as their statement that there is no rule except with Allah and their declaring those who fought them to be disbelievers and that it was allowed to kill and fight them. In the

Muhalla. He died in 456 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 184; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 254.

¹ Zain al-Abideen, pp. 48-50.

course of their experiences, the Khawaarij formed general principles around the problems they were instigating or for which they were one faction of the problem, such as the issue of the Imam, the issue of the one who does a great sin and the ruler concerning his disbelief or belief.”¹

Ideological Roots

In most cases, views and thoughts are not free of any connections, cut off at the roots. Indeed, usually there are clear and distinctive connections. One can divide the intellectual roots of thoughts into two classifications:

(1) The general views that tie all the opinions and thoughts together and from which are produced most of their opinions.

(2) Flaws in the formulating of ideology. This is found in two facets:

(a) Ignorance, meaning either completely lacking knowledge or being deficient in knowledge.

(b) Faulty methodology.

I shall apply these points to extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims in a way that will demonstrate the reality and nature of this extremism.

First: *Al-Haakimiyyah* and Its Relation to the Appearance of Extremism²

Submitting to Allah and acceptance of His Law is one of the necessary parts of Islam and an obligatory result of the testimony that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. [Allah says,]

¹ Ahmad Muhammad Jali, *Diraasah an al-Firaq fi Tareekh al-Muslimeen*, p. 47.

² [*Al-Haakimiyyah* is the belief that Allah is the only true and rightful Lawgiver and that all laws must be subservient to or in conformity with what Allah has revealed. All scholars agree that this belief is proper and correct. However, it has been implemented or applied in ways that are clearly extremism. Note that the author is not discussing the issue of making *tauheed al-haakimiyyah* a “fourth branch of the branches of *tauheed*,” an issue which has caused a great stir and commotion in the past few years. The author is simply discussing the unanimously accepted concept of *haakimiyyah* and how it was misunderstood and misapplied by the extremists.—JZ]

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴾

“It is not fitting for a believing man or believing woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision: if anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path” (*al-Ahzaab* 36). This belief is presented via many different manners in the Noble Quran, including:

(1) The style of all-inclusiveness, wherein it restricts the rule to only Allah. [Allah says,]

﴿ إِنْ أَلْحَمَّ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمْرًا أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ ۗ ﴾

“The Command is for none but Allah: He has commanded that you worship none but Him” (*Yusuf* 40).

(2) The style of rebuking, as Allah rebukes those who desire any other rule. [Allah says,]

﴿ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

﴿ يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

“Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah” (*al-Maaidah* 50). Ibn Katheer stated, “Allah rebukes those who go outside of the rule of Allah which is inclusive of every good and prohibits every evil. Instead, they turn to other opinions, desires and terminologies that have been laid down by men without any source in the Shareeah, in the same way that the people of Ignorance would rule by their misguidance and ignorance as they laid down laws with their opinions and desires.”¹

(3) Faith is negated for the one who does not go to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as the final arbiter. The use of both negation and swearing has emphasized this negation. Allah says,

¹ Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem*, vol. 2, p. 67.

﴿ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِيْٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

“But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest submission” (*al-Nisaa* 65). Ibn Taimiyyah said, “No one may judge between any of Allah’s creation, not between the Muslims nor between the disbelievers... except by the rule of Allah and His Messenger.”¹

This point is affirmed in the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the statements of the scholars.² The Muslim world actually lived under this rule for many centuries. The rule was only for Allah until the cultural invasion and colonialism appeared. European laws made roadways into the Ottoman caliphate when it became weak and filled with disease. The enemies of the caliphate were being deceptive when they claimed that only by implementing Western laws could the caliphate overcome its weakness and be revived. In 1840 C.E. the first law contradicting Islam was promulgated in a Muslim land, deriving its rules from foreign sources. This was the new penal law of the Ottoman State. Then, step by step, other laws were adopted by that state until Islamic law was completely removed in 1348 A.H.³ After the period of colonialism, under which most of the Muslim lands suffered, the Muslims inherited the art of making man-made laws. The laws of France, England and Switzerland were the basis for governance and law. In most cases, Islamic law was relegated to the realm of the individual with himself or in his relationship with others. Thereby, there appeared the opposing of the law of Allah by belittling the pillars of the faith and openly displaying forbidden acts. A number of scholars and callers to Islam tried to wake the people up to what was going on and revive in them the feeling of Islam. They called the people to rule by the law of Allah. This led to a new term, *al-haakimiyyah*.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, p. 408.

² Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab, *Kitaab al-Tauheed*, with its two commentaries *Qurrah Uyoon al-Muwahiddeen* by Abdul Rahmaan ibn Hasan, p. 192 and *Fath al-Majeed*, pp. 320-335; Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem, *Tahkeem al-Qawaaneen*, *passim*; Abdul Azeez ibn Baaz, *Wujoob Tahkeem Sharullaah wa Nabadh Ma Khaalifuhu*, *passim*.

³ Cf., Umar al-Ashqar, *Al-Shareeah al-Uluhiyyah*, pp. 64-67.

Haakimiyyah, as Abul Ala Maudoodi¹ stated, "This word is used for the supreme authority and absolute authority, as referred to in the terminology of today's political science. There is no meaning to an individual or group of individuals or committee being the ruler except in the sense of the law [being laid down by them and being the rule of the land]. They have complete authority and general, unrestricted dominion to implement their rule among the individuals of the country. They are forced to obey them, willingly or unwillingly."²

Abul Ala Maudoodi reiterated, in his book *al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah* [Four Basic Quranic Terms] that one of the requirements of Godhood is that the right of ruling and legislating is for Allah. He said, "The one who has no authority cannot be a god and he should not be taken as a god. He [with the authority] alone is the one who should be taken as a God."³

Sayyid Qutb⁴ also had numerous writings on this topic. In fact, he is the one who spread and broadcasted this term; he also explained its meaning in many places in his works. For example, he said, "The *haakimiyyah* is for Allah and the right to have humans worship Him. The right to lay down laws for them also belongs to Him. These are from the greatest specific characteristics of Godhood that no one who believes in Allah would ever claim for himself nor would any believer in Allah approve of that for anyone else. As for the one who claims for himself the right of *haakimiyyah* and the right to have mankind serve him due to the laws he made for them from his own self, he is in fact claiming for himself the right of Godhood..."⁵

¹ He was Professor Abul Ala Maudoodi, from the contemporary callers to Islam. He was born in India in 1903 C.E. in a family of piety and knowledge. He was self-taught and became a journalist. In 1361 A.H. he formed al-Jamaah al-Islaamiyyah. It had a very large role in the formation of Pakistan as a country. He died in 1399 A.H. Cf., Fathi Yakin, *al-Mausooah al-Harakiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 13-18.

² Maudoodi, *Tadween al-Dustoor*, from *Majmooah Nadhariyyah al-Islaam wa Hadyihi*, p. 251.

³ Maudoodi, *al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah*, p. 29.

⁴ He was Sayyid ibn Qutb ibn Ibraaheem, from the callers to Islam and *mujahideen* of the 20th Century. He was born in Asyut. He graduated from Kulliyah Daar al-Uloom and then was sent to the United States for further studies. He returned as a critic of whatever differed from Islam. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood. He was tortured and imprisoned. He devoted himself to writing and produced the Quranic commentary *Fi Dhilaal al-Quran* and other books. He died as a martyr, Allah willing, in 1387 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 148.

⁵ *Muqawwimaat al-Tasawur*, p. 177; Also see *Mualim fi al-Tareeq*, p. 118.

Here is an important issue. This terminology was started, and it was a newly coined term, as a result of translating some Western terms into Arabic. This does not mean that it was inconsistent with Islam. The source for it exists; it is a part of *tauheed al-uluhiyyah* or the oneness of Godhood. The scholars of the past spoke about *haakimiyyah* and greatly elaborated on it. The new or recent aspect was only the term itself. To revive that belief and to philosophize about it in [this new] manner was simply the result of the crisis that the Islamic World was undergoing due to the law of Allah being completely absent [from their governments]. Hence, the issue was presented in this manner to revive it in the thoughts and conscience of the Muslims and to make it easier for them to understand it, so that they may live it practically as it was lived by those before them.

This *haakimiyyah* issue is the major ideological root for extremism in contemporary times. Indeed, ruling by other than what Allah revealed was the major grievance of the Islamic fronts and of those among them that went to extremes. However, at the same time, that grievance was also associated with an incorrect understanding of the concept of *haakimiyyah*. Some of the researchers on the topic of extremism pointed this out, as one of them entitled his work, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim* ["The Rule and the Issue of Declaring a Muslim to be a Disbeliever], and another entitled his work, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzalallaah wa Ahl al-Ghulu* [Ruling by Other than What Allah Revealed and the Extremists]. One of them, Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, who is considered one of the eyewitnesses to the evolution of extremist thought in one of the Muslim lands, declared that one of the first debates that occurred in the prisons and which was the root of extremism was centered around the issue of *haakimiyyah*. As an example, one of the prisoners responded to the question of why they did not give allegiance to their rulers by saying that they differed with the rulers because the rulers had become partners with Allah, making the people submit to worshipping them rather than Allah.¹

Upon following up the beliefs and actions of the extremism phenomenon, we find that most of it revolves around the issue of ruling by other than what Allah revealed. I shall give a number of examples demonstrating this point:

(1) Declaring the one who lives in the [immoral] society and does not emigrate to be a disbeliever: This stance and declaration

¹ *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah al-Takfeer*, p. 23.

goes back to a number of justifications, including the fact that the land is a land of *kufir* (disbelief) and the society is a *jahiliyyah* (ignorant) society. All of those points go back to the fact that the country is being ruled by other than what Allah revealed.

(2) Revolting against the rulers: The main point justifying such revolts is the declaration that the ruler who is not ruling by what Allah revealed is a disbeliever.

(3) Going to an extreme with respect to the concept of *taqleed* and in censuring *taqleed*: This is due to their conception of *taqleed*. They see it as absolute obedience and such absolute obedience must be only for Allah. Therefore, they declare the *muqallid*¹ to be a disbeliever because he is accepting a lawgiver other than Allah and following a path other than that of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Many of the aspects of extremism are of that nature, parts of it taking from each other until it becomes like a circular argument going back to the issue of *haakimiyyah*.

If it is concluded that the major root of extremism was *haakimiyyah* in one sense and the existence of ruling by other than what Allah revealed and, in another sense, due to an incorrect conception of *haakimiyyah*, it is necessary to point out the following important facts:

The First Fact:

The statement that the *haakimiyyah* or rule is only for Allah does not mean that a special group of humans is to rule as if they were the shadow of Allah upon earth. Nor does it mean that any group has earned a special right for divine rule. Instead, it is an obligation upon all Muslims and believers to rule by the law and authority of Allah and to make the divine law, which has come from Allah via His prophets and messengers, supreme. [Allah says,]

﴿ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ

فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land inheritance (of power)” (*al-Noor* 55). Whenever it is argued that the *haakimiyyah* means that a special group of people has the right to rule, as they are Allah’s shadow on earth, then it becomes a form of

¹ [The one who makes *taqleed*.]

extremism. It is not known that these extremists ever called to anything of that nature.

The Second Fact:

The statement that the issue of *haakimiyyah* is the main ideological root of extremism does not mean that *haakimiyyah* itself is extremism or that it is a mistaken concept, as some writers have actually stated in describing what they term, “the ideological tools” of the extremist groups. One such writer wrote, “From [among those tools] is the idea of the rule [*haakimiyyah*] being for Allah alone... and what that implies of taking the legal authority out of the hands of the society... Their extreme on this point is a sick extreme that is rooted in ignorance and which has no measure for it in the well-being of the people or the goals of the Shareeah. This was the thought of Maudoodi and, following him, Sayyid Qutb... It was then found on the tongues and pens of thousands of youth. It is a true statement that spread to become great evil. It was distorted from its original meaning and used for what it was not intended.”¹

Nor is the call to *haakimiyyah* taken from some external source, as is believed by Muhammad Amaarah.² Amaarah stated, “The slogan of *haakimiyyah* in its very beginning had no connection with Islamic political thought... not even in its Maudoodi-type form which is a representation of the reality of contemporary Islamic thought or as a necessity of the Islamic revival in our Arab nation. It is a slogan that has come from outside of our ancient heritage and recent thinking. Those who first came up with this concept have abandoned it. And the essence of Maudoodi’s thought from him is different from what the others understood from him, both his supporters and his enemies. It is not far-fetched to say it is a misconception.”

In fact, *al-haakimiyyah* is something affirmed in numerous texts of the Quran and Sunnah. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and his caliphs applied it, applying the law of Allah in actual practice. The extremism occurred in its impact. The effect of the statement of *al-haakmiyyah* may be pictured as follows:

People are ruling by other than what Allah revealed. This results in a condemnation of that rule and a call to rule according to

¹ Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *Hawaar la Muwaajjahah*, p. 57.

² He is a contemporary Egyptian, devoted to writing. He has modernist tendencies. He finished his doctorate. He has many writings, over sixty books, including *al-Islam wa Filsifah al-Hukum*, *Tayaaraat al-Fikr al-Islaami* and *al-Amaal al-Kaamilah li-l-Imaam Abduh*.

what Allah revealed. When this call is not responded to, the result is the response of declaring the ruler who rules not by what Allah revealed to be a disbeliever and all of the corresponding corollaries of extremism then follow from that root.

The Third Fact:

The point wherein those who labeled the calling to *al-haakimiyyah* itself as a type of extremism erred was in equating the *haakimiyyah* of Allah with the slogan of the Khawaarij, "There is no rule but by Allah." This is what one writer deduced on this topic, when he wrote, "It is to be noted that Qutb was influenced in his understanding of that conception by the slogan of the Khawaarij on the eve of the Umayyad dynasty", 'There is no *haakimiyyah* except for Allah.'² In fact, some emphasize that the slogan of *haakimiyyah* is exactly the same as the slogan of the Khawaarij, "There is no rule except for Allah."³

In order to clearly distinguish what the Khawaarij criticized the rightly-guided caliph Ali ibn Abi Taalib for and the misconceptions that led to the slogan, "There is no rule except for Allah," and its meaning, I must clarify the following:

The Khawaarij did not resent Ali because he had ruled by other than what Allah had revealed—in reality. Instead, they resented him because he accepted the arbiters and, they claimed, that that was a type of ruling by other than what Allah revealed. Therefore, they said to Ali while debating with him, "You came out of the garment that Allah had clothed you with and from the name by which Allah named you. Then you went and made a judgment in the religion of Allah while there is no rule except for Allah."⁴

This is clearly a form of extremism as they meant to remove humans from any form of applying the law of Allah. For that reason,

¹ This is a historical mistake as it is well-known that the cry of the Khawaarij with that slogan was after the Battle of Siffeen and after the famous arbitration. Cf., ibn Katheer, *al-Bidaayah wa al-Nihaayah*, vol. 7, p. 276. Furthermore, the cry was, "There is no rule (*hukum*) except for Allah," and not, "There is no *haakimiyyah* except for Allah."

² Muhammad Haafidh Diyaab, *Sayyid Qutb: al-Khitaab wa al-Aiduloojiyyah*, p. 129.

³ Cf., Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *Hawaar la Muwaajahah*, p. 67; Muhammad Saeed al-Ashmaawi, *al-Islam wa al-Siyaasa*, p. 28.

⁴ Recorded by Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 86. Ibn Katheer said, "Ahmad alone recorded it. Its chain is *sahih* and al-Dhiyaa chose it for his choice collection." *Al-Bidaayah wa al-Nihaayah*, vol. 7, p. 28.

Ali ibn Abi Taalib responded to them by saying, "A statement of truth by which is intended falsehood."¹

That is, the statement that the rule belongs to Allah is a fact. It is in the Quran:

﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾

"Verily, the rule is for none but Allah" (*al-Anaam* 57; *Yoosuf* 40 and 67). However, the ones who were saying it were intending to prohibit any human from making a ruling in application of the rule of Allah. This is a false view. Ibn Hajar stated, "The first statement that came from them was their statement that the rule is only for Allah. They took it from the Quran and then applied it not in its proper place."²

Their mistake can be made clear by mentioning a number of texts that refute their view. These are as follows:

(1) Allah says,

﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا﴾

"If you fear a breach between the two [the husband and the wife], appoint (two) arbiters (*hakam*), one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation" (*al-Nisaa* 35). Ali ibn Abi Taalib refuted the Khawarij with this verse. He said to a group of his companions, "As for your comrades, those who have revolted, between me and them is the Book of Allah. Allah says in His Book about the wife and the husband, 'If you fear a breach between the two [the husband and the wife], appoint (two) arbiters (*hakam*), one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation.' The Nation of Muhammad has greater right with respect to their blood and honor than a wife and husband."³

(2) Allah says to the Prophet David (peace be upon him) in the Quran,

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 619.

³ This is a portion of the report just quoted from Ahmad alone, concerning which ibn Kather said its chain is sound.

﴿يَدَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾

“O David! We did indeed make you a successor on earth: so judge (*fahkam*) you between men in truth (and justice) and follow not the lusts, for they will mislead you from the Path of Allah” (*Saad* 26).

(3) Shuraih ibn Haani¹ narrated about his father² who, when he came with his people’s delegation to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard them referring to him as Abu al-Hakam (“the father of arbitration”). The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called him and told him,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَكَمُ وَإِلَيْهِ الْحُكْمُ فَلِمَ تُكْنَىٰ أَبَا الْحَكَمِ

“Verily, Allah is the judge and arbitrator and to Him is the rule. Why do they call you Abu al-Hakam?” He said, “Whenever my people differ over a matter, they bring me. I judge between them and both parties are pleased with my judgment.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told,

مَا أَحْسَنَ هَذَا فَمَا لَكَ مِنَ الْوَلَدِ

“How excellent that is. What children do you have?” He replied, “I have Shuraih, Muslim and Abdullah.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him, “Which is the eldest?” He replied, “Shuraih.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said, “Then you are Abu Shuraih.”³ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) approved of him judging between the people. He objected to, in a proper and polite manner, the *kunya* Abu al-Hakam

¹ He was Shuraih ibn Haani Yazeed al-Haarithi, a warrior, one of the earliest companions of Ali. He was killed in a battle in Sijistaan in 78 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 107; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 162.

² He was Haani ibn Yazeed al-Mudhahaji. He was a Companion who had the *kunya* Abu al-Hakam and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) named him by his oldest son Shuraih. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 10, p. 232.

³ Recorded by Abu Dawud and al-Nasaa`ee. Its chain is *sahih*. See al-Arnaoot and al-Shaweesh, footnotes to al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 12, p. 434.

because al-Hakam means the judge whose rule is not rebuked. That characteristic does not behoove anyone beside Allah.¹

(4) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) appointed Saad ibn Muaadh² to judge the case of the Tribe of Quraidha in that well-known incident of the Prophet's life.³

(5) People are in need of individuals to judge among them. For this reason, Ali ibn Abi Taalib said in his refutation of the Khawaarij, "A just word intending by it injustice. In fact, they are only saying that there is to be no government. But there must be a government, pious or impious."⁴

This demonstrates the difference between the slogan of *al-haakimiyyah* that is being presented today and the slogan of there being no rule except by Allah that was presented by the Khawaarij. Those calling to *al-haakimiyyah* do not say that the people should be removed from any possibility of applying judgments. Instead, they say that the supreme authority must rest with Allah's rule, which is a necessary facet of Islam.

Second: Flaws in the Formulating of Ideology

Flaws in the formulation of thoughts and ideology were a major cause of extremism. This is because such flaws are a path to shortcomings in the conclusions and results that are based on that flawed thinking.

Noting the importance of methodology, the scholars of Islam played a very important role in establishing Islamic legal theory (*ilm usool al-fiqh*). It acts as the standard for the methodology that one must follow in deriving laws from the evidences and sources. They emphasized two important aspects:

- (1) The sources of law;

¹ Cf., al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 12, p. 243.

² He was Abu Amr Saad ibn Muaadh ibn al-Numaan ibn Amr al-Qais al-Ansaari, al-Ausi, al-Duri. He embraced Islam at the hand of Musab ibn Umair and was a leader among his people. He died during the Battle of Khandaq (the Ditch). He was struck by an arrow and lived for a month afterwards. He died in the year 5 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 279; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 481; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 88.

³ The story of Saeed's judgment is recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Cf., ibn Abi al-Hadeed, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaaghah*, vol. 2, p. 21; also see al-Shahristaani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, p. 117. I did not find this report in any of the reliable books. I stated it only because some scholars use it as an evidence and because its meaning is sound.

(2) The manner and methodology of derivation of laws [from those sources].

Most of the deviations that occurred in Muslim history, regardless of whether they be related to creed or law, have been as a result of a shortcoming related to one of those two matters. I shall mention some mistakes related to the sources of Shareeah which led to a general set of deviations and principles:

(1) Ignorance of the sources of the Shareeah, the Quran, Sunnah, consensus and analogy. This ignorance includes both a general ignorance of those sources and a specific ignorance regarding their evidence related to a certain issue.

(2) Refusal to benefit from those sources although one was aware of them, relying instead on human reasoning, for example.

(3) Going against the way of the believers by refusing one of those sources: Such is the case, for example, with those who call themselves “Quranists,” those who believe that there is no authority other than the Quran. Such is also the case with those who rejected the authority of the Sunnah, *ahaad*¹ hadith in matters of faith, and so forth, with their varying levels of divergence from the correct path.

Upon inspecting contemporary extremism, we find that there is definitely a shortcoming in the formation of ideology among the extremists. I was able, via reading their works and via critiquing their views as presented in Chapters Three and Four, to discover their shortcomings. I shed light upon the following:

(1) Ignorance. The most glaring and influential aspects of this ignorance are found in the following realms:

- (a) Ignorance of the Quran,
- (b) Ignorance of the Sunnah,
- (c) Ignorance of the goals of the Shareeah,
- (d) Ignorance of what is to be considered a proof and the tools used in deriving conclusions,
- (e) Ignorance of the statements of scholars and their legacies,
- (f) Ignorance of the Arabic language and its stylistic nuances,

¹ [*Ahaad* hadith are those that are not *mutawaatir* or, in other words, are not narrated through numerous chains such that their authenticity cannot be questioned. Although such reports were originally accepted in matters of law and faith, some later scholars came up with the novel idea that such hadith cannot be accepted in matters of faith. This approach, which the author is rightfully implicitly criticizing above, definitely goes against the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and his Companions.—JZ]

- (g) Ignorance of history and societal laws of Allah in this creation,
- (h) Ignorance of reality and their environment and perspectives,
- (i) Ignorance of the different levels of people and the different levels of the deeds to be done.

(2) Lacking in methodology. The most glaring and influential aspects of this ignorance are found in the following realms:

- (a) Taking a very literal approach to understanding the texts of the Quran and hadith,
- (b) Failure to see the “big picture” and understand things in a comprehensive fashion,
- (c) Reinterpreting the texts [to fit their preconceived notions],
- (d) Taking directly from the texts themselves [without the proper background],
- (e) Following the equivocal evidences [while ignoring the unequivocal ones],
- (f) Failure to reconcile seemingly contradictory evidences,
- (g) Lack of objectivity (or, in other words, following desires),
- (h) Making *ijtihaad* while not being qualified to do so and failing to take from the respected sources of law.

Psychological Roots

The researchers differ on the topic of psychological roots of extremism and its ramifications. However, the important question is the following: Is extremism a fruit of some defect in the extremist or is it a product of the environment in which he lives? The responses to this question have been in two trends, which may be summarized as follows:

(1) Some scholars say that the extremist himself is somehow psychologically unbalanced and that extremism is innate in him like any other psychological disorder.¹

Some researchers support this opinion. In fact, some go even further than that. One stated, “The studies and research on psychology and psychotherapy indicate that the personality of the fanatic/extremist is a diseased personality. It has a number of common characteristics with those who suffer from mental

¹ Cf., Muhammad al-Ghazaali, *Hidhaar min al-Tadayin al-Maghshoosh*, p. 42.

illness.”¹ There are a large number of psychological studies investigating fanaticism and its relationship to personality traits. Although those studies have been greatly criticized, they support the theory that there is a primal trait that enhances the growth of fanaticism within a person.²

This is also the view taken by some Western researchers. In their view, they make it even clearer by delineating the features that form the psyche of fanatics that can be applied to Muslim extremists. In sum, these features are as follows:

- (1) Alienation
- (2) Premature Integrity-Dogmatism
- (3) Inferiority-Superiority
- (4) Activism-Aggressiveness
- (5) Authoritarianism
- (6) Intolerance
- (7) Paranoia-Projectivity
- (8) Conspiratorial Outlook
- (9) Idealism-Sense of Duty
- (10) Austereness-Hardness
- (11) Obedience-Conformity³

These features that have been mentioned are derived from the well-known fascist criteria in psychology. That is, a number of psychology professors under the auspices of the Jewish-American Committee attempted to understand the causes behind anti-Semitism and the absolute obedience of the Germans to Hitler.⁴ Those researchers see fanaticism as a personality disorder that

¹ Sameer Ahmad, *Muhadadaat al-Tatarruf al-Deeni fi Misr, Majallah al-Mustaqbal*, p. 112.

² Cf., Mutaz Abdullah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Taasabiyyah*, p. 26. Psychologists have studied the psychological roots of extremism in their research and studies related to fanaticism. Religious fanaticism has been of great concern in the socio-psychological studies. However, their understanding of religious fanaticism is where one religious group opposes another group or opposes another religion. Cf., Mutaz Abdullah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Taasabiyyah*, pp. 18, 48-52.

³ Cf., Hareer Dukmaijaan, *al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalim al-Arabi*, pp. 58-63. [The referred to work is a reference to the Arabic translation of R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 32-36.]

⁴ Adolf Hitler was the leader of the Nazi Party. He was born in Munich in 1889. He, along with a number of his comrades, started the German Socialist Labor Party. He was elected president and spread terrorism throughout the land. He was a racist. He led the world into World War II. Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Arabiyyah al-Maisirah*, p. 1891.

reflects itself completely in other different morbid psychological fears and disorders.¹

(2) A good number of other researchers see extremism as a response to the situation in which the person is living. A specialist in psychological studies stated, "If a person finds himself in a situation that he cannot accept, he unconsciously seeks a resolution by reacting in opposition to that situation. Whenever the driving forces are stronger, the reaction becomes stronger. This could even lead to radicalism and violence."²

Dr. Fuad Zakariya³ states, "The synopsis of the view is that the one who is called a terrorist in our contemporary times is often a person who does not carry a specific psychological makeup that directs him to terrorism. Instead, he is an individual who embraces an issue which influences his behavior and choices to a point that may even conflict with his psychological makeup."⁴ One of the Western researchers also leans toward this view, saying, "The weapon of declaring [Muslims to be] disbelievers became a reality due to the great cultural, social and political pressures that some of the groups were facing from the Egyptian society."⁵

After studying what has been written concerning the psychological roots of extremism, this researcher can make the following conclusions:

(1) That there is some imbalance in the psychological makeup of an extremist is something that is not denied in general. However, the following points must be noted:

(a) The existence of an imbalance in the psychological makeup is an individual matter. The fact that some individual extremists are unbalanced does not mean that it is a conclusion that may be applied to all of them. Nor does it mean that extremism is born, in general, due to such problems.

(b) Many of the psychological disturbances that people have are a result of the pressures and stress they face. The person is not

¹ Cf., Mutaz Abdullah, *al-Itijaahaaj al-Taasabiyyah*, pp. 18, 130-131.

² Dr. Muhammad Shalaan, Professor and Department Head, Department of Neurology, University of Cairo, Interview in *al-Akhbaar* newspaper, 1/7/1989.

³ Doctor Fuad Zakariya is a leading secularist who works in critiquing the contemporary Islamic revival. One of his books is *Al-Haqeeqah wa al-Wahim fi al-Harakah al-Islaamiyyah al-Muaasirah*. He is currently working as a professor in the University of Kuwait and as an advisor to the series *Aalim al-Marifah* produced in Kuwait.

⁴ *Muqaddimah Seekuloojiyyaa al-Irhaab wa Jaraaim al-Unf*, p. 10.

⁵ Gilles Cable, *al-Nabi wa al-Firoon*, p. 66. That is the opinion that many researchers hold. It shall be elaborated in more detail shortly.

born psychologically impaired. Instead, his psyche develops based on his upbringing and environment that he faces.

(c) One can find a psychological readiness among some extremists when they respond to such pressures. The result is a reaction of extremism, especially among the youth as they are the ones in society who are most likely to become extremist since they have the ability and potential accompanied with limited experience and little knowledge.

(2) Most of the studies that dealt with extremism did not look at it from the point of view of the individual. Instead, they viewed it as a societal problem. Obviously, societal problems are usually rooted in societal pressures and tensions.

(3) These societal tensions usually affect a large cross section of the populace, such that its harm is widespread. On the other hand, psychological illnesses are limited in the amount of harm they cause.

(4) Extremism is a reaction or natural response to the chain of political, cultural and social problems. The extremists are in reality facing the extreme influences of those tensions. Therefore, there are two sides to the issue:

(a) The intellectual and practical phenomena that are affecting the members of a specific society (the action).

(b) The way the dissatisfaction with such phenomena is expressed (the reaction).

The flaws of the extremists in formulating a scholarly and practical methodology have had the greatest influence and effect on them driving them to extremism. This was made clear in the discussion of the ideological roots and need not be repeated here.

(5) The manifestations and effects of the different psychological maladies are of varied impact. Some of them have a very great influence. Others of them may have a direct impact on a particular act by the extremist and work like an instigator for that act. The resultant accumulated tension from those phenomena may be the cause behind expressing one's anger and dissatisfaction.¹

In explaining those phenomena and tensions, the researchers have taken two different approaches:

(1) Reducing all of the tensions and phenomena into one event or issue. For example, one researcher says that the roots of the ideology and movement of extremism lay in the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel. He wrote, "The ideological root and the movement spreading Islamic religious fanaticism goes back to the

¹ Cf., Mutaz Abdullah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Taasibiyyah*, p. 78.

social crisis in Egypt after the defeat in June 1967.”¹ He denies that the roots for extremism could have possibly been the torture that some of the Islamic groups faced [in prisons], as is believed to be the cause by other researchers.²

(2) Most researchers study extremism with respect to the bigger picture and trace extremism back to a number of different roots.³

This is definitely the more appropriate approach. The scholars, past and present, affirm that it is not possible to find one independent cause that can be held responsible for all of any one facet of human behavior.⁴

Therefore, I shall present the most important influences and social tensions that affected the psyche of the extremists and those accused of extremism. I shall derive these points via the following means:

(1) An independent study of some of the books of those who engaged in extremism in order to define their mentality and the tensions that affected their psyches.

(2) I have also taken into account the opinions of those who have written on this topic, those who think that some phenomena and tensions have an effect on extremism.

It should also be noted that I shall only present the most important factors in a very brief, summary matter. They are as follows:

(1) The Domestic Situation:

(A) The Shareeah of Allah was not applied as the law in most Muslim lands as the Shareeah was forced out and replaced by man-made laws.⁵

(B) Islam and its teachings had become strange and unfamiliar in many Muslim lands. Islam—in its comprehensive form covering all aspects of life—was absent from the public arena in a number of Muslim countries. Therefore, in many aspects of one’s life, a Muslim felt alienation and strangeness. This feeling of strangeness

¹ Rajaa al-Arabi, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 2.

² For example, al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah al-Takfeer*, pp. 22-30.

³ See, for example, al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 108-125; Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, pp. 6-8.

⁴ Cf., Mutaz Abdullah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Taasabiyyah*, p. 98.

⁵ Cf., *Haithiyaat al-Hukum fi Qadhiyyah al-Jihaad*, quoted from Kamaal Khalid al-Muhaami, *Haulaai Qataloo al-Saadaat*, pp. 259-261.

and alienation has played its role on the Muslim psyche in this era, especially among the youth.¹

(C) The stance taken toward the Islamic wave included the following:

(i) The use of force and terror as the Islamic movement in some Islamic countries faced great pressures, including prison, torture, execution and expulsion. That was definitely one of the roots of extremism as it initiated the idea of fighting the system and repelling the oppression by the use of force.²

(ii) Unsubstantiated accusations and ridicule were hurled by the media at those accused of being involved in the Islamic movement. The media handled the issue with a great deal of alarmism, exaggeration and accusations without any evidence. Indeed, it even ridiculed some of the fundamental parts of the religion itself.³

(iii) Islam [its practice and preaching] was restricted while leaving the door open to the secularists. In some Muslim countries, the freedom to call to Allah was almost completely restricted while the reins, if any, on the calls to secularism and Westernization were completely undone. This sequestering had a great effect on the propagation of Islam. It forced some of the callers to take to secrecy while others turned to violence as an approach or means.⁴

(D) Immorality and promiscuity that resulted from Westernization had overrun Muslim lands and spread degradation. Many people abandoned noble virtues; immorality and lewdness spread throughout. The pious people did not have the means to change that situation. Therefore, some of them resorted to claiming that the entire society was ignorant and they were declared disbelievers. They were also driven to other forms of extremism.⁵

(E) The economic situation: If the societal pressures played a great role in the psychological makeup of the extremists in modern times, some negative economic aspects also need to be pointed out, such as:

¹ Cf., al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 108.

² Cf., Sayyid Qutb, *Limaadha Adamooni*, p. 95; al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, pp. 21-30; al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 125.

³ Cf., Fahmi Huwaidi, *al-Tadayin al-Manqoos*, p. 216; Yoosuf Sideeq, *Haqeeqah al-Tatarruf al-Deeni*, p. 25.

⁴ Cf., al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 119-125.

⁵ Cf., Fahmi al-Huwaidi, *al-Tadayin al-Manqoos*, p. 221; *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni*, p. 3; Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen*, p. 78.

(i) There was an unequal distribution of wealth and great disparity between the classes. Many of the youth in Muslim societies lived either in opulence or in poverty not being able to meet their basic needs.

(ii) Work began to lose its value as it was not considered the way to make wealth. Unfortunately, it became true that the illegal ways of making money were the means to wealth. There is no doubt that this phenomenon will make a person feel the oppression and wrong, thus developing within him the roots of extremism and terrorism.¹

(F) There was an absence of a role for scholars in most Islamic countries. The matters directly related to this reality may be summarized as follows:

(i) Many of the scholars resigned from their posts related to guiding the people and they concerned themselves with tasks that were time-consuming and labor intensive. This left the door open for ignorant people or people not well-grounded in the Islamic sciences to take the role of teaching and directing the masses.

(ii) Some scholars deviated by manipulating the knowledge upon taking positions and they did not fulfill their trusts. For that reason, they were also accused and guilty in the eyes of the extremists, as they saw them as being within the ruler's circle and justifying the deeds of the ruler.

(iii) They did not confront the issues put forth by those accused of extremism although they were very difficult issues that confused many people. They did not make the matters sufficiently clear in such a way as to fulfill their responsibilities.²

(G) There was also the dependence and subservience of the Islamic world as reflected in the following arenas:

(i) Economic and political dependence.

(ii) Dependence in education and direction.

(iii) Subservience in manners and behavior.³

(H) Estrangement and secularization: From the ending of military colonialism, these two have affected all areas of life in the Islamic lands. This estrangement has had its consequences in those

¹ Cf., Abdul Rahman al-Sharqaawi, *al-Irhaab*, pp. 44-45; al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah wa Humoom al-Watan al-Arabi wa al-Islaami*, pp. 131-135.

² Cf., al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 90, Kamaal Khaalid, *Haulaai Qataloo al-Saadaat*, pp. 259-261.

³ Cf., Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, p. 91; al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah wa Humoom al-Watan al-Arabi wa al-Islaami*, pp. 145-154.

who reached the furthest level of extremism. In other words, this alienation produced a reaction, which is extremism. A researcher in this field stated, "It appears to me that extremism will remain at various levels and in various shapes in a continual period or now and then as long as this alienation is preponderant. It [extremism] will not waver unless it [alienation] also wavers."¹

(I) Political and military defeats: The Islamic world has met with numerous political and military defeats. They have had a great effect in bringing about the problem of extremism. For that reason, a number of researchers even completely blame the existence of extremist groups on the defeat in the Arab-Israeli War in 1967.²

(2) The International Situation:

(A) Conspiracies against the religion of Islam: The Muslim Nation went from a nation who was leading and was obeyed by all nations with loyalty, and spreading the law of Allah through the earth, to a dependent nation whose enemies prey on it like an animal preys on his feast. The other nations all strike at it from one bow. This type of conspiracy is considered an influential factor in the psyche of the Muslims as a whole and, in particular, those who have fallen into extremism.³

(B) The overriding influence of materialism: Materialism has overtaken the world today as a result of [technological] progresses made. That direction toward materialism, in most cases, came at the expense of adhering to religion. This always was a strong force inducing some people toward extremism.

(C) The collapse of the caliphate: The form of the united Islamic state that ruled over the lands of the Muslims was lost. The replacement for the Islamic state was the shredding apart of the Muslim world into small nation states. This had a great effect on those who turned to extremism; in fact, this was made clear in their own writings on the Islamic State and the caliphate.⁴

¹ Taariq al-Bishri, *Sayabqaa al-Ghulu ma baqi al-Taghreeb*, p. 61.

² Cf., al-Qaradhawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 117; Rajaa al-Arabi, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 2.

³ Cf., Ali Juraishah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Fikriyyah al-Muasirah*, p. 11; Fathi Yakun, *al-Aaalim al-Islaami wa al-Makaaid al-Dauliyyah*.

⁴ Cf., Mahir Bakri, *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 6.

The Nature of Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary

Muslims

Extremism occurs in many spheres, be it ideological, religious or non-religious, regardless of whether it be among a subsection of the community or the whole nation. Its existence in the Islamic Nation therefore is not something unusual. Indeed, it is consistent with the reality of the intellectual lives of humans.¹

This is not meant to be a rationalization for its occurrence. However, it is just an explanation of the reality.

Knowing the nature of extremism must be considered one of the means to evaluate the problem and seek its cure in any era. Without this knowledge, the researcher will set out on a path that is truly purposeless and haphazard with respect to solving this problem. Many of the mistakes that researchers make while studying this problem are because they fail to recognize the nature of extremism itself. One may summarize the questions whose answers will provide the nature of extremism in contemporary times as the following:

Is the problem or phenomenon proactive or is it simply a reaction?

Is it a temporary or a permanent problem?

Is the problem one of social and political upbringing and maturity or is it more general than that?

Is it a regional problem in one area or is it universal?

Is it a problem that has sprung internally from the Muslim society or have external factors been the main influence?

Is it an individual or group phenomenon?

I shall eagerly attempt to respond to these questions which should uncover the nature of extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims.

1. Is the Problem or Phenomenon Proactive or Is It Simply a Reaction?

Extremism, in its essence, is a behavioral response that human behavior is normally inclined to, such as a reaction to a number of factors: internal factors related to the depths of the individual psychological life and external factors that are related to the

¹ Cf., Muhammad Amaarah, *al-Watan* newspaper, 10/24/1988.

influences of the environment.¹ Usually, the extremism that occurs in an unstable environment is, in reality, a reaction and is not proactive. The evidence for that is that most of the extremist acts that have taken place throughout history have been during crises and unstable times.

This point is not refuted by the fact that there was extremism during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and during the time of his Companions. The extremism that took place in their times was actually a reaction to, in their [mistaken] view, something wrong. Extremism—like distorted thinking and deviations from the truth—can appear in a pious, sound environment, as it occurred during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, in such cases it will only be due to the deviation of the extremist himself as he perceives something as falsehood while it is not falsehood at all.

Extremism is a reaction to something wrong, regardless of whether it is something wrong in reality or only in the perception of the extremist. The man who objected to the Prophet's division of the war booty after the Battle of Hunain went to an extreme and violated the rule of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He did so because he believed that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had performed an unjust and oppressive deed as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not set the portions exactly equal among the combatants. His claim was that perfect equality alone was justice. Similarly, the Khawaarij who revolted against Ali ibn Abi Taalib argued that he had done a wrong deed by accepting the arbitration.²

Therefore, extremism certainly has a strong connection to the social and political environment, actions and circumstances. It is not the child of thought only. A specialist in psychology wrote, "If a person finds himself in a situation that he cannot accept, he unconsciously seeks a resolution by reacting in opposition to that situation. Whenever the driving forces are stronger, the reaction becomes stronger. This could even lead to radicalism and violence."³ This fact led one researcher to state that extremism is "a repercussion or reflection of the political and social systems'

¹ Cf., Rad Abdul Jaleel, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni fi Iraan*, p. 20.

² Cf., Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 619.

³ Dr. Muhammad Shalaan, Professor and Department Head, Department of Neurology, University of Cairo, Interview in *al-Akhbaar* newspaper, 1/7/1989.

inability to handle internal and external crises.”¹ This is not meant to be a justification or rationalization for extremism and what it entails, as the extremists are sick with what could be termed the “factors conducive or dispositions to extremism.”² These factors are:

—They are not sound with respect to the knowledge of the law of Allah.

—They are not sound in thought with respect to the methodology that they use in understanding the texts of the Shareeah.

—They have very little contact with the people of knowledge and remembrance of God.

These factors conducive for extremism or this “ripe soil” for extremism put the burden and sin of becoming fit and ready to cultivate extremism first and foremost upon the extremists themselves.

Failure to understand these two important aspects of the problem—(1) that unusual or unacceptable occurrences produce a reaction and (2) the extremists themselves possess qualities conducive to extremism—leads to a shortcoming in one’s conceptualization of the problem. And this is what leads to failure in evaluating it properly and curing it appropriately.

The stated principle that extremism is a response to unusual or improper circumstances in Muslim society applies with respect to contemporary extremism. A secular judge who has experience with this problem confirms this. He stated that extremism was a reaction to political and social factors and it was these factors that led to the appearance of the [extremist] groups.³ Indeed, most Muslim societies today abound in negative aspects that enrage the most prudent and calm. These societies suffer from the harshness of social injustices, economic deprivation, oppression, cultural dispossession, immorality and corruption. The harshness that is used by those accused of extremism is simply a response to the harshness they are facing.⁴

One professor stated, “My analysis of the stance of these fanatic youth has brought me to the conclusion that their extremism is a result of the extremes they are facing. In other

¹ Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *Msir Turaaji Nafsaha*, p. 22.

² Cf., Fahmi Huwaidi, *al-Tatarruf wa Abaaduhu al-Silbiyyah*, p. 14.

³ Cf., Rajaa al-Arabi, *Al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu al-Salbiyyah*, pp. 2-3.

⁴ Cf., Muhammad Amaarah, interview in *al-Watan al-Kuwaitiyyah* newspaper, 10/28/88.

words, it is a reaction and not a proactive position.”¹ This conclusion is supported by the fact that throughout the history of the revivalist movements in the different lands and eras that had a measure of freedom, interest in meeting the needs of the Muslim nation and some application of the law of Allah, those movements never had to take to extremism or violence. The phenomenon of extremism did not exist or if it did it was on such a small scale that it did not deserve the attention of serious study. Therefore, the conclusion that contemporary extremism is a reaction is virtually agreed upon by all those who researched this problem.² However, [it must be pointed out] that no matter what the mistake [occurring in society is] its only cure must be according to the balanced Shareeah method of reformation and not via extremism.³

What are the factors that form the “action” that produces this reaction? What is the setting that produces these attributes conducive to extremism? These questions have already been answered in the first section of this chapter.

2. Is It a Temporary or a Permanent Problem?

In this author’s view, to answer this question one must first distinguish between the individual and the Muslim nation (*ummah*). With respect to individuals, it is in most cases a temporary problem. However, with respect to the Muslim nation as a whole, it is a perpetual problem. The following hadith indicate that extremism is a temporary state for most individuals:

¹ Abdul Saboor Shaaheen, interview in *Ukaadh al-Saoodiyyah* newspaper, 6/15/88.

² In addition to what was referred to, see Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *Misr Turaaji Nafsahaa*, p. 22; Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 6; Fahmi Huwaidi, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, pp. 3 and 16; Taariq al-Bishri, *Sayabqa al-Ghulu ma Baqi al-Taghreeb*, p. 58.

³ [This is undoubtedly one of the most important points that the author makes in this work. Muslims cannot allow their emotions to get the better of them. This is what leads them to perform many acts that, at the very least, are questionable in the light of the Shareeah. Indeed, they are required to act according to the Shareeah and for the sake of Allah and not according to their desires and for the sake of revenge, personal hatred and so on. When Muslims act within the limits of the Shareeah and act sincerely for Allah, Allah will then bless them and grant them the victory that they are seeking. However, if the goal is simply some sort of victory at any cost in this world over the enemies and unbelievers, then Allah may not bless them and they are left in their miserable plight of a weak band of renegades who can do little against the major forces against them.—JZ]

(1) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that every type of action has for it periods of great enthusiasm and afterwards periods of inactivity or lethargy. He stated,

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ عَمَلٍ شِرَّةً وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٍ فَتْرَةٌ فَمَنْ كَانَتْ شِرَّتُهُ إِلَى سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ
أَفْلَحَ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ هَلَكَ

“Every deed has its time of enthusiasm and every time of enthusiasm has its time of lethargy. Whoever has a period of enthusiasm within my Sunnah, he will be successful. And whoever has a period of lethargy other than that, he will be destroyed.”¹

In another narration, some people who were greatly devoted to acts of worship were mentioned to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he stated,

تِلْكَ ضَرَاوَةُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَشِرَّتُهُ وَلِكُلِّ ضَرَاوَةٍ شِرَّةٌ وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٍ فَتْرَةٌ فَمَنْ
كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى الْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ فَلَيْمَ مَا هُوَ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى
مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ فَذَلِكَ الْهَالِكُ

“That is the overly abundant attachment to Islam and its period of enthusiasm. For every attachment there is a period of enthusiasm. And for every period of enthusiasm there is a time of lethargy. Whose period of lethargy is toward the Book and the Sunnah, then he is on the path he should follow. Whose period of lethargy is toward disobedience of Allah, then he is the destroyed.”²

This hadith alludes to the fact that a person may exert himself in his religion wherein he virtually reaches the state of extremism and harshness in sticking to the religion. Then he calms down to a more balanced approach. However, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that the period of

¹ Recorded by Ahmad. Ahmad Shaakir stated in his footnotes to the *Musnad* of Ahmad (vol. 11, p. 40) that it is *sahih*. Ibn Abi Aasim also narrated it in *al-Sunnah* (vol. 1, p. 28). Al-Albaani stated in his footnotes to that work, “Its chain is *sahih* according to the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim.”

² Recorded by Ahmad. Ahmad Shaakir stated that its chain is *sahih* (*Sharh al-Musnad*, vol. 10, p. 50).

lethargy after that period of enthusiasm must be within the Sunnah.¹

(2) In most cases, the affair of the extremist will end in one of two ways:

(a) The person will discontinue his deeds as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained by his statement,

وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ

“No one overburdens himself in the religion except that it will overcome him.”² Ibn Hajar stated, “The meaning is that no one goes overboard in religious deeds while forgetting kindness [upon himself] except that he will not be able to keep it up. He will discontinue [those acts] and it will overcome him.”³

(b) The error of his ways will be made clear to him and he will return to what is true and correct. This is what occurred to that group of three whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) objected to concerning their extremism and forbidding of the good things. They came back from what they had set out to do.⁴

This is with respect to the individual. As for the entire Nation, the matter is different. Extremism has a permanent existence that becomes either widespread or very limited depending on the prevalence of the factors producing it. Virtually no time period can be free of the existence of extremism, as any overview of history since the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) bears witness.

3. Is It a Regional Problem In One Area or Is It Universal?

This problem is not a regional or national problem restricted to just one area. Instead, it has become a universal problem covering all the Islamic lands from Malaysia and Indonesia to North Africa. Those who follow the news of the Islamic world often find reports about those groups accused of extremism in the different forms of the media, especially in the West. Sometimes, one hears of

¹ Cf., Ahmad Shaakir, *Sharh Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 11, p. 40.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari.

³ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 94.

⁴ Cf., Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 9, p. 104.

radicalism in Nigeria, and then we hear of it in Malaysia, Egypt, Algeria or other places of the Islamic world.¹

Without taking into question the truthfulness or lack thereof of these reports, the important point is that this problem is present throughout many parts of the Islamic world. However, it differs with respect to its magnitude. In some areas it is very great and more apparent than in other areas. This is due to the strength or weakness of the factors that produce this problem in each of the Muslim lands.

4. Is It a Homegrown Problem or Is It of Foreign Origin and Instigation?

Some secularists insist on attributing the extremist problem to some foreign source. They try their best to establish some relationship between the groups accused of extremism and Iran, for example.² Some even go to the extreme of saying that these extremist groups are related to the United States.³ Others claim that it is the Gulf money that is financing these groups.⁴

These statements are not based on any scientific proof. In fact, some writers have started to write about this problem as if those accused of extremism came from outside of the Islamic societies. This led one sociologist specialized in this field to cry out, "The radicals are not from Mars!"⁵ He explains that the media talk about the radicals and extremists as if they descended upon us from Mars or as if they had no roots in the society or were strangers who have come across our lands. He wrote, "I say pleading for help: Those radicals are from the soul of Egyptian society. Indeed, it is most appropriate to say that they descended from the most important cross section of the middle class."⁶

That author himself did a field study and concluded that the people accused of extremism had the following characteristics:

(1) They are fairly young, in that almost 90% of them are in their twenties or thirties.

(2) They have had higher education, as close to 80% of them were either college students or college graduates.

¹ Cf., Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *Al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 5.

² *Majallah Fikr, Nadwah al-Tatarruf*, No. 8, p. 74.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-80.

⁵ Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *Misr Taraaji Nafsahaa*, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

- (3) They are above average students.
- (4) They belong to the middle class of society.
- (5) They have rural roots.¹

This supports the statement that it is a homegrown problem and disproves the theory that it is an imported problem. Yes, it is possible that there is some limited influence by an external phenomenon, such as the Iranian Revolution; however, one cannot attribute extremism to such phenomena and say that it is the result of those external incidences without evidence or proof. Indeed, what further denies this relationship is the fact that the groups accused of extremism are the most stringent when it comes to differentiating between the beliefs of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* and those of the Shiah. It is true that the extremist Shiah groups have some relationship with the Iranian Revolution. But as for those accused of extremism among the Sunni groups, it is still a baseless claim that they have any connection with Iran.

5. Is the Problem an Individual Problem or a Group Problem?

What seems apparent to this researcher is that the type of extremism determines whether it is an individual or group problem. If the extremism is of the general, belief-related nature, it is a group problem. If the extremism is of a partial, deed-related nature, it is an individual problem. This is the case most of the time. The extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims is most apparently of a group nature. Indeed, the domain of this study and research is the group-oriented, comprehensive, belief-related extremism. This is not to deny that there is individual extremism. But since the group-related extremism is more dangerous, it is more appropriate to be concerned with it and seek its cure.

6. Is this Problem an Educational, Social or Political Problem or Is It More General Than That?

Some of the secular writers summarize the approaches of the writers and divide them into different categories with respect to their opinions about the nature of the problems. The five directions or approaches are:

The first approach views the problem as a legal problem.

¹ Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah al-Muaasirah*, Amman Conference, p. 400.

The second approach views the problem as a religious problem. The third approach views the problem as an identity problem. The fourth approach views the problem as a cultural problem. The fifth approach views the problem as a political problem.¹

In reality, the issue has different dimensions to it as the factors that help in producing it are many and various, with great effects. It is not propped on one side alone. It is an identity problem because those accused of extremism are trying to affirm the Islamic identity in the face of the extreme Westernization and secularization that is sweeping the Muslim lands. It is a cultural problem because those accused of extremism appeared as a reaction to the adopting of the Western civilization, with its positive and negative aspects—“extremism will persist as long as the alienation exists.”² It is a religious problem because the main foundation for those who are accused of extremism is the religion itself, which acts as the axis for every request that they call people to. The religion of Islam is too comprehensive for it to be limited. It is a religion that covers every aspect of life. It is also a political problem as politics is a part of the completed, well-founded religion. Furthermore, extremism represents a danger to society in a political sense more than in any other sense. Indeed, most of the demands of those accused of extremism are related to the law and government.

Therefore, I can say that contemporary extremism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it cannot be looked upon from one perspective only.

The Size and Extent of Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

The world today is suffering from waves of organized terrorism³ that have cast mankind into a fiery furnace of problems and catastrophes. Hardly a day passes without news in the various media about some kind of terrorist act. Terrorist organizations have indeed taken on a dangerous role in controlling the course of many

¹ Faraj Faudah, “*Al-Tatarruf al-Deeni*,” *Majallat al-Fikr*, No. 8, pp. 35-36.

² Taariq al-Bishri, *Sayabqa al-Ghulu ma Baqi al-Taghreeb*, p. 58.

³ One researcher defines terrorism as, “Systematic and linked violence meant to create a state of general fear and panic directed toward a country or political group. Those who perpetrate it are an organized group meant to serve political goals.” Ahmad Jalaal Iz al-Deen, *al-Irhaab wa al-Unf al-Siyaasi*, p. 49.

countries. They are now a part of the influential underground forces in the world.

In order to estimate the size of religious extremism, one must overview the terrorist movements in the world and also overview the size of the extremist movement in the Islamic world. It is not the goal here to present detailed statistics on this issue, as such would be difficult to obtain for two main reasons:

(1) No real credibility can be given to the statistics that are announced. Those who are held after extremist incidents are usually large in number while a large number of them have been acquitted of everything they were accused of. Even what the researchers write is also not completely credible. For example, one researcher wrote, "Those arrested in September 1981 encompassed fourteen religious groups in the prison. Each group had its own call to prayer and each group had its own Imam."¹ He also said, "One whose evaluations are trusted was of the opinion that there are 36 Islamic factions among those groups."² The statistics that he presents are not based on any evidence. Indeed, it is simply senseless ramble.

(2) It is very difficult or impossible to obtain reliable statistics concerning the supposed extremist groups of the Islamic world.

However, after presenting approximate statistics, the goal of this researcher is to compare the extent of extremism among the Muslims with similar other acts among other groups in the world. Is the phenomenon of extremism among Muslims exaggerated and inflated or is it being stated according to its real size? This will be answered by first presenting some statistics on terrorism and extremism throughout the entire world. Second, a comparison will be made between Egypt and India to identify the size of the various types of terrorism in those countries and then to make a comparison between them.

The Magnitude of the Extremist and Terrorist Trends In the World

Studies carried out by American newspapers and magazines have shown that there are 370 terrorist organizations in the world. They are centered in 63 countries and carry out their activities in 120 countries.³ These organizations differ in that some are based on nationalist, religious, political or criminal platforms.

¹ Faraj Faudah, *Majallah al-Fikr*, No. 8, p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, No. 8, p. 35.

³ Cf., Jamaal Barakaat, "*al-Dibloomaasiyyah wa al-Irhaab al-Dauli*" *Majallah al-Diraasaat al-Dibloomaasiyyah*, p. 150.

In 1982, terrorist organizations carried out 794 international terrorist acts¹, killing 954 people.² 43 percent of those acts occurred in Western Europe. 22 percent were in Latin America. 15 percent were in the Middle East. And 6 percent occurred in the United States.³

These statistics show that the terrorist acts that occurred in the Middle East, which is considered the heart of the extremist movement, accounted for only 15% of the terrorist attacks that occurred in the world. Furthermore, most of those terrorist acts were directly related to three issues:

- (1) The Iran-Iraq War,
- (2) The Jewish occupation of Palestine, and
- (3) Clashes in Lebanon.

Since we know that most of the terrorist acts that occurred in the region were in response to those issues, this verifies for us that the extent of religious extremism is very small indeed in comparison to world terrorism.

Extremism and Its Trends in Egypt

Egypt is considered the clearest case of a Muslim land wherein there have appeared Islamic movements as well as other types of movements. This is true basically for two reasons:

(1) Egypt has a large population and the number of individuals attached to the various movements has increased in proportion to the population.

(2) Egypt greatly predated the other Islamic countries with respect to the contemporary Islamic revival.

The West greatly focuses on religious extremism among the Muslims in Egypt although there is also an extremist trend among the Coptic⁴ Christians. Since the incidents performed by these two movements can be considered an approximation of the extent of extremism in contemporary times, I shall present the statistics concerning such extremist events from each group, discussed by

¹ Cf., Ahmad Jalaal Izz al-Deen, *al-Irhaab wa al-Unf al-Siyaasi*, p. 106.

² Ibid., p. 119.

³ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴ Coptic is a Greek word originally meaning the inhabitants of Egypt. Now, the word is used to refer to Egyptian Christians. The Coptic Church dates back to the very beginnings of Christianity. Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Arabiyyah al-Maisurah*, p. 1369.

religious affiliation and presented with respect to total population of that religious group.

First, the total population of Egypt from 1972 to 1986 ranged between 33.9 million to 48.5 million. Second, during the same period, the Muslim population ranged between 28.8 million to 41 million. Third, for the same period, the Christian population ranged from 5.1 million to 7.5 million.

In a research carried out by a professor of statistics and using statistical techniques to analyze the occurrence of extremist acts among the religious groups in Egypt, it was shown that the number of terrorist acts that were initiated by members of the Islamic religion was 64.6 percent of the total terrorist acts. 20.4 percent were initiated by Christians. And those of uncertain religious orientation carried out 15 percent.¹ (See Figure 1.)

In relating the number of incidents to the total population of each religious group, it is found that the correlation coefficient between the number of incidents attributed to Muslims and the number of Muslims in the population reaches almost 0.065. At the same time, the correlation coefficient for the Coptic Christians is 0.09. Both of them, with adjustments, are close to one another but the latter is slightly higher. This means that if the number of incidents from each religious group is stated in proportion to the population of that group, the extremist acts from the Christians are greater than those from the Muslims. A [theoretical] increase of one million Muslims in Egypt would lead to one more extremist act while the same increase in Christians in Egypt would lead to 1.3 more extremist acts.² This leads us to a very important conclusion: The size of the problem of extremism among the Muslims is greatly exaggerated beyond its true size. "Although the West concentrates... on the Islamic revival, the West does not even allude, neither directly nor indirectly, to this phenomenon among the other groups of the Egyptian populous."³

Also, the terrorist trend among the Copts predates the terrorist trend among the Muslims. In the late 1940s, there appeared a group known as "The Organization of the Coptic Nation." They distributed some literature with very provocative calls, such as the

¹ Cf., Farhaad Muhammad Ali, *Bahth fi Istikhdaam al-Qiyaas al-Ihsaaee fi Diraasah wa Tahleel Mushkilah Hawaadith Jama'at Tatarruf al-Fikr al-Deeni fi Misr*, p. 9.

² Cf., Farhaad Muhammad Ali, *Bahth fi Istikhdaam al-Qiyaas al-Ihsaaee fi Diraasah wa Tahleel Mushkilah Hawaadith Jama'at Tatarruf al-Fikr al-Deeni fi Misr*, pp. 10f.

³ Nabeel Abdul Fataah, *al-Musahhaf wa al-Saif*, p. 54.

demand for self-rule for the Copts.¹ In 1954, four young armed Copts raided and stormed the headquarters of the Coptic Pope, holding him hostage and telling him to announce his resignation.² This incident occurred yet nobody sounded any alarm. One should compare the attention given to that incident with all of the attention that was given to the assassination of Muhammad Hussain al-Dhahabi.³

The trend of Islamic extremism—according to its understanding among the Westerners—has been blamed for mixing politics with religion. At the same time, though, they do not blame the Coptic Christians, who belong to a distorted religion that has actually separated the two, for doing the same thing. The Coptic movement is best represented in the current Abba [High Church Leader] of the Coptic Church whose lectures and sermons have been concerned with political and social issues. This trend, as being led by them, calls for the church to be an independent entity to face the government and its institutions.⁴ Given all of that, though, they have not been branded with the term “extremists,” thus demonstrating that the extremist trend among the Muslims must be exaggerated and overstated.

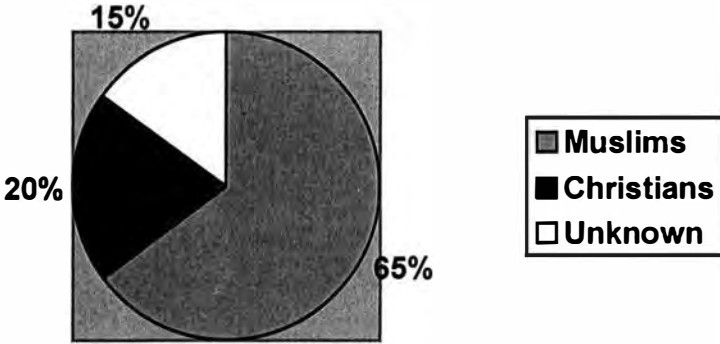
¹ Cf., Muhammad Husanain Haykal, *Khareef al-Ghadhab*, p. 395.

² Cf., Nabeel Abdul Fataah, *al-Musahhaf wa al-Saif*, p. 79.

³ He was Shaikh Dr. Muhammad Hussain al-Dhahabi, a scholar from Egypt. He graduated from Azhar and received his doctorate. He was appointed professor in Azhar. Afterwards, he filled a number of academic posts and was also the Minister of Religious Endowments. He wrote a number of books, including the very famous *al-Tafseer wa al-Mufasiroon*. He was assassinated in 1397 A.H. (may Allah grant him forgiveness). Cf., Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum Bi-Ghair Ma Anzala Allah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 329. For more information concerning the circumstances surrounding his assassination, see Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum Bi-Ghair Ma Anzala Allah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 327.

⁴ Cf. Muhammad Husanain Haykal, *Khareef al-Ghadhab*, pp. 405-406.

Figure 1. Graphical Representation of Terrorist Acts Carried Out by Extremist Groups in Egypt, Represented by Religious Affiliation



India and Its Extremist Movement

India is one of the largest countries and areas in the world. A number of religions and philosophical thoughts co-exist there. Such was true in ancient times and is true now. Indeed, it is even greater now than before. Among these religions and philosophies, there are extremist trends that pose a real danger for Indian society. Among these trends is the Hindu extremist movement.¹ This movement is extremely hostile towards the Muslims. One of every six Indians is a Muslim. Nevertheless, there is no group among the Indian

¹ Hinduism is a polytheistic religion followed by the majority of Indians. It has developed over a long period, dating back to 15 centuries before Christ until the present time. It is a religion that combines spiritual, ethical, legal and ritual aspects. It has a number of deities depending on the action related to them. Every region has a deity and every action or phenomenon has a deity. Cf., WAMY, *al-Mausooah al-Maisurah td al-Adyaan wa al-Madhaahib al-Muaasirah*, p. 529.

populace that faces the kind of oppression and humiliation that the Muslims face. Muslim blood flows as the result of the riots that the Hindus spark. This is virtually a daily occurrence.¹

The Hindu extremists do not recognize any right for the Muslims to live in their midst. M. S. Jaulukar, the founder of the RSS, a fascist Hindu organization, said, "In this land, there are no people other than the Hindus. As for the Muslims and others, if they are not considered enemies of the nation, then, at the very least, they are not part of the make-up of the nation."² Bal Shakiri, leader of the Hindu extremist group Shaif Sina, said, "I do not need to cheat or deceive. This is Hindustan and Hindustan is just for Hindus."³ Those Hindus are calling upon the Muslims to either leave the Quran or leave India. Among the brochures they distribute is, "Leave the Quran or leave India."⁴

One of the extremist leaders stated in a speech, "The Muslims of India are like a cancer in this land. Cancer is a disease for which one cannot even hope for a cure. This cancer has spread throughout the entire land. The only cure for it is an operation. O Hindus, you must take to your weapons and wipe out this cancer from its source."⁵

Disturbances and riots against Islam have become a part of life for the Indian Muslim. The statistics published by the Indian Security Forces show a great number of disturbances and riots directed towards Islam. Here is a summary of those statistics:

¹ Cf., Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, from *Buhooth Mutamar al-Aqliyyaat al-Muslimah fi al-Aalim*, vol. 2, p. 735.

² Cf., *Majallah Muslimai al-Hind*, September 1984, p. 419. Quoted from Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, p. 741.

³ Cf., *Majallah Muslimai al-Hind*, July 1984, p. 306. Quoted from Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, p. 741.

⁴ Cf., *Majallah Muslimai al-Hind*, July 1984, p. 306. Quoted from Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, pp. 741-2.

⁵ Cf., *Majallah Muslimai al-Hind*, July 1984, p. 304. Quoted from Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, pp. 741-2.

Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

Year	Number of Incidents	Year	Number of Incidents
1947-1953	N/A	1969	519
1954	83	1970	521
1955	72	1971	321
1956	74	1972	240
1957	55	1973	242
1958	41	1974	248
1960	26	1975	205
1961	92	1976	169
1962	60	1977	188
1963	61	1978	230
1964	1170	1979	304
1965	849	1980	427
1966	133	1981	319
1967	220	1982	474
1968	346	1983	500
		1984	456

Table 1. Number of Anti-Muslim Riots and Disturbances, India, 1954-1984¹

I was not able to find the number of killed or injured during these uprisings except for the years 1979 to 1984. They are as follows:

Year	Number of Partisan Incidents	Number Killed	Number Injured
1979	304	261	2397
1980	427	375	2838
1981	319	196	2613
1982	474	238	3025
1983	404	202	3478
1984	456	444	N/A

Table 2. Numbers Killed and Injured During Partisan Unrest, India, 1979-1984¹

¹ Cf. Sayid Khaalid, *Haalah al-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, p. 743. The statistics were derived from official publications of the Interior Ministry of the government of India.

These two sets of statistics clearly demonstrate the extent that Indian terrorism has reached in its enmity towards Islam and Muslims. Indeed, these riots and disturbances that the Hindus kindled with the accompanying loss of lives and property threaten the very lives of the Muslims and strike at their economic and social well-being.

Even though so many such incidents have occurred from the Hindu extremists, we do not find them getting much attention or exposure. In the same way, the extremism of the Sikhs², which is also of a large size, does not get much attention. Therefore, it is clear that the extremism among the Muslims has drawn the attention of the analysts and researchers in a way that is grossly exaggerated and out of proportion.

The Philippines suffers from the extremism of the malicious Christians who have slaughtered thousands of Muslims. Lebanon is also suffering from the extremism of the Christians and of the Batinites.³ The Muslims in every land—in fact, even non-Muslims—suffer from the radicalism and extremism of the Jews who have formed organizations and groups to shed blood and steal lands and houses. They destroy the sanctity of holy places. Gush Emunim,⁴

¹ Cf., Abu Dharr Kamaal al-Deen, *Tabeeah wa Hajm al-Mushkilaat al-Iqtisaadiyyah lil-Muslimeen al-Hunood*, p. 789; statistics from the national report of the Interior Ministry [of India], 1983-1984.

² The Sikhs are a religious group from among the Indians. They appeared towards the end of the 15th Century C.E. They called people to a new religion, which had borrowed from both Islam and Hinduism. Their slogan was, "Not Hindus and not Muslims." During their history, they have been very violent against the Muslims. They have also opposed the Hindus in order to create a state of their own. Cf., WAMY, *al-Mausooah al-Maisurah fi al-Adyaan wa al-Madhaahib al-Muaasirah*, p. 283.

³ [These are the groups who claim to believe in an esoteric understanding of the Quran. Outwardly, some may claim to be Muslims but, in reality, their beliefs are pure blasphemies. Many of them are extreme Shiahs, such as those found in Syria and Lebanon, to which this author is referring.—JZ]

⁴ [The Gush Emunim is "a paramystical, ultrachauvinist movement," closely linked to the extremist Likud party. In the past, they established "unauthorized" Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Golan Heights. One of their leaders, Mrs. Geula Cohen, was asked about the Palestinian people and she replied, "Who are the Palestinian people? We are the Palestinian people—not the Arabs!" Cf., Alfred Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1978), pp. 190-192.—JZ]

Haganah¹ and others are organizations among the Jews which are considered by all to be extremist and radical.²

Despite these facts, no one ever casts a glance at those trends and, instead, all are shocked and alarmed by the extremist and fanatic trend among Muslims. It has gotten to the point that just the mention of the expression “religious fanaticism” makes one immediately think of Muslims.

A Muslim thinker asked the question, “Who is meant by religious extremism?” Then he answered, “It is the Muslims only, of all the youth, movements and groups. The Jews, for example, regardless of all of the terrorist acts they have committed, killings, burnings and destroying of houses of Muslims from the time of the creation of Israel until now, their acts are not considered religious fanaticism! And what the Christian governments have done, for example, in the Philippines against the Muslims, is never characterized in the West as religious fanaticism.”³ Indeed, “there passes news of leftist and rightist extremism in the West with complete calmness while the Western media daily sound the alarm concerning religious extremism,”⁴ by which they mean the Muslims and no one else.

The above has been concerned with the amount of extremism among Muslims relative to the entire amount of extremism and terrorism in the world. However, as for the amount of extremism in comparison to the size of the Islamic revival, this researcher does not possess any detailed statistics of that nature. I would, though,

¹ [The Haganah was a “Zionist military organization representing the majority of the Jews in Palestine from 1920 to 1948” and outlawed by the British Mandatory authorities. Hence, it was a “military organization” that was before the creation of a nation state, what would nowadays definitely be termed a “terrorist organization.” According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “After World War II, when the British refused to open Palestine to unlimited Jewish immigration, the Haganah turned to terrorist activities, bombing bridges, rail lines, and ships used to deport ‘illegal’ Jewish immigrants.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 612. Of course, Israel has had many more terroristic extremist groups, such as Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang. However, after the official creation of Israel, the first true vestiges of what is nowadays termed “state-sponsored terrorism” can be found. Cf., Stewart Steven, *The Spymasters of Israel* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980), *passim*.—JZ]

² Cf., Yoosuf Ali Muraad, *Judhoor al-Fikr al-Irhaabi al-Sahyooni Mamaarasatuahu*, and Dr. Hamdan Badr, *Daur Mundhamah al-Haaghaanaah fi Inshaa Israaeel*.

³ Dr. Idrees Kataani, *al-Islam wa al-Asr*, pp. 75-77.

⁴ *Ibid*.

like to present the views of two professors, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradhawi¹ and Dr. Muhammad Amaarah, each one representing a different intellectual approach to this topic.

Dr. al-Qaradhaawi stated, "The [Islamic] revival is represented in many factions and trends. All of them agree in their love for Islam, their respect for its message, the calling to the rule of the Shareeah, the liberation of their lands and the unity of its [the Muslim] nation. The greatest, most important and largest of those trends abides by an important principle: the principle of moderation and balance."² Dr. Muhammad Amaarah stated, "I am certain that the portion of extremism among the Islamic movements is limited by any standard... not just with respect to its influence but also with respect to its number."³

However, is the phenomenon increasing or decreasing? It seems clear to me that this question must be viewed from two angles:

(1) Its numerical size or the number of groups or individuals who are characterized by extremism and the number of incidents attributed to them.

(2) Its diversification size or the types of extremism, the extent of its danger and its distance from the moderate path.

As for the first angle, a researcher has found that the number in custody for extremism in Egypt in, for example, 1974 was 91 individuals while this number increased in 1981 until it reached 1600 individuals.⁴ This is what led that author to state that violence is continuing and has not yet begun to decline.⁵

In assembling the statistics collected by a statistics professor, it becomes clear that the number of incidents ascribed to extremist groups follows a turbulent trend. In 1982, it reached 38 incidents while in the following year it fell to only two.⁶

¹ He is Shaikh Yoosuf Abdullah al-Qaradhaawi. He was born in 1926 C.E. into a religious family. He memorized the entire Quran while very young and finished his studies at Azhar. He obtained his doctorate. He is a scholar, jurist and well-known Muslim activist. He has played a major role in contemporary Islamic work and he has written a large number of works. Cf., *Ulamaa wa Mufakiroon Araftuhum*, vol. 1, p. 439.

² *Al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah wa Humoom al-Watan al-Arabi*, p. 41.

³ *Al-Watan* newspaper, 10/24/1988.

⁴ Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *Misr Taraaji Nafsahaa*, pp. 12 and 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cf., Farhaad Muhammad Ali, *Bahth fi Istikhdaam al-Qiyaas al-Ihsaaee fi Diraasah wa Tahleel Mushkilah Hawaadith Jama'at Tatarruf al-Fikr al-Deeni fi Misr*, p. 32. The chart in the text above is from this source.

In conclusion, the question of whether extremism is on the rise or on the decline with respect to sheer number is something that has no scientifically verifiable answer. This is true because, as was stated earlier, the statistics cannot really be trusted. Furthermore, one sees that there is no steady trend in the number of relevant incidences.

From the other angle, it is clear to this researcher, after studying the phenomenon of extremism as a whole, that extremism is on the decline. Those held in custody in the 1970s for issues related to extremism in the Islamic world were people who were declaring large sectors of the population to be non-Muslims. They separated themselves from the society and forbade joining any government institutions. However, in the 1980s, those accused of extremism declared only a small segment of the population to be disbelievers and did not say that the society as a whole was a disbelieving one—save for a small sect that is hardly reflective of the whole.

This does not mean that there is less of this tendency to declare a sector of the society disbelievers. However, there is no doubt that the number who declares the whole society to be disbelievers has definitely dropped.

If it is now clear that the phenomenon of extremism among Muslims has been greatly exaggerated and blown out of proportion, the question to ask is why there is this exaggeration and overplay. The exaggeration is rooted in the Western media who have given the issue great importance and exposure, more than what it is in reality. This is for the following reasons:

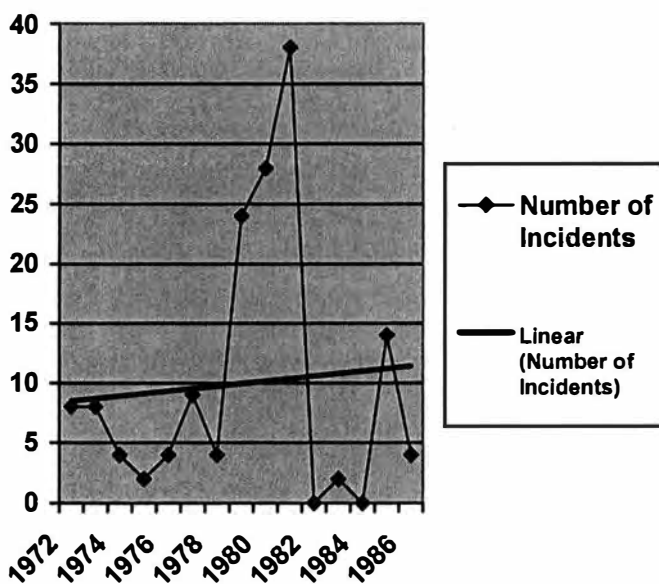
(1) To satisfy the malicious inclination that exists among the Christian and Jewish Westerners towards Islam and its adherents.

(2) To sway international opinion such that it does not become compassionate towards the Muslims and their issues.

(3) To provide a justification for the unacceptable behavior of the Westerners, such as their support of Israel in their war with Arabs and Muslims. It is as if they are saying that Israel is the bastion of freedom and peace in the midst of a barbaric, extremist land.

(4) To put fear and anguish into the governments and people of the Muslim world against Islam in general. They want them to believe that Islam is a looming danger to them with its extremism and terrorism. They also want to cause mistrust among the different parties so that they do not become united and assist one another against the real danger that is found in the cooperating enemies fighting against Islam and Muslims.

Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Number of Extremist Acts, Egypt, 1972-1986 (with linear regression showing trend)



(5) To make the governments and general opinion in the West fear the callers to Islam in general. They want to revive the enmity that existed in the souls against the Muslims as they consider Islam a threat to the security of the West and a factor that may hinder its prosperity.¹

¹ Cf., Dr. Idrees al-Kataani, *al-Muslimoon wa al-Asr*, p. 76.

The Conception of Extremism among Contemporary Scholars

Many scholars have dealt with the topic of extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims, explaining its manifestations and causes. This concern is part of the obligation that falls upon them [as stated in the verse,]

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ﴾

“And remember Allah took a Covenant from the People of the Book, to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it” (*ali-Imraan* 187).

This section is dedicated to studying the conception of extremism among contemporary scholars. The goal is not to cover the conception of every scholar. Instead, it is meant to give a summary view of the conception in order to identify any shortcomings or mistakes in such conceptions. Studying what the contemporary scholars have written about extremism makes it clear that they agree that extremism is going beyond the limits set by the Shareeah.¹

It is also clear that the scholars have been concerned with certain important observations in defining extremism. These can be summarized as follows:

(1) The defining or demarcation of the concept of extremism must be based on the Quran and Sunnah. There is no value to any definition that is not based on these two. Yoosuf al-Qaradhaawi wrote, “There is no value to any declaration or ruling here if it is not based on fundamental Islamic concepts or on the texts and confirmed Shareeah principles—and not simply based on personal opinion.”²

(2) Extremism exists in contemporary life. There is no room to deny this. Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi³ stated, “There is no doubt that

¹ See, for example, al-Qaradhaawi, *Al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 24-29; al-Meedaani, *Basaair al-Muslim al-Muaasir*, p. 228.

² Al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 33.

³ He is Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Husuni al-Nadwi, born in Tukiyyah, India in Muharram 1332 A.H. He first studied under his father and a number of scholars. Then he studied in Daar al-Uloom and the University of Lucknow in India. He graduated with honors. He is a well-known scholar among the contemporary scholars. He has many famous books including, *What the World Lost with the Decline of the Muslims*. He is a founding member of the

there is radicalism, extremism, severity and rigidity. Those are all certain realities. But to apply [any of those terms] to a particular person or to a particular incident or to a particular school of thought requires true justice. It requires a precise balance.”¹

(3) The extent of a person’s religiousness and the religiousness of the surroundings in which he lives, with respect to strong or weak devotion to religion, will influence the ruling given by somebody about another person as to whether he is extreme, moderate or negligent. One who is strongly devoted to the religion in a surrounding whose members are also strongly devoted to the religion will be very sensitive to any type of disobedience or shortcoming. On the other hand, the one who is negligent and living in a negligent environment will be very indifferent and will not even see any harm in committing a grave sin. Indeed, he will view abiding by the commands of the religion as some kind of extremism and harshness.²

(4) The giving or removing of the title of extremism to any individual or group will differ based on the circumstances and environment. Revolting against unjust rulers who fight against Islam may be a kind of jihad when the rebels have established the proof against the ruler that he is committing an unquestionable act of disbelief. However, it could also be a form of extremism if no act of disbelief is proven in those who are being rebelled against. Therefore, the different circumstances lead to different conclusions.³

As for the shortcomings I see in the conception of extremism among contemporary scholars, they are, in sum:

(1) The Manner In Which the Concept Is Presented

Some scholars present the concept of extremism by listing its signs and manifestations. Yoosuf al-Qaradhaawi asks in his book, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf* (“The Islamic Revival Between Rejection and Extremism”), what is extremism or

Muslim World League. Cf., *Ulamaa wa Mufakiroon Araftuhum*, vol. 1, p. 125. [Since the first publication of this book in Arabic, Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi has died, may Allah forgive him and all Muslims.]

¹ *Fiqh al-Dawah Malaamih wa Afaaq*, p. 24.

² Cf., al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 34-36.

³ Cf., al-Nadwi, *Fiqh al-Dawah Malaamih wa Afaaq*, p. 25. This issue will be discussed in further detail later.

radicalism and what are its signs. He then responds by listing six of its signs and manifestations that represent the concept of extremism. These are:

(1) Unflinchingly clinging to one opinion and not giving any consideration or thought to any opposing opinion.

(2) Making the people bound by something that the Shareeah does not bind them by.

(3) Strictness not in its proper place.

(4) Harshness and incivility.

(5) Possessing bad expectations or thinking the worst of others.

(6) Falling into the abyss of declaring others to be disbelievers.¹

However, presenting the concept by mentioning some indicators is neither all-inclusive [of what should be part of the concept] nor is it all-exclusive [of what does not belong as part of the concept]. This is true for two reasons:

(1) There is a difference of opinion concerning these signs among the people: One may view a certain act as strictness not in its proper place while another may view it as being lax. A conception must have clear, definite standards that one may refer to in case of difference of opinion.

(2) There are manifestations of extremism that are not included in what was mentioned as its signs and manifestations. This is so because the manifestations are, in reality, endless. Indeed, they are made anew in every time and place.

For example, absolute loyalty for one's Imam and leader leads one to the concept of infallibility.² This is definitely a form of extremism but it does not fall under any of the manifestations that Shaikh Yoosuf al-Qaradhaawi mentioned. Therefore, the correct methodology to present the meaning of extremism is built upon two matters:

(1) Its linguistic meaning.

(2) Its meaning and intent as used by the Lawgiver. Knowing the intent of the Lawgiver is through combining the relevant texts and studying them and via understanding the usage of the Lawgiver of the term "extremism" and its synonyms [as was done earlier in this work].

¹ Al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 39-56.

² This shall be discussed in further detail later.

(2) Confusing the Two Different Types of Extremism

Many of the contemporary scholars confuse the two types of extremism (partial, deed-related extremism and comprehensive, belief-related extremism). This leads them to make the same ruling for the two of them. Regardless of the different levels of extremism they may reach, they would be viewed in the same manner. This fact can clearly be seen wherein one makes the act of considering other Muslims to be disbelievers equivalent to the characteristics of harshness and incivility, reckoning them both to be simply manifestations of extremism¹ while between them there are actually many degrees.

(3) Failing to Define Extremism

In some of their writings, contemporary scholars fail to define the concept of extremism in a clear and precise manner. A prominent example of this nature is found in the writings of Muhammad al-Ghazaali.² Although he has written a great deal about extremism and the problems facing contemporary workers for Islam, in none of those works has he given a definition for the concept of extremism from his point of view. The closest that I have seen from him that could possibly be considered a definition for this concept are his words, "The despicable partisanship is where a person completely sticks to an idea and refuses to accept any discussion on that topic. He refuses to even look at the other opinion that is presented to him."³ And his words, "Fanaticism occurs when one is very devoted to an opinion concerning which there is a difference of opinion, such as being downright strict about where to place the hands or the way that one puts one feet during the prayer."⁴

¹ Cf., al-Qaradhaawi, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 39-56.

² He is Shaikh Muhammad al-Ghazaali al-Saqaa, born 9/22/1917 in a conservative family in a small village in Egypt. He studied in religious institutions. He is a caller to Islam and well-known preacher. He has beneficial writings, including *Fiah al-Seerah* and others. In some of his books, he has strange, objectionable opinions. See *Ulamaa wa Mufakireen Araftuhum*, vol. 1, p. 255.

³ *Al-Haqq al-Mur*, p. 108.

⁴ *Mushkilaat fi Tareeq al-Hayaah al-Islaamiyyah*, p. 120.

In most of what he writes about extremism, he simply presents the problem in practical examples or events that occurred to him amid those whom he describes as extremists.

It is well established that such cannot possibly establish any criteria. Indeed, this just makes the matter more confusing. The reality is lost because he is presenting partial pictures related to matters in which people differ.

One of the things that al-Ghazaali mentions as evidence of fanaticism and harshness is his being asked more than once the ruling concerning vinegar.¹ He was very tough in speaking about those who asked that question. He saw them as sick people who were doing wrong to the religion, like the others who also ask questions which are problematic for the people. From his mixing with people, he has heard questions that simply shocked and amazed him. As for the ruling concerning vinegar, the scholars discussed it under their discussion of alcohol and the permissible or impermissible beverages. Perhaps the term "vinegar," knowing that it is a type of liquid, may have caused some confusion in the soul of the questioner. In other words, is the vinegar that the jurists speak about the same as the vinegar that exists today? [Is it the same vinegar that is derived from *khamr* or alcohol that scholars mention as a forbidden substance?]

Al-Ghazaali presents an example of that nature while discussing abominable behavior and describing such people as extremists making the reader imagine that everyone who behaves in a similar manner is an extremist and fanatic.

That is not the only picture he presents. However, there is a lot of confusion as to whether most of what he presents is really extremism or not. In his books, he also presents the following as what he views to be extreme:

- (1) A woman covering her face,
- (2) The prohibition of singing.

However, the opinion that the woman is to cover her face² and the opinion that singing is forbidden³ has Shareeah support. One cannot be prevented from following those opinions if he follows them as a *mujtahid* or as a follower of a *mujtahid*.⁴ It was shown

¹ Cf., *Humoom al-Daaiyyah*, pp. 136-137.

² For more on this topic, see al-Shaikh Saalih al-Bulaihi, *Ya Fataah al-Islam*, pp. 139-265.

³ For more on this topic, see Hamood al-Tuwaijiri, *Fasl al-Khitaab fi al-Radd ala Abi Turaab, passim*.

⁴ For some more depictions of extremism mentioned by al-Ghazaali, see *Humoom al-Daaiyyah*, pp. 158-165; *Mushkilaat fi Tareeq al-Hayaah al-*

earlier that it is not correct to describe a person as extreme simply because he follows an opinion that he feels is safest or that will free himself from any sin. Similarly, it is not proper to describe someone as extreme due to him calling people to a conclusion he reached through proper Shareeah means: either by *ijtihad* if he is qualified to do that or by following a scholar for one who is not qualified to make *ijtihad*.

(4) Misapplication

I shall present three examples [to demonstrate this criticism of misapplication]:

The First Example:

Shaikh Abdul Rahmaan al-Meedaani¹ stated, "Extremism in the religion is going beyond the limits Allah established, expanding on the domains of the religion that are demarcated by those limits."²

This is in agreement with what the scholars preceding him stated about the definition of extremism. However, the Shaikh gives some examples that do not fall under the scope of that definition. For example, he said, "Extremism in religious behavior includes leaving the beard in its natural state without trimming. This is especially the case if the beard is extremely full and large. This is a matter that contradicts appearing in a beautiful way as is requested by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Some of those extremists leave their beards so long that they reach their navels."³

This passage is not acceptable. Leaving the beard without removing anything from it is not a form of extremism. Indeed, it is the Sunnah. This is because the order to leave the beard comes in an unrestricted sense [in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)],

Islaamiyyah, pp. 26, 110, 121, 122; *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bain Ahl al-Fiqh wa al-Hadeeth*, *passim*.

¹ He is Abdul Rahmaan Hasan Habankah al-Meedaani, born in 1927 into a religious family. His father was one of the scholars of al-Shaam and ran a school. He then moved to Makkah where he currently works as a teacher at the College of Shareeah in Makkah. Cf., *Ulamaa wa Mufakiroon Araftuhum*, vol. 2, p. 59.

² *Basaair li-l-Muslim al-Muaasir*, p. 228.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

أَعْفُوا اللَّحَى

“Leave the beard.”¹ The Prophet’s own practice indicates that he did not trim anything from his beard as he had a full beard.²

The Second Example:

Another contemporary scholar mentioned some of the manifestations of extremism. I shall mention the following from his work:

(1) [Extremism includes] objecting to those who reinterpret the attributes of Allah [to strip them of any real meaning] by the claim that it is their belief in Allah’s transcendence that leads them to do that. That author was of the opinion that their intention is justification for them and therefore their act should not be objected to as they are *mujtahideen*. He stated that those who object to them have fallen into a type of extremism.³

(2) Under the heading, “Varieties of extremism in the application of fiqh,”⁴ he wrote, “This extremism is mostly kindled in the following matters: (a) growing a beard, (b) using the rosary [or *dhikr* beads] to recite the words of remembrance of Allah and (c) visiting the graves and having graves within the mosques. If it were just the case that those extremists advised the others to what they believed to be correct in these issues, it would be a simple matter. But it reaches the point that they give a ruling other than what Allah and His Messenger have given. It even reaches a point that they declare a sunnan act or recommended act to be obligatory and the leaving of a recommended or obligatory act to be disbelief. This is the extremism that we are prohibited from.”⁵

Then he presents a discussion of the command to leave the beard to grow and the difference of opinion over the implication of that imperative. Then he presents a discussion and the difference of opinion over the “*dhikr* beads.” Then he discusses visiting the graves.

There is some question about his application [of the definition of extremism] and his examples. To be brief, I shall only comment on the last issue above. He is of the opinion that it is extremism to

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa`ee.

² This description is found in a hadith in Muslim and Ahmad.

³ Ali Juraishah, *al-Itijaahaat al-Fikriyyah al-Muaasirah*, p. 307.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

say that it is forbidden to undertake a journey to attend the grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to say it is only sanctioned to undertake a journey to three mosques [of Makkah, Madinah and Jerusalem]. This example does not conform to the description of extremism because there is clear, explicit evidence on this point. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ مَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
وَمَسْجِدِي

“Do not undertake a journey [as an act of religious devotion] except to three mosques: The Inviolable Mosque [in Makkah], Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem] and my Masjid [in Madinah].”¹ Therefore, one cannot undertake a journey to any place with the intention of it being an act of worship except to those three stated mosques. Similarly, it is narrated that it is forbidden to take the Prophet’s grave as a festival site.²

The Third Example:

One contemporary author defines the concept of extremism as follows, “Religious radicalism is to go beyond moderation in one’s religious behavior, in thought or in practice.”³ However, when it comes to applying that definition he falls into a great mistake. He states, while expounding on the manifestations of extremism, “Take, for example, this manifestation or example: When we catch a glimpse of a married or single woman who covers her face with what is like a cloak and does not leave anything exposed by her garment save two small openings like the mouth of sparrow in front of her eyes... [we must ask] where did this unusual attire come from?”⁴

We have already stated that the opinion that it is obligatory to cover the face is the Shareeah opinion of many scholars. It has its evidence and reasoning. To say that it is an act of extremism is not consistent with the definition given by that author himself.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa` ee.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 27, pp. 21-32.

³ Khaalid Muhammad Khaalid, *Majallah al-Arabi*, No. 278, p. 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The Conception of Extremism According to the Secularists

One who scans the books on extremism from the secularist wing will find that they have their own particular conception of extremism, which can be considered an independent approach that differs from the conception held by the Muslim scholars and thinkers. I sought to define the conception of extremism among the secularists via two means:

The first mean: I read the symposium organized by the magazine *Majallah Fikr*. I read it in a critical and analytical manner. In doing so, I used content analysis in the following manner:

(a) Quantitative analysis: I calculated the words or phrases related to this topic in order to determine the major issues of the debate.

(b) Qualitative analysis: I surmised some definitions, important statements or conclusions reached by the symposium participants.¹

The second mean: I read some books, media interviews and articles that were written by members of this trend to surmise the most important definitions or expressions that are indicative of the secularist's conception of religious extremism.

It should be noted that I am only going to present their conception of extremism and will not go into their perception of some related concepts, such as the cause, effect and remedy of the problem.

Content Analysis of the Symposium

After a quantitative analysis of that symposium, it was found that the important words and statements made can be divided into eight major groups:

- (1) The first group consists of those terms related to what they call the politicization of religion. These include:
 - (a) Religious involvement in political issues,
 - (b) Inserting religion into politics,
 - (c) The politicization of the religion,

¹ Those who participated in the symposium include the leaders of the secularist wing: (1) Dr. Fuad Zakariya, (2) Lutfi al-Khauili, (3) Dr. Waheed Rafat, (4) Dr. Muhammad Noor Farhaat, (5) Dr. Taahir Hakeem, (6) Dr. al-Habeeb al-Janhaani, (7) Dr. Faraj Faudah, (8) Dr. Yunaan Labeeb Rizq and (9) Dr. Raof Abbaas. In the symposium, they made it clear that the participants represent the secularist movement.

- (d) The extreme, religio-political framework,
- (e) Islamic government or religious rule.

These terms were used a total of 136 times.

(2) The second group is related to the discussion of applying the Shareeah. This includes:

- (a) The application of the Shareeah,
- (b) Islam as both a religion and a state,
- (c) Separation of religion and state,
- (d) The divine rule.

These expressions were found eighty-six times.

The third group was related to the Islamic movement as a whole. This includes:

- (a) The religious direction,
- (b) The religious movements,
- (c) The Islamic religious wave.

These expressions were found forty-five times.

The fourth group of terms revolves around the extremist trends. They include:

- (a) The radical or extremist trends,
- (b) Religio-political radicalism,
- (c) Radicalism.

These words were used forty-two times.

The fifth group of terms is concerned with Islamic banking and Islamic economics. This includes:

- (a) Islamic banking,
- (b) Islamic economics,
- (c) Islamization of banks.

These expressions were found twenty-seven times.

The sixth group deals with declaring the society to be non-Muslims or part of *Jahiliyyah*. These terms were used only eight times.

The seventh group deals with the Muslim woman's dress (*hijab* and *jilbaab*). These words occurred five times.

The eighth and final group deals with "Islamic tourism." This is a reference to, as used in the symposium, the hotels that prohibit alcohol and so forth. This expression was used five times.¹

¹ *Majallah Fikr*, No. 8, Symposium on Extremism, p. 57.

The Results and Illustration of the Analysis

After the preceding quantitative analysis, it is clear that the main axes of extremism from the point of view of the secularists are two:

- (a) The politicization of the religion,
- (b) The application of the Islamic Shareeah in all spheres of life.

Any action that falls into one of these two categories is extremist. Dr. Faraj Faudah¹ stated at that Symposium, in his explanation of the religious extremism phenomenon, "There is a stunningly clear and accepted religious overture for a political problem that is strongly confusing and backward."²

He made this definition even clearer when he stated, "The main goal of the Islamic religious movement is a political goal that includes establishing a religious-Islamic state. This is a very vague goal as they all just gloss over it. They always limit the discussion to the publicly announced goal of implementing the Islamic Shareeah."³

The agreement of the participants on that conception is emphasized in what the symposium chairman, Dr. Fuad Zakariya, stated in his closing comments to the opening session, "I believe that we have all reached the main point of this phenomenon. We all agree that the old religious movement has, in recent years, taken on a clear and organized political form."⁴

This conception is repeated by many in their writings. Faraj Faudah stated, "For one of the young people to declare his embracing of Islamic political thought is appropriate in some people's estimation. But it is rashness in my estimate. The religion is too honorable to be dragged into politics. And it is too respectable to be tarnished by political ventures."⁵

¹ He is Faraj Ali Faudah, an Egyptian writer who obtained a Ph.D. in agronomy from Ain Shams University in 1981. He has written a number of books, most of them criticizing the contemporary Islamic revival and opposing the implementation of the Islamic Shareeah. Cf., for information on his life, the cover of his book, *al-Irhaab*.

² *Majallah Fikr*, No. 8, Symposium on Extremism, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁵ "*Al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu al-Silbiyyah*," *Majallah al-Manaar*, No. 36, p. 49.

Muhammad Saeed al-Ishmaawi¹ agrees with that. He wrote a book entitled, *al-Islam al-Siyaasi* ("Political Islam"). The entire book is about the politicization of the religion and the application of the Shareeah. He considers such to be extremism and radicalism as Islam is a religion of worship that does not involve itself with politics and systems. Most of his refutations in that book are of what he terms the movement to politicize religion through violence and radicalism.² The phrase, "through violence and radicalism" are meant to be simply explanatory and emphasis and not words of additional meaning. In other words, his intent, as is clear to the reader of his book, is that the movement to politicize religion will always have these attributes of violence and radicalism.

Via their discussion in the symposium, their conception of politicization of the religion became clear. Faraj Faudah stated, "The trend toward mixing religion with politics existed in the platform of the Wafd Party that was presented to the revolutionary government in 1953. That program included a [constitutional-type] article banning or prohibiting alcohol, gambling and the like. This was an attempt to bring religion into the political thought and to unite the religious sentiments via political directions."³ Based on that, if a country prohibits those types of things, it is considered extremist and radical because it has mixed religion with politics.

That is concerning mixing religion with politics. As for the call to implement the Shareeah in every aspect of life, it is the second signpost indicating extremism and radicalism according to their conception. One of the participants in the symposium stated, "The members of this movement were and still are mixing between calling people to Islam as a religion, belief and ethics and calling people to the application of the Islamic Shareeah as a set of texts that must run the social relations between the people."⁴ Therefore, he sees, "that it is one of the important fundamental starting points upon the shoulders of the secularists in Egypt and the Arab world to call people to separate between Islam and the Islamic Shareeah."⁵

¹ He is Muhammad Seed al-Ishmaawee, president of the criminal courts and court of higher national security in Egypt. He has been promoted through a number of juridical positions. He has attended a number of American universities. He is one of the strongest opponents of the application of the Shareeah. Cf., for information on his life, the cover on his book, *al-Islam al-Siyaasi*.

² See pp. 39, 45, 54, 58, 64 and others of that book.

³ *Majallah Fikr*, Symposium on Extremism, p. 67.

⁴ Dr. Noor Farhaat, *Majallah Fikr*, Symposium on Extremism, p. 41.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Some of the participants excused themselves by saying that, "the separation between religion and state does not mean an antagonism toward religion."¹ Their concern and battle against the application of the Islamic Shareeah is emphasized in the books that were published virtually all in one year from the secularist thinkers wherein applying the Shareeah is treated as a form of radicalism and extremism.² Hence, they discussed in that symposium every type of adherence or application of part of the religion as a type of extremism and radicalism. For example, they discussed the issue of Islamic banks and dealt with it as a religious expression for an economic problem that, theoretically speaking, should be outside of the realm of religion. Similarly, they discussed the Muslim woman's dress (*hijab* and *jilbaab*) as an apparent form indicative of extremism and radicalism. For that reason, one of the education ministries in a Muslim land issued a directive prohibiting women from wearing the Islamic *hijab* as it is considered a phenomenon indicative of extremism and radicalism.³ (See Figure 3.)

However, the matter did not stop at that point. Dr. Fuad Zakariya stated, "The arena being filled with books that prohibit picture-taking and music and making people fear the punishment of the grave is not a cause for the radicalism of these youth. Instead, it is a result of it. It is a necessary portion that cannot be broken off of the phenomenon of radicalism that we are endeavoring to reduce."⁴

One of the books that the secularists published to discuss this phenomenon is a book entitled, *Hadha Huwa Islaamuhum* ("This is Their Islam").⁵ The cover of the book has a picture of man with a thick beard, wearing a gown down to his knees carrying a thick stick upon which is written, "The beautiful admonition."

¹ Lutfi al-Khauili, *Majallah Fikr*, Symposium on Extremism, p. 100.

² These books were (1) *al-Haqeeqah wa al-Wahm fi al-Harakah al-Islaamiyyah al-Muaasirah* by Dr. Fuad Zakariya, (2) *Qabl al-Suqoot* by Dr. Faraj Faudah, (3) *Al-Mujtama wa al-Shareeah wa al-Qaanoon* by Muhammad Noor Farhaat, (4) *Haul al-Dawah ila Tatbeeq al-Shareeah al-Islaamiyyah* by Husain Ahmad Ameen.

³ Cf., *Jareedah al-Sibaah al-Toonisiyyah*, Date 9/23/81. The figure in the text above is from that newspaper.

⁴ *Jareedah al-Ahram*, date 6/12/1988.

⁵ Written by Suaad Minsi.

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«صيانة الزي والعناية بالمظهر والمندام»

في الادارات والمدارس!؟

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Figure 3. "The Proper Non-Extremist Way to Dress." [The accompanying text states that the clothing on the right is approved while that on the left is not approved. It states that the clothing on the left goes against the spirit of the times and development. Furthermore, it is a type of strangeness and indicates an adherence to extremism and radicalism. It is in contradiction to what the "great *mujahid*" (as the Minister calls him) Habib Bourguiba called the nation to in his recent speech. Hence, the Minister of National Development strongly urges all school and institution administrators to eagerly enforce the new dress code in the name of the reputation of the country and its youth.—JZ]

In general, this book is entirely about the following topics:

- (1) Application of the Shareeah,
- (2) The religious government,
- (3) The Muslim woman's dress,
- (4) Raising the voice in giving the call to prayer.

There is no discussion in the book of the phenomenon of extremism or radicalism except with respect to those issues, which the author claims are radical.

Their battle against the application of the Islamic Shareeah and their considering it a type of extremism is indicated by their implications toward two Muslim Arab countries, one which declares the application of Islamic Shareeah and the other which has gone through an attempt to implement it. These two countries are Saudi Arabia and Sudan.¹ They drag these two names into the picture during the symposium in a ridiculing or accusing fashion.

In sum, the secularists view any deviation from the endemic Western scheme in the Islamic societies—a scheme that has become the custom and accepted mode—to be extremism and radicalism. Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem² stated in defining intellectual and partisanship radicalism, “In its simple definition, it is any departing from the ideological, constitutional and legal principles and organization that is pleasing to the society and which, under its shade, allows for differences and dialogue.”³ He defines religious radicalism as, “Any departure from the custom or what is accepted in matters of belief, perception or behavior according to the majority of the people.”⁴

This makes clear the secularists' conception of extremism. It shows that what they mean by the extremist and radical movement is the Islamic movement in general. Their explicit statements strengthen this understanding. One of the participants in the symposium stated, “This movement [and he was speaking about extremism] existed from the beginning of the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood—in fact, from the time Shaikh Rasheed

¹ *Al-Tatarruf al-Siyaasi wa al-Deeni, Majallah Fikr*, No. 8, pp. 57-58.

² Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem was born in al-Mansoorah [Egypt] in 1938. He studied at Egyptian universities and got his Ph.D. from the University of Seattle, United States, in Social Politics in 1968. Now, he is working as a professor of sociology at the American University in Cairo. He is also the president of Arab Affairs at the Center for Political and Strategical Studies at the al-Ahram Foundation. Cf., for more on his life, the cover to his book, *Misr Turaaji Nafsahaa*.

³ *Misr Turaaji Nafsahaa*, p. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Ridha¹ began his call.”² Dr. Faraj Faudah makes this view clear by dividing the extremist and radical movements. He said, “I see that this movement has a number of elements to it and is not simply one movement. We must accept the fact that the most dangerous of those trends is the existence of what is known as the revolutionary trend.”³

The reader may imagine that this symposium was held just to discuss the Islamic trend as a whole. However, the coordinator of the symposium did not take long to himself express their true intent, as by the second session he made it clear what the agenda was when he said, “What we must address is radicalism, that is these extreme religious groups. This is the topic of the meeting.”⁴

In reality, they make the scope of extremism and radicalism even bigger as they brand every calling to Islam as such. The secularists have emphasized their position toward every facet of the Islamic movements that they do not consider just. They consider them all extremism, either very extreme or simply extreme.

Although the usage of their terms in their study of the phenomenon, terms like “radicalism,” “fundamentalism” and “partisanship”, is in no way precise and scientifically accurate, one of the secularists has encouraged the writers to correct their usage of terms and not to use terms like “Islamicists,” “Islamic expansion” or “Islamic front.” She stated that the use of such words will just drive the people to cling more tightly to that movement. She opines that the effective word for such people is “non-Islamicists.” In fact, she goes even further than that and says that they should in reality be called “fugitives, vagabonds” as what they are practicing is nothing but “religious vagrancy.”⁵

¹ He was Muhammad Rasheed ibn Ali Ridha al-Qalmooni, the editor of the magazine *al-Manaar* and a member of the *Islaah* (reform) movement. He was born in 1282 A.H. in Qalmoon in Lebanon. He studied there and then went to Egypt in 1315 A.H. He was very close to Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, studied under him and remained in Egypt until the latter's death in 1354 A.H. His most famous legacy is the magazine *al-Manaar* which contained his legal rulings. It is now in six volumes. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 126.

² Taahir Hakeem, *Majallah Fikr*, No. 8, p. 48.

³ *Majallah Fikr*, No. 8, p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁵ Suaad Minsee, *Hadhaa Huwa Islaamuhum*, pp. 44 and 123-125.

The Conception of Extremism According to the People of the West

Fundamentalism among Christians

For the extremist and radical movements, Westerners use the term “fundamentalism.” This term is a reference to a particular approach or school of thought in Western life. Just by hearing this term, a person with a Western mentality recalls something that he experienced. In order for us to understand this Western term, we must study what occurred by explaining (a) the meaning of this term and (b) the history of the inception of the Christian groups so named.

Lexically, the word means the bases or foundations.¹ In the perception of the majority of the people in the West, fundamentalism implies adherence to the literal meaning of the Gospels.² One Western researcher says that this definition is far from being precise and if one wants a true definition of fundamentalism, one must present a number of the attributes that are not accepted by the majority of Christians but which are shared attributes of the various fundamentalist Christian groups.³ The most prominent of those attributes, as mentioned by that author and others who have researched fundamentalist Christianity, are as follows:

(1) Believing in the infallibility of the Gospel and an emphasis that it is absolutely free of any type of mistake, whether it be in creed or ethics or even with anything related to history or the unseen.

(2) Taking the Gospels at face value (or literally) without reinterpreting its meaning, as it is representative of God’s word recorded in one wording.

(3) Believing that everything that is stated in the Gospels must be a foundation for the life of a Christian. From this premise comes the name, “fundamentalist.”

¹ Muneer Balabaki, *Mausooah al-Maurid*, vol. 4, p. 179.

² Cf., Jaims Baar, *al-Usooliyyah*, p. 1 [=James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1981).]

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

(4) Rejecting modern views and theories in theology and studies that include a criticism of the Gospel and any such conclusions.

(5) Rejecting scientific opinion that contradicts what is found in the Gospel, such as the theory of evolution. The goal of fundamentalism is to block any attempt aimed at using modern scientific theories in dealing with the texts of the Gospel.

(6) Rejecting the concept of separation of church and state and calling upon the politicians to form their platforms according to the commands of God.

(7) Believing in millennialism. This is the belief that the world as we know it is approaching its end. The thousand years that will come after this end will be the period of peace and blessings. That period will begin with the return of Jesus (peace be upon him). Based on this belief, they support the bringing about of the War of Armageddon, as such is the beginning of the end of this civilization and the fulfillment of the above referred to prophecy.

(8) [Accepting that] the understanding of the Fundamentalists is the true and only correct belief among all the Christian beliefs. One Western researcher stated, "The fundamentalists... believe with an absolute belief that their understanding of the religion is absolutely the true and only understanding."¹

(9) Based on the previous point, those who call themselves fundamentalists see themselves as the only pure or true Christians and, therefore, they love to call themselves by that name.

The above points are all with respect to beliefs. With respect to their actions, the following are their most prominent characteristics:

(1) They are greatly concerned with political issues. One author wrote, "They are like the political parties trying to seek control of the law and government by increasing their numbers and their candidates. The fundamentalists nominate candidates in those states in which their numbers are most concentrated and large."² A fundamentalist actually entered the presidential race among the Republicans and won half of the votes of the delegates for the state of Michigan. Their concern with political issues can be seen in many of their most prominent leaders endorsing specific candidates in the American elections.³

¹ Ibid., p. 338.

² Ijaaj Nuwahidh, *Hal Hadhihi al-Nahdhah al-Muaasirah Khaadhiah li-Sultaan al-Ilm*, p. 311.

³ Cf., Dr. Taariq Mutri, *al-Tayaraat al-Usooliyyah al-Masehiyyah fi al-Wilaaayat al-Mutahidah*, pp. 483-484.

(2) The fundamentalists try to pass laws and regulations that support their beliefs and which counter their opponents.¹

(3) With respect to individual behavior, fundamentalist Christians are strict. Most of them do not drink or smoke. Similarly, they do not attend dances nor go to the movies or playhouses. All of that is forbidden for members of Christian fundamentalism.²

“Fundamentalism” is a term that is considered derogatory in Western society. One Western author wrote, “Now fundamentalism is a bad word... It is often felt to be a hostile and opprobrious term, suggesting narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism.”³ He stresses that such was the cause for the sensitivity and repulsion in the feelings of the people in the West towards those who are called by this name.⁴ Due to the nature of the term “fundamentalist,” Christian fundamentalists dislike being called by it. They prefer the terms “evangelical” or “conservative evangelical.”⁵ Many Western researchers deny the appropriateness of these terms. One of them wrote, “The fact is that ‘fundamentalism’ is the normal designation in common English for the phenomenon which we propose to discuss.”⁶

As for the beginnings of Christian fundamentalism, most of the researchers trace its beginnings back to the nineteenth century⁷ when conferences of the conservative Protestants were held. In the Niagara Conference of 1895, they announced the formation of the fundamentalist movement. However, the Protestant church then split into two factions at the beginning of the twentieth century: the fundamentalists and the modernists.⁸

In the period of 1901-1915, the fundamentalists in America published a number of tracts entitled, *The Fundamentals*. They used

¹ Cf., Ijaaj Nuwahidh, *Hal Hadhihi al-Nahdhah al-Muaasirah Khaadhiah li-Sultaan al-Ilm*, p. 312.

² *Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah* [Arabic version of *Encyclopedia Britannica*], vol. 7, p. 777. For more details about the beliefs of the Fundamentalists, see (1) *Mausooah al-Adyaan*, p. 291; (2) *al-Mausooah al-Dauliyyah*, vol. 1, p. 406; (3) *al-Mausooah al-Amreekiyyah*, vol. 12, p. 164; (4) *Mujam Muqaaranah al-Adyaan*, p. 292; (5) *Mukhtasar Mujam Aksfoord lima Yataliq bi-l-Kanaais al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 204.

³ [James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 2. Quote above is from the English original and not via the Arabic translation.—JZ]

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3. *Mujam Muqaaranah al-Adyaan*, p. 292.

⁶ [James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 3.]

⁷ [James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 3;] *al-Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah*, vol. 7, pp. 777-779.

⁸ Cf., *Mukhtasar Mujam Aksfoord limaa Yataaliq bi-l-Kanaais al-Nasraaniyyah*, under “Fundamentalism,” p. 204.

the term “fundamentalists” as an indication of their adherence to traditional doctrine and beliefs as inspired by the Gospel texts, belief in the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him) and his virgin birth as well as other beliefs.¹

In the United States, in the first periods of their existence they grew to more than fifty thousand members.²

Applying the Term “Fundamentalism” to the Islamic Lands

The Westerners transferred the term “Fundamentalism” and branded some groups of Muslims with that name. This “transfer” took place in the period after 1395 A.H. or 1975 C.E. That time period was filled with many events that were attributed to those who openly professed Islam and called others to it—irrespective of the question of how sincere those claims were. It was during said time that the Iranian Revolution broke out, the Shiah groups took further control in Lebanon and Sadat was assassinated. A number of terrorist groups appeared who ascribed themselves to Islam and threatened Western interests. Therefore, the Western experts on Middle East affairs recognized that the Islamic movements did not spark the interest of the governments or the people until they started doing terrorist acts against the West.³ Patrick Ryan⁴ stated, “The use of the word ‘fundamentalist’ in referring to a number of people has become widespread in political writings and articles in recent years. With the end of 1980 [1400-1401 A.H.], American newspapers often wrote about what we call the growing tide of religious fundamentalism.”⁵

Furthermore, that time period also saw the rise of Islamic revival and the appearance of Islamic phenomena, such as the

¹ Cf., James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 2.

² Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah* [Encyclopedia Britannica], vol. 7, pp. 777-779.

³ See what some American experts stated in a congressional session that was published in its Arabic translation by Ahmad Khidhr, *Majallah Mujtama*, No. 929, p. 49, No. 973, p. 50 and No. 937, p. 32.

⁴ Patrick Ryan is a American specialized in Middle Eastern studies. He is currently working at Fordham University, USA. Cf., *al-Mujtama*, No. 886, p. 26.

⁵ Quoted from Dr. Ahmad Ibraaheem Khidhr, “*al-Gharbiyyoon wa al-Usooliyyah al-Islaamiyyah*,” *al-Mujtama*, No. 886, p. 26.

wearing of the Muslim woman's dress, growing of the beard and calling to the application of the Shareeah.¹

All of that made the West live in great anxiety and confusion, to the point that one researcher was led to remark that it was a state of illness.²

Some authors stress that the terms "radicalism, extremism," as opposed to the term "fundamentalism," were first used by Israel when the Muslims began to realize their identity and returned to Islam as the source of their honor and the road for victory.³ There is no clear evidence for this save for the study and documentary published in 1406 A.H. entitled, "The enmity of the Jews for the Islamic movement."⁴ This work covered what was published in the Jewish written media and Israeli broadcasts. Those articles and reports reflected the great fear they have of those who adhere to Islam and branded them all as extremists. Some of those reports and articles appeared quite early, giving the impression that the Jews were some of the first to use those terms.

In any case, regardless of whether it was the Jews or others who spread these terms, it is certain that the transfer of these terms to the Muslims was via the Western media that spoke about what they called, "the fundamentalist Islamic phenomenon." The giving of that name to this phenomenon was influenced by the already existing conception among the Westerners concerning the fundamentalist Christian phenomenon.

The Western Perception of Extremism among Muslims

Under the heading "Indices of Islamic Fundamentalism," Dr. Hrair Dekmejian⁵ presents a number of verbal and behavioral indices of fundamentalism. I shall concisely present what he stated

¹ Cf., Hasan Hanafi, *al-Usooliyyah*, p. 8; Dr. Saad al-Deen Ibraaheem, *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah al-Muaasirah*, p. 395.

² Cf., Haamid Rabee, *al-Islaam wa al-Quwi al-Dauliyyah*, p. 7.

³ Cf., Umar Ubaid Hasanah, Introduction to *al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah bain al-Juhud wa al-Tatarruf*, pp. 7-8.

⁴ This study was done by Professor Ziyaad Abu Ghunaimah.

⁵ Hrair Dekmejian, originally a Syrian-Armenian Christian, is now an American citizen. He was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1933. He is a professor of Political Science at New York University. He is also a lecturer on Middle Eastern affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State. He has worked as a consultant to a number of official American agencies. He is among those most concerned with the topic of contemporary Islamic revival. Cf., *al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalim al-Arabi*, pp. 5 and 15.

in order to define in the light of his discussion the Western perception of extremism among Muslims.

First: The General Indices of Collective Behavior:

The author distinguishes between two types of fundamentalism: passive fundamentalism and activist fundamentalism. He says that there are some general indices that are common to both types of fundamentalism yet there are some additional indices only found in activist fundamentalism. The indices that are common to both types are as follows:

- (1) "regular mosque attendance, five times a day";
- (2) "strict observance of the Five Pillars";
- (3) "striving for an exemplary life with a significant degree of adherence to Quranic prohibitions, such as abstaining from alcohol...";
- (4) "regular religious meditation and reading of the Quran and other Islamic literature";
- (5) "participation in group activities organized by religious societies";
- (6) "participation in neighborhood self-help and mutual assistance societies, which provide health care, food, and social services particularly to the poor";
- (7) "growing full beards and thin moustaches as a sign of devotion and piety and often displaying short haircuts";
- (8) "wearing of distinctive clothing: males usually wear a *galabiyah* which does not cover the feet; women wear loose garments covering the body or a maxi-length skirt and sometimes a head cover (*khimar*)."

As for what the author calls "activist fundamentalism," Dekmejian states that it

is difficult if not impossible to differentiate between the militant and passive fundamentalists, except in situations where the following characteristics are observable:

1. Activist fundamentalists are likely to pursue the behavioral norms of the passive fundamentalists (1 through 8 above), except with greater vigor and assiduity...
2. [A tendency] to live together in specific neighborhoods and, in certain cases, in physical and social isolation from the Muslim population...
3. ...frequent specific mosques...

4. The activists, in contrast to passive fundamentalists, periodically engage in acts of “purifying” violence directed against places of illicit pleasure, night clubs...¹

Second: The Verbal Indices:

Dekmejian states, “Another method to discern the manifestations of fundamentalism is through the identification of key words, mottos [*sic*], and phraseology which Islamic speakers and writers use with great frequency. Indeed, Islamic fundamentalism has its own specialized terminology (*mustalahat*) and slogans (*shiarat*), as found in other religions and ideologies.”²

He presented a number of terms and I shall present them as he presented them in order to greatly enhance the perception of the concept in their minds:

Jahiliyyah—the ignorant and sinful society consisting of non-Muslims as well as Muslims who do not follow the correct path—*sirat al-mustaqim*—as in the pre-Islamic society of the Prophet’s time.

Fasad—moral corruption in society, especially among the ruling elite and its allies in the economic sector.

Tawhid—belief in the unity of Allah, in opposition to *shirk*—the belief in ascribing “partners” to the Godhead.

Iktinaz—hoarding of goods and wealth against the interests of the Islamic community.

Makruh—abhorrence by believers of impious conduct.

Iftira—false accusation.

Kafir—unbeliever. In the case of extreme fundamentalists, the term is applied to all non-Muslims, including Christians and Jews as well as mainstream Muslims.³

He quotes yet more terms which I shall just mention briefly as examples: “the enemies of Allah and man,” “forces of evil, darkness and ignorance,” “the art of death,” “superstition,” “innovation,”

¹ Cf., *al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalim al-Arabi*, p. 87-89. [The above quotes have been taken from the original English text with close attention paid to what the author did or did not quote. See R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 54-55.—JZ]

² *Al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalim al-Arabi*, p. 91. [Quote taken from Dekmejian, p. 56.]

³ *al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalim al-Arabi*, pp. 91-93. [Quote taken from Dekmejian, p. 57.]

“despot,” “apostate,” “straying,” “atheist,” “victory is from God, and the conquest is at hand,” “injustice,” “the wretched,” “the poor,” “the corrupt on earth,” “extravagance,” and “they legalize the illicit, and they proclaim illicit the legal.”

John Esposito¹, another Western expert, presented the doctrinal framework of what he calls “Islamic organizations.” He noted the following:

- (1) Islam is a complete way of life.
- (2) The cause for the weakness of the Muslims is in their deviating from Islam and their following of other dogmas.
- (3) It is obligatory upon the Muslims to follow what is found in the revelation.
- (4) The way to revive and reform the Muslim society is via a social and political Islamic revolution such as that carried out by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which established an Islamic system covering the law and the state.
- (5) It is obligatory upon the Muslims to apply the law of Allah.
- (6) Islam does not reject science. However, the discussion must comply with Islamic parameters.
- (7) The Islamization process requires the existence of a nucleus of devout believers who call the people to repentance and return to the path of Allah. This core must be prepared when the necessity comes to fight against evil and corruption.²

Then he explained that the “extremists” believe, in addition to the above, in the following:

“(1) The Crusader complex, new imperialistic designs and Zionist power is the result of a Judeo-Christian plot which incites the West against the East or the Islamic world.

(2) Given that the law of the Islamic governments is to be built upon the Islamic Shareeah, those rulers who do not apply that Shareeah are responsible for the plight that their lands have reached. Therefore, they are sinners. Based on that, jihad against them is a sanctioned goal and obligatory with respect to them. Similarly, it is a must to fight against the other Muslims who follow the same path as the rulers.

(3) Jihad against the disbelievers is a religious obligation.

¹ John Esposito is an American Orientalist who lived for more than ten years in Arabic and Islamic lands. He is specialized in contemporary Islamic revival. He is a professor of Religious Studies, Holy Cross University, Worcester. Cf., Ahmad Khidhr, *Majallah al-Mujtama*, “*al-Islama wa al-Koongriss*,” no. 914, p. 26.

² See John Esposito, Congressional Session, translated into Arabic and critiqued by Ahmad Khidhr, *Majallah al-Mujtama*, No. 914, p. 27.

(4) The Jews and Christians are disbelievers—for the most part. The least that can be said about them is that they are the People of the Book according to their traditional Islamic understanding of that term.

(5) The opposition to this movement is not limited to the legal rulers but extends to the official scholars of the religion.”¹

In a session held by the subcommittee on European and Middle Eastern affairs, under the auspices of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the United States Congress, a number of statements were made which will help us pinpoint the perception of extremism. The most conclusive of them are as follows:

(1) Daniel Pipes² stated under the title, “The Goals of the Islamic Fundamentalists,” “The Islamic fundamentalists are trying in every land of these lands [that is, the Islamic lands] to apply a fervent program derived from their understanding of Islamic Shareeah. They think that their holy book encompasses in detail this application which is the key to politics with respect to them.”³

(2) Daniel Pipes divides contemporary Muslims into three groups: secularists, reformists and fundamentalists.⁴ The secularists are those who speak on behalf of the West. They see it as a necessity to completely separate religion from life. The reformists are those who combine the Shareeah and Western civilization and they interpret the Shareeah in such a way that it is consistent with the ways of the West. The fundamentalists are those who believe that it is obligatory to completely apply the Shareeah.⁵

(3) A great amount of that congressional session was devoted to the Shiah in Iran, Lebanon and some other countries. This indicates that they occupy the major concern in the Western thought about what is known as Islamic fundamentalism. However, Dr. Northern⁶, one of the participants, stated, “Radicalism is not a permanent feature of the Shiah. It is simply a reaction.”¹

¹ Ibid., p. 28.

² Daniel Pipes is a visiting associate at Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He worked as an advisor for the State Department and as director of an institute, in Philadelphia, to study foreign affairs. He is specialized in Middle Eastern topics. Cf., *al-Mujtama*, No. 942, p. 39.

³ “*al-Islam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress),” *al-Mujtama*, No. 942, p. 41.

⁴ “*al-Islam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress),” *al-Mujtama*, No. 942, p. 41.

⁵ Cf., Ahmad Khidhr, “*al-Islam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress),” *al-Mujtama*, No. 942, p. 49.

⁶ Augustus Richard Northern is a professor in the department of sociology in the Military Academy of New York. He got his Ph.D. in political science

(4) A clear theme prominent among the writers and conferences in the West concerning the topic of fundamentalism is the issue of the threat to Western influences due to religious motivation being a salient feature of Islamic fundamentalism. For that reason, the Shiah are prominent in the Western studies on Islamic fundamentalism since in Iran and Lebanon they carried out some terrorist attacks and abductions of Westerners.

(5) One Western writer, taking into consideration the Muslims' adherence to the Quran and their belief that its wording was sent down from Allah, says that all Muslims can be described as fundamentalists. He states, "Islam also can be said to be 'fundamentalistic': Muslims believe that the Quran was verbally revealed to the Prophet in its Arabic words, and that the exact form of the text was divinely inspired; its purity cannot be questioned."²

(6) What makes the Western conception of fundamentalism very clear is that one Western expert, Daniel Pipes, categorizes the previous ruler of Pakistan, Dhiya ul-Haqq³, as one of the fundamentalists because he called for the implementation of the Islamic Shareeah in his country.⁴

(7) One Western expert states that the belief that Islamic fundamentalism is equivalent to terrorism is wrong. He says that fundamentalism is more than that. He stated, "I spent some ten to fifteen years in the Islamic world. I lived in a very good manner with a number of those who are known today in the world as Muslim activists. I found that the vast majority of them are not terrorist extremists."⁵ He also said, "This phenomenon which we call Islamic fundamentalism must not be understood in terms of terrorism. It is far from that."⁶

from the University of Chicago. He is known for his writings on religious extremism and politics in the Middle East. Cf., *al-Mujtama*, No. 948, p. 31.

¹ "*al-Islaam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress)," *al-Mujtama*, No. 964, p. 43.

² [James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 7.]

³ He was General Dhiya ul-Haqq who became the ruler of Pakistan after the overthrow of Ali Butto in 1397 A.H. During his lifetime, he steered his country toward applying the Shareeah. He was one of the strongest supporters of the jihad in Afghanistan. He died in a plane crash in 1408 A.H.

⁴ "*al-Islaam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress)," *al-Mujtama*, No. 919, p. 44.

⁵ John Esposito, quoted in "*al-Islaam wa al-Kungriss* (Islam and Congress)," *al-Mujtama*, No. 919, p. 44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

In light of the discussion just presented of opinions of some Western experts concerning the affairs of the Muslim world and those concerned with Islamic revival, we may explain the Western conception of extremism or what they call "Islamic fundamentalism" in the following brief points:

(1) The Westerners are more concerned with this phenomenon as a political phenomenon than as a religious one. This is the angle from which they are viewing this matter. This is evidenced in the following:

(a) The political circles in the West are those most concerned with this matter. For that reason, most of the conferences that were held concerning this topic were held under the auspices of the political circles.

(b) The political aspects of extremism almost monopolize the research on extremism.¹

(2) According to them, applying the Shareeah or advocating such is considered one of the most blatant features of extremism regardless of whether that application is in one's own personal behavior or as a societal matter for the Muslim nation as a whole.

(3) Advocating no separation of religion from life [that is, worldly or mundane matters] is considered a form of extremism.

(4) Taking a literal approach to the commands of the Quran and adhering thusly is considered extremism.

(5) The most obvious acts of extremism are acts of violence. The Westerners equate two matters related to this issue: (a) jihad against the disbelievers and (b) violence and terrorism not sanctioned by the Shareeah, such as revolting against Muslim rulers.

(6) The extremists declare others to be disbelievers. They declare the Jews and Christians to be disbelievers in the same way that they declare the masses of Muslims to be disbelievers.

(7) The extremists participate in religious and social programs in their countries.

Those are the most salient features of extremism from the point of view of the West. Before I critique these points, I would like to clarify one important fact: In their conception, the Westerners' reference to what they call "Islamic fundamentalism" comes from a preconceived notion, which is Christian fundamentalism whose adherents are described as being irrational, biased and bigoted. Equating Islam with Christianity on this matter

¹ Cf., Dr. Abdul Qaadir Taash, "*al-Tatarruf al-Islaami Wahim am Haqeeqah*," *Jareedah Ukaadh*, No. 8459.

is a very big mistake that in turn leads to mistaken corollaries. The Muslim going back to his roots in the Quran is not something despicable or error-prone as it is when a Christian returns to his source of the Gospel. This is true for the following reasons:

(1) The letter and wording of the Quran is in fact from Allah. This is proven through many means, including:

(a) Man and jinn are challenged to bring forth anything similar to the Quran. [Allah says,]

﴿ قُلْ لِّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا

الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾

“Say: If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Quran they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support” (*al-Israa* 88). In fact, the Quran challenges them to bring forth just one *soorah* or “chapter” similar to one of its *soorahs*. No human has been able to do that although the Arabs had great linguistic skills and the presence of a strong enmity that should have driven them to do such.

(b) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was illiterate and did not know how to read or write. [Allah says,]

﴿ وَمَا كُنتَ تَتْلُو مِن قَبْلِهِ مِن كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا

لَأَرْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴾

“And you were not (able) to recite a book before this (Book came), nor were you (able) to transcribe it with your right hand: in that case, indeed, would the speakers of vanities have doubted” (*al-Ankaboot* 48). The fact that he was illiterate shows that those who claim that he took this Quran from previous books are nothing but liars.

(c) The biography of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) confirms that he did not learn from any of the People of the Book, those who had the knowledge of their prophets and people.

(d) In the Quran, there are verses that reprimand the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).¹ If the Quran were

¹ An example of that nature can be found in the beginning of *soorah Abasa*.

from himself and not from Allah, he certainly would not have reprimanded himself in such a manner.

(e) There are a number of miraculous aspects related to the Quran that demonstrate that it could not possibly be the speech of a human. Its eloquence is not even approximated in the eloquence of humans. It also contains information about future events—with respect to the time of their revelation. For example, it spoke about the coming victory, at that time, of the Romans over the Persians. Allah says,

﴿الْمَرْغُوبَاتِ الرُّومِ﴾ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ﴿فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ﴾ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ ﴿

“Alif Lam Mim. The Romans have been defeated in a land close by. But they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious, within a few years. With Allah is the decision in the past and in the future” (*al-Room* 1-4). It also contains scientific miracles; that is, it contains information that was unknown to the people at that time, such as the stages of the fetus in the womb of its mother. These aspects all demonstrate that the Quran is the word of Allah and not the speech of a human. It is definitely only from Allah, the all-Wise, the all-Knowing.

(f) There is also the miracle of the preservation of the Quran in its wording and lettering. Since the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until today it is exactly the same, without even one letter being distorted or one word being lost. If such were to occur in a copy of the Quran today, the young children of the ones who wrote it would spot it even before it reaches the Quran specialists and scholars.

(g) It has never been shown to be from other than Allah, although the enemies of Islam have tried in vain to establish any proof that it is the speech of a human and they have had many years and centuries to perform that task. This incapability confirms along with the previously stated evidence that the Quran is the word of Allah.

This issue is very different, though, with respect to the Bible. The Christians admit that the Gospel is not the literal word of Allah.¹ This is evident in the fact that there are a number of

¹ [Perhaps the author should have said that the vast majority of Christians and Biblical scholars, save for the fundamentalists among them, admit that the Bible has not been preserved and is not the literal word of God.—JZ]

Gospels, each of which is attributed to one of the disciples: the Gospel of Matthew¹, the Gospel of Mark², the Gospel of Luke³ and the Gospel of John⁴.

Reading any one of these four Gospels will make it clear that it is not the word of God. In fact, each writer of the Gospels states in his own way the narrations of history and what occurred to Jesus, including even the claimed narrations about his crucifixion.⁵

In fact, even the ascription of these Gospels to their supposed authors is something that is not definite. In *al-Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah* (*Encyclopedia Britannica*) it states, "It is certain that the Gospel of Matthew was written for a Judeo-Christian church within a very strong Jewish environment. However, it is uncertain whether it was Matthew who actually wrote it."⁶

In the same encyclopedia, an author writes, "Although the author of the Gospel of Mark is not known according to the strongest opinion, the value of this book and its traditional authority comes from the relationship between the theorized author with the disciple Peter."⁷

¹ Matthew is the name of one of the disciples according to the Christians. He was originally Jewish. He was a tax collector for the Romans. He followed Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and after he was raised, he left to spread the word in Ethiopia. It is said he died there. Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 45.

² Mark was a follower of Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but not one of the disciples. He was born in Jerusalem and went on a missionary trip to Antioch and Cyprus. He died in Alexandria. Cf., Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 49.

³ Luke was one of the followers of Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and was a non-Jew. It is said that he was born in Antioch. He accompanied Paul in his trips. He died in Greece. Cf., Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 51.

⁴ John was a Jewish fisherman and a follower of Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the beginning. He traveled to Western Turkey, wrote his Gospel there and died there. Cf., Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 53. It should be noted that these biographies are taken from Christian statements. In reality, there is a lot of confusion and uncertain aspects as to the identity of these four.

⁵ Cf., Ibn al-Qayyim, *Hidaayah al-Hayaara fi Ajwibah al-Nasaara*, p. 48; Ibn Mamar, *Minhat al-Qareeb al-Mujeeb fi al-Radd ala Ibaad al-Saleeb*, p. 73.

⁶ *al-Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 697. Quoted from Muhammad al-Saadi, *Diraasah fi al-Anajeel al-Arbaah*, p. 16.

⁷ Peter was one of the disciples. His original name was Simeon. He was a fisherman. After Jesus' ascension, he roamed about calling people to the new faith. He was crucified thirty-years after Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 51.

(h) The Quran was transmitted from the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a *mutawaatir*² fashion that produces definite knowledge. Hence, there can be no room for any doubt about any of its words. On the other hand, the Gospels definitely cannot, in general, be traced to Jesus. In fact, they cannot even be traced back to their four writers. Although they are widespread today, such does not produce confirmed knowledge since the origin itself of those works is either unknown or non-existent.³

(2) The Noble Quran contains only sound information. There is no information in it whatsoever that has been proven false through sound evidence, although those who deny the Quran are very eager to try to deny or refute it. On the other hand, the distorted gospels are filled with stories and reports that are denied by reasoning and which the senses find distasteful. Furthermore, there are many prophecies in the Gospel that did not turn out true and which did not occur. This is evidence that it is not a divine book as one of the aspects of a divine book is that its prophecies are fulfilled.⁴

Therefore, one cannot be blamed for believing in the reports and information of the Quran. On the other hand, one who affirms in general the reports of the Gospels is blameworthy as rational and historical evidence can be presented to refute what it contains.

(3) The Quran does not contradict science. And it does not prohibit benefiting from the creation that Allah has made subjected to humans. Indeed, encouragement to attain knowledge is found in numerous verses in the Quran.⁵ Similarly, there is encouragement for contemplation and thought, traveling throughout the earth,

¹ *al-Mausooah al-Britaaniyyah*, vol. 2, p. 951. Quoted from Muhammad al-Saadi, *Diraasah fi al-Anajeel al-Arbaah*, p. 17. For the discrepancies among those works, see Maurees Bookai [Maurice Bucaille], *Diraasah al-Kutub al-Muqadissah fi Dhau al-Maarif al-Hadeethah*, pp. 93-75; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Muhaadharaat fi al-Nasraaniyyah*, pp. 43-59.

² [*Mutawaatir* means that it has been passed on in such a way and by so many people in each generation that there is no possibility of an error having been made or that they could have all agreed upon a forgery.—JZ]

³ Cf., Ibn Mamar, *Minhat al-Qareeb al-Mujeeb fi al-Radd ala Ibaad al-Saleeb*, pp. 67-68.

⁴ For a discussion of those unfulfilled prophecies, see Muhammad al-Saadi, *Diraasah fi al-Anajeel al-Arbaah*, p. 45.

⁵ Over seven hundred verses contain the word "knowledge" and its synonyms. See Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baaqi, *al-Mujam al-Mufihri li-Alfaadh al-Quraan al-Kareem*, caption "ilm."

studying the laws of Allah in humans and in creation. All of this is in order to benefit from what Allah has subjected to mankind.

As for the distorted Gospels or the people of the deviated gospels, they all stood for many years blocking the path of scientific progress in Europe. Indeed, they burnt at the stake many who were brave enough to speak about scientific theories which contradicted what the Church believed in.

Therefore, the one who adheres to the foundation of the Quran will have in his affairs what supports knowledge and encourages him to it. The one who adheres to the foundation of the distorted Gospels will be opposed and resistant to scientific progress, as there is a big difference between it and what he believes in.

Based on what has just been stated, to use the word *usooliyyah* [in referring to Islam, based on the Western term “fundamentalism”] according to the meaning prevalent among the Westerners is not proper.¹

¹ [To further support what the author has stated, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (vol. VI, p. 267) defines fundamentalism as, “A religious movement, which orig. became active among various Protestant bodies in the United States after the war of 1914-1918, based on strict adherence to certain tenets (e.g. the literal inerrancy of Scripture) held to be fundamental to the Christian faith.” Hence, this definition refers to those who believe in the Bible and the teachings of the faith to be the actual truth that one must adhere to in one’s life. The majority and the media often use the term in a negative sense. Of course, with a religion like Christianity concerning which many scholars have to admit that its original scriptures have been distorted and whose teachings are many times not compatible with human life, it is not surprising to see a strong anti-Fundamentalist movement, as people are forced into such a stance when they wish to somehow adhere to their religion yet they are not willing to accept its irrational aspects. If this is one’s definition of fundamentalism, there is no room for an “anti-fundamentalist” movement among Muslims. All scholars, including many non-Muslims, agree that the Quran has not been tampered with in any way and it is a revelation from Allah. Hence, there is no need to discuss whether or not one should believe in the “inerrancy of Scripture,” as the definition states above. It should also be noted that the highly respected *Oxford English Dictionary*’s second given definition of “fundamentalism” is appalling and inaccurate in the Islamic context. The Dictionary (vol. VI, p. 267) states, “In other religions, esp. Islam, a similarly strict adherence to ancient or fundamental doctrines, with no concessions to modern developments in thought or customs.” This term is often used for Muslims who are calling to a return to the Quran or Sunnah. However, that movement does take into account “modern developments in thought or customs”—accepting what is good and consistent with the Quran and Sunnah and rejecting what is bad and evil. The Dictionary’s definition is a very distorted one but it is the one in the

Critique of the Western Conception of Extremism

Not everything that the Western experts stated about extremism is incorrect. Instead, it is partially correct and partially incorrect.

The aspects in which it is correct include the following:

(1) The Western experts consider the Shiah as a most blatant form of what they call “fundamentalists” [meaning extremists] in contemporary times. That is correct. The *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* agree in stating that the Shiah are extremists. In fact, they were from among the first extremists that appeared in this nation [as previously discussed]. Their extremism has many facets to it.

(2) The Western experts say that declaring others to be disbelievers is a characteristic act of the “fundamentalists” [extremists]. However, they say that they declare the Jews, Christians and majority of the Muslims to be disbelievers. This statement is not quite correct [as a characteristic of extremism]. The correct portion is that the declaration that other Muslims are disbelievers is a form of extremism, as the basic ruling is that a Muslim is within the fold of Islam and is not considered out of it unless there is a clear proof otherwise.

(3) The Western experts consider a very apparent phenomenon of extremism to be violence and terrorism. They also equate jihad to unsanctioned violence and terrorism. This is also not completely correct. It is true that violence, terrorism and killing of Muslims, non-Muslim citizens, protected visitors and people with whom there is a pact without any right and supposedly from a religious justification is truly extremism, as was discussed earlier.

On the other hand, their conception is mistaken with respect to the following aspects:

(1) They differentiate between active and passive fundamentalists. They claim, while making such a differentiation, that it is very difficult to differentiate between those two categories. Actually, what drives them to try to make such a differentiation is that [in their eyes] all [practicing, non-secularist] Muslims without exception are extremists and, in reality, not one Muslim who adheres to the commands of Islam, even if only on an individual basis, can escape that description.

(2) [They are also incorrect in their claim] that calling to a non-separation of religion and life is a form of extremism. The

minds of many Westerners when they think of what they have termed “Islamic fundamentalism.”—JZ]

Westerners consider not separating between religion and life—or, in particular, politics—as a form of extremism. This is a clear fault in their perception. This fault is visible in the opinion of some researchers who are ignorant of the fact that Islam does not distinguish between religion and politics. Although the Muslims may have forgotten that principle for a long period, they eventually woke up, even if it just be on the level of calling to that principle. In reality, this is a return to a basic, well-known Islamic principle that is part of the essentials and fundamentals of the religion.¹ This fact was noted by one of the participants in the congressional symposium as he gave the advice that American policy in dealing with the Islamic fundamentalists should be built upon the understanding of the connection between religion and politics and that the events that have occurred should be explained as logical actions resulting from that connection.² The nature of the Islamic religion indicates that it is a religion that was revealed to rule all aspects of life. Even just one look at its texts and rulings, therefore, will confirm that it is a complete way of life covering both the spiritual and material aspects as well as the individual and societal.

Western experts, when they reject what they call “mixing religion with politics,” should be wary of falling into a contradiction by neglecting the similar phenomenon that is occurring among the youth in progressive Europe. It has been confirmed in academic studies that that youth is being more and more influenced by religious factors when they decide or vote on national political issues, even though Christianity is a faith and spiritual religion that does not enter into the political system of the individual or groups. Indeed, there are a number of political parties in European countries which ascribe themselves to Christianity [such as the Christian Democratic Party].³

(3) They have made the issue into a political issue and look at it only from that angle. This is a great shortcoming in their understanding of the nature of extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims. In its essence, extremism is a matter that is attributed to the religion. The extremists of any religion are to be judged in accordance with the religion that they ascribe themselves to. Therefore, one must see what is in agreement with the

¹ Cf., Muhammad Mahmood Rabee, *Araa fi al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah*, p. 29.

² Cf., Dr. Ahmad Khidhr, *al-Islam wa al-Koongris, al-Mujtama*, No. 969, p. 49.

³ Cf., Muhammad Mahmood Rabee, *Araa fi al-Sihwah al-Islaamiyyah*, p. 21.

foundation of the religion and what falls outside of it with respect to extremism.

(4) [They are also incorrect when they say that] the application of the Shareeah or the call to its implementation is a type of extremism. Actually, the Islamic Shareeah contains what is good for mankind and what is needed for everyone's happiness. There is no comparison between Islam and the distorted Christianity [on this point]. If the distorted Christianity were to be applied in the lives of humans, it would lead to great injustice to mankind. The secularists in the West developed and grew only as an escape from the misery of Christian life that was applied by the Pope and church leaders.¹

(5) [They are also incorrect when they say that] calling to jihad against the disbelievers is a type of extremism. This is not correct because jihad is one of the Shareeah obligations. Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبئسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾

“O Prophet! Make jihad against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed” (*al-Taubah* 73). Allah also says,

﴿ قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴾

“Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the *Jizyah* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued” (*al-Taubah* 29).

Islamic jihad has been sanctioned in order to allow the light of Islam to reach humans. It was due to that light that when a people were conquered it was not long before those people were the leaders in conquering other lands [as they spread their new religion of Islam].

¹ Cf., Muhammad Qutb, *Madhaahab al-Fikriyyah al-Muaasirah*, pp. 9-70.

At the same time, though, violence, revolting against rulers and terrorism have different rulings in Islam depending on the circumstances of the people involved. Making jihad against a warring disbeliever is not extremism. However, violence and terrorism as a religious deed performed against a Muslim, non-Muslim citizen or those who have a pact with the Muslim government is a form of extremism. This topic shall be dealt with in more detail later.

(6) [They are also incorrect when they say that] declaring the Jews and Christians to be disbelievers is a form of extremism. This mistake is built upon failing to recognize the religion itself as the standard to judge matters of extremism. Otherwise, the Islamic religion makes it very clear that whoever does not adhere to the religion of Islam is a disbeliever in it. Allah says,

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ﴾

“Those who say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary have surely disbelieved” (*al-Maaidah* 17 and 72). Allah also says,

﴿لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ

حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ﴾

“Those who reject (truth) among the People of the Book and among the polytheists were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them clear evidence” (*al-Bayyinah* 1). In fact, the adherents of any religion believe that the others are disbelievers since they do not belong to their religion and way of life.

It should be noted that the Western perception of extremism is a very superficial perception in some ways. For example, they consider the wearing of the Muslim woman’s dress as an indicator of extremism. This superficiality is the opposite of the in-depth and serious study needed.

Some Muslim scholars and researchers have been duped by the terminology [derived from the West]. One of them said, “The West uses the second term, ‘fundamentalism,’ as a description of the moderate, comprehensive trend. At the beginning, they used to use the term ‘terrorist’ and branded them as radicals. However, they were not able to continue with that type of description.”¹

¹ Dr. Ali Juraisha, *al-Itijahaat al-Fikriyyah al-Muaasirah*, p. 329.

Apparently, there is a shortcoming in the understanding of the meaning of the Western experts as it applies to Muslims. They use the term “fundamentalism” to refer to the Islamic revival as understood by the Muslims. However, according to their understanding of “fundamentalists,” the Western experts is referring to the abnormal movement that contradicts rational principles. A historical look at how that term is used confirms this. To understand this term, it is not sufficient to look at dictionaries that simply give the literal meaning of the word. Instead, one must study the different ways in which the term is used. Such study makes it clear that their use of the term is in reference to fanatical, bigoted movements. To choose this term to describe the Islamic movement is a choice that entails some enmity and evil. The following is proof for this:

(1) The historical background that exists in the mind of the Westerner makes it such that whenever he hears about “fundamentalism,” he is filled with disdain and scorn due to the barbarian acts perpetrated by their brethren Christians in the name of religion. They fought humanism, scientific progress and development. The choice of that term and its application to the Muslims or a group of them is not without a purpose. However, it is not justified either. One Western researcher stated after presenting the use of that term in English and French, “These terms were transferred to the Muslim world as intellectual tools. They were formulated as explanations for the specific events of the Catholic and consequently Protestant history. We do not find any justification for this type of transfer.”¹ This shows that fundamentalism is not desirable among the Christians as it implies a return to the fundamentals of the distorted Gospels that are filled with misguidance and deviation, inconsistency with rational thought, incompatibility with science and false reports. However, if one means by “fundamentalism” a return to the Quran that is free from all those negative aspects, then this is something praiseworthy indeed. In fact, the word *usooliyeen*² in the customary usage of the Muslims refers to the scholars of the foundations of the faith or the scholars of Islamic legal theory, in its general usage. And they are a group among the Muslim scholars.³

(2) Further evidence that what is meant by the West when they use the term “fundamentalist” is the extreme, fanatical

¹ Gilles Cable, *al-Nabi wa al-Firoon*, pp. 231-232.

² [Which is the word used as a translation of “fundamentalists.”—JZ]

³ Cf., Ahmad Kamaal Abu al-Majd, *al-Tatarruf al-Deeni wa Abaaduhu*, p. 5.

movement and not the moderate, comprehensive movement, as some scholars think, is that the Westerners differentiate between fundamentalism and moderation and they distinguish between fundamentalists and moderates. For example, with respect to the jihad in Afghanistan, the West distinguished between the groups of mujahideen, calling some fundamentalists and others moderate, a differentiation that was rejected by the Mujahideen who described themselves as moderate.¹

(3) The history of the ideological struggle between Islam and the West, in particular in the modern age, demonstrates that the West has put forward a number of terms that were born in their environment and which carry particular meanings and understandings particular to the West, having a historical background to them. They apply these terms to the Muslims even though there is a great difference between the religions, histories and environments of the two civilizations. The following terms are perhaps clear examples of this nature:

- (1) fundamentalism
- (2) secularism
- (3) combativeness
- (4) backwardness
- (5) reform
- (6) progressiveness²
- (7) modernist

All of these terms are like abbreviations [or code words] indicating a philosophy or specific situation that was born in a particular environment in the West. [Although they are not appropriate for an Islamic context], the Westerners have insisted on transferring these terms to the Muslims due to reasons related to the need for control, spread of colonialism and to open the doors for intellectual and cultural invasions.

¹ Cf., Said Ahmad Jeelaani, *al-Mujtama*, No. 913, p. 24.

² Cf., Abdul Wahaab Saeed, introduction to *al-Usooliyyah fi al-Aalam al-Arabi*, p. 12.

Chapter Three: The Spheres of Credal and Shareeah-Related Extremism

Extremism with Respect to Loyalty (*al-Walaa*) and Disassociation (*al-Baraa*)

The Lexical Meaning of *al-Walaa* and *al-Baraa*

(1) The lexical meaning of *al-Walaa* [الولاء]:

Ibn Faaris stated, “[The three Arabic letters] *waw*, *laam* and *yaa* are a sound root indicating closeness. From this root comes *al-wali* [الولي], the closeness. One says, ‘They distanced themselves after *wali*,’ that is closeness.”¹ *Al-muwaalaah* [الموالة] is love. One says, “So and so *waala* to so and so,” if he loves him.² *Al-Walaa* also means help and assistance. Allah says,

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن
تَوَلَّوهُمْ ﴾

“Allah only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them for friendship and

¹ *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic *wali*.

² From the statement of ibn al-Araabi. Cf., ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, topic *wali*.

support" (*al-Mumtahinah* 9). Al-Faraa¹ said, "That is, giving them support, meaning the people of Makkah."²

(2) The lexical meaning of *al-Baraa* [البراءة]:

Ibn Faaris explains that the letters *ba*, *ra* and *hamzah* form two independent roots from which other branches are derived. One of them is "creation." One says, for example, "Allah *bara`a* [created] the creation." The other root means, "distancing from something and refraining from it." From this root, *bar`* means being sound and free of disease. So one says, "I have discharged [or are free of] your right." The people of the Hijaz say, "I am *buraa* [free, innocent] from you," while others instead say, "I am *baree* from you."³ One scholar of Arabic said, "One says *baree`a* when he is free of something [or has fulfilled it]; and one says *baree`a* if one refrains from something and stays away from it; and one says *baree`a* when he admonishes and warns."⁴

(3) The Shareeah Meanings of *al-Walaa* and *al-Baraa*:

Al-Walaa and *al-Wilaayah* mean support, love and respect.⁵ *Al-Baraa* means distancing, being free of another and enmity after admonishing and warning.⁶ Ibn Taimiyyah stated, "*Al-Wilaayah* is the opposite of enmity and animosity. The root of *al-wilaayah* is love and closeness. The root of *adaawah* [enmity and animosity] is hatred and distancing."⁷

The Position of *al-Walaa* and *al-Baraa* in Islam

The concept of *al-walaa* and *al-baraa* is a great foundation of the foundations of Islam. It is a necessary implication of the testimony,

¹ He was Yahya ibn Ziyaad ibn Abdullah al-Dailami, leader of the Kufi school of linguistics and most knowledgeable of them concerning grammar, language and literary arts. He was born in Kufah and moved to Baghdad. He was hired to bring up the children of the caliph al-Mamoon. He died on his way to Makkah in 207 A.H. Among his writings is *Maani al-Quran*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 10, p. 118; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 145.

² Quoted from ibn Mandhooor, *al-Lisaan*, topic *wali*.

³ *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic *bara*, vol. 1, p. 236.

⁴ Ibn al-Araabi, quoted in *Lisaan al-Arab*, topic *bara`a*.

⁵ Cf., ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, p. 403; Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah, *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 422; Dr. Muhammad al-Qahtaani, *al-Walaa wa al-Baraa*, p. 90.

⁶ Cf., Dr. Muhammad al-Qahtaani, *al-Walaa wa al-Baraa*, p. 90.

⁷ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Furqaan*, p. 7.

“There is none worthy of worship except Allah.” Numerous texts point to this foundation, to the extent that one scholar stated, “There is nothing in the Book of Allah that has more or clearer evidences for it [than *al-walaa* and *al-baraa*]¹—it coming after only the obligation of *tauheed* and the prohibition of its opposite [*shirk*].”¹

From the evidence related to this topic is the following:

Allah says,

﴿ لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ
تَقَةً وَيُحَذِّرْكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾

“Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers other than Believers. If any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah. Except [if it is done] by way of precaution, that you may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself, for the final goal is to Allah” (*ali-Imraan* 28). Allah also says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ
يُخْرِجُونَ الْحَقَّ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ
وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ
سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴾

“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors), offering them (your) love, even though they have rejected the truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homes),

¹ Hamad ibn Ateeq, *Sabeel al-Najaah wa Fakaak*, p. 31.

(simply) because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come out to strive in My Way and to seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them: for I know full well all that you conceal and all that you reveal. And any of you who do this has strayed from the Straight Path" (*al-Mumtahinah* 1). Again, Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَتَوَلَّوْهُم مِّمَّنْ مِّنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾

"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he among you who turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guides not a people unjust" (*al-Maaidah* 51). Allah also says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ
حَبَالًا وَذُؤًا مَا عُنْتُمْ قَدِ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي
صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

"O you who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin. Rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths. What their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if you have wisdom" (*ali-Imraan* 118). Indeed, there are many verses of this nature.

There are also the following hadith:

Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali reported that he pledged allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to "act sincerely toward every Muslim and to be free of every disbeliever."¹

Ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, al-Nasaa`ee and al-Baihaqi. The essence of Jareer's hadith may also be found in al-Bukhari and Muslim.

أوثق عرى الإيمان الحب في الله والبغض في الله

“The firmest cord of faith is loving for the sake of Allah and hating for the sake of Allah.”¹

Ibn Abbaas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أوثق عرى الإيمان الموالاة في الله والمعادة في الله والحب في الله

والبغض في الله

“The firmest cord of faith is having loyalty for the sake of Allah, disassociating for the sake of Allah, loving for the sake of Allah and hating for the sake of Allah.”²

This loyalty is based on and contingent upon truth. It is for the sake of truth only and cannot be on any other basis. In fact, one shows one’s loyalty to any believer no matter what type or class he may be. The loyalty is also a relative one dependent upon how much the Muslim adheres to the truth. Ibn Taimiyyah said, “For whoever is a believer, it is obligatory to give him loyalty no matter what kind he may be. And for whoever is a disbeliever, it is obligatory to have enmity toward him no matter what kind he may be... If someone has faith and evil in him, he is given an amount of loyalty that corresponds to the level of his faith and an amount of hatred that corresponds to his evil. However, he does not completely fall out of Islam simply due to sins and disobedience.”³

¹ Recorded by ibn Abi Shaibah in *Kitaab al-Imaan* as a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), p. 45. See the discussion of the following hadith.

² Recorded by al-Tabaraani and by al-Baghawi in *Sharh al-Sunnah* from the hadith narrated by ibn Abbaas and ibn Masood from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Its chain is weak but the hadith has supporting evidence that strengthen it, such as what is recorded by al-Tayaalisi (See *Minhah al-Mabood*, vol. 1, p. 23) and Ahmad from al-Baraa ibn Aazib who said, “We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he said, “The strongest cord of faith is to love for Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah.” Similarly, al-Tabaraani records such a hadith from ibn Masood in his *Sagheer* whose chain is *hasan* due to supporting and corroborating evidence. Cf., al-Haithami, *Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 1, pp. 89-90. He mentions a number of supporting reports. Also see al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheehah*, hadith #998 and *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 343, hadith #2536.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 227-229.

Loyalty and disassociation have their due limits. Whoever falls short of the desired loyalty has been negligent. Whoever goes beyond the sanctioned limit of loyalty is a blameworthy extremist. Whoever falls short in his disassociation is negligent. Whoever goes beyond its proper limits is a blameworthy extremist. I have restricted the discussion of the manifestation of extremism with respect to loyalty and disassociation in contemporary life to five aspects that I have broken down into the following:

- (1) Extremism with respect to the conception of the *jamaah* (community, group).
- (2) Extremism with respect to fanaticism and obedience to the *jamaah*.
- (3) Extremism that sets the *jamaah* as the source of truth and what is right.
- (4) Extremism with respect to the leader.
- (5) Extremism with respect to disassociating from the Muslim society.

Extremism with Respect to the Conception of the *Jamaah*¹

Certainly, Allah has ordered Muslims to come together and has prohibited sectarianism and division. [Allah says,]

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

“And hold fast all together by the rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves” (*ali-Imraan* 103). Allah also warned Muslims about treading the same path as the previous nations:

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

“Be not like those who divided among themselves and fell into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty” (*ali-Imraan* 105). He stated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is free of those who divide among themselves in the religion and become sects. The

¹ [The word *jamaah* in contemporary usage often refers to, “group, organization, movement.” However, it can also refer to the community at large, such as the Muslim community as a whole. It is important to keep these two meanings in mind while reading this section.—JZ]

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has nothing to do with them. [Allah says,]

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا وَكَانُوا دِيْنَهُمْ شِيْعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

“As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allah. He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did” (*al-Anaam* 159). This disassociating is for everyone who separates from the religion of Allah. Ibn Katheer stated, “The clear meaning is that the verse is general for everyone who separates from the religion of Allah and differs from it. Verily, Allah has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth so that it may dominate all religions and way of life. His law is one; it does not contain contradictions or discrepancies. As for whoever differs over it ‘and becomes sects,’ such as the various religious sects, groups, arbitrary desires and acts of misguidance, Allah has declared the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be free of what they are doing.”¹ “If Allah has declared his Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) free and innocent of all of their affairs, the one who is a follower of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) must also make himself free of them like his [the Prophet’s] being free of them. Whoever is in accord with them is going against the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the extent that he is in agreement with them.”²

There are numerous hadith specifically about the community and warning about separating and dividing. These hadith include the following:

(1) Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan said:

كَانَ النَّاسُ يُسْأَلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الْخَيْرِ وَكَنتُ أُسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَخَافَةً أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا كُنَّا فِي جَاهِلِيَّةٍ وَشَرٌّ فَجَاءَنَا اللَّهُ بِهَذَا الْخَيْرِ فَهَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ

¹ *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem*, vol. 2, p. 196.

² Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 1, p. 153.

قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ وَهَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الشَّرُّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَفِيهِ دَخَنٌ قُلْتُ
وَمَا دَخَنَهُ قَوْمٌ يَهْدُونَ بِغَيْرِ هَدْيِي تَعْرِفُ مِنْهُمْ وَتُنْكِرُ قُلْتُ فَهَلْ بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ قَالَ نَعَمْ دُعَاةٌ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ جَهَنَّمَ مَنْ أَجَابَهُمْ إِلَيْهَا
قَذَفُوهُ فِيهَا قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صِفْهُمْ لَنَا قَالَ هُمْ مِنْ جِلْدَتِنَا وَيَتَكَلَّمُونَ
بِالسِّنِّينَا قُلْتُ فَمَا تَأْمُرُنِي إِنْ أَدْرَكَنِي ذَلِكَ قَالَ تَلْزِمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَإِمَامَهُمْ قُلْتُ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ جَمَاعَةٌ وَلَا إِمَامٌ قَالَ فَاعْتَزِلْ تِلْكَ الْفِرْقَ
كُلَّهَا وَلَوْ أَنْ تَعَضَّ بِأَصْلِ شَجَرَةٍ حَتَّى يُدْرِكَكَ الْمَوْتُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ

“The people used to ask the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about the good things while I would ask him about evil out of fear that it may reach me. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we were in ignorance and evil and Allah came with this good. Will there be any evil after this good?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Will there be any good after that evil.’ He replied, ‘Yes, but it will contain some smoke [or fume, that is, it will be polluted and not completely pure].’ I said, ‘What will be its smoke?’ He said, ‘A people who will guide but not by my guidance. You will recognize some things from them [as correct] and you will reject others.’ I said, ‘Will there be any evil after that good?’ He replied, ‘Yes, [there will be] callers upon the gates of Hell. Whoever responds to them will be flung into it.’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), describe them to us.’ He said, ‘They are of our skin and they speak our language.’ I said, ‘What do you order me to do if I should encounter that?’ He said, ‘Stick to the community of the Muslims and their Imam [leader].’ I said, ‘Suppose there is no such community or Imam?’ He said, ‘Withdraw from all of those sects, even if you have to bite on the roots of trees until death comes upon you while you are in that state.’”¹

(2) Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

لَا يَحِلُّ دَمُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
بِإِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ النَّبِيُّ الزَّانِي وَالنَّفْسُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالتَّارِكُ لِدِينِهِ الْمُفَارِقُ
لِلْجَمَاعَةِ

“It is not legal [to spill] the blood of a Muslim except in one of three cases: the fornicator who has previously experienced legal sexual intercourse, a life for a life and one who forsakes his religion and separates from the community.”¹

(3) Ibn Abbaas narrated that Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ فَلْيَصْبِرْ عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ
شَبِيرًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“For whoever sees something from his leader that he does not like, let him be patient. The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance.”²

(4) Abu Dharr³ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شَبِيرٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

“Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck.”⁴

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maaajah and Ahmad.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Daarimi and Ahmad.

³ He was Jundub ibn Janaadah ibn Sufyaan of the tribe of Ghafaar, a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was the first to greet the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the greetings of peace (*salaam*). He was living in Damascus but Uthmaan ordered him brought to Madinah. Then he lived in al-Rubdah until he died. 182 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 46; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 90; *al-Alaam*, vol. 12, p. 140.

⁴ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Haakim and ibn Hibbaan from the hadith of al-Haarith al-Ashari. The narration has supporting evidence in narrations from ibn Umar, Abu Hurairah, Abu al-Darda and Aamir ibn Rabeeah. About the source hadith, ibn Hajar (*Fath*, vol. 3, p. 17) stated,

(5) Ibn Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْمَعُ أُمَّتِي أَوْ قَالَ أُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ اللَّهُ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ إِلَى النَّارِ

“Verily, Allah does not gather together this Nation—or he said the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—upon a misguidance. The Hand of Allah is with the congregation. Whoever separates from it, separates to the Hell-fire.”¹

(6) Umar narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْفُرْقَةَ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ مَعَ الْوَاحِدِ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْبَاطِنِينَ أَبْعَدُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بُحْبُوحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ فَلْيَلْزِمِ الْجَمَاعَةَ مَنْ سَرَّتْهُ حَسَنَتُهُ وَسَاءَتْهُ سَيِّئَتُهُ فَذَلِكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُ

“Adhere to the congregation and avoid division. Verily, Satan is with the one [alone] and he is further away from the two. Whoever wants the comfort of Paradise, let him stick to the congregation. Whoever is made happy by his good deeds and saddened by his evil deeds is, in fact, a believer.”²

“Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Khuzaimah and by ibn Hibban who declared it *sahih*.” Al-Haithami (*Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 5, p. 217) stated, “Its narrators are of the *Sahih* save Ali ibn Ishaq al-Sulami, and he is trustworthy.”

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Abi Aasim, al-Laalakai in *Sharh Usool al-Itiqaad* and al-Haakim. Al-Tirmidhi said, “It is unique through this chain.” Its chain contains Sulaimaan ibn Subyaan and he is weak, as it states in *al-Taqreeb* [by ibn Hajar]. Al-Tabaraani records it via two chains. The narrators of one of them are the narrators of the *Sahih* save for Marzooq, the ex-slave of the family of Talhah, and he is trustworthy, as al-Haithami stated in *Majma* (vol. 5, p. 218). Al-Albaani said about the narration in al-Tabaraani that its chain is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Dhilaal al-Jannah fi Takhreej al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 40.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, ibn Abi Aasim and by al-Haakim who said it is *sahih* and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Tirmidhi said, “It is *hasan saheeh ghareeb* through this chain.” The hadith also has other chains from Umar. See *Kitaab al-Sunnah* by ibn Abi Aasim, nos. 87, 88, 902, 896 and 899. Al-Albaani declared it *sahih* in his discussion of the hadith of ibn Abi Aasim.

There are yet other texts of the Quran and Sunnah that all indicate that it is obligatory to stick to the community. The Companions grasped this concept very well and often advised people to stick to the community, especially during times of trials and tribulations (*fitnah*).¹

One scholar² followed up all of these hadith, reports and statements of early scholars in order to clarify the meaning of the word *al-jamaah* ("the community") in those texts. One comes across five opinions as to its interpretation:

The First Opinion:

It refers to the vast majority of the people of Islam. This was the opinion of the Companion Abu Masood al-Ansaari.³ Ibn Seereen⁴ narrated that Abu Masood would state whenever anyone asked for his advice after the killing of Uthmaan, "Stick to the community for Allah will not gather together the Nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) upon misguidance."⁵

Al-Shaatibi stated, "Based on that statement, the *jamaah* includes all of the *mujtahideen* and scholars of the nation and the people of the Shareeah who act upon it. The masses are included in that group because they are the followers of the scholars. Anyone who goes outside of that group is from those who have separated. They are the spoils or booty of Satan. This latter group includes all

¹ For some such texts, see al-Laalalka`ee, *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 96-113; al-Ajuri, *al-Shareeah*, p. 153.

² Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, pp. 260-265. Also see ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 37.

³ He was Abu Masood Uqbah ibn Amr ibn Thalabah al-Ansaari al-Badri, from the tribe of al-Khazraj. He participated at Badr and Uhud and other following battles. He settled in Kufah and was one of the associates of Ali. When Ali went to the Battle of Siffeen, he delegated Abu Masood the one in charge of Kufah. He died in 40 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 493; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 7, p. 247; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 240.

⁴ Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Seereen al-Basri, al-Ansaari through clientage, was of the generation of the Followers. He was born and died in Basrah. He grew up as a textile merchant but then he learned the religion. He narrated hadith and was known for interpreting dreams. He died in 110 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 606; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 9, p. 214; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 154.

⁵ Recorded by al-Khateeb in *al-Faqeeh wa al-Mutafaqih* and by al-Tabaraani. In *al-Majma* (vol. 5, pp. 218-219) it states that al-Tabaraani recorded it through two chains; one of them has trustworthy narrators. The hadith with similar wording is recorded by al-Laalalka`ee in *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 109. Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 37.

of the people of heresies as they are in opposition to those people of the Nation and they cannot be considered part of their masses under any circumstances.”¹

The Second Opinion:

[The *jamaah* refers to] the group of the leaders of the scholars who are *mujtahideen*. Whoever goes against what they follow dies a death of the Days of Ignorance. This is because Allah has made the scholars a proof against the creation and the people have to follow them in the matters of religion. The scholars are the ones meant in the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْمَعُ أُمَّتِي أَوْ قَالَ أُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ وَيَدُّ اللَّهُ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ إِلَى النَّارِ

“Verily, Allah does not gather together this Nation—or he said the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—upon a misguidance. The Hand of Allah is with the congregation. Whoever separates from it, separates to the Hell-fire.”² The meaning of this hadith is that the scholars of this nation will never all concur on something which is misguidance. This was the opinion of Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak³, Ishaq ibn Rahuwaih⁴ and a number of early scholars. This is also the opinion of the scholars of Islamic legal theory.⁵ This was the conclusion of al-Bukhari as he wrote, “Chapter on, ‘Thus We have made you a Nation justly balanced’ [al-Baqarah 143] and the order of the Prophet (peace and

¹ *Al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 261.

² A sahih hadith just discussed.

³ He was Abu Abdullah Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak ibn Wadhih, the Handhali by clientage. He was a scholar, *mujtahid* and businessman. He wrote books and traveled for the purpose of knowledge and jihad. He lived in Khurasaan. He died while returning from a battle against the Romans in 181 A.H. He wrote, *Kitaab al-Jihaad*, being the first to write a book on the topic of jihad. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 8, p. 378; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 382; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 115.

⁴ He was Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem ibn Mukhalid al-Handhali, the scholar of Khurasaan during his time. He was from the city of Merv. He was one of the leading scholars and keepers of knowledge. He traveled throughout the lands to gather hadith. He is from the leading Imams. He settled in Naisaboor and therein he died in 328 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 11, p. 358; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 292.

⁵ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 261.

blessings of Allah be upon him) to adhere to the *jamaah*, and they are the people of knowledge.”¹ This is also the opinion of al-Tirmidhi² who said, “The explanation of *al-jamaah* according to the people of knowledge is the people of fiqh, knowledge and hadith.”³ Al-Kirmaani⁴ said, “The implication of the order to adhere to the *jamaah* is that the responsible person is required to follow what the *mujtahideen* have agreed upon.”⁵ Ibn Bataal⁶ said, “The meaning of *al-jamaah* is the people ‘who tie and untie’ [that is, the leaders of society] in every era.”⁷

The Third Opinion:

The *jamaah* are the Companions only and not the people who came afterwards. The Companions are the ones who supported and established the religion. They are the ones who would never all agree on a misguidance.

The Fourth Opinion:

The *jamaah* is in reference to the Muslim community when they gather together under one ruler. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that one adhere to them and forbade dividing the nation when they are agreed upon having a particular person lead them. The one who violates his pledge and

¹ *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, published with its commentary *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 316.

² He was Muhammad ibn Isa ibn Suwarah ibn Moosa al-Tirmidhi, one of the leading scholars of hadith and a preserver of knowledge from the people of Tirmidh. He was a student of al-Bukhari. He traveled to Khurasaan, Iraq and the Hijaz. He became blind at the end of his life. He died in Tirmidh in 279 A.H. One of his works is *al-Jaami al-Saheeh*, which is most commonly known as *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 13, p. 270; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 322.

³ *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 4, p. 467.

⁴ He was Muhammad ibn Yoosuf ibn Ali Shams al-Deen al-Kirmaani. He occupied himself with spreading knowledge in Baghdad for thirty years. He spent some time in Makkah also. One of his books is a commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *al-Kawaakib al-Duraari fi Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari*. He died in 786. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 153.

⁵ See ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 316.

⁶ He was Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Khalf ibn Abdul Malik, a scholar of hadith from the people of Cordoba. He wrote a number of tracts. He died in 449 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 47; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 285.

⁷ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 316.

allegiance goes out from the *jamaah*. This is the conclusion of Imam al-Tabari.¹

The Fifth Opinion:

The *jamaah* is the community of the people of Islam when they all come together on an issue. It is obligatory upon all others then to follow them. Al-Shaatibi said, "This opinion goes back to the second opinion. It also implies the same or goes back to the first opinion, which is the most apparent."²

These are the opinions held by the scholars concerning the meaning of *al-jamaah* or "the community."³ What seems clear from the preceding texts—inclusive of the scholars' uncovering of their meanings—is that the word *al-jamaah* is used in two different contexts:

First, the word *jamaah* is used in reference to a structure, form and make-up.

Second, the word is used in reference to a methodology and way.

The following is an explanation of these two usages:

The First Usage:

If the Muslims agree upon a legally sanctioned leader, they become a congregation or *jamaah* that one is obliged to adhere to and not separate from. So the *jamaah* is in the agreement of the opinions upon an Imam or leader to whom the pledge of allegiance is given. Therefore, going against him would be a type of illegal rebellion.⁴ This is the *jamaah* that was meant by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he told Hudhaifah, in the previously discussed hadith,

تَلَزَمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِمَامَهُمْ

¹ The four opinions above were stated by ibn Hajar while quoting al-Tabari, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 37, and by al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, pp. 260-265.

² *Al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, pp. 263-264.

³ It seems apparent that these statements are not contradictory. Instead, the difference is one of variation and not contradiction. In fact, some of the opinions were taken from the clarification by some scholars of particular hadith. For example, note what al-Tabari stated while explaining the hadith of Hudhaifah, "The correct opinion is that the meaning of the report is to adhere to the congregation in obeying the command that the people are agreed upon." See *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 37.

⁴ Cf., al-Ghazaali, *Ihya' Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 223.

“Stick to the community of the Muslims and their Imam [leader].”

Al-Tabari stated, “The correct opinion is that the meaning of the report is to adhere to the congregation in obeying the command that the people are agreed upon. The one who discards his allegiance has left from the *jamaah*.”¹ This is the same meaning that is intended in the previously mentioned hadith from ibn Abbaas that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ فَلْيَصْبِرْ عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ
شَيْرًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“For whoever sees something from his leader that he does not like, let him be patient. The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance.”

In this usage of the word *jamaah*, the situation of the *jamaah* differs as there may be some eras in which no such *jamaah* or community exists. Such is the time of *fitnah* or great trials. This is indicated in the question of Hudhaifah to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “What if there is no community (*jamaah*) or Imam?” When it does not exist, it is obligatory upon the Muslims to work to bring it into existence, as erecting a leader who is the head of the structure of the *jamaah* is a matter that all agree upon as being obligatory.² For that reason, the Companions quickly moved after the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr as his successor and the leader of the Muslims. Saeed ibn Zaid³ was asked, “Did you witness the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?” He replied, “Yes.” He was asked, “When was the oath of allegiance given to Abu Bakr?” he

¹ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 37. Also see ibn al-Atheer’s comments on this hadith in *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 4, pp. 69-70.

² Cf., al-Maawardi, *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*, p. 35.

³ He was Saeed ibn Zaid ibn Amr ibn Nufail. He was a Companion from among the ten given the glad tidings of Paradise. He participated in all of the battles of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) save for Badr, as he was absent tending to an affair that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had sent him on. He was a person of respected opinion and bravery. He was born in Makkah and died in Madinah in 51 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 124; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 188; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 94.

said, "On the same day that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died. They hated to spend even a part of the day without a community (*jamaah*)."¹

The Second Usage:

The second usage of the word *jamaah* is with respect to a way and methodology. The texts that require one to adhere to the *jamaah* must not be studied in isolation from the texts that speak about the saved sect and the victorious group. There is a clear and inseparable aspect between them when one researches those hadith and narrations. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

افْتَرَقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى أَوْ ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً وَتَفَرَّقَتِ النَّصَارَى
عَلَى إِحْدَى أَوْ ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً وَتَفَتَّرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ
فِرْقَةً

"The Jews divided into seventy-one or seventy-two sects. The Christians also divided into seventy-one or seventy-two groups. And my Nation will divide into seventy-three sects."² One narration adds,

اِثْنَتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

"Seventy-two in the Hell-fire and one of them in Paradise."³

In defining this saved group, a number of narrations are reported:

1. In some narrations it states,

¹ Recorded by al-Tabari with his chain in *Tareekh al-Tabari*, vol. 3, p. 201.

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, Ahmad and by al-Haakim who said it is *sahih* according to Muslim's criteria; and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. It is also recorded by ibn Hibbaan in his *Sahih*.

³ This text is found in the narration of the hadith from Muaawiyah ibn Abi Sufyaan from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Daarimi, Ahmad, al-Haakim, al-Ajuri in *al-Shareeah* and ibn Batah in *al-Ibaanah*. In *al-Itisaam* (vol. 3, p. 38), al-Shaatibi declared it *sahih*. Al-Iraqi said that its chain is good in *Takhreej al-Ihya* (vol. 3, p. 199). And al-Albaani declared this hadith as well as the previous and the next hadith to be *sahih* in *Dhilaal al-Jannah*, vol. 1, p. 8.

وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ

“And one in Paradise and it is the jamaah.”¹

2. Other narrations stated,

كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا السَّوَادَ الْأَعْظَمَ

“All of them are in the Hell-fire except for the vast masses.”²

3. In another narration, when he asked about the saved sect, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

“What I am upon as well as my Companions.”³

Al-Ajuri⁴ stated, “The meaning of all of them are one, Allah willing.”⁵ The Prophet’s statement, “What I am upon as well as my

¹ This is the same hadith referred to in the previous footnote.

² Recorded by al-Tabaraani, as stated in *al-Majma*, vol. 6, p. 234. Therein, al-Haithami states that its narrators are trustworthy. At another place (vol. 7, p. 258), he stated, “Recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Ausat* and *al-Kabeer* and [its chain] contains Abu Ghaalib. Ibn Maeen and others declared him trustworthy. The rest of the narrators in *al-Ausat* are trustworthy. Similar is the case with one of its two chains in *al-Kabeer*.” Al-Laalakaa’ee also recorded it in *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah* (vol. 1, p. 104) as did al-Ajuri in *al-Shareeah* (p. 36) and ibn Abi Aasim in *al-Sunnah*.

³ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, al-Haakim, al-Laalakaa’ee in *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, ibn Widhaah in *al-Bida wa al-Nahi anhu* and al-Ajuri in *al-Shareeah*. The hadith is weak because its chain contains Abdul Rahmaan ibn Zaid who is weak, as it states in *al-Taqreeb*. However, the hadith has the following supporting evidence: There is the same narration from Anas as recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Sagheer* and al-Uqailiy in *al-Dhuafaa*. There is also the hadith of Abu al-Dardaa, Abu Umaamah, Waail ibn al-Asqa and Anas ibn Maalik, all through the same chain, recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, as noted in *Majma al-Zawaaid*. The conclusion is that the hadith is *sahih* with the additional words, “What I and my Companions are upon,” due to the numerous supporting evidence. See the detailed discussion of this hadith in al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheehah*, hadith #203 and 204.

⁴ He was Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Husain ibn Abdullah. He was a Shafi’ee jurist and scholar of hadith. He was born in Baghdad and taught there and then he moved to Makkah, where he died in 360 A.H. He has a number of books, the most famous being *al-Shareeah*. Cf., *Siyar Alam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 16, p. 133; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 97.

⁵ *Al-Shareeah*, p. 15.

Companions,” makes it clear that, “The saved sect is the one having the same qualities as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and as his Companions.”¹

This shows the connection between the hadith about the saved sect and the hadith about the *jamaah* as the saved sect is the *jamaah*.²

The statements of the early scholars show that the *jamaah* refers to a set of characteristics and not simply a form or structure. A person by himself can be the *jamaah* if he were the only one abiding by those characteristics. Ibn Masood said, “The *jamaah* is only what is in accordance with obedience to Allah, even if you are alone [in doing so].”³

“Since the order has come to adhere to the *jamaah*, its meaning is to adhere to the truth and follow it, even if the numbers who adhere to it are small and the opposing numbers are large. This is because it was the truth which the first *jamaah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions were on. One does not look at the large numbers of the people of falsehood after their time.”⁴

That this was the understanding of the early scholars is indicated by Imam al-Ajuri, presenting in his chapter on adhering to the *jamaah* a number of verses and hadith about adhering to the straight path and not following the deviant paths. Then he says at the conclusion of his chapter, “The sign of the one for whom Allah desires good is that he follows this path: [the path of] the Book of Allah, the way of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the way of his Companions and those who followed them in goodness (may Allah have mercy on them). [This includes also] the path that was followed by the Imams of the Muslims in every land until the last of the scholars: scholars like al-Auzaa’ee⁵, Sufyan al-Thauri¹, Malik ibn Anas², al-Shafi’ee³, Ahmad

¹ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 252.

² What makes this relationship even clearer is that the early scholars used to record the hadith about the dividing of the Nation in the chapters related to encouragement to stick to the *jamaah*. Cf., *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 96-113.

³ Recorded by al-Laalakaa’ee, *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 109.

⁴ Abu Shaamah, *al-Baath ala Inkaar al-Bida wa al-Hawaadith*, p. 22.

⁵ He was Imam Abdul Rahman ibn Amr al-Auzaa’ee, Imam of the land of al-Shaam (“Greater Syria”) in fiqh and piety. He was born in Balabak in 88 A.H. and grew up in al-Baqaa. He lived in Beirut and died there in 157 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 7, p. 107; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 320.

ibn Hanbal⁴, al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam⁵ and whoever follows similar to their path and who avoids every thought that is not in accord with what those scholars followed.”⁶

Imam al-Ajuri presented in this chapter the verses and hadith along with his conclusion as expressed above. This indicates that his understanding of *al-jamaah* was that of “following”—whoever follows the path of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions and early scholars of this Nation is included among the *jamaah*. Further evidence for the existence of this being al-Ajuri’s perception is what is presented to introduce the chapter, as he says, “Chapter: Mention of the order to

¹ He was Imam Abu Abdullah Sufyan ibn Saeed ibn Masrooq al-Thauri, the leader of the believers with respect to hadith. He was born in Kufah in 97 A.H. and was raised there. He was offered a position as judge but he refused it. He left and lived in Makkah and Madinah; then he went to Basrah and died there in 161 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 7, p. 229; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 111; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 014.

² He was the Imam of the land of the Hijrah, Abu Abdullah Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi al-Humairi. He was born in Madinah in 93 A.H. He is one of the respected Imams of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. He compiled *al-Muwatta*. He died in Madinah in 179 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 8, p. 48; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 10, p. 5; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 176.

³ He was Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idrees ibn al-Abbas al-Haashimi al-Qurashi, one of the Imams of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. He was born in Ghaza in 150 A.H. He moved to Makkah and visited Baghdad twice and settled in Egypt where he died in 204 A.H. He was extremely intelligent and eloquent in his language. He gave religious verdicts at the young age of twenty. He wrote *al-Umm*, *al-Risaalah* and other works. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 10, p. 5; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 9, p. 25; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 26.

⁴ He was Imam Abu Abdullah Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal al-Shaibaani. He was born in 164 A.H. He was from the Imams of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. Through him, Allah gave victory to the truth when the inquisitions related to the false belief in the created nature of the Quran spread. He was tortured and imprisoned due to his stance. He grew up loving knowledge and went on many journeys to seek it. He compiled the *Musnad* which contains 30,000 hadith. He was from the precise preserves of knowledge as well as from the very few truly pious and austere. He died in 241 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 11, p. 177; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 72; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 203.

⁵ He was Abu Ubaid al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam al-Haruwi al-Azdi al-Khuzaa’ee by clientage, from Baghdad. He was one of the greatest scholars of hadith, literature and fiqh. He wrote many books including *al-Ghareeb*. He was one of the Imams of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. He died in Makkah in 224 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 10, p. 490; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 315; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 176.

⁶ *Al-Shareeah*, p. 14.

stick to the *jamaah*... In fact, it is following and avoiding innovations."¹

With this meaning, the *jamaah* never fails to be present. It will remain until the Hour of Judgment. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

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

"A group of my Nation shall continue to be established upon the commands of Allah. They will not be harmed by those who abandon them or differ from them, until the command of Allah comes and they are victorious over the people."² Al-Nawawi said, "As for who that group is, al-Bukhari said it is the people of knowledge. Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, 'If it is not the people of hadith, I do not know who they are.' Qaadhi Ayyadh said, "Ahmad meant the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* and all who believe in the beliefs of the people of hadith.' I [al-Nawawi] say: It is possible that this group is spread throughout the believers; some of them are courageous fighters, some are jurists, some are scholars of hadith, some are pious austere people, some are orderers of good and eradicators of evil and others are from different areas of good. It is not necessary that they are all together [in one place]. Instead, they could be spread throughout the lands of the earth."³

The above makes it clear to us that the *jamaah* is a sign for those who combine a number of characteristics, the first and most prominent of them being that they follow what the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came with. This *jamaah* does not complete its actual form and structure unless there is a sanctioned ruler leading them. However, the absence of that structure does not mean that the *jamaah*—which refers to the methodology and the way—does not exist. In this meaning, the *jamaah* will remain until the Hour of Judgment.

By this categorization, one is able to reconcile the various evidences as well as the statements of the scholars. This is because their difference of opinion is one of variation and not one of contradiction. Therefore, the five opinions actually boil down to two groups. The first group combines together four of the opinions:

¹ *Al-Shareeah*, p. 3.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 13, p. 67.

- (1) The *jamaah* is the vast majority of the people of Islam;
- (2) The *jamaah* is the leading *mujtahideen* scholars;
- (3) The *jamaah* are the Companions in particular;
- (4) The *jamaah* are the people of Islam as opposed to the disbelievers.

All of these opinions revolve around the meaning of “following [the truth],” as, “all of them agree upon including the people of knowledge and *ijtihaad*.”¹

The second group consists of the fifth opinion, which is that the *jamaah* is the Muslim community when it gathers together behind a sanctioned leader.

When the texts or just one text regarding the *jamaah* is studied, one must also view its context and setting as well as the statements of the scholars regarding each text. Then one can give the text its proper meaning as to which use of the term is meant, as there is no contradiction between the two usages.²

In light of what has been presented, it is clear that “the *jamaah* mentioned in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cannot be restricted to only one of the Islamic groups that exist today, which are known by certain names, with a leader, organization and membership. It is completely unjust and unjustifiable to say that one of these groups is the *jamaah* of the Muslims and that leaving it is a type of disbelief or a type of splitting from the *jamaah* or causes one to die a death of the Days of Ignorance. Doing this restricts a matter which Allah had made very accommodating.”³ The *jamaah* that is mentioned in the texts is considered a foundation of the foundations of belief. It is obligatory upon Muslims to adhere to it and not to separate from it. However, the groups [also called *jamaah*] that are working for Islam

¹ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 266.

² For more details, see Yahya Ismaa'eel, *Minhaj al-Sunnah fi al-Alaaqah bain al-Haakim wa al-Mahkoom*, pp. 42-52. He presents a number of texts related to *al-jamaah* and then categorizes them according to their intended meaning.

³ Jafar Shaikh Idrees, “*Minhaj al-Amal al-Islaami*,” *Majallah al-Muslim al-Muaasir*, No. 13, p. 8. [The difference between the two matters must be very clear in the mind of the reader. If a group claims that it is the *jamaah* of the Muslims referred to in the hadith quoted earlier, it, in reality, means that anyone who is not part of that *jamaah* actually falls outside of the fold of Islam or is doing the forbidden act of separating himself from “the Muslim community.” This is different from forming a Muslim group (also called *jamaah*) which has specific purposes and goals. However, if someone does not join this group, this does not mean that he is outside of the fold of Islam or that he is disobeying the Prophet’s command in any way.—JZ]

today are simply a means to spread the message of Allah. It does not harm a Muslim if he chooses any one of these groups that he sees as closest to the truth and what is right, as they are nothing but a means to call to Islam. Indeed, he may even choose another means for calling to Islam which he believes is more pleasing to his Lord and safer for his religion and beliefs.

In modern times, some people who belong to specific Islamic groups have gone to an extreme in believing that their group is the *jamaah* of the Muslims. They take every hadith that speaks about the prohibition of separating from the *jamaah* as applying to their group in particular. I shall give examples from the writings of two such people who belong to particular Islamic groups:

The first example is the following text from Saeed Hawa.¹ He wrote,

From a general investigation of all the texts and of the contemporary situation of the Muslims and their needs, we are able to identify the qualities of that *jamaah* which is to be considered *the jamaah* of the Muslims upon which it is obligatory for every Muslim to put their hand in its hand, like a modern ruling from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "Stick to the *jamaah* of the Muslims and their Imam." Although the first and second leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood did not consider anyone outside of the Muslim Brotherhood to also be outside of the *jamaah* of the Muslims and although the respected knowledgeable people calling others [to this message] also only consider the Muslim Brotherhood as simply one group of Muslims working towards meeting the characteristics of the *jamaah* of the Muslims and when it is able to develop itself towards that it will then become the *jamaah* of the Muslims, although the respected knowledgeable callers consider the matter to be like that—all of the evidences, as we shall see, indicate that this group [the Muslim Brotherhood] is in general the closest to being *the jamaah* of the Muslims. We do not claim perfection; however,

¹ He was Saeed ibn Muhammad Deeb Hawa, born in 1355 A.H. in Hamah. He graduated from the College of Shareeah in Damascus in 1376 A.H. He studied under a number of scholars. He was a member of the leadership council of the Muslim Brotherhood. At the end of his life, he suffered from a number of diseases and went into isolation. He died on 1/8/1409 A.H. Cf., *Majallah al-Mujtama*, No. 909.

the others are not perfect either. We do not claim completeness; however, the others are also not complete.¹

The second example comes from Shukri Mustafa's group. They claim to be *the jamaah* of the Muslims. Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair² stated that he differed with Shukri on a number of issues, including, "Our *jamaah* being the only *jamaah* of the Muslims in the world."³ Shukri's group believed that they were *the jamaah* of the Muslims; in fact, they called themselves by that name: *Jamaah al-Muslimeen* ["The community of Muslims"].⁴ They believed that they were the *jamaah* of the Last Days [before the Day of Judgment], the decreed and well-known group with Allah who is written in the Prescribed Tablet.⁵ Shukri himself stated while speaking about his group, "If we can agree that we are that specific Muslim *jamaah* of the end of times, the group which will continue to be prominent, not harmed by those who differ from us, until the last of this group fights the anti-Christ or until the Hour is established."⁶ After presenting a number of hadith about the end of time, he stated, "These prophecies make it clear that we will meet Jesus son of

¹ *Al-Madkhal ila Dawah al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen*, p. 21. Before he died, Hawa wrote *al-Ijaabaat*, responding to some of the criticisms directed toward some statements he made in the above quoted work, implying that the Muslim Brotherhood is *the jamaah* of the Muslims or it is the closest to being that *jamaah*. Although he did retract somewhat, it is not clear to me that he made a complete retraction. He stated in *al-Ijaabaat* (p. 85), "In all, I consider the Muslim Brotherhood in its realms as established by Professor al-Bana to be the closest group to possessing the conditions of the *jamaah* of the Muslims according to the third usage of the word *jamaah* [which is those who represent the truth in their beliefs and actions]." Also see p. 86 of that same work.

² He was a journalist who was a member of Shukri Mustafa's group. In fact, he was one of his advisors. He was imprisoned with him after the assassination of al-Dhahabi. After being released, he wrote, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen* [or his memoirs of while he was with the group]. In that work, he stated that he was a member and supporter of that group, although he differed with Shukri Mustafa and the other leaders of the group on some issues. Cf., Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen, passim*; Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair Ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, pp. 16-17.

³ *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen*, p. 34.

⁴ Note the title of Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair's book, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen*. Also see Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair Ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 24.

⁵ See Rajab Mukhtar Madkoor, *al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah: Wajhan li-Wajh*, p. 236; Shukri, *al-Tawwasamaat*, p. 7.

⁶ Shukri, *al-Tawwasamaat*, p. 38.

Mary, Allah willing. However, we do not know the identification of the precise time for that now... We hope that we will be the 'helpers of Allah' at the end of time who will have among them Jesus son of Mary, successors of his disciples." They also believed that their group was the *jamaah* of the truth. One of their leaders stated, "We are the *jamaah* of the truth and whoever opposes us is not a Muslim."² They made the *jamaah* a condition of true faith—however, not any *jamaah*, only the *jamaah* that they belonged to.³ They believed that loyalty must be only to Allah but that it could not be fulfilled unless one joins their *jamaah*. Shukri stated, "Loyalty is to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, this is not put into actual practice except by entering into its loyalty [that is, loyalty to the *jaamah* of the Muslims or, in other words, his group]."⁴ Allah has obligated the forsaking of having loyalty to the groups of disbelief and falling into their loyalty or loyalty to its groups. As we have said, there are only two forms of loyalty, two groups and two systems: that of *kufri* (disbelief) and that of Islam. A person cannot avoid except to be in one of them."⁵

Their extremism with respect to the perception of the *jamaah* led them to kill those who left their group and to consider them apostates due to their leaving.⁶

With respect to the bases of their [both Hawa and Shukri] claims, in proving their points they use two methods.

The first method or approach is by mentioning the attributes of the *jamaah* of the Muslims and then applying them specifically to their group and only their group. For example, Saeed Hawa lists the characteristics of the *jamaah* of the Muslims. He clarifies that they are seven in number:

The *jamaah* of the Muslims is:

1. The *jamaah* [or group] that carries Islam without any fear or reservations.

¹ Shukri, *al-Tawwasamaat*, pp. 53-54. Also see Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair Ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 215.

² This was stated by one nicknamed Abu Musab. See *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen*, p. 74.

³ See al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 34.

⁴ [The words in brackets above were added by the original author and not by the translator.—JZ]

⁵ *Al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 28.

⁶ See Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, pp. 65f; Muhammad Suroor, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair Ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 314.

2. The *jamaah* that has appeared now in the manner of the only truth that has been recognized throughout history and that is exemplified in the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jamaah*.
3. The *jamaah* that is able to present the form of truth which can gather together all Muslims.
4. The *jamaah* that moves in the practical spheres of life in order to fulfill all the Islamic goals.
5. The *jamaah* which attempts to rescue the Muslims from their diseases which have led to their disgrace and loss of honor.
6. The *jamaah* that fills every one of its members with the lofty attributes of the party of Allah: [from] love for Allah to being humble towards other believers to being strong against the disbelievers to jihad for the sake of Allah to sincerity and purity in one's loyalty to Allah, His Messenger and the believers.
7. The *jamaah* whose members do not forget their brotherhood to every Muslim, nor do they belittle a gracious deed from the gracious, nor are they arrogant against the truth.¹

In the following pages, that author concludes two matters: (1) Those qualities must be found in *the jamaah* of the Muslims, and (2) those characteristics are found in one particular group, the Muslim Brotherhood.²

After presenting the hadith about this Nation dividing into sects, Shukri Mustafa stated,

Each of these sects claims that it is upon the truth or that it is *the* Islamic *jamaah*. In general, this could never be true unless truth and falsehood are one and the same. However, at the same time, who can deny that the *jamaah* of Islam will also make the same claim and that it is possible for it to be in existence today? Who can deny that its light will not be extinguished and that its proofs cannot be falsified based on the evidence that it is obligatory to adhere to that group and adhere to its leader?... [And who can deny that] the one who leaves that group is committing unbelief and that Allah has established a clear proof against the falsehood that all

¹ *Al-Madkhal ila Dawah al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen*, pp. 22-23.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 23-27.

the others are upon and that the Messenger for His nation made it clear by evidence that one must separate from them [those false groups] and affirm the disbelief of those among them. The *jamaah* is what Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and what his Companions were upon, as it was explained and made clear. Do you recognize it? It was what Muhammad and his Companions were upon with respect to understanding, guidance, a path and methodology, loyalty and goal... If you wished, you could say: the earth and sky [of their world and way]. The *jamaah* of the Muslims refers from its first day to the Book of Allah and Sunnah of His Messenger, seeking from it its law and way... following along on its path... differing from all who oppose it in all of that like the difference between the sky and earth. It does not have a father, mother, relative or loyalty except the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. The proof that they are the *jamaah* of truth is nothing but their guide from the Book of Allah and Sunnah of His Prophet... Let whosoever believe in them and let whosoever disbelieve in them... There is no doubt for the one who is aware of their affair... The just one does not fail to recognize their virtue and the difference between them and those who oppose them... It is a must that this difference be like the difference between the true prophet and Musailamah, the liar.¹

It is understood from their speech throughout their works that what they mean by this *jamaah*, which is the *jamaah* of truth, is their *jamaah* or group only.

The second approach they take is by using the Shareeah texts concerning the *jamaah* as evidence [that one is obliged to follow their group]. For example, they will quote the previously mentioned hadith,

¹ *Kitaab al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, pp. 46-47. Musailamah was Thamaamah al-Hanafi al-Waaili. He was a false prophet who was born and raised in al-Yamaamah in Najd. He claimed to be a prophet and wrote some lines of poetry to compete with the Quran. Abu Bakr sent Khaalid ibn al-Waleed with a group of Companions and Followers to counter him. The battle ended with Musailamah being killed in 12 A.H. 1,200 of the Companions and Followers fell as martyrs in that fighting. See *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 226.

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شَيْراً فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance.” Or the Prophet’s saying,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شَيْرٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

“Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck.”¹

They also produce the previously mentioned hadith of Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan as evidence. Shukri Mustafa stated, “[There was] Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan. The people used to asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) [about good]² and he would ask about evil out of fear that it would encounter him... [The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] said to him, ‘If you encounter that time—the time which by definition we are currently in, Allah willing—adhere to the Muslim *jamaah* and their leader.’”³ It is well-known that what he meant by those words is that his group is the *jamaah* of the Muslims and he the leader that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded that one should cling to.

In general, one can refute their statements with the following points:

First: One must go back to the speech of the Lawgiver Himself to understand the meanings of the terms used. The relevant texts on a topic and on similar topics must be brought together to understand from all of them the exact purport. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “It is necessary that one intend when mentioning a term from the Quran or hadith, to mention its matching term, what Allah and His Messenger mean by it. In this way, the language of the Quran and hadith is known. The way of Allah and His Messenger by which He spoke to His servants is the customary manner of speech that is recognized in His words. Then if there are

¹ See Shukri Mustafa’s use of these hadith, as evidence that one is required to adhere to his group, in *al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, pp. 28-29. Also see al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 86; al-Samura’ee, *al-Takfeer*, pp. 187-188.

² These words were missing from the original and I have added them due to their contextual need. [This note was from the author and not the translator.]

³ Shukri, *al-Tawwasamaat*, p. 53.

similar terms in the speech of others, and the matching terms are many, it is then known that such custom and language is shared in general and is not specific to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, it was the language of his people. And it is not allowed—although many do so—to interpret his speech according to any customary usage of speech that came after his time and that was not well-known in his speech and the speech of his Companions.”¹

Ibn Taimiyyah touched upon the cause for most of the misguidance of the heretics and innovators. The cause is that they fail to understand the intent and meaning of Allah and His Messenger’s speech and they fail to comprehend how the words indicate their meanings. He stated, “Most of the misguidance of the innovators is due to this reason. They began to interpret the speech of Allah and His Messenger in a way that they claim it indicated while, in reality, it was not so.”²

The innovation of taking a particular group as “the Muslim *jamaah* (community)” is due to this reason. The people of that opinion use the general texts about the *jamaah* as evidence. However, their reasoning is rejected from the point of view of their understanding. In other words, the evidences they use are not false in themselves nor is what they point to wrong. The mistake is in the application of those texts. To specify a particular group to the exclusion of others as *the jamaah* of the Muslims is a view that is rejected by any sound understanding of those texts presented earlier. Furthermore, restricting those texts to a particular group is a case of limiting something that Allah has made wide and accommodating. The phrase, “*jamaah* of the Muslims” is a phrase that encompasses every Muslim who is a follower of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). To use these texts to justify what they are calling to is not permissible because the texts are more general than what they are claiming and are not restricted in their application.

Second: An accepted principle in the case of difference of opinion is to ignore any claim that lacks any proof or evidence, that is built upon false premises or that has rejected reasoning. [For example,] from before, the Jews and Christians claimed that they would be the only ones to enter Paradise. They said, as Allah quotes them,

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 115.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 116.

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَىٰ ﴾

“And they say, ‘None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian’” (*al-Baqarah* 111). [In the next part of that verse,] Allah taught His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the way to refute claims of that nature after He explained the situation that they were actually in:

﴿ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴾

“Those are their (vain) desires. Say [to them], ‘Produce your proof if you are truthful’” (*al-Baqarah* 111).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself also made it clear that the claims of people which are void of any kind of proof do not establish their rights. Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَوْ يُعْطَى النَّاسُ بِدَعْوَاهُمْ لَادَّعَى نَاسٌ دِمَاءَ رِجَالٍ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ
الْيَمِينَ عَلَى الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيْهِ

“If the people were to be given simply on the basis of their claims, they would then certainly claim the blood and wealth of people. However, the defendant may swear an oath.”¹

The claim that a specific group is the *jamaah* of the Muslims is a claim that is in need of proof and evidence since the texts they use as evidence are more general than what they claim, as earlier shown.

Third: The characteristics presented by those who claim that their *jamaah* is the *jamaah* of the Muslims are characteristics that are not exclusive to their group alone. Indeed, all the callers to Islam say that they are working for the sake of Islam, they are eager to spread the school of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, they are eager to present the platform of truth that can unite all Muslims, they are working in a practical manner to achieve the Islamic goals, they are trying to rid the Muslim nation of its ills, they are trying to fulfill

¹ Recorded by Muslim. [Actually, the author only quoted the first portion of the hadith but it seems that the entire hadith makes his point even clearer. The meaning of the hadith is that if someone makes a claim but does not offer any proof to support his claim, the defendant may swear an oath and the case will be dropped due to lack of evidence.—JZ]

the lofty attributes of the party of Allah, and they are seeking to implement brotherhood toward every Muslim—although they are at different levels in adhering to these matters. The claim that these characteristics are not found save in one particular group is a claim that is not true. Indeed, this in itself is an act of disobedience to Allah as it is a self-righteous attitude and sanctification that is not allowed in the Shareeah. Allah says in the Quran,

﴿ فَلَا تَزَكُّوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اَتَّقَى ﴾

“Therefore do not ascribe purity to yourselves: He knows best who it is that guards against evil” (*al-Najm* 32).

Fourth: History itself belies some of those claims. [For example,] Shukri Mustafa claimed that the texts indicated that he and his group will encounter Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).¹ Reality has falsified that claim as Shukri Mustafa, the head of the group, has been executed and the group itself has been vanquished save for a miniscule number. They did not meet with Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the caliphate was not reestablished upon their shoulders, as they had claimed.

Fifth: There is even some doubt that those two groups, in particular Shukri Mustafa’s group, met the characteristics that they mentioned. Hence, it is not an accepted fact that they in reality have those characteristics.

Extremism In Ardent Zeal and Partisanship to a Group

The coming together of groups of Muslims to help and strengthen one another in calling to Allah, ordering the good and forbidding the evil is one of the best means that assist in fulfilling the goals of guiding mankind to what is good, clarifying the guidance for them and so on. Such togetherness also helps in bringing strength and vigor to the group that is calling to Allah.

This is what the messengers of Allah themselves understood. We find Moses (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), after Allah had commissioned him to convey the message, asking his Lord for an assistant and helper:

¹ Cf., Shukri, *al-Tawwasamaat*, pp. 53-54; Muhammad Suroor ibn Naif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair Ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 215.

﴿ وَأَجْعَلْ لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٣٤﴾ هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣٣﴾ أَشَدُّ بِمِ
 أَرْزِي ﴿٣٢﴾ وَأَشْرِكُهُ فِي أَمْرِي ﴿٣١﴾ كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾
 وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢٩﴾

“And give me a minister from my family, Aaron, my brother. Add to my strength through him, and make him share my task, that we may celebrate Your praise without stint, and remember You without stint” (*Taha* 29-34).

Lot (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also noted the importance of a group to support and assist him in calling to the way of Allah and in defending himself. When the enemies of his call had seemingly gotten the upper hand over him, he wished that he had a group to support him. He said,

﴿ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِيَ إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

“Would that I had power to suppress you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support” (*Hood* 80).

Similarly, Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sought supporters from among men so that they could assist him in achieving his goals of propagation. He said to his disciples,

﴿ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ﴿١٤﴾

“Who will be my helpers [for the work of] Allah?” (*al-Saff* 14). And Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not emigrate to Madinah except in seeking helpers, those who would assist this religion and its people and would help in propagating it and calling others to it.

However, that gathering is only a means of the different means to call to the way of Allah. One must consider the situation of the different groups. “If they have come together according to what Allah and His Messenger have commanded, with no increase or decrease, then they are believers. For them is what they earn and against them what they commit. However, if they added or decreased something, such as extracting extreme adherence either in right or falsehood from the ones who entered their group or they turn away from those who do not enter into their group whether they be in the right or wrong, then such is the type of division and

factionalism that Allah and His Messenger have censured.”¹ It is not allowed to be biased or bigoted towards one or another group. In that case, joining that group will lead to a sin. In other words, the ruling concerning joining any such group or making any affiliation differs depending upon the circumstances:

(1) There is affiliation that is good and praiseworthy, such as some of the Companions affiliating themselves with the Emigrants (*Muhajireen*²), Helpers (*Ansaar*³), Quranic readers and so forth.

(2) There is affiliation that is permissible, such as a person affiliating with a tribe or land.

(3) And there is affiliation that is reprehensible or forbidden, and this is the type that leads to innovations or sins.⁴

Even though affiliation to the Emigrants or Helpers is of the type that is good and praiseworthy, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) denounced any kind of sectarian or bigoted affiliation to either of these two groups. Jaabir ibn Abdullah narrated that two young men were fighting, one from the Muhajireen and one from the Ansaar. The one from the Emigrants called out, “O Muhajireen.” The one from the Ansaar called out, “O Ansaar.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came out and said,

مَا هَذَا أَدْعَوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

“What is this? Is this a call of the Days of Ignorance?” The people said, “No, O Messenger of Allah, two young men were fighting and one of them struck the other on his back.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

لَا بَأْسَ لِيَنْصُرَ الرَّجُلُ أَخَاهُ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا فَإِنْ كَانَ ظَالِمًا فَلْيَنْتَهَهُ
فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ نُصْرَةٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَظْلُومًا فَلْيَنْصُرْهُ

“No harm [was done]. A person should help his brother whether he is the wrongdoer or the wronged. If he is the wrongdoer, let him

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 11, pp. 92-93.

² [This is a reference to the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who emigrated from Makkah to Madinah.—JZ]

³ [The is a reference to the Muslims of Madinah who welcomed and aided the emigrant Muslims who came from Makkah and elsewhere.—JZ]

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 211.

stop him [from his harmful act] and that is helping him. And if he is the wronged, he should help him.”¹ Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “When each one of them called his group to help him, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) objected to that. He called it, ‘a call of the Days of Ignorance,’ until he was told that it was just two young boys who did that and it did not come from a group. He then ordered that the wrongdoer be stopped and the wronged be helped. In this way, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made it clear that what is prohibited is the bigoted and absolute allegiance by a person to his group, like the actions of the people of the Days of Ignorance. Otherwise, helping for truth’s sake without committing aggression is good, either being obligatory or recommended.”² He also said, “If such is the case with respect to these names [the Muhajireen and Ansaar] and such affiliations that are beloved to Allah and His Messenger, what must be the case of the partisan absolute allegiance or calling to one’s lineage and other matters that are simply permissible or are actually reprehensible?”³

Among what has been narrated warning against partisanship is the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ قَاتَلَ تَحْتَ رَايَةٍ عَمِيَّةٍ يَغْضَبُ لِعَصْبَةٍ أَوْ يَدْعُو إِلَى عَصْبَةٍ أَوْ
يَنْصُرُ عَصْبَةً فَقَتِلَ قَتْلَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

“Whoever fights under a banner of uncertainty [blindly, not knowing whether its cause is justifiable or not, but fights and] has animosity simply due to partisanship, out of calling to a group or to support a group and is then killed, he is killed in the manner of the Days of Ignorance.”⁴

Jubair ibn Mutim⁵ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ [With this wording it was recorded by Ahmad. The same hadith with slightly different wording may be found in al-Bukhari and Muslim.]

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 211. Also see ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 11, p. 514.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 214. Also see ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 415.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim and al-Nasaa’ee.

⁵ He was Jubair ibn Mutim ibn Adi ibn Naufal ibn Abd Manaaf al-Qurashi, a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was one of the most knowledgeable of the Quraish in matters of lineage and one of their leaders. He died in Madinah in 59 A.H. Sixty

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ وَلَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ قَاتَلَ عَلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ وَلَيْسَ
مِنَّا مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ

“He who calls to partisanship is not from us. And he who fights out of partisanship is not from us. And he who dies upon partisanship is not from us.”¹ The partisan person may have had confidence in a particular group due to his belief that it is [always] upon the truth. This kind of belief is not a permissible one according to the Shareeah. This is because the standard for truth can only be the Quran and Sunnah and not a particular group. If someone considers that the truth is always with his group, then he is from those who cause factions in the religion and division into sects. He becomes from those whom Allah describes:

﴿كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ﴾

“Each party rejoicing in that which is with itself” (*al-Room* 32). Every group of those who cause division in the religion is pleased with what they themselves think they have of the truth. However, the truth is only to be found in the Quran and Sunnah.² Ibn Taimiyyah described the ill state during his time, “You will find many of the jurists when they see a Sufi or worshipper consider him

hadith have been ascribed to him. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 95; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 2, p. 66; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 112.

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood. Abdul Qadir al-Arnaoot said that its chain is weak but it has supporting evidence in the previously mentioned hadith above recorded by Muslim. Hence, the hadith is *hasan*. Cf., *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 10, p. 59.

² One scholar uses the verse, “Each party rejoicing in that which is with itself” (*al-Room* 32), to prove that it is not sanctioned to form a group or to name oneself with a particular name based on the verse, “He is the one who named you Muslims” (*al-Hajj* 78). (See Dr. Saalih ibn Saad al-Suhaimi, *Minhaj al-Salaf fi al-Aqeedah*, p. 43.) The truth is that to give oneself another name is permissible. This is indicated by the actions of the Companions who referred to themselves as the Muhaajireen, the Ansaar, the *ahl al-Suffah* [those poor who lived in the mosque], the Quranic readers and so on. However, partisanship or bigotry based on that new name and going to an extreme with respect to that group, taking it as the reference for the truth, is blameworthy. In that sense, one can only join the party of Allah. Similarly, the naming that is blameworthy is the naming which contradicts with the name of Islam. As for the names the Muhajireen and the others in conjunction with the name of Islam, they are simply like tautologies wherein Islam is inclusive of the Muhajireen, the Ansaar and so forth. Allah knows best.

as being on nothing; he does not reckon him save as an ignorant, misled person. He does not believe that along their path there is any knowledge or guidance whatsoever. [Similarly,] you can see many of the Sufis and 'poor devotees' seeing nothing in the Shareeah or knowledge. Indeed, they think that one who adheres to them is cut off from Allah. They believe that those people have nothing that will benefit them with Allah. The correct stance is that whatever each group has that is found in the Quran or Sunnah is the truth. Whatever they have that contradicts [those two sources] is falsehood."¹

If an opinion is attributed to a person or a group or if the group itself is affiliated with its followers, this is only for the purpose of clarification and identification. It is a must that this not be a cause for praise, blame, loyalty or disassociation. These aspects are only for the names found in the Noble Quran [or Sunnah], such as Muslim and disbeliever, believer and hypocrite, pious and impious, sincere and liar, reformer and evildoer and examples of that nature.² However, to put someone to some type of inquisition based on the name of a particular group, to differentiate among the Nation according to something which Allah and His Messenger have not commanded or to have loyalty or disassociation on the basis of these names due to conjecture and desires—all of these are things that Allah has declared His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be innocent of.³ "This type of differentiation that occurs in this Nation—among its scholars and Sufi shaikhs, rulers and leaders—is what of necessity brings about the subjugation by the enemies over it. This is due to their leaving the act of obedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Whenever the people leave part of what Allah has ordered them to do, there occurs enmity and hatred [among them]. When the people become divided and into factions, they become evil and are destroyed. However, when they join together, they become good and hold sway. Coming together as a community is mercy while division is torment."⁴

In our contemporary situation, this type of partisanship and breaking into groups is manifest. Everyone claims that it is his group that is upon the truth and everyone else is upon falsehood.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 78.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Daru al-Taarudh*, vol. 1, p. 273.

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 414.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 421.

One of the leaders of Shukri's group said, "We are the group of the truth. Whoever opposes us is not a Muslim."¹

This partisanship is also noted, and not on a small scale, in the practical actions of the Muslims. The Islamic libraries and bookstores are abundantly filled with refutations and responses that, as is clear from their covers, are nothing but a person supporting his group by refuting some other group or organization.

Extremism by Making One's Group the Source of Truth

As previously shown, the specific groups are simply one of the means by which one can call to the way of Allah. It is not allowed that a Muslim's way be that he only accepts the truth that comes from the group that he belongs to. Of those who are affiliated with a specific group for knowledge, calling to Islam, fiqh or Sufism or are affiliated to a specific caller or great religious person in their view other than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), there are many who are afflicted with the [disease of] only accepting from the religion what comes from their own group or school.² This is in contradiction to what is fundamentally found in the religion. It is one of the foundations of *tauheed* that one believe in everything that Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to obey him, love him, respect him and completely submit to his rulings. Allah says,

﴿ أَتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

"Follow the revelation given unto you from your Lord, and follow not, as friends, or protectors, other than Him. Little it is you remember of admonition" (*al-Araaf* 3). Allah also says,

﴿ وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

"Verily, this is My Way leading straight. Follow it and follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) Path.

¹ This was stated by one nicknamed Abu Musab. See *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaat al-Muslimeen*, p. 74.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, pp. 73-74.

Thus does He command you that you may be righteous" (*al-Anaam* 153). He also says,

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا
 أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
 فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴾

"It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path" (*al-Ahzaab* 36).

Even though it is obligatory to obey the prophets, it is a necessary aspect of *tauheed* that one not take those prophets as lords besides Allah. Allah says,

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ
 لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّنَ
 بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴾

"It is not (possible) that a man, to whom is given the Book and Wisdom, and the Prophetic office, should say to people, 'Be my worshippers rather than Allah's.' On the contrary (he would say), 'Be worshippers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all, for you have taught the Book and you have studied it earnestly'" (*ali-Imraan* 79).

The angels and the prophets, in fact, the righteous and the great religious leaders too, are all deserving of love, loyalty, respect and praise. However, it is forbidden to go to extremes concerning them or to associate them as partners with Allah.¹ Islam obligates the absolute following of the truth. The scholars are only followed because they are conveying from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the conveyor from Allah, and not because they have the absolute right to give rulings.² The source of the truth is the Quran and Sunnah. The scholars are simply

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Radd ala al-Akhnaa`ee*, pp. 333f.

² Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 342.

clarifying the rule of Allah; otherwise, it is not in their statements alone wherein they have any authority.

The one who does not accept the truth unless it comes from the group that he is affiliated with is similar to the Jews, concerning whose behavior Allah said,

﴿ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ﴾

“When it is said to them, ‘Believe in what Allah has sent down,’ they say, ‘We believe in what was sent down to us.’ Yet they reject all besides, even if it is the truth confirming what is with them” (*al-Baqarah* 91). Allah said this after describing them thusly,

﴿ وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَمْتَفِتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ مَّا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

“From of old they had prayed for victory against those without faith but when there comes to them that which they have recognized, they refused to believe in it. But the curse of Allah is on the disbelievers” (*al-Baqarah* 89). “The Jews are described as having known the truth before the one speaking that truth arrived. And they were calling to that truth. When the one speaking that truth finally came and he was not from their group, they did not submit to him. They do not accept the truth unless it comes from the group they are affiliated with—while, at the same time, in reality, they do not follow what their own beliefs require them to follow.”¹

It is observable that the one who follows his group with such absolute obedience also, in most cases, loves and hates for the sake of desires and wants. Indeed, his accepting of truth is conditional upon it reaching him through his own group. This shows that his way is based on desires and wants. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, “You will find many people loving a people or hating a people due to desires, not knowing the rational or the reason [behind such an emotion]. Instead, they just give an absolute loyalty or enmity without it being based on any authentic narration from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the early members of this Nation. [They do so] without them understanding its meaning or

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 73.

recognizing its implications or requirements.”¹ For that reason, Allah advised His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to adhere to the Shareeah and not follow the vain desires of those without knowledge:

﴿ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيحَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يُغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾

“Then We put you on the (right) way of religion. So follow that way, and follow not the desires of those who know not. They will be of no use to you in the sight of Allah. It is only wrongdoers (who stand as) protectors, one to another. But Allah is the Protector of the righteous” (*al-Jaathiyah* 18-19). In fact, some early scholars made the standard by which one knows that he is following the Sunnah that one does not get upset due to desires and wants. Indeed, they called those who differed from the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jamaah* the *ahl al-ahwaa* (the people of desires and whims).² “Abu Bakr ibn Ayyaash³ was asked, ‘Who is a Sunni?’ He replied, ‘The one who if the whims and wants are mentioned to him, he is not provoked by them at all.’”⁴

Reading the writings of contemporary extremists or the debates with their individuals makes it clear that partisanship and bigotry towards a particular group is a blatant phenomenon among all of those who have fallen into extremism. This partisanship is a part of the problem and one of its manifestations.

This will be made clearer in the following sections, with refutations of extremists, and in particular in the next section.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 2, p. 163. Also see ibn Taimiyyah, *Daru Taarudh al-Aql wa al-Naql*, vol. 1, p. 272.

² See the meaning of the term, *ahl al-ahwaa* in *al-Mausooah al-Fiqhiyyah*, vol. 7, p. 100.

³ He was Abu Utbah Ismaaeel ibn Iyyaash ibn Sualim al-Ansi, the scholar and expert of hadith in his time for al-Shaam (“Greater Syria”). He was from Hims and traveled to Iraq. He died in 182 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 8, p. 312; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 320.

⁴ Quoted from ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Istiqamah*, vol. 1, p. 255.

Extremism In One's Stance Toward the Leader

Every human organization, no matter what its qualities, has to have a leader to guide it, look after its affairs, organize it and unite its views. In fact, in order to bring about good and repel evil for humans, the Shareeah has laid down the principle of appointing a leader. Abu Saeed narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا خَرَجَ ثَلَاثَةٌ فِي سَفَرٍ فَلْيُؤَمِّرُوا أَحَدَهُمْ

“If three go out on a journey, they should appoint one of them to lead.”¹ In a narration from Abdullah ibn Umar, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا يَجِلُّ لِثَلَاثَةٍ نَفَرٍ يَكُونُونَ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَاةٍ إِلَّا أَمَرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ أَحَدَهُمْ

“It is not permissible for a group of three to be in a wilderness except that one of them is appointed leader over them.”² Al-Shaukaani stated in his comments to these two hadith, “This contains evidence that it is sanctioned for every group of three or more to appoint one of them as the leader. If there is no leadership, it could lead to destruction as each one will try to enforce his opinion and will follow what is in accord with his desire, and they will be destroyed. With proper leadership, differences will be lessened and their voices will be united.”³ Ibn Taimiyyah said, “If it is obligatory upon the smallest of groups to appoint one to lead, this is a sign that such is obligatory for any group larger than that.”⁴ Those groups that form for Shareeah reasons, such as ordering good, eradicating evil and spreading the message, must have a leader in order to bring about benefit and repel the evils that result from anarchy and lack of leadership. Of course, a corresponding ramification of leadership is obedience. Verses and hadith emphasize this aspect. Allah says,

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood. Ahmad Shaakir stated in his comments to the *Musnad* (vol. 10, p. 6648), “Its chain is *sahih*.” Al-Haakim also recorded it and he said that it is *sahih* according to al-Bukhari and Muslim’s criteria. Al-Dhahabi agreed with him.

² Recorded by Ahmad. Ahmad Shaakir stated in his comments to the *Musnad* (vol. 10, p. 6648), “Its chain is *sahih*.”

³ *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 7, p. 157.

⁴ *Al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 65.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي
الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

“O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority among you” (*al-Nisaa* 59). Al-Shaukaani said, “Those of authority are the Imams, rulers, judges and everyone in a legal position of authority.”¹

In a hadith narrated by ibn Umar, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ
بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ

“Upon the person is hearing and obeying concerning what he likes and what he dislikes, unless he is ordered to do an act of disobedience [to Allah]. If he is ordered to do an act of disobedience, there is no hearing nor obeying.”² In fact, there are many hadith of this nature.

It is very important to point out that the leadership, head and guidance of a specific group is not the same as the leadership and rule of the state leader [known as *al-Imaam al-Adham* or the “great Imam”]. This is true for the following reasons:

First, the general community or *jamaah* that is headed by the “great Imam” is, in reality, the Muslim community of all, as it is the structure of the community and he is its head. However, a specific group or *jamaah* that has been formed for the sake of calling others to Islam or due to traveling and so forth is not but a group within the greater group of the Muslim community. The texts that refer to the *jamaah* are in reference to the general Muslim community or *jamaah* and not the smaller, specific group or *jamaah*.

Second, adhering to the state leader or “great Imam” is an obligatory adherence. It is not an optional adherence. Therefore, whenever the Muslims agree upon a leader, it is forbidden to revolt against him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Al-Shaukaani, *Fath al-Qadeer*, vol. 1, p. 481.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi.

مَنْ أَتَاكُمْ وَأَمْرُكُمْ جَمِيعٌ عَلَى رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَشُقَّ عَصَاكُمْ أَوْ
يُفَرِّقَ جَمَاعَتَكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُ

"If someone comes to you while your matter is united upon one person and he seeks to cause discord and division among your community, kill him."¹ On the other hand, the requirement of obedience in a specific group is an optional adherence. This is because the affiliation with the group itself is not obligatory but optional in the first place, as was shown earlier. Therefore, any corollary ruling regarding this affiliation and its requirements will have the same ruling. Hence, adhering to obedience is optional also.

Third, the leader who is mentioned in the text, whose obedience is a requirement and concerning whom it is forbidden to revolt against, is the leader of all of the Muslims. This position of Imam or ruler has been defined by the scholars in a number of ways. For example, al-Mawaardi² stated, "The Imam is in the place of the successor of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with respect to guarding the religion and affairs of this world."³ Imam al-Haramain⁴ said, "The position of Imam is a complete leadership, a leadership that deals with both the specific and the general, the important affairs of the religion and worldly life."⁵ So, the Imam of the Muslims is equivalent to the caliphate and being the leader of the believers. Al-Nawawi said, "It is permissible to call the Imam caliph, Imam or commander of the faithful."⁶

However, the leader or Imam of a group is a specific case. He is nothing but the temporary leader of a particular group. He cannot

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² He was Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Habeeb al-Mawaardi, one of the leading judges in his time. He was a scholar who wrote many beneficial works. He was born in Basrah in 364 A.H. and moved to Baghdad. He died in 450 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 64; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 327.

³ *Al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*, p. 5.

⁴ He was Abu Maali Abdul Malik ibn Abdullah ibn Yoosuf ibn Muhammad al-Juwaini [known as Imam al-Haramain]. He was from the fifth century of the Hijrah. He was a leading Shafi'ee scholar. He was born in 419 A.H. He traveled to Baghdad and stayed there for more than four years. Then he went to Madinah and gave religious rulings there. Then he returned to Naisaboor. He died in 478 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 15, p. 235; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 160.

⁵ *Ghiyaath al-Umum*, p. 15.

⁶ *Raudhat al-Taalibeen*, vol. 10, p. 49.

be raised to the position of the Imam of the Muslims, even if he claims that or even if his associates make the oath of allegiance to him on that basis. "The position of Imam is dominion and rule... The king does not become king simply by the accord of one, two or even four, unless the agreement of those few implies the agreement of others which could then make him king."¹

If everyone who claimed that he is the Imam of all the Muslims were believed and given the oath of allegiance, it would lead to great evil and trials. All of this is given the assumption that the leadership of the leader of a group is valid—as how many leaders have there been whose leadership was not valid due to clear legally impending factors. This shows that the leader of a group is not like the Imam of the nation and his rights are not similar to his.

Based on the differences between them, it is not allowed to make the pledge of allegiance to a group leader the same as one makes to the Imam of the Muslims. Since the issue of the oath of allegiance or *baiah* is of extreme relevance here, I shall discuss it in more detail.

The Concept of the *Balah* or Oath of Allegiance

(1) The Lexical Meaning of *al-Bai'ah* (البيعة):

Ibn Faaris stated, "[The letters] *ba*, *ya* and *ain* are one root. It refers to selling something. One may also call *al-shuraa bai*."² Ibn Mandhoor said, "*Al-bai'ah* refers to a pledge of allegiance and obedience. One could make a pledge on a particular matter, such as your saying, 'I pledge to you such and such,' and this pledge is an oath. *Baayatuhu* comes from *al-bai* [selling] and *al-bai'ah* [pledge of allegiance], and *al-tabaaya* is similar. It is an expression used for making a contract or a pact. It is as if each one is buying from the other what he has and gives him himself sincerely, obeying him and abiding by his command."³ Ibn Hajar explains the lexical relationship between *al-bai* (sale) and *al-bai'ah* (oath of allegiance). He said, "Whoever makes the pledge to the ruler has given him his obedience and takes from him what is assigned for him. It is like a person who buys some merchandise and gives its price to the other. It is said that its source is that the Arabs, whenever they would make a contract, would shake hands. They would do the same whenever they would make an allegiance or confederation.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 141-142.

² *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, under heading *bai*.

³ *Al-Lisaan*, under heading *bai*.

Therefore, the promise of allegiance and adhering to it by the hands is a *baiah*.”¹

(2) The Technical Meaning of *al-Baiah*:

The jurists mention the word *baiah* in the course of their discussion about the rule and caliphate. However, they do not define it. They simply mention it as one of the ways of inaugurating the ruler. In *al-Minhaaj*, al-Nawawi stated, “The leader is inaugurated by the *baiah*. The most correct is the *baiah* from ‘the people who tie and untie’ [the leaders in society] from among the scholars, leaders and respected people who can easily be assembled.”²

However, the scholars of hadith define it while explaining the relevant hadith. They define it as a mutual pact and oath. Ibn al-Atheer³ stated about *al-baiah*, “It refers to the mutual oath for it [that is, for embracing Islam] and a mutual pact. It is as if each one is buying what his companion has and he is giving his sincere self, his obedience and his submitting to his command in return.”⁴

Al-Kirmaani defined it, “The pledge of allegiance upon Islam refers to a mutual oath and pact concerning Islam. It is given that name due to its similarity to a financial transaction. It is as if each one of them is buying from the other what he has. From the side of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he is promising reward and, from the others’ side, they are pledging obedience. It is also defined as the oath and pledge of the ruler concerning what he orders the people.”⁵

One jurist defines it as, “The mutual pledge refers to taking a pact, covenant and pledge to give life to what the Quran and Sunnah give life to and to extinguish [give death] to what they extinguish. It is as if each party buys what the other has. He gives

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 71.

² *Al-Minhaaj*, printed with its commentary *Mughni al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 4, p. 130; also see Ibn Abideen, *al-Haashiyah*, vol. 4, p. 263.

³ Ibn al-Atheer was Abu al-Saadaat Majd al-Deen al-Mubaarak ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Jaziri. He was a scholar of hadith, language and legal theory. He was born and raised in Jazeerah ibn Umar. He moved then to Mosul and was one of their specialists. He became ill [and was semiparalyzed]. His illness stayed with him until his death in 606 A.H. He has many beneficial writings. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 21, p. 489; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 272.

⁴ See *al-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth*, vol. 1, p. 174; *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 1, p. 252.

⁵ *Sharh al-Kirmaani ala al-Bukhaari*, vol. 1, p. 105; also see al-Safaareeni, *Sharh Thalaathiyat al-Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 927 and vol. 1, p. 70.

his sincere self, obedience and submission to his order. The mutual pledge is from both parties.”¹

Ibn Khaldun² gives the following definition, “It is the pledge of obedience.”³

In light of these definitions, it is clear that the word *baiah* has two meanings. First, it has a general meaning, which is that of a mutual pact and pledge. Second, it has a specific meaning, which is the pact and pledge between the Nation and the ruler.

The word *baiah* when used according to its specific meaning, that is the pact between the nation and the ruler, cannot be applied to the Imam or leader of a specific group. This is because all or most of the conditions of the specific *baiah* are not fulfilled. The conditions for the validity of the specific type of *baiah* include:

(1) The conditions for the greater Imam or ruler must be present in the one to whom the pledge is being given.⁴

(2) Those who perform the pledge of allegiance must be from the “people who tie and untie” [the leaders in society, “the powers that be”]. Al-Ramali⁵ said, “The *baiah* that is not from the ‘people who tie and untie’ is not given any consideration.”⁶ This is also indicated in Umar’s statement, “Whoever gives the pledge of allegiance to any man without consulting with the Muslims is not to be supported, neither him nor the one he gave the pledge to, lest they both should be killed.”⁷ Umar also said to the People of the *Shoorah* [consultation body] just before his death, “If anything

¹ Al-Abbaas al-Hasani, *Al-Tatammah ala al-Raudh al-Nadheer*, p. 17.

² Ibn Khaldun was Abdul Rahmaan ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldoon, historian and researcher. He was born in Tunis in 732 A.H. He grew up there and then traveled to Fez, Granada and Andalus. He held many posts and then he went to Egypt, where the ruler honored him. He died in Cairo in 808 A.H. He wrote a number of books, the most famous being his history entitled, *al-Ibr wa Dayawaan al-Mubtada wa al-Khabr*. From that work, his *Muqaddimah* has become very famous. Cf., *al-Badr al-Taali*, vol. 1, p. 337; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 320.

³ *Al-Muqaddimah*, p. 209.

⁴ For the conditions of the ruler or Imam, see Abdullah al-Dumaiji, *al-Imaamah al-Udhmaa*, pp. 233-308.

⁵ He was Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Hamzah, a Shafi’ee jurist. He was born in 919 A.H. and died in 1004 A.H. in Cairo. He was the leader in giving religious verdicts for the Shafi’ees. He wrote a number of works, the most famous being *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj ila Sharh al-Minhaaj*. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 7.

⁶ *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 7, p. 390.

⁷ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

should happen to me, be deliberate and cautious. Let Suhaib¹, the client of the Tribe of Judaan, lead the people in prayers for three nights. Then gather together on the third day the nobles of the people and the leaders of the soldiers. They should appoint one of them as the leader. If one assumes power without consultation, strike his neck.”²

(3) The pledge must be done solely for him so that no pledge is given to more than one person. This is proven by the hadith narrated by Abu Saeed al-Khudri in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا بُوِيعَ لِخَلِيفَتَيْنِ فَأَقْتُلُوا الْآخَرَ مِنْهُمَا

“If two caliphs are given the pledge of allegiance, then kill the latter of the two.”³ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

فُوا بْبَيْعَةِ الْأَوَّلِ فَالْأَوَّلِ

“Fulfill the pledge of allegiance of the one who received it first.”⁴

As for the word *baiah* used in a general sense meaning any kind of pact or pledge, I searched to the best of my ability to find relevant hadith and reports of this nature. It became clear to me that during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the period of the Companions and the period of the Followers there were such pacts or pledges. These reports include the following:

(1) It is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made a special pledge with some of his Companions concerning specific matters. [For example,]

¹ He was Suhaib ibn Sanaan ibn Maalik, one of the earliest Companions. His father was a noble in the Days of Ignorance. The Persian king appointed him governor over al-Ailah (al-Basrah). The Romans stormed the city and he was taken prisoner. He grew up among the Romans until someone from the Tribe of Kalb purchased him. He was then sold in Makkah to Abdullah ibn Jadaan. He lived there, practiced a profession well, embraced Islam and then emigrated. He died in 38 A.H. 307 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 17; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 310.

² Recorded by al-Baihaqi.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, ibn Maajah. For more details concerning the case where there is more than one Imam, see al-Dumaiji, *al-Imaamah al-Uthmaa*, pp. 549-568.

(a) Ubaadah ibn al-Saamit said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made a pledge with us that we would not steal."¹

(b) Hakeem ibn Hizaam² said, "I made a pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that I would not die except while adhering to Islam."³

(c) Umaimah bint Raqeeqah⁴ said, "I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) among some women who gave him the oath of allegiance upon Islam. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, we pledge to you that we shall never associate anything with Allah, we shall not steal, we shall not commit illegal sexual intercourse, we shall not kill our children, we shall not come with any slander that we have invented by ourselves and we shall not disobey you in any goodness.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'According to what you can do and what is within your ability.' We then said, 'Allah and His Messenger are more merciful to us than we are to ourselves. Come now and we shall make the pledge to you, O Messenger of Allah.' He then said,

إِنِّي لَا أَصَافِحُ النِّسَاءَ إِنَّمَا قَوْلِي لِمِائَةِ امْرَأَةٍ كَقَوْلِي لِامْرَأَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ أَوْ
مِثْلَ قَوْلِي لِامْرَأَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

² He was Hakeem ibn Hizaam ibn Khuwalid ibn Asad, a Companion from the Quraish. He was born in Makkah. He was a close friend of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) before and after his receiving of revelation. He lived a long time and he was one of the nobles of the Quraish. He embraced Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. Forty hadith have been narrated on his authority. He died in Madinah in 54 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 44; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 269.

³ Recorded by al-Nasaa'ee and Ahmad. Al-Arnaaoot said that its chain is *hasan*. See *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 5, p. 388. [Note that in the translation above one of the possible interpretations of the hadith is given. For other interpretations, see al-Mubaarak ibn al-Atheer, *al-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1997), vol. 2, pp. 20-21.—JZ]

⁴ She was Umaimah bint Raqeeqah. Her father's name was Jaad and her mother was Raqeeqah bint Khuwailid, the sister of Khadeejah, the "Mother of the Faithful." She was a noble Companion who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At the end of her life, she lived in Damascus. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 12, p. 134; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 401.

“I do not shake hands with women. My speech to one hundred women is the same as my speech to one woman.”¹

Waliullah al-Dahlawi² stated in his commentary to this hadith, “This contains evidence that the *bai'ah* is not restricted to simply accepting the position of caliph.”³

(2) Such pledges over specific issues also took place among some of the Companions. Here are some examples:

(a) Abdullah ibn Zaid⁴ said that during the time of the Battle of Harrah, a person came and said to him, “Ibn Handhalah⁵ is taking the pledge from the people [to fight until] death.” Abdullah replied, “I shall never make that pledge to anyone after the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).”⁶

(b) Al-Shabi narrated that Aishah, the Mother of the Faithful, said to one of the judges of the people of Madinah, “I want you to pledge to me three things or I shall dispute with you.” He said, “I shall certainly make the pledge to you, O Mother of the Faithful. What are they?” She said, “Refrain from rhyming in your supplications as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions did not use to do that. And lecture to the people once a week. If you must, then do so twice. If you must even more, then do so thrice. Do not make the people bored with this Book. Do not come upon a people and

¹ Recorded by Malik, al-Nasaa'ee and al-Tirmidhi. Al-Arnaaoot said its chain is *sahih*. See *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 1, p. 256.

² He was Ahmad ibn Abdul Raheem al-Faarooqi al-Dahlawi, Hanafi jurist of the scholars of hadith. He was born in 1110 A.H. He was from India but he visited the Hijaz. He had a great influence on resurrecting the Sunnah and its sciences in India. He has many writings, the most famous being *Hujjah Allah al-Baalighah*. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 149.

³ *Al-Musawa fi Sharh al-Muwatta*, vol. 2, p. 217.

⁴ He was Abdullah ibn Zaid ibn Aasim al-Ansaari, a Companion. There is a difference of opinion as to whether he attended the Battle of Badr. But he did attend Uhud and the battles afterwards. He was also one of the people who participated in the defeat and killing of Musailamah, the liar. He also took part in the Battle of Harrah, to which the above report is referring. He died at that battle in 63 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 92; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 233.

⁵ He was Abdullah ibn Abd Amr ibn Saifi al-Ausi, one of the scholars and brave ones of the generation of the Followers. He was born in 4 A.H. and grew up as an orphan. During the revolt of the people of Madinah during the battle of Harrah, he was appointed its governor. When the opposing armies of Yazeed came close, he led them in prayer and encouraged them to be patient. He fought a valiant battle but they were not victorious. He continued to fight until 63 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 321; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 99.

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

interrupt their speaking. Instead, leave them unless they turn to you and ask of you, then speak to them.”¹

(3) Some of the early scholars also made pledges upon specific issues. [For example,] al-Jasaas records via his chain of narrators from ibn al-Mubaarak who said, “When the news of the killing of Ibraheem al-Saaigh² reached Abu Hanifah³, he cried to such an extent that we thought that he was going to die. I spoke to him privately and he said, ‘By Allah, he was an intelligent man. By Allah, I feared this type of matter would happen to him.’ I said, ‘What was its cause?’ He replied, ‘He used to come to me and ask me questions. He would greatly sacrifice himself in obedience to Allah and he was very pious. Sometimes I would offer him some food and he would ask about it, and he would not be pleased with it nor would he taste it. Sometimes he would be satisfied and eat it. He would ask me about ordering good and forbidding evil until we both agreed that it is an obligation from Allah. He said to me, “Put out your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you.” The world then turned dark between me and him [meaning, things were not good between us after that].’ I said, ‘Why?’ He said, ‘He had a right of the rights of Allah and I refused to do it. I said to him, “If one person does that act, he will end up being killed and he would have done nothing to change the ways of the people. However, if we could find a group of pious people doing that with one person at their head, responsible for the religion of Allah [that would be beneficial].” He continued to demand that from me every time he came to me, like a creditor. Every time he would demand that from me, I would tell him, “This is a matter that is not appropriate for just one person. The Prophets were not able to do it until they were summoned to do so from heaven. This obligation is not like the other obligations for a person performs the other obligations by

¹ Recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad*. The chain is broken between al-Shabi and Aishah.

² He was Ibraaheem ibn Maimoon al-Saaigh, one of the pious predecessors. He was from Merv. He was a jurist in addition to being one who ordered good and eradicated evil. He was killed by Abu Muslim al-Khurasani in 131 A.H. Cf., *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, pp. 172-173; *al-Tabaqaat al-Siniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 245.

³ He was al-Numaan ibn Thaabit, al-Taimi by clientage, the Imam, the *mujtahid*. He was one of the “four Imams.” He was born in Kufah in 80 A.H. He grew up there and sought knowledge. He was asked to be a judge but he refused. Imam al-Shafi’ee said about him, “The people are dependents of Abu Haneefah in matters of fiqh.” He died in Baghdad in 150 A.H. Many books have been written about his life. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 390; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 36.

himself. As for this one, if a person does that on his own, he exposes his blood and person to be killed.”¹

Based on these reports in conjunction with the earlier presented texts, the following becomes clear:

First, the pledges of allegiance that are from the confirmed, Shareeah pacts are of two types: (1) The greater, general, comprehensive *baiah* that is for the supreme leader of the Muslims and which is given by the “people who tie and untie” or the leaders of society. (2) The smaller, partial, specific *baiah* that is given by some Muslims to other Muslims to perform specific jobs and which cannot conflict with the greater *baiah* if it exists, although it may be between the supreme leader and some of his citizenry, as was shown earlier.

Second, the smaller, partial, specific *baiah* is not valid unless it meets the following three conditions:

- (1) It must be for a confirmed, legal matter;
- (2) There must be a definitive need for it;
- (3) It cannot take away from the implications of the greater *baiah* if such is in existence.

Third, the *baiah* to the supreme leader of the Muslims, if there is no Imam who has been given the pledge, is not valid unless it comes from the “people who tie and untie” (that is, the religious, political and social leaders in society) in accordance with its legal conditions.

Fourth, the pledge to a particular Muslim as the supreme leader of the Muslims while there is already a leader who has been given the pledge is not permissible. In fact, it is a violation of the pact and a source for civil war and commotion. It also breaks the bond of obedience.

Fifth, there are some differences between the two types of *baiah*. They may be summarized as follows:

(1) When it comes to the greater *baiah*, there are specific hadith ordering the fulfilling of the pact and warning about violating it. However, as for the lesser *baiah*, fulfilling such a pact only falls under general texts [of fulfilling promises].

(2) The obedience in the matter of the greater *baiah* is absolute concerning what is in obedience to Allah. However, the obedience in the smaller *baiah* is limited to what was agreed upon at the time

¹ Recorded by al-Jasaas with his chain in *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 33. Also see al-Ghizi, *al-Tabaqaat al-Siniyyah fi Taraajim al-Hanafiyah*, vol. 1, p. 246.

of making the *baiah* and concerning only that for which the pact was made.

(3) It is obligatory to fulfill the greater *baiah*. The one who leaves it, dies a death of the Days of Ignorance. [As in the hadith,]

وَمَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

“Whoever dies and does not have on his neck a pledge of allegiance dies a death of the Days of Ignorance.”¹ However, fulfilling the lesser *baiah* is a matter of *ijtihaad*.

(4) If there is any conflict between the two *baiahs*, the only one that is given any consideration is the greater *baiah*.

If these differences between the greater, general *baiah* and the lesser, specific *baiah* are accepted, then I submit that it is best to call the lesser, specific *baiah* by a different name. This is called for due to the following reasons:

(1) Practical experience shows that those who take the lesser *baiah* treat it as if it were the greater *baiah* of the Muslim ruler. [They treat it in the same manner with respect] to prohibition to violate it, the obligation to abide by it and so forth. Therefore, as a means to block this evil and as a protection for the supreme leader, which in effect is a means to protect the society as a whole, the partial, specific *baiah* should be given an independent name.

(2) The understanding of the people, both scholars and masses, when they hear the word *baiah* is, due to its common usage, that it refers to the *baiah* of the supreme ruler. For that reason, it is quite problematic to use the same term for the partial, specific *baiah*.

In searching through the Shareeah texts, we find a name sanctioned for the pacts that are made between humans in order to achieve a specific goal, produce some benefit and so forth. This name is *al-hilf* (sworn alliance). This type of alliance is needed in every society. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “It must be known that every change that was made in the religions, in fact for every society in the world, there must be a sworn alliance of two or more people—an agreement and a pact upon that act. In fact, humans cannot survive without coming together for those things that will produce their benefits and repel harm. These agreements for those things are mutual pacts and sworn alliances.”²

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Jaami al-Rasaail*, vol. 2, pp. 306-307.

The need for such pacts and alliances is even greater among a people who are not united behind a strong object of obedience. "Every people who are not united behind a strong person of obedience in all of their affairs must have some pacts and alliances concerning those matters wherein the ruler does not command them."¹

If something is concluded through an alliance, it is obligatory to fulfill it if it is permissible according to the Shareeah. This is because the Shareeah that is sent down from Allah is inclusive of the acts that are made obligatory for Allah's sake and the acts that are made obligatory by individuals with other individuals. In other words, sometimes something is obligatory by Allah making it obligatory while at other times it is made obligatory by a pact, such as an oath, reciprocal contract or partnership. Nothing is obligatory in the Shareeah except by the law or by a contract or pact.²

The ruling concerning such alliances differs according to their objects. They fall into one of three cases:

The First Case:

The object is something that violates the Shareeah. For example, this would include an alliance "to support one another in some wrong against another person and taking his wealth illegally... This type of [special kind of alliance or] brotherhood and similar others which is a type of mutual assistance to do what Allah has forbidden, whatever that may be, is forbidden according to the agreement of the Muslims."³

Another example of a forbidden alliance is that which some of the Sufi shaikhs and teachers throughout history have done in making a pact that a person will show loyalty for whomever the shaikh shows loyalty to and will display enmity to whomever the shaikh opposes. In refuting these people, ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "Nobody has the right to make a pact with someone on the basis that he will agree with him on everything that he wants, he will support whomever he supports and he will oppose whomever he opposes. Whoever does that is of the same nature as Ghengis Khan⁴ and others who say that whoever agrees with him is an ally and friend and whoever disagrees with him is an enemy and a rebel.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Jaami al-Rasaail*, vol. 2, pp. 309.

² Cf., Ibn Taimiyyah, *Jaami al-Rasaail*, vol. 2, pp. 309.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, p. 96.

⁴ Ghengis Khan was a Mongol ruler. His descendants were the leaders of the Tartars who pillaged the lands of the Muslims. He was born in 1167 C.E. and died in 1227 C.E. Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Arabiyyah al-Maisirah*, p. 650.

Instead, they and those who follow them must abide by the covenant with Allah and His Messenger to obey Allah and His Messenger, to do what Allah and His Messenger have ordered them to do, to forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and they should tend to the rights of the teachers¹ in the way Allah and His Messenger ordered.”

In this case—that is, making an alliance to do something that is forbidden—there is no doubt that the pact is forbidden and, therefore, all of its ramifications and consequences are also voided because the pact itself was void.

The Second Case:

This is wherein the pact is for a legally sanctioned matter, such as ordering good and eradicating evil. Concerning this type of pact, there is a difference of opinion. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “The dispute occurs with respect to [that special pact of] brotherhood whose purpose of the two [parties] is to assist each in piety and righteousness, in the sense that obedience to Allah brings them together and any disobedience to Allah will separate them. As they say, ‘The Sunnah brings us together and innovation separates us.’ This is the type concerning which there is a difference of opinion. Most of the scholars do not see it [as permissible]. They feel that the brotherhood of faith that is bound by Allah and His Messenger suffices for it. They say that it is sufficient to bring about every good. It is simply a matter of exerting oneself to fulfill it and its obligations properly. In fact, Allah has obligated specific rights of a believer over a believer that is beyond what the souls request. Other scholars permit it for legally sanctioned aspects as long as it does not contain anything that contradicts the Shareeah.”²

It seems that ibn Taimiyyah leans toward the second opinion as he stated, after pointing out the illegality of what some teachers do in their alliances with their students concerning absolute loyalty, “It would be better if he [the teacher] were to say to his student, ‘You must abide by the pact and covenant of Allah. You must support whomever Allah and His Messenger support. And you must oppose whomever Allah and His Messenger oppose. You must assist one another in piety and righteousness and not assist one another in sin and transgression. If the truth is with me, support the truth. If I am

¹ [Ibn Taimiyyah mentioned teachers in particular here because he had been discussing the pact that some teachers and shaikhs would make with their students.]

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, p. 96.

upon a falsehood, do not support a falsehood. Whoever adheres to this is one of the *mujahideen* along the path of Allah, those who want the religion to be all for Allah and want Allah's word to be supreme."¹

There is another opinion from other scholars that may be considered a third opinion. They are of the opinion that there is no legal effect of the alliance when it comes to affirming something that is already affirmed by the Law itself. Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Allah has brought the believers together through Islam and has made by that a brotherhood, helping one another... Islam suffices for them above any kind of alliance. Indeed, what this brotherhood of Islam requires them to do for each other is above anything that an alliance could require. And, if an alliance requires anything that contradicts Islam, it is void. If it requires the same thing that Islam requires, it has no effect and no benefit to it."²

The weightiest opinion among the views of the scholars is that the type of alliance that has been canceled is that wherein the members of the alliance would inherit from one another. The forbidden type of alliance is the alliance [like] the Days of Ignorance, which requires one to assist another whether he is in the right or the wrong. However, as for the alliance for a sanctioned act, such as ordering good, eradicating evil, assisting one another, mutual support and helping one another to make the word of Allah supreme,³ this type retains its original ruling of permissibility. This conclusion is proven in the following:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَآتَوْهُمْ نَصِيحَتَهُمْ ﴾

"To those also whom you made a pledge, give them their due portion" (*al-Nisaa* 33). This refers to an alliance, pact and pledge that was given to each other.⁴ As for "their due portion," there is a difference of opinion concerning its meaning. It is said that it is the inheritance that was later abrogated by Allah's words,

﴿ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ﴾

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 20-21.

² Ibn al-Qayyim, *Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood*, printed in the margin of *Aun al-Mabood*, vol. 8, p. 142.

³ Cf., Ibn al-Qayyim, *Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood*, printed in the margin of *Aun al-Mabood*, vol. 8, p. 142.

⁴ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 5, p. 51.

“But kindred by blood have prior rights against each other in the Book of Allah” (*al-Anfaal* 75).

Other Quranic commentators state that, instead, this verse was revealed concerning those who made a pact of alliance. They have been ordered to give to each other their portion of aid, assistance, advice and similar other matters, short of inheritance.¹ Al-Tabari stated, “The preferred interpretation is that which all agree is from its still affirmed ruling. That is, it means for the members of the alliance that took place in the Days of Ignorance before Islam to give to each other their proper due of support, advice and opinion—but not inheritance. This is due to the authentic narration from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

لَا حِلْفَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ وَأَيَّمَا حَلْفٍ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ الْإِسْلَامُ إِلَّا
شِدَّةً

‘There is no making of sworn allegiances in Islam. Any such allegiance made in the Days of Ignorance is only strengthened in Islam.’ [Recorded by Muslim.]”²

(2) Aasim ibn Sulaimaan al-Ahwaal³ said, “I said to Anas ibn Maalik, ‘Has it reached you that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “There is no making of sworn allegiances in Islam”?’ He replied, ‘The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made an allegiance between the Quraish and Ansaar in my house.’”⁴

Ibn Hajar stated, “Al-Tabari said, ‘What Anas used to affirm the sworn allegiance does not negate the hadith of Jubair ibn Mutaim which denies it.’⁵ The aforementioned brotherhood was just after the Hijra [emigration from Makkah to Madinah] and they used

¹ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 5, pp. 51-54.

² Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 5, p. 55.

³ He was Abu Abdul Rahmaan Aasim ibn Sulaimaan al-Ahwal al-Basri, one of the preservers of hadith and a trustworthy narrator from Basrah. He held some posts. In Kufah, he was in charge of the *hisbah* [those who order good, eradicate evil, check the affairs in the marketplace and so on]. He was a judge in Madain (Ctesiphon). He was known for austerity and worship. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 13; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 248.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

⁵ He is referring to the hadith mentioned earlier that negates any such allegiances in Islam. It states, “There is no making of sworn allegiances in Islam. Any such allegiance made in the Days of Ignorance is only strengthened in Islam.” Recorded by Muslim and Abu Dawood.

to inherit from one another. Then, the inheritance portion was abrogated and there remained everything that was not voided by the Quran, which was helping one another in truth, support and restraining the hand of the wrongdoer. As ibn Abbaas said, “[It is abrogated] save for help, advice, assistance and bequeathing to the other. However, the inheritance [part] has gone.”¹”²

The negated allegiance that was referred to by Anas ibn Maalik’s questioner is the sworn allegiance of the Days of Ignorance. Al-Khataabi stated, “Ibn Uyainah³ said, ‘They made a sworn allegiance between themselves that was like a brotherhood. In other words, the intent of the sworn allegiance in the Days of Ignorance is the brotherhood of Islam. But in Islam, it goes according to the rules of the religion and its limits. The allegiance of the Days of Ignorance flowed according to what they would lay down according to their opinions. Therefore, what contradicted Islam was voided and the rest remained intact as it was.’”⁴ Al-Nawawi said, “As for what was agreed upon concerning inheritance, the majority of the scholars say it is best to contradict that. However, the brotherhood in Islam and the allegiance for obedience to Allah, helping in the religion, supporting one another for piety and righteousness and establishing the truth are all things that remain and have not been abrogated. This is the Prophet’s meaning in this hadith, ‘There is no making of sworn allegiances in Islam. Any such allegiance made in the Days of Ignorance is only strengthened in Islam.’”⁵

(3) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said about the “Allegiance of al-Fudhool” [from pre-Islamic days], “It would not please me to violate it even if I were given red camels [the best type of camels]. If they were to call me to

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 473; also see al-Aini, *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 12, p. 119.

³ He was Sufyaan ibn Uyainah al-Hilaali, preserver of knowledge and trustworthy narrator. He had lots of knowledge in various fields and lots of ability. He was born in 107 A.H. Al-Shafi’ee said about him, “If it were not for Malik and Sufyan, the knowledge of the Hijaz would have gone.” He made hajj seventy times. He died in 918 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 8, p. 454; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 105.

⁴ Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 474. Also see what al-Aini quoted from ibn Sayiduh, *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 12, p. 119.

⁵ *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 16, p. 82.

it today I would respond in order to order good, forbid evil and repel the wrongdoer from the wronged.”¹

(4) Pacts, contracts and conditions are from the worldly, customary activities. The basic ruling concerning them is that they are not prohibited. This ruling applies to them until there is evidence indicating otherwise. There is no evidence in the Shareeah to show that this type of pact is not allowed. The absence of any prohibiting evidence is an indication that it is not prohibited.²

(5) The general nature of the texts indicates that such a pact is permissible and also that one must fulfill its conditions unless it contains a forbidden condition. The general command to fulfill contracts and pacts is also an indication that they are basically permissible and they are not void. [Such texts include] Allah’s saying,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ﴾

“O you who believe, fulfill your contracts and pacts” (*al-Maaidah* 1). Allah states, while mentioning the attributes of the believers, the people of understanding,

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ ﴾

“Those who fulfill the Covenant of Allah and fail not in their pledged word” (*al-Rad* 20). Ibn Taimiyyah said, “The ruling is definitely general that for all such contracts and pacts it is obligatory to fulfill what they contain of obedience to Allah and it is not allowed to fulfill what they contain of disobedience to Allah.”³

The Third Case:

The third case is where the essence of the sworn allegiance and pact is something good but it includes some conditions that are forbidden. It then becomes a mixture of good and evil. In such a case, one fulfills what is consistent with the Shareeah and repels what is contrary to it. “Any conditions, contracts, allegiances of brotherhood or other things done among the people must be taken back to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Every condition that is in accord with the Book and the Sunnah is to be fulfilled. And [as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

¹ Recorded by al-Bazaar. Al-Haithami (*al-Majma*, vol. 7, p. 264) said, “In its chain is Dharaar ibn Sard and he is weak. And it has another chain,” but he did not mention the other chain.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 29, p. 150.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Jaami al-Rasaail*, vol. 2, p. 315.

him) stated], ‘Whoever stipulates a condition that is not in the Book of Allah, then it is void, even if it is one hundred conditions. The Book of Allah has more right and its conditions are more binding.’^{1,2}

The differentiation between these three cases and what was previously mentioned concerning obedience to the people in authority and everyone who has some power being conditional is all built upon a very great principle of the principles of Islam: The contentment with the message itself and the sufficiency of the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), being not in need of any other source, and that obedience to Allah and obedience to the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the fundament. On the other hand, obedience to the shaikhs, leaders and even those in authority of scholars and rulers must follow obedience to Allah and obedience to the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The proof against mankind is only established through the messengers. Allah explains why He sent inspiration to the Prophet Noah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and those after him,

﴿ لِقَالِ يَكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ﴾

“That mankind, after (the coming) of the messengers, should have no plea against Allah” (*al-Nisaa* 165). In this verse, there is a refutation of those who claim that mankind is in need of someone other than the messengers, like Imams and so forth. Allah also says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ

مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ ﴾

“O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger” (*al-Nisaa* 59). The command is to obey them when there is agreement and consistency. And the command is also to, when there is a dispute, take the issue back to Allah. This proves that their obedience follows after the obedience to Allah. The aspect that is obligatory is the obedience to Allah. However, no one can know how that is to be done except through the messengers who convey the message from

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad and Abu Dawood,

² Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, pp. 97-98.

Him. Therefore, it is also obligatory to obey them and affirm everything that they order and state. As for anyone else, such as the rulers and scholars, obedience to them is only obligatory because it is done as a way of following the obedience to Allah. Al-Shaatibi stated, "As for the scholar of the Shareeah, when his statement is followed and the people follow his judgment, he is to be followed only because he is a scholar of the Shareeah and he gives his ruling according to its decrees. [That is why he is followed] and not for any other reason. In reality, he is only conveying from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the conveyor from Allah. What is taken from him is done so with the knowledge that he is simply conveying or with a belief with probable cause that he is conveying. It is not the case that he is in an absolute position to make a ruling. In reality, no one has that right. Such a right is confined only to the Shareeah that was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."¹

The Imams and shaikhs who are followed are simply meant to be guides to Allah. They are like the leaders of the prayer. They pray and the people pray behind them. They are like the guide for the pilgrim. They take him to the House of Allah and make the pilgrimage with him. But they have no portion of divinity whatsoever.² After presenting this very important principle, ibn Taimiyyah stated, "The point of this principle is that whoever puts his Imam in a position where it is absolutely obligatory to obey him, in belief and practice, then he has strayed. This is like the Imami Raafidha [Shiah] who make for every era an Imam, protected from any error, who must be obeyed. There is no one protected from error after the messengers. It is not obligatory to obey anyone in everything after them."³

Whoever obeys the Imams and shaikhs in everything has fallen into a form of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). The occurrence of *shirk* in the Nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is more obscure than the crawling of an ant. *Shirk* is of different varieties:

It includes *shirk* with respect to worship and taking of a god.

It also includes *shirk* with respect to obedience and submission.

It also includes *shirk* with respect to faith and acceptance.⁴

¹ *Al-Itisaam*, vol. 2, p. 342.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 11, p. 499.

³ *Al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 69. See his presentation of the principle in vol. 19, pp. 66-71.

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 1, p. 97.

Ibn Taimiyyah said, "Many of those who study knowledge, soldiers of the kings, followers of the judges and followers among the masses commit the *shirk* of obedience. When the verse,

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ﴾

'They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ, the son of Mary' (*al-Taubah* 31) was read, Adi ibn Haatim¹ told the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they do not worship them.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, 'They do not worship them but they permit for them what is forbidden and they follow them; and they forbid for them what is permissible and they follow them.'² You can find a deviated person taking as obligatory what the person he is following has obligated; the forbidden is what he forbade; the permissible is what he permitted; and the religion is what he sanctioned... Then he fears for the one who will not have anything to do with that kind of *shirk* although he does not fear that he is associating something [with Allah] in his manner of obedience without any approval from Allah."³

¹ He was Adi ibn Haatim ibn Abdullah al-Ta'ee, a Companion and leader of his people. He performed some noble deeds during the Wars of Apostasy [after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)]. He was also present at the conquering of Iraq. He lived in Kufah. 66 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He lived for more than one hundred years and died in 68 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 162; *al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 7, p. 166; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 220.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Jareer al-Tabarai (vol. 10, pp. 80-81) and al-Baihaqi. Al-Tirmidhi said, "This hadith is solitary and we do not know it except from the hadith of Abdul Salaam ibn Harb and Ghateef ibn Ayun." The hadith was declared weak by al-Daaraqutni, as quoted by ibn Hajar in *Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 251. The hadith is also narrated as statements from the Companions that may be used to strengthen it. Such is recorded by ibn Jareer and al-Baihaqi. Cf., Abdul Qadir al-Arnaoot, footnotes to *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 2, p. 161.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 1, p. 98.

The Contemporary Form of Extremism with Respect to the Leader

Extremism with respect to the leader of a group is a manifest phenomenon in the lives of contemporary Muslims. It appears in a clear form with respect to two levels: (1) the theoretical level and (2) the practical and experiential level. Here is an explanation of these two levels.

The First Level:

When one reads through the writings of Shukri Mustafa's group, the extent of their extremism with respect to their leaders becomes clear. I shall present some of what Shukri Mustafa wrote in his book *al-Khilaafah*. Shukri said, "The law of Allah, His wisdom and His rule require that there cannot be a joining together unless there is a kernel or pole for it to rally around. This is the confirmed law of creation that is never violated, from the nucleus of an atom to the revolving planets in the skies. This is what His law and wisdom require. The power of the coming together is relative to the strength of the relationship between the body and the core. Indeed, it is the core that must be the goal of the unifying and represented in it."¹

About the *jamaah* of the Muslims, he wrote,

Therefore, whoever separates from it the amount of a handspan has released the tie of Islam from his neck. Whoever dies and there is not upon his neck a *baiah* dies a death of the Days of Ignorance. Whoever obeys his Imam has obeyed Allah. Whoever disobeys him has disobeyed Allah. The Muslim *jamaah* are those who are discharging the rights of Allah upon earth, preserving the limits of Allah on earth. Its Imam is the leader of the lance by which it remains and by which the fighting takes place behind it. He is the one responsible for defining the practical goal to march towards it...² One row, one strike... And the Imam of all of them—before and after that—and their guide is the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do

¹ *Al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 27.

² At this point in the original text, the words are not clear.

believe in Allah and the Last Day: that is best, and most suitable for final determination” [*al-Nisaa* 59]. The restriction between him and them is that he not order them to disobey Allah. Hearing and obeying are obligatory upon the Muslim individual concerning that which he loves or he hates as long as he is not ordered to disobey Allah. If he is ordered to disobey Allah, there is neither hearing nor obeying... The order to disobey Allah—what is confirmed as an act of disobedience to Allah—is in itself a manifest act of disbelief for which we have a proof from Allah.¹

After presenting a number of the texts related to *baiiah*, Shukri stated, “This is the *baiiah* with the meaning of *baiiah*. They are mistaken who think that it is something less than the *baiiah* wherein one gives his soul completely to Allah via the Muslim *jamaah* exemplified in the pledge upon the hand of an Imam. From the requirements of this *baiiah* is that the Imam is closer to the person than his own self and more important to him in the sense that he has made the sale and the matter is finalized.”²

He also said, “The true Imam can meddle in the affairs in order to direct the elements of strength within the group. He can coordinate between them in the way that he sees best... Some people believe that he has the right to rule over the lives and blood by defining the place of the battlefield and its strategy and they don’t think he has the rule to rule over the wealth [...] in any way he wills. He can transfer it from any place according to what is in the best interest. Indeed, I must say that those who say he has the right to do that [concerning their lives] while he cannot do this [concerning their wealth] are demonstrating the most excellent example of stupidity.”⁴ He also said, “The Imam has the right to give an order without explaining the reason behind it. Indeed, he must do that if he feels that there is some benefit in concealing it or if there is some harm in spreading it. The Muslim must then listen and obey concerning all such matters, even if there is some kind of suspicion or questionable aspect, as a suspicion or questionable aspect is not definitely a sin or a clear act of unbelief.”⁵

¹ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 28-29.

² Ibid., vol. 3, p. 30.

³ The words in Shukri’s text are not clear here.

⁴ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 35.

⁵ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 37.

Shukri also said, "How many men—in fact, complete tribes—have apostatized and the establishment of the proof against them was not known to the Muslim masses but was only known to the Imam. Then he ordered them to be killed and their wealth taken." He says the same thing about implementing the penal punishments of cutting off the hand, lashing, stoning, death, banishment, crucifixion and so on. "If the proof is established with the Imam then it is like it is established with the whole nation. The Imam, after the proof is established to him, orders one to whom the proof was never established except for the statement of the Imam, to then kill, stone or cut off the hand of that person."¹

The Second Level:

When one studies the history of this group, the extent of their extremism with respect to the person of their leader becomes clear. Their experience also shows the extent of his oppression over his group. I shall present some of what [the ex-member] Abdul Rahmaan Abu al-Khair wrote about the group and the extent of their extremism with respect to their leader.

He wrote, "Every time I listened to Brother Shukri it increased my certainty that he had changed. He was no longer that high-strung youth that no one paid any attention to whom I had seen the last time in the political prison of Turah. At that time, Shukri was a caller who had all the abilities to be the Imam, although he still had that high-strung rage that would lead him to abuse the one he was speaking to if he felt him having even the slightest difference in opinion."²

About Shukri, he stated, "He was longing to be successful as a leader. He would be overjoyed with himself whenever the news of his affairs would be spread throughout any country."³ He also said, "The youth [members] were required to follow military orders. They did not know the nature of the jobs they were presented with nor the extent that he was content with them. Most of the youth [members] had no knowledge whatsoever of the complex nature of the thought of the leader of the group. They all submitted completely to the order of Abu Saad [Shukri's nickname] without any discussion. In fact, the practice of killing apostates [that is, those from outside the group] and widespread news of that put fear into the hearts of all, those who were strangers to the group and the

¹ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 38.

² *Dhikriyat ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, p. 32.

³ Ibid., p. 53.

members of the group itself. Shaikh Shukri would never back down from any policy once he was convinced of it. He would consult with Abu Musab, Abu Abdullah and others, but the final opinion was always for him. The overruling opinion was his...¹ He also wrote about Shukri's psychological state, "The violent dealings were the result of the natural high-strung personality of Shaikh Shukri. It was the original cause for the apostasy movement in the group and it drove that movement to what it finally reached [of widespread abandonment of the group]."²

He also said, "This group was built upon absolute obedience—indeed blind obedience. If any scent of taking these orders and comparing them to the standards of the Shareeah or even asking for clarification of their meaning was perceived from anyone, he would be faced with the accusation of apostasy and he would be treated like an apostate."³

After describing the members of this group as being of good behavior, Abu al-Khair stated, "[He would be treated thus] as long as the leaders did not feel any kind of objection to the thoughts or discussion of a stance from him. If one of them felt some doubt about something and simply wanted to discuss the point to attain certainty, leading him to discuss it with his brother, he would meet a very antagonistic response. Indeed, it would even lead to insults, ridicule and other practices that lead to hatred in the hearts."⁴

Their perceptions of the Imam and leader may be summarized as follows:

(1) Based on the belief that their group was *the jamaah* of the Muslims or "the only Muslim community" and that their Imam was the Imam of all Muslims, all of the texts related to obeying the supreme ruler and *bai'ah* applied to their Imam Shukri Mustafa. All of that is wrong and evil and is built upon evil. Their basic point of making their group *the jamaah* of the Muslims is rejected, as was explained earlier.

(2) Due to the obligations of the *bai'ah*, their Imam has the right to rule over their wealth and lives. The followers had no right to object to any of that.

(3) The Imam, their Imam, deserves absolute obedience. He is not required to explain the reason or wisdom behind an order. And the followers are not to ask about such matters.

¹ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

² Ibid., pp. 72-73.

³ Ibid., pp. 134-135.

⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

All of these views are rejected and rebuked. This was demonstrated earlier in the discussion of the meaning of the *jamaah* and extremism related to it as well as in the discussion of the concept of *baiah* and the rule concerning obeying Shaikhs and so forth, such that there is no need to repeat that information here.

Extremism In Disassociation from the Muslim Society

Disassociation from non-Muslims is a matter that is established in the Shareeah. Texts related to it are numerous. [For example,] Allah says,

﴿ لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ
 عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ
 وَدَخَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
 عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ
 الْمُقْلِحُونَ ﴾

“You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah will be well pleased with them and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will achieve felicity” (*al-Mujaadilah* 22).

This disassociation is towards those who oppose the religion of Allah and disbelieve in it. As for the Muslims and those with them, there is wickedness and faith. One is given loyalty to the extent of his faith and disassociated from to the extent of his wickedness. Whenever the disassociation goes beyond the limits set forth by the Shareeah, it becomes a form of blameworthy extremism. Extremism with respect to disassociating from society

has occurred in the lives of contemporary Muslims. This is clear in the writings of Shukri Mustafa's group. Maahir Bakri wrote, "Allah has prohibited in the strongest terms the believers from entering into any form of loyalty to the disbelievers¹ rather than the believers... And He has prohibited them from having love in their hearts for them, trying to get close to them or taking them as intimate friends. Such acts are the antithesis of faith and contradict the methodology of Islam and of the Muslim *jamaah*."²

Mahir Bakri, like his Shaikh Shukri Mustafa, uses the general evidences related to loyalty (*al-walaa*) and disassociation (*al-baraa*) to substantiate his point. He quotes, for example, Allah's words,

﴿لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ
تُفْلَةً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

"Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers. If any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah, except by way of precaution, that you may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself, for the final goal is to Allah" (*ali-Imraan* 28). Allah also says,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا

¹ See the following section to understand their concept of disbelievers and whom this passage is referring to.

² See the previous section to understand whom he means by "the Muslim *jamaah*."

³ *Al-Hijrah*, p. 18.

أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَحْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءً

﴿السَّبِيلِ﴾

“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors), offering them (your) love, even though they have rejected the truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come out to strive in My Way and to seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them. I know full well all that you conceal and all that you reveal. And any of you who does this has strayed from the Straight Path” (*al-Mumtahinah* 1).

Allah also says,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِيَدَانَهُ مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا

يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُؤًا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

“O you who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks. They will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin. Rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths; what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the signs, if you have wisdom” (*ali-Imraan* 118).

[A final example is] Allah’s saying,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ

بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا

يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each

other. And he among you who turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guides not a people unjust" (*al-Maaidah* 51).¹

The weakness in their perception of disassociating from the disbelievers is their incorrect understanding of disbelief. They claim that the entire society is an ignorant, disbelieving society. Disassociating from the disbelievers is something concerning which there is no dispute or debate. But the question is who are the disbelievers that one must disassociate himself from. According to them, it means all of those people who are disbelievers because they are outside of the group that they belong to. While discussing *the jamaah* of the Muslims or, in other words, his group, Shukri Mustafa said, "The loyalty to Allah and His Messenger is not exemplified in a practical manner save by actually entering into its loyalty. Allah has obligated the abandoning of having loyalty to the disbelieving groups in order to enter into His loyalty and the loyalty to His party. As we have stated, there are only two loyalties, two groups and two systems: that of disbelief or that of Islam. Everyone must but fall into one of them."²

Maahir Bakri mentions what he claims to be some forms of having loyalty to the disbelievers that are occurring these days. He lists, "Having loyalty to the disbelievers rather than the believers... such as submitting and accepting as rule a law for which Allah did not reveal any authority, joining the ranks of the armed forces of a despot, fighting under the banner of nationalism... supporting the foundation of society and helping its system, such as by robbing the wealth in the form of paying taxes and other means supporting the leader of falsehood while the Muslims are more in need of it... or by submitting to an Ignorant (*jahili*) system of education, obligating learning of sciences that distances us from the worship of Allah. Muslims, in this time, are more in need of understanding their religion and learning the Book and the wisdom."³

Shukri Mustafa declared the obligation of separating, in steps, from the Muslim society today. This makes it clear that what they

¹ See their quoting of these verses and their use of them as proofs in Shukri Mustafa, *al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, pp. 17-27; Maahir Bakri, *al-Hijrah*, pp. 18-20.

² *Al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 28.

³ Theoretically speaking, some of those matters are actually forms of showing loyalty to the disbelievers. However, to apply them to the situation of the Muslims today is a misapplication and not correct. For example, learning contemporary practical sciences is not a type of showing loyalty to the disbelievers. This topic shall be discussed in more detail later.

mean by disassociating from the disbelievers is actually disassociating from today's Muslim societies. Shukri wrote, "If we agree to the obligation of separating and being independent... we also know that at this time we are still not separate or independent. We have to, by the rule of Allah's decree and our own ability, remain with the disbelievers, in their lands or in the land with them; we buy, sell, preach, call, object to what is wrong, are compelled, are aware, forgive, overlook and deal with the people. We keep the ties of kinship, honor the neighbor and help the one who is in need."¹ As evidence to justify that, he quotes a number of hadith showing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interacting with the disbelievers. For example, it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would answer the Jews whenever they questioned him and he would buy from them. He died and a Jew was holding his shield as collateral. And there are other such occurrences.² After that, he stated, "Islam differentiates between issuing a ruling of disbelief—as it is an identification which is a must—and issuing the practical rule of the death penalty, despairing of any happiness [in the Hereafter for him]."³

This is their conception of disassociation from the disbelievers. This conception has a number of important corollaries, such as separating oneself from societies, not praying in the mosques of the Muslims and so forth. Since the study of these practices has a particular place in this research, I will delay the discussion of these points until their proper time.

Extremism with Respect to Declaring Others to be Disbelievers

The Meaning of *Kufr* (Disbelief) and the Seriousness of *Takfeer* (Declaring Someone to be a Disbeliever)

(1) The Lexical Meaning of *Kufr* (كفر):

Ibn Faaris stated, "[The Arabic letters] *kaaf*, *fa* and *ra* form a sound root indicating one meaning: covering and concealing. When

¹ *Al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, pp. 20-21.

² See Shukri Mustafa, *al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, pp. 20-25.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 25.

a person covers his coat of armor with his clothes, one says, 'He has *kafar* his coat of armor.' And *al-mukafir* is the man who is covered by his weapons."¹ *Kufr* [unbelief] is the opposite of *imaan* [faith]. It is so named because it is a concealing of the truth. What is known as the "*kufr* with respect to the bounties of Allah" is wherein a person denies them and conceals them."²

(2) The Shareeah Meaning of *Kufr*:

The word *kufr* is found in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. Sometimes, it means the *kufr* [unbelief] that takes one out of the fold of Islam while at other times it refers to the *kufr* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam.³ In other words, *kufr* has many branches to it just like faith has many branches to it. Each of the branches of faith is also called faith. [For example, Allah says,]

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ﴾

"And never would Allah make your *imaan* of no effect" (*al-Baqarah* 143).⁴ If some particular branches are missing, such as the branch of the testimony of faith, then all of the faith is missing. However, if other branches are missing, such as removing something harmful from the road, faith is still present. Hence, the branches differ greatly in their degrees and effect.

Similarly, *kufr* has a foundation and varying branches. Some of those branches impose disbelief on the person while others simply represent characteristics of the disbelievers. Abu Ubaid al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam wrote, "As for the reports narrated that mention *kufr* and *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and which impose them on one who commits sins, their meaning, according to us, is not the affirmation of *kufr* or *shirk* and the removal of faith for the people who perform those acts. Instead, the understanding is that such acts are the behavior and ways of the disbelievers and polytheists."⁵

¹ *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic *kufr*.

² Cf., Ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic *kufr*; Ibn Mandhoor, *al-Lisaan*, topic *kufr*.

³ Scholars have divided *kufr* into the *kufr* of belief and the *kufr* of action. Some divide it into the "greater *kufr*" and the "lesser *kufr*." Some divide it into *kufr* of action and *kufr* of rejection and denial. However, the result is all the same. In this research, I shall follow the division of *kufr* into "greater *kufr*" and "lesser *kufr*," since it covers all of the other categories.

⁴ [In this verse, the term *imaan* (faith) is used in reference to the prayers, which is one of the branches of *imaan*.—JZ]

⁵ *Al-Imaan*, p. 93; also see ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaah*, pp. 53-54.

Hence, the *kufir* that is mentioned in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah is of two types:

The greater *kufir* necessitating permanent residence in the Hell-fire;

The lesser *kufir* necessitating the qualification to be punished but without permanent residence in Hell.¹

I shall discuss these two categories in more detail, with an even more detailed discussion of the lesser *kufir* due to greater need to clarify its meaning.

The Greater *Kufir*

The greater *kufir* is that which necessitates a permanent existence in the Hell-fire. It is mentioned in the texts in contrast to *imaan* (faith). [For example,] Allah says,

﴿ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ﴾

“Some believing (*amana*) and others disbelieving (*kafara*)” (*al-Baqarah* 253). Allah also says,

﴿ اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى
الظُّلُمَاتِ ﴾

“Allah is the Protector of those who have faith (*amanoo*): from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith (*kafaroo*), their patrons are the Evil Ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness” (*al-Baqarah* 257). And Allah says,

﴿ كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ﴾

“How shall Allah guide those who reject faith (*kafaroo*) after they accepted it (*imaanihim*)” (*al-Baqarah* 86).

This type of *kufir* is of five varieties:

(1) The *kufir* of belying: This is the belief that the messengers were lying. This is rare among the disbelievers. This is because

¹ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij al-Saalikeen*, vol. 1, p. 337; *Kitaab al-Salaah*, p. 55.

Allah sent His messengers with clear proofs. Their situation is how Allah has described them,

﴿ وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا ﴾

“And they rejected those signs in iniquity and arrogance, though their souls were convinced thereof” (*al-Naml* 14). This is also why Allah said to the Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

﴿ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَيَّاتِلْتِ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴾

“It is not you they reject: it is the Signs of Allah, which the wicked contemn” (*al-Anaam* 33).

(2) The *kufir* of refusal and arrogance: This is the kind of *kufir* found in Iblis, the devil. He did not deny the command of Allah nor did he disavow it. Instead, he met it with refusal and arrogance. This is the type of *kufir* found in many nations. Allah quotes their statements to their messengers, as they would say,

﴿ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ﴾

“You are just humans like us” (*Ibraaheem* 10).

(3) The *kufir* of turning away and disinclination. This is where someone is presented with the news of the Messenger, hearing it and understanding it, yet he does not affirm the Messenger nor does he belie him; he also does not give him any support nor does he oppose him. Indeed, he does not pay him any heed at all.

(4) The *kufir* of doubt: This is where the person is not certain about the truthfulness of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but he also does not belie him either. Instead, he is just doubtful about his affair [much like an agnostic today].

(5) The *kufir* of hypocrisy: This is where the person shows faith by his tongue but his heart is filled with belying and denial. [Allah describes it in this way,]

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَأْتِيهِمُ الْآخِرُ وَمَا هُمْ

بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

“Of the people there are some who say, ‘We believe in Allah and the Last Day,’ but they do not (really) believe” (*al-Baqarah* 8).

These are the varieties of the greater *kufr* that take one out of the fold of Islam.¹

The Lesser *Kufr*

The lesser *kufr* makes one deserving of the threatened punishment but without permanently remaining in punishment. It comprises all sins because they are all from the characteristics of disbelief. In the same way that all acts of obedience are called faith (*imaan*), all acts of disobedience are called *kufr*.² Furthermore, it is the opposite of gratefulness and thankfulness, which implies the performing of the deeds of obedience.³ Allah says in the Quran,

﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴾

“We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (*kafoor*) (rests on his will)” (*al-Insaan* 3). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّيَ غَنِيٌّ

﴿ كَرِيمٌ ﴾

“And if any is grateful, truly his gratitude is (a gain) for his own soul; but if any is ungrateful (*kafara*), truly my Lord is Free of All Needs, Supreme in Honor” (*al-Naml* 40).

Below, I shall present some of the texts in which the word *kufr* is used to mean sin. I shall also present comments from scholars on those texts.

(a) Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَرُغَبُوا عَنْ آبَائِكُمْ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ فَهُوَ كُفْرٌ

“Do not deny your fathers. Whoever denies his father has committed *kufr*.”⁴

¹ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij al-Saalikeen*, vol. 1, pp. 337-338.

² See what ibn Hajar quoted from ibn al-Arabi, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 83.

³ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Madaarij*, vol. 1, p. 337. [*Kufr* can also mean “ungratefulness,” which is the opposite of *shukr* (gratefulness, thankfulness).—JZ]

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

(b) Abu Dharr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَيْسَ مِنْ رَجُلٍ ادَّعَى لِغَيْرِ أَبِيهِ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُهُ إِلَّا كَفَرَ

“No man knowingly claims someone else as his father except that he has committed *kufur*.”¹

Al-Nawawi said, “There are two interpretations for the Prophet’s saying, ‘No man knowingly claims someone else as his father except that he has committed *kufur*.’ The first interpretation is that the hadith is in reference to the one who declares such an act to be permissible. The second interpretation is that it is a *kufur* (ungratefulness) with respect to the bounties, goodness, right of Allah and right of his father; its meaning is not the *kufur* that takes one out of the fold of Islam. This is like the Messenger’s statement, ‘They [the women] are ungrateful,’ then he explained it as meaning they are ungrateful for the beneficence and are ungrateful to their husbands.”

(c) Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

سِيَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

“Abusing a Muslim is wickedness (*fusooq*) and fighting him is *kufur*.”² The word *kufur* here does not mean the *kufur* that takes one out of the fold of Islam. This is proven by Allah’s statement,

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا ﴾

“If two parties of believers fight each other” (*al-Hujuraat* 9). Al-Bukhari said, “They have been called believers [that is, even though they are described as fighting each other].”³ Ibn Hajar said, “The author [al-Bukhari] is indicating that if the believer performs a sin, he is not made a disbeliever because Allah kept the name of believer for them in the verse, ‘If two parties of believers fight each other’ (*al-Hujuraat* 9).”⁴ Allah then says in the verse after the above verse,

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ﴾

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad.

³ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 84.

“The Believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers” (*al-Hujuraat* 10). He also used as evidence the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

إِذَا التَّقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا

“If two Muslims face each other with their swords...”¹ “They are still called Muslims even though they have been promised the Hell-fire.”²

Ibn Hajar stated in commenting upon the hadith, “Abusing a Muslim...,” “It does not mean the literal meaning of *kufir* that takes one out of the fold of Islam. Instead, the word *kufir* is being used to exact the strongest type of warning.”

(d) Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

اِثْنَتَانِ فِي النَّاسِ هُمَا بِهِمْ كُفْرٌ الطَّعْنُ فِي النَّسَبِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ عَلَى الْمَيِّتِ

“There are two characteristics among the people by which they are committing *kufir*: slandering the lineages and wailing over the dead.”³ Al-Nawawi said, “There are different opinions about this. The strongest is that those are from the deeds of the disbelievers and behavior of the Days of Ignorance. The second opinion is that they are deeds which lead to [the greater] *kufir*. Third, they are from the *kufir* of [or ungratefulness toward] the blessings and beneficence. Fourth, it is with respect to the one who makes those acts permissible.”⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah said, “By which they are committing *kufir*,’ that is, those are two characteristics among the people which are *kufir*. The characteristics themselves are *kufir*, as they were from the deeds of the disbelievers and still among the people. However, not everyone who performs a branch of *kufir* becomes an absolute disbeliever (a *kaafir*). It is not until the essence of *kufir* is in him [that he becomes a disbeliever].”⁵

(e) Ibn Abbaas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad. [The remainder of the hadith states, “Then the killer and the killed will be in the Hell-fire.”—JZ]

² *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 85.

³ Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

⁴ *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 57.

⁵ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, pp. 207-208.

أَرَيْتُ النَّارَ فَإِذَا أَكْثَرُ أَهْلِهَا نِسَاءُ يَكْفُرْنَ قِيلَ أَيَكْفُرْنَ بِاللَّهِ قَالَ يَكْفُرْنَ
 الْعَشِيرَ وَيَكْفُرْنَ الْإِحْسَانَ لَوْ أَحْسَنْتَ إِلَى إِحْدَاهُنَّ الدَّهْرَ ثُمَّ رَأَتْ مِنْكَ
 شَيْئًا قَالَتْ مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْكَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ

"I was shown the Hell-fire and most of its inhabitants were women who committed *kufur*." It was said, "Did they commit *kufur* in Allah?" He said, "They are ungrateful (*yakfurun*) to their husbands and they are ungrateful for beneficence. If you were to do good for one of them for the entire time and then she sees one thing from you [that she dislikes], she says, 'I have never seen any good in you.'"¹ In this hadith, there is an explicit use of the word *kufur* meaning something that is less than the *kufur* [disbelief] in Allah that takes one out of the fold of Islam. For that reason, al-Bukhari entitled his chapter [wherein this hadith is found], "Chapter on being ungrateful [*kufraan*] to husbands and the *kufur* less than [the greater] *kufur*." Ibn al-Arabi² stated, "The point of the author [al-Bukhari] was to show that as acts of obedience are called *imaan* [faith], so acts of disobedience are called *kufur*. However, when they are termed *kufur* it does not mean the *kufur* that takes one out of the fold of Islam."³ Ibn Hajar mentioned one of the points of this hadith, "It is permissible to use the term *kufur* for something that does not take one out of the fold of Islam. The hadith also shows that the people of *tauheed* (monotheism) will also be punished for their sins."⁴ Al-Nawawi stated, "This hadith contains the use of the word *kufur* for something other than the *kufur* [disbelief] in Allah, such as *kufur* towards the husband, beneficence, blessings and the truth. Based on this, one can say that the interpretations of the previous hadith are sound."⁵ [By, "the previous hadith"], he is referring to the other hadith recorded by Muslim in which the word *kufur* is used in reference to something that does not take one out of the fold of Islam.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

² He was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Maafari al-Ashbeeli, a judge. He was born in Ashbeeliyah [Seville] in 468 A.H. He traveled to the East and reached the level of *mujtahid*. He was an expert of belles-lettres. He wrote works on fiqh, hadith and Islamic legal theory. He died in 543 A.H. close to Fez, where he is buried. His books include *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, *al-Awaasim min al-Qawaasim* and *Aaridhah al-Ahwadhi*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 20, p. 197; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 230.

³ Quoted in ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 83.

⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 2, pp. 542-543.

⁵ *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 62.

What further points to this very important principle of differentiating between the “greater *kufṛ*” and the “lesser *kufṛ*,” a principle which repels many of the misconceptions of those who declare others to be disbelievers, are Allah’s words,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾

“Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything less than that, to whom He pleases” (*al-Nisaa* 48). Further evidence is the hadith of intercession wherein [sinners from the] people of *tauheed* (true monotheism) will be taken out of the Hell-fire.¹

Al-Bukhari has a chapter entitled, “Sin is from the matters of the Days of Ignorance. The one who perpetrates them is not considered a disbeliever unless he commits *shirk*. As the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘You are a man who has some *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) in him.’² And Allah has said, ‘Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything less than that, to whom He pleases’ (*al-Nisaa* 48).”³ The conclusion from that chapter title is, after he had shown in the previous chapters that the word *kufṛ* can be used for sins, that sins are a type of *kufṛ* that do not take one out of the fold of Islam, as opposed to what the Khawaarij believed.⁴

Similar to *kufṛ* are *al-dhulm* (wrongdoing), *al-fusooq* (evilness) and *al-jahl* (ignorance), as each of them is divided into what takes one out of the fold of Islam and what does not do so.⁵ “This differentiation is the view of the Companions, those who are the most knowledgeable of this Nation of the Book of Allah and of Islam and *kufṛ* and their requisites. This issue cannot be taken except from them. The later scholars did not understand the purport of these terms. These later scholars fell into two groups. One group said that the perpetrator of great sins falls outside of the fold of Islam and shall remain in Hell forever. The other group said about the same person that he is a complete and true believer. The first went beyond the limits and the second were negligent. Allah guided the *ahl al-Sunnah* to the most excellent path and the balanced position of the different views, just as Islam is the balanced religion

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari. It shall be mentioned in full shortly.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 84.

⁴ Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 84.

⁵ Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij al-Saalikeen*, vol. 1, pp. 335-365; ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaah*, pp. 55-60.

among the different religions. Therefore, there is a *kufr* which is less than [the greater] *kufr*, a hypocrisy less than [the greater] hypocrisy, *shirk* which is less than [the greater] *shirk*, sinfulness (*fusooq*) which is less than [the greater] sinfulness, and wrongdoing (*dhulm*) which is less than [the greater] wrongdoing.”¹

Two Important Principles of Declaring Another Person to be a Disbeliever

The First Principle: In One Person, One may Find Branches of Faith as Well as Branches of Unbelief

If it is established that good deeds fall under the name of *imaan* (faith), [as in Allah’s statement,]

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ﴾

“And never would Allah make your *imaan* of no effect” (*al-Baqarah* 143),² and that sins and acts of disobedience fall under the name of *kufr* (unbelief), [as in the Prophet’s statement,]

سِيَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

“Abusing a Muslim is wickedness (*fusooq*) and fighting him is *kufr*,”³ then some people may be believers but they may yet have one branch or a number of branches of *kufr*, hypocrisy or ignorance. Based on this principle are those hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) referred to some sins as *kufr* but, at the same time, he did not deny the faith of the person who performed those deeds. This is a very important principle for the purposes here. The question of the perpetrators of great sins being released from the Hell-fire and not remaining therein forever is also built upon this principle for which there is much evidence in the Quran and the Sunnah.

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaah*, pp. 56-57.

² [Again, in this verse, the term *imaan* (faith) is used in reference to the prayers, which is one of the branches of *imaan*.—JZ]

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad.

Evidence from the Quran:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (others as partners) with Him” (Yusuf 106). Here, Allah affirms faith for them but with *shirk*. Although the verse was revealed with respect to the Arab polytheists, the point is to be based on the generality of its text and not the specific occasion behind its revelation.¹

(2) Allah also says,

﴿ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَأَمِنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَأْتِكُمْ مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْءٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾

“The desert Arabs say, ‘We believe.’ Say [to them], ‘You have no faith, but you (should only) say, “We have submitted our wills to Allah,” for not yet has faith entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle any of your deeds: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (al-Hujuraat 14). Islam, obedience to Allah and His Messenger have all been affirmed from them yet faith, meaning the absolute or complete faith, has been denied of them.²

Evidence from the Sunnah:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصَلَةٌ مِّنْهُنَّ
كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصَلَةٌ مِّنَ النَّفَاقِ حَتَّىٰ يَدَّعَهَا إِذَا أُوْتِيَ خَانَ وَإِذَا حَدَّثَ
كَذَّبَ وَإِذَا عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ وَإِذَا خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ

¹ See ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 2, p. 494, wherein he gives many examples of the minor *shirk* as being included under the meaning of this verse.

² Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaat*, pp. 60-61.

"[There are] four characteristics that if a person has them, he is a pure hypocrite. If anyone has any of them, he has a characteristic of hypocrisy until he leaves it. [They are:] if he is given a trust, he betrays it; if he speaks, he lies; if he gives a promise, he is unfaithful to it; if he is arguing, he acts immorally."¹ This hadith indicates that a person may combine in himself both hypocrisy and Islam.²

Evidence from the Statements of the Companions:

Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan said, "Hearts are of four types: A sealed heart and that is the heart of the disbeliever; the double-faced heart [or heart of malice] and that is the heart of the hypocrite; a barren heart that is radiant by a lamp and that is the heart of the believer; and a heart which contains both faith and hypocrisy, the similitude of faith therein is like a tree supported by good water and the similitude of hypocrisy therein is like a wound that emits pus and blood—whichever of these two dominates the heart will be the dominant one."³

Ibn Taimiyyah said, "What Hudhaifah stated is also indicated by Allah's words, 'On that day, they were closer to unfaith than they were to faith' (*ali-Imraan* 167). Before that time, they had hypocrisy in their hearts that was overpowered [by faith]. But on the Day of Uhud, their hypocrisy dominated and, therefore, they were closer to disbelief."⁴ After recording a number of narrations from the Companions, ibn Taimiyyah then stated, "There is much of these types of statements in the words of the early scholars that clearly demonstrate that the heart can possess both faith and hypocrisy."⁵

The Second Principle: To Declare Others Unbelievers Is Treacherous Ground

The judgment that someone else is a disbeliever is a very dangerous judgment with grave consequences. No Muslim may take this step unless he has a clear proof and unquestionable evidence. It is confirmed in an authentic hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and Ahmad.

² Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaat*, p. 60.

³ Recorded by ibn Abi Shaibah, *Kitaab al-Imaan*, p. 17, no. 54.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 304.

⁵ Cf., Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, pp. 304-5.

إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ لِأَخِيهِ يَا كَافِرٌ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهِ أَحَدُهُمَا

“If a man says to his brother, ‘O disbeliever,’ it will certainly stick to one of them.”¹ In a narration from Abdullah ibn Umar, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ قَالَ لِأَخِيهِ يَا كَافِرٌ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهَا أَحَدُهُمَا

“For any man who calls his brother, ‘O disbeliever,’ it will certainly stick to one of them.”²

Thaabit ibn al-Dhahhaak³ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ حَلَفَ بِمِلَّةٍ غَيْرِ الْإِسْلَامِ كَاذِبًا فَهُوَ كَمَا قَالَ وَمَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسَهُ بِشَيْءٍ
عَذَّبَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَعْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَقَتْلِهِ وَمَنْ رَمَى مُؤْمِنًا بِكُفْرٍ
فَهُوَ كَقَتْلِهِ

“Whoever swears by a religion other than Islam, [even though] it is not true [that he is from that religion], then he is as he has said. Whoever kills himself with something will be tormented by that thing in the Hell-fire. Cursing a believer is like killing him. Whoever accuses a believer of disbelief is like he killed him.”⁴

Abu Dharr narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say,

وَمَنْ دَعَا رَجُلًا بِالْكَفْرِ أَوْ قَالَ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ إِلَّا حَارَ عَلَيْهِ

“Whoever calls a person with *kufr* or says, ‘enemy of Allah,’ while he is not so, then it will return to him.”⁵ Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid⁶ said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood and Ahmad.

³ He was Thaabit ibn al-Dhahhaak ibn Khaleefah al-Ashhali al-Ausi, from Madinah. He was one of the Companions who made “the pledge of allegiance under the tree.” Fourteen hadith have been ascribed to him. He died in 45 A.H. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, p. 8; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 98.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

⁵ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

⁶ He was Abu al-Fath Taqiy-al-Deen Muhammad ibn Ali Wahb, popularly known as Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid. He was a judge and one of the leading

“This is a very strong warning to whoever declares anyone of the Muslims a disbeliever while he is not so. This is a grave predicament that many of the scholars have fallen into. They differ in their beliefs and they declare each other to be disbelievers.”¹

These hadith and similar others contain a warning and reprimand about declaring others to be disbelievers. This is because it is a Shareeah ruling restricted by the well-known parameters derived from the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. One cannot be led to it simply on the basis of desires and ignorance. “One of the gravest things that an ignorant person does is that he establishes a call, giving free rein to ignorance by disagreeing with all of the people of knowledge and then, after disagreeing with them, he wants to declare them disbelievers and misguided because they are not in agreement with him.”² The foundation and locus of faith and disbelief is in the heart. No one except Allah sees what is in the hearts. Allah says,

﴿ مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ
بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

“Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief—except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith—such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty” (*al-Nahl* 106).

The disbeliever is the one who opens his heart to disbelief. “There must be an opening of the heart to disbelief, the heart becoming content with it and the soul being at rest with it. Otherwise, there is no weight given to the different evil beliefs among the people, especially given that they are ignorant that such is contrary to the path of Islam. No weight is given to what comes from them in the form of acts of *kufur* when the person does not intend by that to leave Islam to the ways of disbelief. No weight is

scholars. He was originally from Manfaloot in Egypt. He studied in Damascus, Alexandria and Cairo. He held the position of judge in Egypt until his death in Cairo in 702 A.H. His writings include *Ahkaam al-Ahkaam*. Cf., *Al-Durur al-Kaaminah*, vol. 5, p. 348; *Mujam al-Mualifeen*, vol. 11, p. 70; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 283.

¹ Quoted from Abdullah ibn Abdul Rahman Ababateen, *al-Kufr al-ladhee Yuadhir Sahibahu bi-l-Jahl*, p. 8.

² Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Radd ala al-Bakri*, p. 125.

given to a statement made by a Muslim that indicates *kufir* while he did not believe in its meaning.”¹

Usamah ibn Zaid² said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent us on a military expedition. In the morning, we raided the Huruqaat from Juhainah. I came across a man and he said, ‘There is none worthy of worship except Allah.’ I then killed him. This bothered my soul so I mentioned it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Did he say, “There is none worthy of worship except Allah” and you still killed him?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he said that only out of fear of the weapon.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said, ‘Why didn’t you open his heart so you would know why he said it.’ He kept repeating that statement to the point that I wished that I had embraced Islam on that day.”³

Due to the gravity of calling a Muslim a disbeliever even if he commits sins and acts of disobedience, the scholars consider this a type of injustice and an outrage. In his *Sunan*, Abu Dawood⁴ entitles a chapter in the section on behavior and manners, “The prohibition of injustice and wrongs.” In that chapter, he records the hadith from Abu Hurairah in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says,

¹ Al-Shaukaani, *al-Seel al-Jaraar*, vol. 4, p. 578. His statement is sound if it is with respect to a deed wherein it is possible that a person did or did not intend *kufir*. However, if there is no such possibility and no other implication except *kufir*, as when a person tramples on a copy of the Quran, there is no need to look into his intention [as in that case he is definitely a disbeliever]. Allah knows best.

² He was Usamah ibn Zaid ibn Haaritha, a Companion and a son of a Companion. He was born in Makkah and grew up in Islam. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) loved him greatly. He emigrated to Madinah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) appointed him the head of an expedition before he had reached the age of twenty. He moved to Damascus during Muawiyah’s reign and then he moved back to Madinah, where he died in 54 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 342; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 208; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 291.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

⁴ He was Abu Dawood Sulaimaan ibn al-Ashath ibn Ishaq al-Azdi al-Sijistaani. He was the leader of the people of hadith in his time. He is the compiler of the *Sunan* that has spread throughout the lands. He died in Basrah in 275 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 13, p. 203; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 122.

كَانَ رَجُلَانِ فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مُتَوَاحِشَيْنِ فَكَانَ أَحَدُهُمَا يُذْنِبُ وَالْآخَرُ
 مُجْتَهِدٌ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ فَكَانَ لَا يَزَالُ الْمُجْتَهِدُ يَرَى الْآخَرَ عَلَى الذَّنْبِ
 فَيَقُولُ أَقْصِرْ فَوَجَدَهُ يَوْمًا عَلَى ذَنْبٍ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَقْصِرْ فَقَالَ خَلْنِي وَرَبِّي
 أَبْعَثْ عَلَيَّ رَقِيبًا فَقَالَ وَاللَّهِ لَا يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكَ أَوْ لَا يُدْخِلُكَ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ
 فَقَبِضْ رُؤُوحَهُمَا فَاجْتَمِعَا عِنْدَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ فَقَالَ لِهَذَا الْمُجْتَهِدِ أَكُنْتَ
 بِي عَالِمًا أَوْ كُنْتَ عَلَى مَا فِي يَدِي قَادِرًا وَقَالَ لِلْمُذْنِبِ اذْهَبْ فَادْخُلِ
 الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِي وَقَالَ لِلْآخَرَ اذْهَبُوا بِهِ إِلَى النَّارِ

“There were two men among the Tribe of Israel who were striving for the same goal. One of them would commit sins while the other was exerting himself in acts of worship. The one who was exerting himself would continue to see the other commit sins. He told him, ‘Refrain yourself.’ One day he saw him sinning and he said to him, ‘Refrain yourself.’ The other one said, ‘Leave me alone with my Lord. Have you been sent as a watcher over me?’ The other one said, ‘By Allah, Allah will not forgive you,’ or he said, ‘Allah will not enter you into Paradise.’ Their souls were later taken and they were brought together in front of the Lord of the Worlds. He [Allah] said to the one who had exerted himself, ‘Were you having knowledge of me? Or did you have any power over what is in My hand?’ He said to the sinner, ‘Go and enter Paradise by My mercy.’ He said to the other, ‘Take him to the Hell-fire.’”¹

Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi said, “It is from among the greatest acts of injustice for someone to bear witness that another individual will not be forgiven by Allah or will not be shown mercy and that he will be in the Hell-fire forever, as that is the judgment for the disbeliever after his death.”²

Knowing the grievous ramifications of declaring a person a disbeliever makes the gravity of the issue quite obvious. These ramifications include the following:

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood and Ahmad. The commentator on *al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah* [ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi] said that it is *hasan*.

² *Sharh al-Tahaawiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 436.

(1) His wife will no longer be permissible for him. It is forbidden for her to stay with him and for his children to remain under his authority.

(2) A ruling must be made concerning him so that the punishment of apostasy may be carried out, after the proof is established against him and he is requested to repent.

(3) If he dies, the rules of a Muslim do not apply to him. He will not be washed. He will not be prayed for. He will not be buried in the Muslim cemetery. And his Muslim relatives will not inherit from him.

(4) If he dies in a state of unbelief, he will necessarily have the curse of Allah upon him and he will remain forever in the Hell-fire.¹

The Manifestations of Extremism with Respect to *Takfeer*

In studying the religious extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims, it becomes clear that extremism with respect to *takfeer* (declaring others to be non-Muslims) is exemplified in the following phenomena:

(1) Declaring others to be unbelievers due to sins they committed.

(2) Declaring a ruler who does not rule by what Allah revealed an unbeliever without exception.

(3) Declaring the followers of those rulers who do not rule by what Allah revealed unbelievers without exception.

(4) Declaring those outside of the group (*jamaah*) to be unbelievers.

(5) Declaring those who live in the society and do not emigrate unbelievers.

(6) Declaring specific people unbelievers without considering the Shareeah principles and parameters on this issue.

(7) Declaring as a disbeliever the one who does not consider the other disbelievers—according to their claims—as disbelievers.

(8) The innovation of suspending judgment and verifying others' Islam.

(9) The view that the contemporary Muslim society is a *jahili* (ignorant) society.

(10) Extremism with respect to making a judgment about a land or country.

¹ Cf., Dr. Yoosuf al-Qaradhaawi, *Dhaahirah al-Ghuloo fi al-Takfeer*, pp. 31-32.

Each one of these will be discussed in a separate section accompanied by a discussion of the statements of the extremists.

Extremism In Declaring Others Unbelievers Due to Committing Sins

An accepted principle among the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jamaah* is that a perpetrator of sins is not considered a disbeliever as long as he does not take those sins as permissible and lawful.

Imam al-Tahaawi¹ said, "We do not declare any of the People of the Qiblah² an unbeliever due to a sin he committed, as long as he does not treat it as something permissible. At the same time, though, we do not say that the sin, as long as he has faith, does not harm the person who does it."³

Al-Nawawi said, "Know that the opinion of the people of truth is that no one of the People of the Qiblah is declared a disbeliever simply due to a sin. Nor do we declare the People of Desires and Heresies disbelievers. If anyone rejects what is known by necessity to be of the religion of Islam, the judgment concerning him is that of apostasy and disbelief. This is so unless he has newly embraced Islam or was raised in a distant, desolate land and he was unaware of these things. He should then be informed of these things and if he persists in rejecting them, he is then considered a disbeliever. The same ruling is for the one who considers permissible fornication, alcohol, killing or any of the other well-known forbidden acts that are known by necessity [to be a ruling of the religion of Islam]."⁴

But when we say that the *ahl al-Sunnah* do not declare disbelief simply due to sins, it is in reference to acts of disobedience and great sins and it is not in reference to abandoning any of the pillars of Islam. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "If we say that the *ahl al-Sunnah* are agreed not to declare disbelief simply due to a sin, what we mean by

¹ He was Abu Jafar Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salaamah al-Azdi al-Tahaawi. He was a jurist, being the leading Hanafi jurist of his time. He was born and raised in Taha in Upper Egypt. He first learned law according to the Shafi'ee school and then later he became a Hanafi. He traveled to "greater Syria." He has many beneficial writings, including *Sharh Maani al-Athaar*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 15, p. 27; *al-Tabaqaat al-Sinniyyah*, vol. 2, p. 49; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 206.

² [Those who perform the Muslim prayer toward the Qiblah in Makkah.—JZ]

³ *Al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, with its commentary, p. 355.

⁴ *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 150.

that is acts of disobedience like fornication or drinking. However, as for the foundations [meaning the four pillars of Islam after the testimony of faith], there is a well-known difference of opinion as to whether or not if someone abandons one of these he becomes a disbeliever.”¹

The Evidence:

The Understanding of the Texts:

There are numerous texts in the Quran and Sunnah that establish the legal punishment for those who committed specific great sins, such as the punishment for theft, fornication, drinking alcohol and slander. These texts indicate that the thief, fornicator, slanderer and drinker are not to be killed. Instead, they have a legal punishment meted out to them. If these acts were such that they would cause the people to become disbelievers, it would be necessary to apply the punishment of apostasy, which is death.²

In the midst of his refutation of the Khawaarij, Abu Ubaid al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam stated, “We find Allah belying their statements. This is so because the ruling for the thief is that he has his hand amputated, while the fornicator and slanderer are flogged. If the sin would make the person a disbeliever, the only possible ruling for them would be death, as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Whoever changes his religion is to be killed.’³ Do you not see that if they were disbelievers, how could their punishments be amputation and flogging? Furthermore, Allah says about the one who is wrongfully killed, ‘We have given his heir authority [to demand the other’s life or to forgive]’ (*al-Israa* 33). If murder is *kufur*, the heir would not have the right to forgive or take the blood-money. Instead, it would have been a must to kill the murderer.”⁴

Ibn Taimiyyah said, “Similarly, every Muslim knows that the consumer of alcohol, the fornicator, the slanderer and the thief were not treated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) like apostates who must be killed. Instead, the Quran and the definitive reports from him show that those people are to be punished in a way different from the punishment for the apostate. Allah has mentioned in the Quran flogging of the slanderer and fornicator and amputation of the hand of the thief. This is

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 302.

² Cf., ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi, *Sharh al-Tahaawiiyyah*, p. 367.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

⁴ *Al-Imaan*, pp. 88-89.

something definitively known from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Had they been apostates, he would have killed them.”¹

Evidence from the Quran:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ فَاءَ ت فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴾

“If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the Command of Allah. But if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just)” (*al-Hujuraat* 9). Injustice and oppression are great sins. At the same time, Allah calls these fighting groups believers. This means that their fighting and injustice did not take them out of the fold of Islam. Indeed, Allah even affirms that they are all brothers. [In the verse following the above one,] Allah says,

﴿ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ﴾

“So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers” (*al-Hujuraat* 10). Al-Bukhari entitled one of his chapters, “Chapter: ‘If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them;’ He [Allah] called them believers.”² Ibn Hajar stated, “The author [al-Bukhari] is using this as proof that when a believer commits a sin he does not become a disbeliever, as Allah kept the name ‘the believer’ in their case.”³

(2) Allah says,

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 288 and vol. 7, p. 482.

² *Sahih al-Bukhari* with its commentary *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 84.

³ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 85.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴾

“Allah forgives not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgives whom He pleases whatever is less than that. One who joins other gods with Allah, has strayed far, far away (from the right)” (*al-Nisaa* 116).

Al-Bukhari has a chapter entitled, “Sin is from the matters of the Days of Ignorance. The one who perpetrates them is not considered a disbeliever unless he commits *shirk*. As the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘You are a man who has some *jaahiliyyah* (ignorance) in him.’¹ And Allah has said, ‘Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything less than that, to whom He pleases’ (*al-Nisaa* 48).² Ibn Hajar then noted, “The result of the chapter heading is that, since he had already shown that the word *kufr* is used for sins in a figurative sense meaning *kufr* with respect to the bounty and not *kufr* of denial, he now shows that it is a *kufr* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam. This is contrary to the views of the Khawaarij who declared people disbelievers due to sins. The text of the Quran refutes them, in Allah’s words, ‘but He forgives whom He pleases whatever is less than that’ (*al-Nisaa* 116). Therefore, whatever is less than *kufr* comes under the possibility of being forgiven. The meaning of *shirk* in this verse is *kufr*. This is because the one who denies the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for example, is a disbeliever even if he does not set up any partner with Allah. There is no difference of opinion on the point that forgiveness is denied for such a person.”³

Ibn Taimiyyah said, “It is not permissible to interpret it [the above verse] as referring to the one who repents. When it comes to the repentant, there is no difference between *shirk* and other sins, as Allah has said, ‘Say: “O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins. He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”’ (*al-Zumar* 53). This is general and unrestricted because it is referring to the repentant. But the other is specific and restricted.”⁴

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 84.

³ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 85.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, pp. 484-485.

(3) Allah also says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى الْحُرُّ
بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ
شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبِعْهُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدِّءْ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَنٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنْ أَعْتَدَىٰ بِعَدَاةٍ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝﴾

“O you who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. After this, whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave punishment” (*al-Baqarah* 178). Allah affirms that the killer is a brother to the guardian of the killed. The meaning is, without doubt, a religious brotherhood. He is not excluded from those who believe. This indicates that he does not become a disbeliever due to that act.¹

(4) Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تَلْقَوْنَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَن تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ إِن كُنتُمْ
خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا
أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَحْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَن يَفْعَلْهُ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ

السَّبِيلِ ۝﴾

“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors), offering them (your) love, even though they have

¹ Cf., ibn Abi al-Izz, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, p. 361; ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 151.

rejected the truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come out to strive in My Way and to seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them: for I know full well all that you conceal and all that you reveal. And any of you that do this has strayed from the Straight Path” (*al-Mumtahinah* 1). The occasion behind the revelation of this verse was the incident concerning Haatib ibn Abi Baltaah.¹ Haatib had committed a sin by informing the polytheists that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was preparing an army to advance on and conquer Makkah. Even though he did that, he was not declared a disbeliever. For that reason, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not allow Umar to strike his neck. Indeed, he said to Umar,

لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ اَطَّلَعَ اِلَى اَهْلِ بَدْرِ فَقَالَ اَعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ

“Perhaps Allah has looked to those who participated at the Battle of Badr and has said, ‘Do what you will for I have forgiven you.’”²

(5) Committing sins is from the nature of humans. Even some of the prophets fell into acts of disobedience.³ Allah says,

¹ He was Haatib ibn Abi Baltaah, a Companion. He attended all of the battles of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and was the strongest archer among the Companions. He had lots of business dealings. He died in Madinah in 30 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 43; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 159.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

³ [The question of the prophets committing any type of sin is a controversial issue. Many scholars prefer to avoid it as there is not much clear evidence for either view. However, all scholars are agreed that the prophets commit no mistakes with respect to communicating to their people what God revealed to them. Similarly, they are agreed that prophets do not commit grave sins. But they differ on the question of whether prophets may commit a small sin sometime. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, “The view that the prophets do not commit grave sins and that they may commit small sins is the view of most scholars of Islam and most of their followers. One can say that this is the view of the majority of the theologians. Abu-l-Hasan al-Amidi has noted that this is the view of the majority of the Ash’ari theologians as well as the majority of the scholars of Quranic exegesis, hadith and fiqh. What has come down from the *Salaf*, the *imams*, the Companions, the Successors and their successors is not different from this view.” [Ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmu’ Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam*, (Riyadh, 1398 A.H.), vol. 4, p. 319.] Qadi ‘Ayad wrote in *al-Shifa’*, “As for small sins, a group of the *Salaf* as well as others uphold its possibility. This is also the view of Abu Ja’far al-Tabari and other scholars of fiqh, hadith and

﴿ وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ ﴾

“Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced” (*Taha* 121). The brethren of Yoosuf who were prophets—although there is a difference of opinion as to whether they were actually prophets—fell into what they fell into. Allah gives their story in the Quran and says,

﴿ أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ ﴾

“[They said:] “Slay Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so the favor of your father may be given to you alone” (*Yoosuf* 9). [The story continues with their deed,]

﴿ وَجَاءَ وَعَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ﴾

“They stained his shirt with false blood” (*Yoosuf* 17).

These sins occurred but they are definitely not *shirk*. Such would not be done by any messenger, God forbid. Allah says,

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ

يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِّي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ

كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ

تَدْرُسُونَ ﴾

“It is not (possible) that a man, to whom is given the Book, and Wisdom, and the Prophetic office, should say to people, ‘Be my worshippers rather than Allah’s.’ On the contrary (he would say), ‘Be worshippers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all: for you have taught the Book and you have studied it earnestly’” (*ali-Imraan* 79). Allah also says while quoting Yoosuf,

scholastic theology... Another group has refrained from saying anything positive on this issue. Rationally, it cannot be ruled out that they might commit small sins, but as for textual sources, there is nothing definitive either way. A third group of jurists and theologians uphold their absolute infallibility.” [Qadi ‘Ayad, *Al-Shifa fi Ta’rif Huquq al-Mustafa* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah), vol. 2, p. 144.] See the introduction by Muhammad Abdul Haqq Ansari to *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyah* (Fairfax, VA: IIASA, forthcoming).—JZ]

﴿ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكِ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا
وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴾

“And never could we attribute any partners whatever to Allah: that (comes) of the grace of Allah to us and to mankind. Yet most men are not grateful” (Yousuf 38).

Evidence from the Sunnah:

(1) Allah says in a *hadith qudsi* that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) narrated from him,

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقِيتَنِي لَا تُشْرِكُ
بِي شَيْئًا لَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةٌ

“O son of Adam, if you were to come to Me with sins that are close to filling the Earth and you would then meet Me without ascribing any partners with Me, I would certainly [also] bring to you forgiveness close to filling it [the Earth].”¹

(2) Abu Dharr said,

هُوَ نَائِمٌ ثُمَّ أَتَيْتُهُ وَقَدْ اسْتَيْقَظَ فَقَالَ مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ
مَاتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ قُلْتُ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ قَالَ وَإِنْ زَنَى
وَإِنْ سَرَقَ قُلْتُ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ قَالَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ قُلْتُ
وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ قَالَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ عَلَى رَغْمِ أَبِي ذَرٍّ

“[The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] was sleeping and then I came to him and he had awakened. He said, ‘There is no servant who says, “There is none worthy of worship except Allah,” and dies upon that except that he will enter Paradise.’ I said, ‘Even if he fornicated and even if he stole.’ He said, ‘Even if he fornicated and even if he stole.’ I said again, ‘Even if he fornicated and even if he stole.’ He said, ‘Even if he fornicated and

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi who said, “It is *hasan ghareeb* and we do not know it except through this chain.” It has supporting evidence in Ahmad. Al-Albaani has declared it *hasan* in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, no. 127.

even if he stole.’ I said again, ‘Even if he fornicated and even if he stole.’ He said, ‘Even if he fornicated and even if he stole, despite Abu Dharr.’”¹

In a narration in al-Bukhari, it states,

أَتَانِي جِبْرِيلُ فَبَشَّرَنِي أَنَّهُ مَنْ مَاتَ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ
قُلْتُ وَإِنْ سَرَقَ وَإِنْ زَنَى قَالَ وَإِنْ سَرَقَ وَإِنْ زَنَى

“Gabriel came to me and gave me the glad tidings that if anyone dies without associating any partner with Allah, he will enter Paradise.” I [the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] said, “Even if he steals and even if he fornicates.” He said, “Even if he steals and even if he fornicates.”²

(3) There is also the hadith of intercession narrated by Anas in which he said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to them,

إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ مَاجَ النَّاسُ بَعْضُهُمْ فِي بَعْضٍ فَيَأْتُونَ آدَمَ فَيَقُولُونَ
اشْفَعْ لَنَا إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ فَإِنَّهُ خَلِيلُ
الرَّحْمَنِ فَيَأْتُونَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمُوسَى فَإِنَّهُ كَلِيمُ
اللَّهِ فَيَأْتُونَ مُوسَى فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِعِيسَى فَإِنَّهُ رُوحُ اللَّهِ
وَكَلِمَتُهُ فَيَأْتُونَ عِيسَى فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَيَأْتُونِي فَأَقُولُ أَنَا لَهَا فَاسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَى رَبِّي فَيُؤْذَنُ لِي
وَيُلْهِمُنِي مَحَامِدَ أَحْمَدَهُ بِهَا لَا تَحْضُرُنِي الْآنَ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمَحَامِدِ
وَأَخِرُّ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقُولُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ يُسْمَعُ لَكَ وَسَلْ تُعْطَى
وَأَشْفَعْ تَشْفَعُ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي فَيَقُولُ أَنْطَلِقْ فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَنْ
كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ شَعِيرَةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَأَنْطَلِقُ فَأَفْعَلُ ثُمَّ أَعُودُ فَأَحْمَدُهُ

¹ [Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim; the above wording is from al-Bukhari.—JZ]

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi.

بِتِلْكَ الْمَحَامِدِ ثُمَّ آخِرُهُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ يُسْمَعُ
لَكَ وَسَلْ تُعْطَى وَاشْفَعْ تُشَفَّعْ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبُّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي فَيَقُولُ انْطَلِقْ
فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ أَوْ خَرْدَلَةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَأَخْرِجْهُ
فَانْطَلِقْ فَأَفْعَلُ ثُمَّ أَعُودُ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمَحَامِدِ ثُمَّ آخِرُهُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقُولُ
يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ يُسْمَعُ لَكَ وَسَلْ تُعْطَى وَاشْفَعْ تُشَفَّعْ فَأَقُولُ يَا
رَبُّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي فَيَقُولُ انْطَلِقْ فَأَخْرِجْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ أَدْنَى أَدْنَى
أَدْنَى مِثْقَالِ حَبَّةٍ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَأَخْرِجْهُ مِنَ النَّارِ فَانْطَلِقْ فَأَفْعَلُ

“On the Day of resurrection people will surge like waves, and then they will come to Adam and say, ‘Please intercede for us with your Lord.’ Adam will say, ‘I am not fit for that but you had better go to Abraham as he is the *khaleel* (dear friend) of the Beneficent.’ They will go to Abraham and he will say, ‘I am not fit for that, but you had better go to Moses as he is the one to whom Allah spoke directly.’ So they will go to Moses and he will say, ‘I am not fit for that, but you had better go to Jesus as he is a soul created by Allah and His Word.’ They will go to Jesus and he will say, ‘I am not fit for that, but you had better go to Muhammad.’ So they would come to me and I would say, ‘I am [qualified] for that [role].’ Then I will ask for my Lord’s permission, and it will be given, and then He will inspire me to praise Him with such words of praise as I do not know now. So I will praise Him with those words of praise and I will fall down in prostration before Him. Then it will be said, ‘O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.’ I will say, ‘O Lord, my followers! My followers!’ And then it will be said, ‘Go and take out of Hell (Fire) all those who have faith in their hearts equal to the weight of a barley grain.’ I will go and do so and return to praise Him with the same praises, and fall down (prostrate) before Him. It will be said, ‘O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.’ I will say, ‘O Lord, my followers! My followers!’ It will be said, ‘Go and take out of Hell (Fire) all those who have faith in their hearts equal to the weight of

a small ant or a mustard seed.' I will go and do so and return to praise Him with the same praises, and fall down in prostration before Him. It will be said, 'O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my followers, my followers!' Then He will say, 'Go and take out (all those) in whose hearts there is faith even to the lightest, lightest mustard seed. (Take them) out of the Fire.' I will go and do so."¹

Ibn Taimiyyah said, "They are many definitive hadith from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stating that some people will be taken out of the Fire after they have entered it. And there are definitive hadith stating that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) shall intercede on behalf of people who have entered the Fire. These hadith form proofs against two groups: (1) Those who emphasize the threats and say that those who enter the Hell-fire from the people of *tauheed* shall never exit from it, and (2) The Murjiah and those who abstain from giving a view by saying that we do not know if any of the people of *tauheed* will ever enter the Hell-fire."²

(4) Ubaadah ibn al-Saamit narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said while a number of his Companions were around him,

بَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا تَسْرِقُوا وَلَا تَزْنُوا وَلَا
تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ وَلَا تَأْتُوا بِبُهْتَانٍ تَفْتَرُونَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ وَلَا
تَعْصُوا فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ
ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ
سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَاقَبَهُ فَبَايَعْنَاهُ عَلَى

ذَلِكَ

"Pledge allegiance to me that you will not associate any partner with Allah, you will not steal, you will not fornicate, you will not kill your children, you will not commit slander with something you

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 486.

produced from between your hands and legs, and you will not disobey when ordered to do good. Whoever fulfills these will have his reward with Allah. If these acts happen to anyone and he is punished in this world, that will be the expiation for him. If these acts happen to anyone and Allah conceals it, then his affair is with Allah. If He wills, He may forgive him and if He wills, He may punish him.” And we made the pledge to him upon those things.¹

Ibn Hajar stated, “The portion, ‘If these acts happen to anyone and Allah conceals it, then his affair is with Allah. If He wills, He may forgive him and if He wills, He may punish him,’ is a refutation of the Khawarij who declare sinners to be disbelievers.”²

(5) Muaadh ibn Jabal narrated:

بَيْنَمَا أَنَا رَدِيفُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ إِلَّا آخِرَةُ
الرَّحْلِ فَقَالَ يَا مُعَاذُ قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً
ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا مُعَاذُ قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا
مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ قَالَ هَلْ تَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ
اللَّهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ قَالَ حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ أَنْ
يَعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا يُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ
قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ قَالَ هَلْ تَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ الْعِبَادِ عَلَى اللَّهِ
إِذَا فَعَلُوهُ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ قَالَ حَقُّ الْعِبَادِ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ لَا
يُعَذِّبَهُمْ

“I was riding behind the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there was nothing between him and me but the rear part of the saddle, when he said, ‘O Muaadh ibn Jabal!’ I replied, ‘At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah!’ He moved along for a few minutes and then said, ‘O Muaadh ibn Jabal.’ To which I replied, ‘At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah!’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said, ‘Do you know what right Allah has upon His

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa`ee.

² *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 64.

servants?’ I said, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ He said, ‘Verily the right of Allah over His servants is that they should worship Him and not associate any partners with Him.’ He moved along for a few minutes and said, ‘O Muadh ibn Jabal!’ I replied, ‘At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah!’ He said, ‘Do you know what rights servants have from Allah if they do that [that is, worship Allah alone without associating anything with Him]? I replied, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ He then said, ‘That He would not punish them (with the fire of Hell).’¹

(6) There is also what al-Bukhari and others record from Abu Hurairah concerning the one who drank alcohol. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered to have him beaten. After this was done and the person turned away, someone said, “May Allah disgrace you.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَقُولُوا هَكَذَا لَا تَعِينُوا عَلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانَ

“Do not say that. Do not support Satan against him.” A narration in *al-Bukhari* states,

لَا تَكُونُوا عَوْنَ الشَّيْطَانِ عَلَى أَخِيكُمْ

“Do not be an aide of Satan against your brother.” In other narrations of the incident, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated,

وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ اللَّهُمَّ اِرْحَمْهُ

“Instead, you should say, ‘O Allah, forgive him. O Allah, show him mercy.’² The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited them from cursing him; he called him their brother and he ordered them to pray for him. All of these acts indicate that he was a Muslim and not a disbeliever. If he were a disbeliever, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would not have prohibited them from cursing him, nor would he have called him their brother and nor would he have ordered them to pray for him.

(7) Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawood.

مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لِأَخِيهِ مِنْ عَرَضِيَّةٍ أَوْ شَيْءٍ فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهُ الْيَوْمَ
قَبْلَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ
بِقَدْرِ مَظْلَمَتِهِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ أَخَذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ صَاحِبِهِ فَحُمِلَ
عَلَيْهِ

“Whoever has wronged another concerning his reputation or anything else should beg him to forgive him before the Day of Resurrection when there will be no money [to compensate for wrong deeds], but, if he has good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him according to the wrong he has done. And if he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be loaded on him.”¹ Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi noted, “This confirms that the wrongdoer has some good deeds by which the wronged will seek his rights fulfilled.”²

Evidence from the Statements of the Companions:

Jaabir ibn Abdullah was asked one day, “Did you use to consider sins as a type of *shirk*?” He replied, “May Allah forbid that [we did not].”³

These texts make it clear that it is a form of extremism to declare one who has fallen into sins a disbeliever. That extremist view contradicts the features of Islam, which are distinguished by ease, gentleness, justice and abundant mercy. Declaring sinners to be disbelievers was one of the most prominent opinions and beliefs of the Khawaarij.

Studying the contemporary reality makes it clear that there are some people who call Muslims disbelievers due to their sins. They believe that every sinner is a disbeliever. Maahir Bakri⁴ said, “The

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad.

² *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, p. 361.

³ Recorded by Abu al-Qaasim al-Lalaakaa`ee in *Sharh Usool al-Itiqaad* (vol. 6, p. 1075) and Abu Ubaid al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam in *al-Imaan*, p. 29.

⁴ He was Maahir Bakri, the second in command of the group of Shukri Mustafa and he was the one responsible for media relations. He was the nephew of Shukri and knew well the philosophy of the group. He was given the death penalty and he was executed on 3/30/1978. Cf., Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Aabideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 321.

word 'sinner, disobedient' (*aasi*) is one of the words for the disbeliever. It is completely equivalent to the word 'disbeliever.' This is based on the question of naming, as there is nowhere in the religion of Allah in which a single person is both called a Muslim and a disbeliever."¹

In a publication they had entitled, *Ijmaal Taweelatuhum wa Ijmaal al-Radd Alaihim* ("A summary of their interpretations and a summary of the refutation against them"), Shukri's group stated, "The word *kufur* does not come in the Shareeah except as indicating the antithesis of faith and its negation. It is an expression used for a general category that contains a number of subcategories, each of which has its own specific name, such as wickedness, wrongdoing and evil... When Allah says, 'He has made hateful to you unbelief, wickedness, and rebellion,' [*al-Hujuraat* 7] all three of those are *kufur* with respect to the general ruling, although they differ in their specific names. They all completely fall under the category of *kufur*. In the same way, Allah says, 'For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves...' [*al-Ahzaab* 35]. These are different and specific titles that all indicate one and the same thing and one and the same meaning. They are all believers but they are given different names according to their different relationship with faith and which characteristic is most dominant in a person."²

One may summarize their beliefs about the disbelief due to sinning in the following points:

- (1) Acts of disobedience to Allah and sins are all disbelief in Allah (*kufur*).
- (2) The title of disbeliever cannot be removed from a sinner unless he repents.
- (3) Repentance means the renewal of one's Islam.

They said, "If a person commits a sin once and he did not repent from that one act of sin, he is then persistent in it, a disbeliever."³ They refer to that as, "persistence upon sinning."⁴

¹ *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 72.

² Quoted from Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Aabideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 161.

³ *Al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, p. 78.

⁴ [Actually, this sentence was in a different place in the Arabic text. However, it seemed to have been misplaced and should have been where it is placed above. Allah knows best.—JZ]

Their Evidence:

Some professors have mentioned a number of the proofs that they use to show that the sinner is a disbeliever. They are:

(a) Allah says,

﴿ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوْنَهُ ﴾

“Do you see one who takes for his god his own passion? (al-Furqaan 43).

(b) Allah also says,

﴿ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يٰبَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴾

“Did I not enjoin on you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan; verily, he was to you an enemy avowed?” (Yaa Seen 60).

(c) Again, Allah says,

﴿ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“His [Satan’s] authority is over those only who take him as patron and who join partners with Allah” (al-Nahl 100).

(d) Allah says,

﴿ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُوحِيَ إِلِيَ آوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“But the devils ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists” (al-Anaam 121).

(e) Yet another verse states,

﴿ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴾

“Any who disobey Allah and His Messenger, for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein forever” (al-Jinn 23).

(f) Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴾

“But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment” (*al-Nisaa* 14).

(g) Allah also says,

﴿ بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾

“Nay, those who earn evil and are girt round by their sins, they are Companions of the Fire: therein shall they abide (forever)” (*al-Baqarah* 81).

(h) In one verse, Allah says,

﴿ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

“And those who do not repent are (indeed) wrongdoers” (*al-Hujuraat* 11). However, in another verse, Allah says,

﴿ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

“The disbelievers are [truly] the wrongdoers” (*al-Baqarah* 254). Putting these two verses and removing what is repeated, the desired result is gotten: whoever does not repent is a disbeliever.

(i) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى

“All of my nation will enter Paradise except who refuses.” His companions asked, “Who would refuse?” He answered,

مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى

“Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise; whoever disobeys me has refused (to enter Paradise).”¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

(j) They also use a logical argument. They say suppose someone leaves Alexandria heading for Cairo. He goes through all the stages and stops that take him to Cairo except he stops at one point along the trip. One does not need mention the reason why he stopped at that place only a few miles from Cairo. The important thing is that he stopped there. They are representing the minimum level of Islam to be Cairo. Since he did not reach Cairo, it means that he did not reach the minimum level of Islam.¹

The Refutation of Their Views:

The proofs the people of *takfeer* use can be refuted with both general arguments and specific arguments related to their proofs.

The General Refutation:

(1) All of the texts that they used to prove that the sinner is a disbeliever are general texts which may be countered by similar texts promising rewards from Allah. For example, Allah says,

﴿ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾

“Those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to gardens with rivers flowing beneath, to abide therein (forever) and that will be the Supreme achievement. But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment” (*al-Nisaa* 13-14). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

“He who obeys Allah and His Messenger, has already attained the highest achievement” (*al-Ahzaab* 71).

Allah also says,

¹ For their use of these proofs, see Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Aabideen, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzala-llah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 161.

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ
النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

“All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, of the Prophets, the sincere, the witnesses, and the righteous (who do good). Ah, what a beautiful Fellowship (*al-Nisaa* 69).

According to the way in which they understand “the verses of threats” [warning those who disobey Allah], such that every act of disobedience falls under the meaning of the verse,

وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

“Any who disobey Allah and His Messenger, for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein forever” (*al-Jinn* 23), then in the same way every act of obedience must fall under the meanings of the verses that begin with, “Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger.” According to their sick understanding, these sets of verses must of necessity be contradictory and puzzling.

The Murjiah based their views on the general purport of “the verses of promises” [promising rewards to those who obey Allah]. They also said, “Faith is affirmation of the truth. Therefore, if one has faith, sins do not harm him. Similarly, if one has unbelief, acts of obedience cannot benefit him.” Therefore, when it comes to the threats of punishment, he must combine together all of the sins to fall under the threat of punishment and be in the Hell-fire forever.

The Khawaarij based their views on the general purport of “the verses of threats”. They said that one sin is sufficient to be sent to the Hell-fire forever. Therefore, with respect to the promises of rewards, one must gather together all of the acts of obedience in order to be in Paradise forever.

The *ahl al-Sunnah* have taken a middle position. They say that the one who commits a great sin is a sinner with a deficiency in his faith. He is exposing himself to the possibility of punishment. However, if he dies without repenting, he is under the Will and Decision of Allah. If Allah wills, He will forgive him but if He wills, He will punish him. Abu Ubaid al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam said, “Our opinion on this issue is that disobedience and sins do not remove

faith and do not necessitate disbelief. However, they negate from faith its reality and purity by which Allah describes true believers.”¹

Ibn Taimiyyah stated about the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, “They do not declare the People of the Qiblah to be unbelievers simply due to disobedience and great sins, as the Khawaarij do. Indeed, the brotherhood of faith remains even with sins... They also do not completely remove from the evildoer (*faasiq*) the title of faith. Nor do they say that he will be in the Hell-fire forever, as the Mutazilah say. Indeed, evilness still can fall under the name of faith; however, it is not part of the termed complete faith... They [the *ahl al-Sunnah*] say that he is a believer who has a deficiency in his faith or they say he is a believer due to his faith and an evildoer due to his great sin. They do not give him [the title of faith] absolutely nor do they absolutely remove that title from him.”²

Al-Safaareeni³ said, “The truth is the opinion of the people of truth from the *ahl al-Sunnah*. [That is,] the perpetrator of a great sin is under the will of Allah and His [possible] forgiveness. This is because the foundation of faith, which is affirmation, knowledge and submission, exists [in his heart]. The texts of the Quran and Sunnah do not indicate any other view except this.”⁴

(2) There is an exacting principle that must be referred to with respect to these general verses. Invoking this exacting principle will dispel any supposed contradiction between the verses. In the Quran, there is no contradiction or discrepancy. [As Allah says,]

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ

أَخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴾

“Do they not consider the Quran (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy” (*al-Nisaa* 82).

¹ *Al-Imaan*, p. 89.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, pp. 151-152.

³ He was Shams al-Deen Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Saalim al-Safaareeni, a scholar of hadith and legal theory, one of the *muhagiqeen* [detailed researchers and verifier of what is true]. He was from the later Hanbali scholars. He was born in Safareen, Nablus in 1114 A.H. He traveled to Damascus and then he returned, teaching and giving legal rulings for Safaareen. He died there in 1188 A.H. His most famous works include *Ghadhaa al-Albaab* and *Sharh Thalaathiyaa al-Musnad*. Cf., *Al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 14.

⁴ *Lawwami al-Anwaar al-Bahiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 312.

This exacting and ruling principle is found in Allah's statement,

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾

"Allah forgives not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him (*shirk*); but He forgives whom He pleases whatever is less than that" (*al-Nisaa* 116). This verse divides sins and disobedience into two categories:

- (a) *shirk* (associating partners with Allah)
- (b) what is less than *shirk*.

Shirk is never forgiven. As for what is less than *shirk*, Allah forgives that for whomever He wills. This entire verse is with regard to the forgiveness of sins without the person repenting. For the person who sincerely repents, Allah then forgives every type of sin, both *shirk* and what is less than *shirk*. [As Allah says,]

﴿ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ ﴾

"But if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them" (*al-Taubah* 5). [Allah also says,]

﴿ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ﴾

"Say to the Unbelievers, if (now) they desist (from unbelief), their past would be forgiven them" (*al-Anfaal* 38).

The Detailed, Specific Refutation:

(1) From the proofs that the people of *takfeer* use to declare the sinner a disbeliever are the following verses:

﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ ﴾

"Do you see one who takes for his god his own passion? (*al-Jaathiyah* 23); and,

﴿ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ

لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴾

"Did I not enjoin on you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan; verily, he was to you an enemy avowed?" (*Yaa Seen* 60). Apparently, their understanding of those verses is that the one who follows his desires and commits a sin has associated a partner

with Allah. However, the people of knowledge state in the explanation of this verse that it is in reference to the polytheists who would worship whatever their own souls would desire to worship.

Al-Tabari said, "The interpreters have differed as to the meaning of, 'Do you see one who takes for his god his own passion?' Some say that it means that he takes for his religion his desires or passions, in the sense that he never desires anything except that he follows it. That is because he does not believe in Allah, does not prohibit what Allah prohibited and does not permit what Allah permitted. His religion is only what he desires himself, acting upon it."¹ Then he presents his chain back to ibn Abbaas who said, "That is the disbeliever who takes his religion without guidance from Allah or evidence."² He also records from Qataadah on the meaning of this verse, "He does not desire anything except that he follows it, not fearing Allah."³ Then al-Tabari stated, "The meaning of that is, 'Do you not see the one who takes as his object of worship what he desires himself to worship of whatever.'"⁴ Then he presents his chain back to Saeed ibn Jubair who said, "The Quraish, at one point in time, used to worship al-Uzza, which was a white stone. If they found something better than it, they would throw it away and worship the other [stone]. Therefore, Allah revealed, 'Have you not seen the one who takes as his god his passion.'"⁵

Concerning this verse that they use as evidence from *soorah al-Jaathiyah*, there is another verse almost exactly the same that comes in a context describing the polytheists. Allah says,

﴿ وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِذَا يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوعًا أَهْدَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا
 ﴿١١﴾ إِنْ كَادَ لَيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ ءَالِهَتِنَا لَوْلَا أَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا وَسَوْفَ
 يَعْلَمُونَ حَيْثُ يَرْوُونَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ
 اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣﴾

¹ Jaami al-Bayaan, vol. 25, p. 150.

² Quoted in Jaami al-Bayaan, vol. 25, p. 150.

³ Quoted in Jaami al-Bayaan, vol. 25, p. 150.

⁴ Jaami al-Bayaan, vol. 25, p. 150.

⁵ Quoted in Jaami al-Bayaan, vol. 25, p. 150.

“When they see you, they treat you no otherwise than in mockery: ‘Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger? He indeed would well-nigh have misled us from our gods, had it not been that we were constant to them!’ Soon will they know, when they see the Penalty, who it is that is most misled in Path! See you such a one as takes for his god his own passion (or impulse)? Could you be a disposer of affairs for him?” (*al-Furqaan* 41-43).

Al-Tabari said, “He means, ‘O Muhammad, have you seen one who takes as his lord his own lusts that he desires. Men from the polytheists used to worship a stone. Whenever they found a nicer one, they would throw the old one away and worship the new one. Therefore, that was his object of worship and his god and he had chosen it himself.”¹ Al-Qurtubi stated, “He made His Prophet Muhammad astonished at this persistence to commit *shirk* and especially their persistence given that they admitted that He was their Creator and Provider and yet they betook to stones and worshiped them without any proof [for their actions].”²

This demonstrates that the meaning of the verse is a worship that is absolutely based on desires and whims. It does not mean that when one [slips and] follows his desires in committing a sin that this is to be considered a worship [of the desires] and *shirk*. Al-Raazi³ said, “It means that they abandoned following the guidance and turned to following the desires instead. They would worship desires like a man would worship his god.”⁴

(2) [They also use as evidence] Allah’s words,

﴿ أَلَمْ آتَيْنَاكُم بِبَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ
لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴾

“Did I not enjoin on you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan; verily, he was to you an enemy avowed?” (*Yaa Seen* 60). Their understanding of this verse is that any obedience to Satan is a type of worship of him. However, the use of the word

¹ *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 19, p. 19.

² *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 13, p. 35.

³ He was Fakhar al-Deen Muhammad ibn Umar ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Husain al-Taimi, one of the commentators on the Quran and a scholar of theology and Islamic legal theory. He was a descendant of the Quraish. His most famous works include his Quranic commentary *Mafaateeh al-Ghaib* and *al-Mahsool fi Ilm al-Mahsool*. Cf., ibn Khaalikaan, *Wafiyat al-Ayaan*, vol. 3, p. 381; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 313.

⁴ *Tafseer al-Raazi*, vol. 27, p. 268.

“worship” in the verse is meant to be deterrence and it is not meant literally. Sideeq Hasan Khan¹ wrote, “The worship of Satan is obedience to him in what he whispers to them and makes alluring to them. The word used for it is ‘worship’ in order to increase the nature of the warning and its force as a deterrent, and because it occurs in opposition to the worship of Allah.”² Obedience to him is only *shirk* when the person obeys him in matters of belief. Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi stated, “The believer commits *shirk* by following a polytheist only when he obeys him in matters of belief, which is the locus of disbelief and faith. If he obeys him in an action while his belief continues upon *tauheed* and affirmation, he is then a sinner [and not committing *shirk*].”³

(3) [Another verse that they use is] Allah’s statement,

﴿ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ
أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“But the devils ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists” (*al-Anaam* 121). This is a portion of a noble verse. One can truly understand its meaning if it is taken in conjunction with the complete verse and not cut off from the rest of it. Allah says,

﴿ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ
الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ
إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

¹ He was Muhammad Sideeq ibn Hasan ibn Ali al-Bukhaari, one of the people of the Islamic renaissance. He was born in Qunooj, India in 1248 A.H. He studied in Delhi and moved to Bahubaal to earn a living. There he married the queen of Bahubaal. He was greatly influenced by Imam al-Shaukaani. He wrote a large number of works. He died in 1307 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 168.

² *Fath al-Bayaan fi Ijaaz al-Quraan*, vol. 8, p. 38.

³ *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 743. [It seems, Allah knows best, that this statement is not true under all circumstances. If a person bows down to an idol or sacrifices to a saint while knowing that those are acts of *shirk* and *kufr*, it cannot be argued that as long as his heart is still upon *tauheed* that he has not committed *shirk*.—JZ]

“Eat not of (meats) on which Allah’s name has not been pronounced: that would be impiety. But the devils ever inspire their friends to contend with you if you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists” (*al-Anaam* 121). This verse shows that the devils inspire and whisper falsehood into the hearts of their followers. They put misconceptions and doubts into their minds about the eating of carrion, that which has not had the name of Allah mentioned over it [but died on its own]. Ibn Abbaas said concerning this verse, “They would say, ‘What Allah has slaughtered you do not eat but what you slaughter, you eat.’ And then Allah revealed the verse, ‘Eat not of (meats) on which Allah’s name has not been pronounced.’”¹

Therefore, the obedience that is being referred to in the verse is the obedience in making carrion permissible. This verse forms a foundation concerning *shirk*. *Shirk* includes making permissible what Allah has forbidden. Al-Tabari said, “Allah’s words mean, ‘If you were to obey them,’ in making the carrion permissible, ‘you would indeed be polytheists.’ This verse proves that if someone makes something permissible that Allah has prohibited, he becomes a polytheist (*mushrik*) due to that. Allah has explicitly forbidden carrion. If somebody accepts its permissibility from some other source [other than Allah], he has committed *shirk*.”²

(4) [They also use as evidence,] Allah’s words,

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

“His [Satan’s] authority is over those only who take him as patron and who join partners with Him” (*al-Nahl* 100). The people of *takfeer* [those who declare others disbelievers] use this portion of this noble verse to argue that any form of patronage is disbelief in Allah. But this is not correct. Patronage or following is *kufir* only when the person believes in the same thing as his patron. Concerning the verse,

﴿ وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُواهُمْ

أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴾

“If only they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet, and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors, but most of them are rebellious wrong-doers” (*al-*

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa` ee.

² *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 7, p. 77.

Maaidah 81), Al-Qurtubi stated, "This indicates that the person who takes a disbeliever as a friend and patron is not a believer if he believes like the [disbeliever] believes and if he is pleased with his actions."¹

Furthermore, there is a difference of opinion concerning whom the pronoun [him] in *bihi mushrikoon* refers to. Al-Tabari stated, "As for the words, 'who join partners with Him,' the commentators differ concerning its interpretation. Some say, as we have said, that it means 'those who associate partners with Allah.' That opinion is traced back to Mujaahid and other commentators. Others said it means that they associate Satan in their deeds."²

(5) [They also quote as evidence], Allah's statement,

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

"Any who disobey Allah and His Messenger, for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein forever" (*al-Jinn* 23), as well as Allah's words,

﴿ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا

فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴾

"Those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment" (*al-Nisaa* 14). And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى

"All of my nation will enter Paradise except who refuses." His companions asked, "Who would refuse?" He answered,

مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى

"Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise; whoever disobeys me has refused (to enter Paradise)."³

Concerning these two verses and hadith, the refutation of their use as evidence that every sinner is a disbeliever may be summarized in the following points:

¹ *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 6, p. 254.

² *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 6, p. 254.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

(1) The word “disobedience” (*al-maasiyyah*) is used for any kind of contradiction of a command. Therefore, it includes the disobedience of *kufr* as well as other acts. In looking at the texts in which the word “disobedience” is found in the Quran, we find that they are of two types:

The first usage is an unconditional use of the word “disobedience,” which would then be inclusive of *kufr*, evil (*fusooq*) and so forth. This is the case with, for example, Allah’s words,

وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

“Any who disobey (*yasi*) Allah and His Messenger, for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein forever” (*al-Jinn* 23), and also in the verse,

﴿ وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ

كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴾

“Such were the ‘Ad People: they rejected the Signs of their Lord and Cherisher, disobeyed (*asau*) His Messengers, and followed the command of every powerful, obstinate transgressor” (*Hood* 59).

The second usage is its use as a limited, particular reference. In this specific meaning it is different from the above. For example, Allah states concerning the one who commits injustice with respect to the inheritance:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا

فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴾

“But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment” (*al-Nisaa* 14). In this case, the act of disobedience is a specific act of disobedience [and not general covering all forms of disobedience]. Similarly, Allah says,

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا بَعَدَ مَا

أَرْسَلْنَاكُمْ مَّا تُحِبُّونَ ﴾

“[Allah did indeed fulfill His promise to you when you with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy] until you flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He

brought you in sight (of the booty) which you covet" (*ali-Imraan* 152). Here Allah is speaking about a specific act of disobedience that occurred, the archers disobeying the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).¹

(2) The disobedient will be in the Hell-fire forever if he makes permissible his act of disobedience. Imam al-Tabari stated, "If someone were to say, 'Will the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger concerning the division of the inheritance be in the Hell-fire forever?' The reply is, 'Yes, if in addition to his act of disobedience he also had doubt that Allah had obliged those matters upon His servants in these two verses. [The same is true] if he was certain of that but he opposed Allah and His Messenger concerning this command of theirs. Whoever contradicts the division stated by Allah and contradicts His rule on that matter and the rule of His Messenger, as an act of rejection from himself of their rule, then he will be from those who will be in the Hell-fire forever. This is because his rejection of Allah's rule in this matter makes him become a disbeliever in Allah and one out of the fold of Islam.'"²

Al-Qurtubi said, "If one intended *kufr* by the act of disobedience, then he will be forever [in the fire] for that reason. If he intended a great sin and going beyond the commands of Allah, then the word 'forever' is in a metaphorical sense meaning a [long] period of time. One says, 'Allah gave him his dominion for a long time (*khalada*).'"³

(6) [Another verse they quote is,]

﴿ بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾

"Nay, those who earn evil (*sayyi`ah*) and are girt round by their sins (*khatee`ah*), they are Companions of the Fire: therein shall they abide (forever)" (*al-Baqarah* 81). One may refute this argument in a concise way by the following:

(a) The words *sayyi`ah* ("evil") and *khatee`ah* ("sin") are used for *shirk* and what is less than *shirk*. In the following verse, the word *sayyi`ah* is used for *shirk*,

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*.

² *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 4, p. 219; also see al-Qaasimi, *Mahaasin al-Taweel*, vol. 5, p. 1151.

³ *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 5, p. 82.

﴿ بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾

“Nay, those who earn evil (*sayyi`ah*) and are girt round by their sins (*khatee`ah*), they are Companions of the Fire: therein shall they abide (forever)” (*al-Baqarah* 81). However, in the following verse, the word is used to mean what is less than *shirk*,

﴿ إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَنُدْخِلَكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا ﴾

“If you (but) eschew the most heinous of the things which you are forbidden to do, We shall expel out of you all the evil (*sayyi`ah*) in you, and admit you to a gate of great honor” (*al-Nisaa* 31).

And the word *khatee`ah* is used in the following verse to mean *shirk*,

﴿ مِمَّا خَطِيئَتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا ﴾

“Because of their sins (*khatee`ah*) they were drowned (in the flood), and were made to enter the Fire; and they found, in lieu of Allah, none to help them” (*Nooh* 25). However, in the following verse, it is used in reference to what is less than *shirk*,

﴿ وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴾

“And [Allah] who, I hope, will forgive me my faults (*khatee`ah*) on the Day of Judgment” (*al-Shuaraa* 84).

This demonstrates that the words *sayyi`ah* and *khatee`ah* do not always imply *shirk*. Instead, the words *sayyi`ah* and *khatee`ah* are inclusive of *shirk* as well as what is less than *shirk*.

(b) In the verse [above, *al-Baqarah* 81,] the meaning of the word [*sayyi`ah*] is *shirk*. Al-Qurtubi stated [in his commentary to said verse], “Allah’s statement, ‘*sayyi`ah*,’ [here] *al-sayyi`ah* is *shirk*. Ibn Juraij¹ said, ‘I said to Ataa’, “[What is the meaning of,] ‘those

¹ He was Abdul Malik ibn Abdul Azeez ibn Juraij, the jurist of the Haram [in Makkah] and the Imam of the people of Hijaz during his time. He was originally from the Roman lands and he was a slave of the people of the

who earn evil (*sayyi`ah*)?" He said, 'It is *shirk*.' Then he recited the verse,

﴿ وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ ﴾

"And if any come with evil (*sayyi`ah*), their faces will be thrown headlong into the Fire" (*al-Naml* 90).' Al-Hasan and Qataadah said the same. They also stated that *al-khatee`ah* means the great sins."²

(7) [They also use the following verses as a proof:]

﴿ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

"And those who do not repent are (indeed) wrongdoers" (*al-Hujuraat* 11). And, in another verse, Allah says,

﴿ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

"The disbelievers are [truly] the wrongdoers" (*al-Baqarah* 254). They say that if one puts these two verses together and removes what is repeated, the desired result is gotten: whoever does not repent is a disbeliever.

The refutation of this argument: Not all types of wrongdoing (*dhulm*) are *kufir*. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, "The absolute *dhulm* comprises *kufir* but it is not specifically just *kufir*. Indeed, it also comprises what is less than it. Similar is the case with the words sin (*al-dhanb*), *khatee`ah* and disobedience (*masiyyah*). These all can imply *kufir*, evil (*fusooq*) and disobedience. Abdullah ibn Masood said, 'I said, "O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), what sin is the greatest?" He replied, "That you set up an equal with Allah while He created you." I then said, "Then what?" He said, "Then is the killing of your child out of fear that it may eat with you." I then said, "What next?" He said, "Then is committing illegal sexual intercourse with your neighbor's wife."³⁴

Quraish. He was born in Makkah and died there in 150 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 325; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 160.

¹ He was Ataa ibn Abi Rabaah Aslam ibn Safwaan. He was from the generation of the Followers. He was one of the greatest jurists. He was a black slave born in Yemen and raised in Makkah. He studied there until he became the *mufti* (giver of religious verdicts) for its people and their scholar of hadith. He died there in 114 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 5, p. 78; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 235.

² *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 12.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Nasaa`ee, Abu Dawood and Ahmad.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 9, p. 72.

What further indicates that *dhulm* (wrongdoing) comprises both *kufir* and what is less than *kufir* is the hadith of ibn Abbaas who stated that when Allah revealed the verse,

﴿ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا ءِيمَنَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ الْاَمْنُ
وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴾

“It is those who believe and mix not their faith with *dhulm* that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance” (*al-Anaam* 82), the Companions found this very difficult. They said, “Who among us does not mix his faith with some form of *dhulm* (wrongdoing)?” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then told them,

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِذٰلِكَ اَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ اِلَى قَوْلِ لُقْمٰنَ (اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ)

“It is not such. Do you not hear Luqmaan’s statement, ‘Verily, *shirk* is a great wrongdoing’ [*Luqmaan* 13].”¹ There is an explicit text showing that not every form of *dhulm* is *shirk*. The *dhulm* meant by the verse, “The disbelievers are the wrongdoers,” is the absolute or complete *dhulm*.

Commenting on the verse,

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاتِيَ يَوْمٌ
لَّا يَبْعُ فِيْهِ وَلَا خِلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفِيعَةٌ ۗ وَالْكَٰفِرُوْنَ هُمْ الظَّٰلِمُوْنَ

“O you who believe! Spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you before the Day comes when no bargaining (will avail), nor friendship nor intercession. The unbelievers, they are the wrongdoers” (*al-Baqarah* 254), ibn Taimiyyah stated, “The absolute, complete *kufir* is the absolute, complete *dhulm*.”²

(8) They also present a rational argument. They say that a traveler leaves Alexandria headed for Cairo. He goes through all the stops and stages of the trip save for the last one. There is no reason to discuss why he stopped there. Cairo represents the minimum of Islam. Since they did not reach it, they did not even reach the minimum of Islam.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 74.

The Khawaarij before them presented this specious argument that they depend upon in a similar fashion. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "The sum of their specious arguments on this matter is that a compound matter is done away with when one of its parts is removed. Like [something made of] ten [components], if a part is removed from it, it is no longer ten. They argued that if faith is composed of outward and internal statements and actions, it must be vanquished by removing just a part of it."¹ Ibn Taimiyyah also wrote, "This specious argument is an argument from one who does not accept that a person can combine obedience and disobedience because obedience is a portion of faith while disobedience is a portion of disbelief. There cannot be combined in him both *kufir* and faith. They said, therefore, that there can only be a pure believer or a pure disbeliever."²

Ibn Taimiyyah refuted them in detail, of which I shall present a summary here:

The reality of anything made up of components, regardless of whether it be specific beings or philosophical accidents, is that if part of it is removed, either the remainder of it is also removed or the remainder is not removed, as it is not necessary that if part of something is removed the remainder of it also leaves. This is regardless of whether it is termed a compound or any other name. The example they gave of ten follows this principle, as when one of the ten is removed, it does not necessarily mean that the other nine must also leave. If one part of a compound matter leaves or is taken away, it does not mean that the remaining components of that compound also leave. The most that can be said is that the grouped together form is no longer in existence and the name that can only be used for the entire grouping is also no longer valid. In the same way the word "ten" is no longer used, as the grouped together form is no longer in its old form. This is something that no sane person would dispute. However, is it a necessity that if a portion of something is taken away that the name must also no longer fit?

The response to that is that compounded matters are of two natures:

Some are such that the complete grouping must exist for it to bear its name.

Some are not of that nature.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 511.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 512.

The first group includes “ten,” for the one that completes the ten is a necessary component for that compound group to be called ten.

The second group includes oceans and rivers. The complete components are not necessary for such to be given those names unconditionally. For that reason, if a portion of an ocean is removed, the name still remains for the remainder. Most of the compound matters are of this nature. If this is clear, then one realizes the falsehood of their argument that if a portion is missing, the name must be removed. It is possible that the name remains with the remaining portions.

At the end of his refutation, ibn Taimiyyah stated, “It is well-known that the name *imaan* (faith) is of [this second] category. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘*Imaan* has seventy some-odd branches. The highest of them being the statement, “There is none worthy of worship except Allah,” and the lowliest being removing something harmful from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith.”¹ It is also well-known that if the removing of something harmful is not present [in a person] the name of *imaan* is not removed from him.”²

As for their statement that when a Muslim commits a sin and does not repent that means that he will be in the Hell-fire forever, this is a false claim. The texts of the Quran and Sunnah clearly demonstrate that the punishment for a sin can be removed from the person via ten means:

(1) Repentance: This is something agreed upon by all Muslims. Allah says,

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ

السَّيِّئَاتِ ﴾

“He is the One that accepts repentance from His Servants and forgives sins” (*al-Shooraa* 25).

(2) Seeking forgiveness: It is recorded in the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, pp. 514-517. Also see Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bima Anzalallaah wa Ahl al-Ghulu*, p. 163, as he also presents two rational refutations.

إِنَّ عَبْدًا أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا فَقَالَ رَبِّ أَذْنَبْتُ وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ أَصَبْتُ فَاعْفِرْ لِي فَقَالَ
 رَبُّهُ أَعْلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنْ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ثُمَّ
 مَكَثَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ ذَنْبًا أَوْ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا فَقَالَ رَبِّ أَذْنَبْتُ أَوْ
 أَصَبْتُ آخَرَ فَاعْفِرْهُ فَقَالَ أَعْلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنْ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ
 غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ثُمَّ مَكَثَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ أَصَابَ
 ذَنْبًا قَالَ قَالَ رَبِّ أَصَبْتُ أَوْ قَالَ أَذْنَبْتُ آخَرَ فَاعْفِرْهُ لِي فَقَالَ أَعْلِمَ
 عَبْدِي أَنْ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ثَلَاثًا فَلْيَعْمَلْ مَا
 شَاءَ

"A slave committed a sin and said, 'O Lord, I have committed a sin, so forgive me.' The Lord said, 'My slave knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins. Therefore, I have forgiven my slave.' Then he committed another sin and said, 'O Lord, I have committed another sin, so forgive me!' His Lord says, 'My slave knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins, therefore, I have forgiven him.' And on the third or fourth occurrence Allah says, 'He may do whatever he wishes.'"¹ In a narration, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَوْ لَمْ تُذْنِبُوا لَذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ وَلَجَاءَ بِقَوْمٍ يُذْنِبُونَ فَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ فَيَغْفِرُ
 لَهُمْ

"If you were not to commit sins, Allah would take you away and bring a people who commit sins and then seek Allah's forgiveness and He would forgive them."²

(3) The good deeds that wipe away [the evil deeds]: Allah says,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by Muslim.

﴿ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيْ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ
الْحَسَنَاتِ يَذْهَبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ﴾

“Establish worship at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night. Lo! Good deeds annul evil deeds” (Hood 114). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

الصَّلَوَاتُ الْخَمْسُ وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ وَرَمَضَانَ إِلَى رَمَضَانَ
مُكْفِّرَاتٌ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ إِذَا اجْتَنَبَ الْكَبَائِرَ

“The five prayers, the Friday prayer until the Friday prayer and Ramadhaan until Ramadhaan, they all act as expiation for what is between them, as long as one did not perform one of the great sins.”¹

(4) The supplications of the believers for each other, such as in the funeral prayer: Aishah and Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَا مِنْ مَيِّتٍ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يَبْلُغُونَ مِائَةَ كُلِّهِمْ يَشْفَعُونَ
لَهُ إِلَّا شُفِّعُوا فِيهِ

“No one dies and then has a group of Muslims, whose number reaches one hundred, praying and interceding for him except that there will be intercession for him.”²

(5) What is done of good deeds on behalf of the deceased, such as charity: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ
أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

¹ Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

² Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

“When the person dies, his deeds are cut off—save for three: a continual charity, knowledge which is being benefited from or a pious child who supplicates for him.”¹

(6) The supplication of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and others on the Day of Resurrection for the sinners. The hadith concerning intercession are *mutawaatir* and definitive. One of them was produced earlier. Another is what was narrated by Anas ibn Maalik that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي

“My intercession is for those of my *ummah* who performed the great sins.”²

(7) The hardships by which Allah expiates sins in this world: It is confirmed in a number of texts that the hardships expiate sins. From among them is what Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْ وَصَبٍ وَلَا نَصَبٍ وَلَا سَقَمٍ وَلَا حَزَنٍ حَتَّىٰ اللَّهُمَّ
يُهَمُّهُ إِلَّا كَفَّرَ بِهِ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِ

“A believer is not stricken with discomfort, hardship, illness, grief or even mental worry except that some of his sins are expiated due to it.”³

(8) What occurs in the grave of trials, pressure and fright: These are some of the means by which Allah expiates sins.

(9) The affairs of the Day of Judgment and its distress and hardships.

(10) The mercy, pardon and forgiveness of Allah without any cause from the human.⁴

¹ Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, by al-Tirmidhi who said it is *hasan sahih ghareeb*, by Ahmad, by al-Haakim who said it is *sahih* according to the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim, and by ibn Abi Aasim in *al-Sunnah*. They all recorded this hadith from Anas. It has also been recorded from a number of other Companions, such as Jaabir ibn Abdillah, ibn Umar and Kaab ibn Ajwah. Al-Haithami mentioned some of their reports in *al-Majma*, vol. 10, pp. 378-379.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, pp. 487-501.

Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “If it is confirmed that the blame and punishment can be removed from the sinners due to these ten reasons, then their [that is, the Khawaarij] claim that the punishment of those who committed great sins is not repelled save by repentance contradicts this [proven reality].”¹

Uncategorically Declaring the Ruler Who Rules Not In Accord with What Allah Revealed to Be a Disbeliever

It is explicitly stated in the Noble Quran that ruling by other than what Allah revealed is *kufr*. Allah says,

﴿ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

“If any do fail to rule [or judge] by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are disbelievers” (*al-Maaidah* 44). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

“If any do fail to rule [or judge] by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are wrongdoers (*dhaalimoon*)” (*al-Maaidah* 45). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴾

“If any do fail to rule [or judge] by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are evildoers (*faasiqoon*)” (*al-Maaidah* 47). The scholars have differed concerning the interpretation of this verse. Their different views may be summarized as follows:

The first opinion: The verse is intended for the Jews who distorted the Book of Allah and changed His rule.²

The second opinion: The meaning of “the disbelievers” is with respect to the people of Islam; “the wrongdoers” is for the Jews; and “the evildoers” is for the Christians.³

The third opinion: The meaning is a *kufr* which is less than [the greater] *kufr*, a *dhulm* which is less than [the greater] *dhulm* and a *fisq* which is less than [the greater] *fisq*.⁴

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 501.

² Cf., ibn Jareer al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 6, p. 252.

³ Ibid., vol. 6, p. 255.

⁴ Ibid., vol. 6, p. 255.

The fourth opinion: The verse was revealed with respect to the People of the Book but its intent is for all the people, the Muslims and the disbelievers.¹

The fifth opinion: The meaning of the verse is that if one does not rule by what Allah revealed while denying or rejecting it, then he is a disbeliever. The wrongdoing and evil is for the cases where he accepts [the supremacy of what Allah revealed but he does not apply it].²

What seems most clear is that the verse is to be understood according to its apparent meaning, as "it is inconceivable that Allah would call the ruler who rules by other than what Allah revealed a disbeliever while he is not a disbeliever. Indeed, it is the absolute disbelief, either a disbelief of action or a disbelief in creed."³ There is no room for particularizing it to be only in reference to the Jews, Christians or others. The verse is general with respect to anyone who rules by other than what Allah revealed. Its being revealed with respect to a specific cause does not negate its generality. The precept is based on the generality of the text not on the specificity of the occasion behind the revelation. Those who say that it is revealed only concerning the Tribe of Israel are refuted by what al-Hudhaifah said, "What a great brethren the Tribe of Israel are for you if they possess all the sour aspects and you possess all the sweet aspects. Verily not [that is not the case]. By Allah, you will certainly follow their path [very closely like] the length of a sandal strap."⁴ The truth is that ruling by other than what Allah revealed is *kufir*. It can be *kufir* of deeds or *kufir* of beliefs. Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi stated while explaining the different situations of the ruler, "If he [the ruler] believes that ruling by what Allah revealed is not obligatory or that he has an option in the matter or he is showing disdain for it while he is certain that it is the rule of Allah, then that is the greater *kufir*. If he believes that it is obligatory to rule by what Allah revealed and he is aware of that fact, however, he abstains from doing so while admitting that he is deserving of punishment, then he is a sinner. He is called a *kaafir* (disbeliever) in a metaphorical sense or [in other words] it is the lesser *kufir*."⁵ Shaikh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem⁶ explained this in more detail and

¹ Ibid., vol. 6, p. 256.

² Ibid., vol. 6, p. 257.

³ Shaikh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem, *Tahkeem al-Qawaneen*, p. 4.

⁴ Recorded by ibn Jareer in his *Tafseer*, vol. 6, p. 253.

⁵ *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiiyyah*, p. 302.

⁶ He was the Shaikh, Imam and Mufti Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem ibn Abdul Lateef ali-al-Shaikh, a jurist and scholar of hadith. He was born in

clarified the different possibilities of the ruler. Since his words are of extreme importance, as they explain the matter in detail and explain the position of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, I shall quote what he said, with some minor adjustments and abridgement.

The Shaikh stated that the noble verse covers both types of *kufir*, the *kufir* of belief and the *kufir* in deeds. As for the first, *kufir* of belief, it is of various forms, as follows:

The first forms: The ruler who rules by other than what Allah reveals denies the right of ruling for Allah and His Messenger. This is a denial of what Allah has revealed of Shareeah rulings. There is no disagreement concerning him among the people of knowledge. One of the fundamental, accepted and agreed-upon principles is that anyone who denies any of the fundamentals of the religion or any agreed-upon branch or rejects any letter of what has definitively come from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a disbeliever, having the greater *kufir* that takes him out of the fold of the religion.

The second form: This is where the person believes that the law that has not come from Allah is more excellent, more complete and more comprehensive with respect to what the people need when there are disputes. He holds this belief either with respect to all the laws or with respect to the new situations that have arisen. This is, without a doubt, *kufir* as it is stating that the law of the created beings is to be preferred to the law from the All-Wise, the All-Praiseworthy.

The third form: The person does not believe that [the man-made laws] are better than the Law of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but he believes that they are equal or similar. The ruling for this [ruler] is the same as the previous two forms with respect to the person being a *kaafir* (disbeliever) having the form of *kufir* that takes him out of the fold of Islam. This is because he is making the created beings equal to the Creator. This contradicts and opposes what Allah has said [in the following two verses]:

1311 A.H. in Riyadh. He studied there until he started to teach and give religious verdicts. He then became the *mufti* for the country of Saudi Arabia and the head for its judges. He was an amazing man in the sense of fulfilling many responsibilities and posts. After the grace of Allah, it was through his efforts that Shareeah learning was established in Saudi Arabia, as he founded two Islamic universities and numerous educational institutions during the times of King Abdul Azeez, Saood and Faisal (may Allah have mercy on all of them). He authored a number of beneficial writings. He died in 1389 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 306.

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ﴾

“There is nothing similar unto Him” (*al-Shooraa* 11);

﴿ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ﴾

“It is His to create and to rule” (*al-Araaf* 54).

The fourth form: He believes that it is permissible to rule in a way that contradicts the rule of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The same [as the previous cases] is true in his case due to his belief that something is permissible while that thing is clearly, definitively and authentically prohibited in the texts of the Shareeah.

The fifth form: This is the most dangerous, most comprehensive and most apparent form. This is where the person opposes the Law of Allah and refuses to acknowledge its rulings, resisting and disdaining Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He applies non-Shareeah laws from various sources of man-made laws as the law for every matter, laws derived from various sources, such as the French or British codes. This is the way of government in many of the Muslim lands today. Their governments rule between them with laws that differ from the law of the Book and the Sunnah. What *kufur* can be above this type of *kufur* and what negation of the testimony that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is there left to be made after this negation?

The sixth form: This is the manner in which many of the clans, tribal leaders and Bedouins rule. They rule according to their customs that have been passed on, continuing upon the laws of Ignorance turning away and not having any desire to apply the Law of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).¹

¹ It seems, and Allah knows best, that the Shaikh (may Allah have mercy on him) was presenting in the first four forms the exact parameters that make the ruler himself a disbeliever. Hence, he was describing the ruler with words like, “He believes,” “He rejects,” and so on. However, in the last two categories, he was showing that the deed in itself is a form of *kufur*; that is why he was describing the act itself and not the doer. Therefore, to declare anyone of the last two categories a disbeliever, one must see if he fits into any of the parameters of the first four categories.

The *Kufr* in Deeds:

This is the form of *kufr* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam. This is where the ruler, based on his desires and wants, follows a rule on a particular issue that is not consistent with what Allah revealed—although he still believes that the Law of Allah and His Messenger is the truth and correct form of law and he admits that he is committing a sin and is straying from guidance. If this does not take him out of the fold of Islam, he is still committing one of the greatest of the great sins, like committing illegal sexual intercourse, consuming alcohol, stealing, false oaths and so forth. The sins that Allah calls *kufr* are definitely greater than those sins for which the term *kufr* is not used.¹

Extremism with respect to declaring the rulers to be disbelievers has occurred in this era. While speaking about *takfeer* and those who declare others to be disbelievers, Saalim al-Bahinsaawi wrote, “All the people of this trend [that is, declaring others to be disbelievers] agree upon one opinion: the rulers of the Muslims [today] are disbelievers. [They further agree] that those who are under their rule who do not work to change that government by joining with the *jamaah* that carries the sound methodology for Islam and is working to implement it, and that is [of course] their *jamaah*—in other words, anyone who is not from their *jamaah*—is also a disbeliever for obeying that ruler.”²

One may identify the shortcomings in their approach when they declared the rulers all unbelievers as the following:

First, they made a general statement of disbelief for the rulers without taking into consideration the details of the matter as explained above.

Second, they declared specific individuals disbelievers without checking the possibility of the existence of [some excusing factors]. [For example, there could have been] ignorance, coercion or the belief in the Law of Allah while having some excuses that would change the nature of the ruling concerning that person from the *kufr* that takes one out of the fold of Islam to the *kufr* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote,

¹ See *Tahkeem al-Qawaaneen*, pp. 4-7.

² Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah al-Takfeer*, p. 116. I could not find any evidence for their view except the previously stated verse, “Whoever does not rule in accord with what Allah revealed, they are disbelievers,” and I have already explained its proper meaning.

Although the Negus¹ was the king of the Christians [in his land], his people did not obey him in entering into Islam. Only a small group obeyed him. For that reason, when he died, there was no one to perform the prayers for him... We know with certainty that he was not able to apply the laws of the Quran among his people. However, Allah had made it obligatory upon His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that if any of the People of the Book were to come to him, he would judge between them according to what Allah had revealed to him. Allah warned him about being tempted to stray from any of what Allah revealed to him... Many of the people who are appointed judges or Imams among the Muslims and the Mongols are themselves just and they want to act appropriately but it is not possible for them. In fact, there are people who prevent them from doing so and Allah does not burden a soul except with what he can bear. Umar ibn Abdul Azeez was opposed and punished due to some of his just stands. It is said that he was poisoned due to his way. The Negus and similar others are from the joyous people in Paradise even though they did not abide by the laws of Islam concerning those things that they were not able to abide by. Instead, they would apply the laws that they had the ability to apply.²

This makes it clear that the ruler may have some excuse that would change his ruling from the domain of the greater *kufur* to that of the lesser *kufur*. To rush to declare a specific ruler a disbeliever is not allowed according to the Shareeah. Instead, one must show caution and prudence in order to make one's soul free of any sin [with respect to the rulers].

¹ The Negus was the ruler of Abbyssinia. Some scholars consider him a Companion. He was from those who excelled in Islam but did not migrate. Hence, he did not see the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Therefore, in that sense, he is considered from the Followers and in another sense he is considered a Companion. A number of the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) emigrated to his land and he treated them well. He died during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed the funeral prayer for him in absentia. That was during the month of Rajab in the ninth year after the Hijrah. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 428.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 217.

Unconditionally Declaring as Disbelievers Those Citizens Who are Ruled Not In Accord with What Allah Revealed

As for those [citizens] who are ruled by a law other than what Allah revealed, their situation differs according to their stance toward that rule. Basically, there are two categories:

The first category comprises those who obey by submitting themselves to what their rulers legislate for them. This category has two subsets to it.

The first subset consists of those people who know fully well that those that they are following have substituted for what is the religion of Allah and they are obeying them in that change. They believe in permitting what Allah has forbidden and forbidding what he permitted as a form of obedience to those in charge, although they know that such is in disagreement with Islam. This is disbelief in Allah as they have established a partner with Allah.¹ Allah says,

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْكَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا هُوَ بَحْتَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ, the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One God: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)” (*al-Taubah* 31).

Adi ibn Haatim said, “I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and around my neck was a crucifixion of gold. He said, ‘O Adi, take that idol off of you.’ I heard him recite, ‘They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah,’ and he said, ‘They did not worship them but if they would allow something, they would take it as permissible and if they would forbid something, they would take it as prohibited.’”² Hudhaifah was asked about Allah’s words, “They

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 70.

² With different wordings, recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Jareer al-Tabarai (vol. 10, pp. 80-81) and al-Baihaqi. Al-Tirmidhi said, “This hadith is solitary and we do not know it except from the hadith of Abdul Salaam ibn Harb and Ghateef ibn Ayun.” The hadith was declared weak by al-Daaraqutni, as quoted by ibn Hajar in *Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 251. The hadith is

take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah,” and he said, “They would not fast for their sake or pray for them. But if they would declare something permissible, they would take it as permissible. If they forbade something Allah had permitted, they would take it as forbidden. That is how they took them as their lords.”¹

Abu al-Aaliyyah² was asked about the “taking of lords” among the Tribe of Israel. He stated, “Their taking of lords was whereby they would find a command or prohibition in the Book of Allah and they would say, ‘Our rabbis have not said anything to us yet. What they order us to do, we will do and what they prohibit us, we will abstain from.’ Hence, they took the advice of humans and threw the Book of Allah behind their backs.”³

The second subset consists of those people who obey while believing firmly in prohibiting what has been prohibited [by Allah] and permitting what has been permitted [by Allah]. However, they are obeying their rulers in an act of disobedience to Allah. In this way, they are like any Muslim who commits a sin while believing that it is a sin. The ruling concerning them is the same ruling as that of other sinners. It is confirmed that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“Obedience is only in what is good and proper [according to the Shareeah].”⁴ He also said,

عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ
بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ

also narrated as statements from the Companions that may be used to strengthen it. Such is recorded by ibn Jareer and al-Baihaqi. Cf., Abdal Qaadir al-Arnaoot, footnotes to *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 2, p. 161.

¹ Recorded by ibn Jareer in his *Tafseer* (vol. 10, pp. 114-115) and by al-Baihaqi (vol. 10, p. 116) and there is some weakness in its chain.

² He was Abu al-Aaliyyah Rafee ibn Mahraan, al-Riyaahi by clientage. He was alive during the Days of Ignorance and he embraced Islam two years after the Prophet's death. He was a trustworthy scholar. He died in 93 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 207; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 384.

³ Recorded by ibn Jareer in his *Tafseer* (vol. 10, p. 115); also see ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 67.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

“Upon the Muslim person is hearing and obeying concerning what he likes and what he dislikes, unless he is ordered to do an act of disobedience [to Allah]. If he is ordered to do an act of disobedience, there is no hearing nor obeying.”¹ Ibn al-Qayyim wrote, “In this hadith there is evidence that whoever obeys those in charge regarding an act of disobedience to Allah, he is then a sinner. That does not make for him an excuse with Allah. Instead, the sin of disobedience will be upon him even if he would not have committed that act were it not for the people in authority [ordering him to do so]. This is what this hadith indicates.”²

However, the mere act of obedience [to the rulers] does not entail unbelief. The unbelief in obedience is when it is accompanied by belief [that it is proper or acceptable to go outside of the laws of Allah]. Ibn al-Arabi stated, “The believer commits *shirk* by following a polytheist only when he obeys him in matters of belief, which is the locus of disbelief and faith. If he obeys him in an action while his belief continues upon *tauheed* and affirmation, he is then a sinner [and not committing *shirk*]. That must be understood pertaining to every such matter.”³

The second category consists of those who reject, dislike and are displeased [with there being a rule other than what Allah revealed]. By the text of a hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), these people are definitely not sinners, not even to speak of them definitely not being disbelievers. If they get any share of sin, it would only be if they do not object to something that they have the ability to repel. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يُسْتَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرَاءُ فَتَعْرِفُونَ وَتُنْكِرُونَ فَمَنْ كَرِهَ فَقَدْ بَرِيَ وَمَنْ
أَنْكَرَ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ
قَالَ لَا مَا صَلَّوْا

“Leaders will be appointed over you. You will recognize some of what they do and reject other aspects. The one who dislikes [that situation] will be innocent [of sin]. The one who objects to it will be safe [with respect to his religion]. But the one who is pleased

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee, Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi.

² Ibn al-Qayyim, *Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, p. 429.

³ *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 743.

and follows [will have his sin upon him].” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we not fight them?” He said, “No, not as long as they pray.”¹ Al-Nawawi wrote, “The meaning is that whoever hates that evil will be free of its sin and punishment. However, this is for the one who does not have the ability to repel it by his hand or tongue. In their case, he must hate it in his heart and he will be free of sin... This also indicates that one who is unable to remove an evil is not sinful by his silence. Instead, he will be sinful if he is pleased with it, if he does not dislike it with his heart or if he follows and implements it.”²

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

إِنَّهُ سَتَكُونُ بَعْدِي أُمَرَاءُ مَنْ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَصَدَّقَهُمْ بِكُذِبِهِمْ وَأَعَانَهُمْ
عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ وَلَيْسَ يَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضُ وَمَنْ لَمْ
يَدْخُلْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَمْ يُصَدِّقْهُمْ بِكُذِبِهِمْ وَلَمْ يُعِنْهُمْ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ فَهُوَ مِنِّي وَأَنَا
مِنْهُ وَسَيَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضُ

“After me there will be [certain] rulers. Whoever goes to them, believes in their lies and assists them in their wrongdoing is not from me and I am not from him. He will not be presented to me at the Cistern [of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Hereafter]. Whoever does not go to them, does not believe in their lies and does not assist them in their wrongdoing is from me and I am from him. He will come to me at the Cistern.”³

Some people have declared the Muslim populous today disbelievers on the grounds that they follow and obey those who rule not in accord with what Allah revealed. They say, “A Muslim is a disbeliever polytheist whenever he obeys and follows anyone who rules not in accord with what Allah revealed.” Obedience and

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 243.

³ Recorded by al-Nasaa'ee, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Hibbaan and by al-Haakim who said it is *sahih* and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Tahaawi also narrated it in *Mushkil al-Athaar*. [Al-Albaani also declared it *sahih* in Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Nasaa'ee* (Riyadh: Maktab al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 3, p. 882.—JZ]

following, according to their claim, is by action, without any need to look into the intention or beliefs. They say, "Whenever a person performs a deed called for by a ruler who rules not in accord with what Allah revealed, he is obedient to him and a follower of him, taking him as a lord besides Allah." They say that such is the case regardless if:

(a) He performed the deed with the mistaken belief that the ruler was ruling by a ruling Allah had given or that Allah has permitted him to rule in that matter.

(b) He performed the order of the ruler while he knew that the ruler was ruling in contradiction to what Allah has ruled. He believes that the ruler does not have the ability to change the rule of Allah and he believes that his action in executing the order of that ruler is an act of disobedience to Allah.

(c) He performed the order of the ruler while he knew that the ruler was ruling in contradiction to what Allah has ruled but he also believes that the ruler, due to his holiness and nobility, has the right to permit what Allah forbade or forbid what Allah permitted. He believes that the ruler has the right to contravene the rule of Allah and that it is obligatory to obey and follow the ruler without regard to what Allah has ruled.¹

The Evidence

They present a number of texts to justify their view that the followers are disbelievers. Those who debated with them presented these texts. They include,

(1) First is Allah's statement,

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَتَهُمْ أَرْكَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ

"They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ, the son of Mary" (*al-Taubah* 31). They say that the following was in their acting upon what their priests and rabbis stated without looking into the general beliefs. This is the obedience. The text of the verse equates obeying the priests and rabbis in one's actions with taking the Messiah as a lord. This is the evidence that the action and belief are

¹ Taken from Hasan al-Hudhaibi, *Duaah la Qudhaah*, pp. 155-156.

the same in the ruling of the Shareeah. Both of them lead to *shirk*. This is further emphasized by the noble verse being in reference to all of the Tribe of Israel without exception. It does not distinguish between the one who did so mistakenly or not mistakenly, believing in said act or not believing in it.¹

(2) Allah also says,

﴿ إِنَّمَا أَلْهَىٰ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ﴾

“Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief” (*al-Taubah* 37). They argue that the transposing of the months is a deed and yet Allah has ruled that the one who perpetrates it commits *kufur*.²

(3) Allah has said,

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا
وَالرَّسُولَ اللَّهُ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴾

“Say, ‘If you do love Allah, follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’ Say [to them], ‘Obey Allah and His Messenger.’ But if they turn back, Allah loves not those who reject Faith” (*ali-Imraan* 31-32). Their argument here is that following is acting in accord with what the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought. If one does not act in accord with what he brought, he is not following him. If he does not follow him, he is turning away from him and is one of the disbelievers.³

(4) Allah says,

﴿ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُوحُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ لِيُجَدِّدُوا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ
إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

¹ Quoted from Hasan al-Hudhaibi, *Duaah la Qudhaah*, pp. 156-157.

² Quoted from Hasan al-Hudhaibi, *Duaah la Qudhaah*, pp. 156-157.

³ Quoted from Hasan al-Hudhaibi, *Duaah la Qudhaah*, p. 157.

“Eat not of (meats) on which Allah’s name has not been pronounced: that would be impiety. But the devils ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists” (*al-Anaam* 121-2). They say that the obedience that is meant in this verse is the eating of that which Allah has prohibited, regardless of the belief of the one who does the eating. If a Muslim is an apostate polytheist by obeying with respect to eating a piece of meat, what must be the case if he obeys in a much greater matter?¹

A Critique of Their Evidence

(1) Their first argument is Allah’s statement,

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبِنَهُمْ أَرْكَانًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ﴾

“They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ, the son of Mary” (*al-Taubah* 31). The meaning of this verse is that they took their rabbis and priests as lords by obeying them in permitting the forbidden and forbidding the permissible. This is a matter of belief and not just action. This point is made clear in the explanation of the verse as found in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), statement of the Companion and statement of the Follower that were presented earlier. These all make it clear that the *shirk* that the Tribe of Israel fell into was in putting the rabbis and priests in Allah’s place of permitting and forbidding while turning away from what Allah had ordered. Furthermore, there is nothing in the verse that indicates that it is true with respect to all of the Tribe of Israel. Indeed, there is a verse in the Quran that indicates the opposite of that conclusion:

﴿ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَانِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنْهَاءً
آئِيلٍ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴾

¹ Quoted from Hasan al-Hudhaibi, *Duaah la Qudhaah*, p. 158.

“Not all of them are alike: of the People of the Book are a portion that stand (for the right); they rehearse the Signs of Allah all night long, and then prostrate themselves in adoration” (*ali-Imraan* 113).

(2) Their second argument is the verse,

﴿ إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ﴾

“Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief” (*al-Taubah* 37). In this verse, Allah clarified that the transposing of a prohibited month was an addition to unbelief that had occurred. In commenting on this verse, ibn al-Arabi stated, “It is an explanation of the various aspects of disbelief that the Arabs used to perform. They denied the existence of the Creator when they said, ‘And who is the Merciful’ (*al-Furqaan* 60)... They denied the resurrection, saying, ‘Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?’ (*Yaa Seen* 78). And they denied the sending of the messengers, saying, ‘Shall we follow one of the humans among us’ (*al-Qamar* 24). They also claimed that permitting and forbidding was their right. Accordingly, they would permit or forbid based on the demands of their desires. They went beyond all of that by completely changing Allah’s religion. They permitted what He forbade and forbade what He permitted, changing and distorting [Allah’s religion].”¹ From their own minds, they would make things either permissible or forbidden. The transposing of the months was an addition in disbelief because it was a type of forbidding or permitting from them. Allah says [in the entire verse itself],

﴿ إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضِلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

يُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا لِيُوَاطِئُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحِلُّوا

مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ زَيْبًا لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ

الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

“Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief. The unbelievers are led to wrong thereby: for they make it lawful one year, and forbidden another year, in order to adjust the number of months forbidden by Allah and make such forbidden

¹ *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 935; also see al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 8, p. 139.

ones lawful. The evil of their course seems pleasing to them. But Allah guides not those who reject Faith” (*al-Taubah* 37).

(3) They also argue based on the verses,

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“Say, ‘If you do love Allah, follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’ Say [to them], ‘Obey Allah and His Messenger.’ But if they turn back, Allah loves not those who reject Faith” (*ali-Imraan* 31-32). The referred to “following” in this verse is a call to the absolute following of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The “turning back” mentioned in this verse is also the complete turning away from the call of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It does not mean the turning away from just one of his deeds. This is because not everyone who performs a deed that is not in following the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is considered to be turning away from the command of Allah in an absolute sense. Al-Tabari stated regarded the second verse, “Say [to them], ‘Obey Allah and His Messenger.’ But if they turn back, Allah loves not those who reject Faith” (*ali-Imraan* 32), “What He [Allah] means by that is: Say, O Muhammad, to that delegation of the Christians of Najran, ‘Obey Allah and the Messenger Muhammad for you know with certainty that he is My messenger to My creation. I have sent him with the truth that you find recorded with you in the Gospel. If you turn away and turn your back upon what he calls you to of those matters [of truth] and are averse to him, then you must know that Allah does not love anyone who disbelieves by denying what he knows to be the truth and rejecting it after he has had knowledge thereof.’”¹ Then he presents his chain back to Muhammad ibn Jafar ibn al-Zubair² who said, “‘Obey Allah and His Messenger,’ you, meaning the delegation of the Christians of Najran, recognize him

¹ *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 3, p. 223.

² He was Muhammad ibn Jafar ibn al-Zubair al-Awaam from Madinah. He was a scholar who narrated some hadith but who was reckoned among the jurists and poets. He died between 110 and 120 A.H. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 9, p. 93.

and find him in your books. 'If they turn away,' in their disbelief, 'then Allah does not love the disbelievers.'"¹

(4) Finally, they argue on the basis of,

﴿ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

"Eat not of (meats) on which Allah's name has not been pronounced: that would be impiety. But the devils ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists" (*al-Anaam* 121-2). This verse is related to the issue of the permissibility of carrion. The issue is not simply one of deeds but, instead, it is related to the right of permitting what Allah has forbidden. Al-Qurtubi said, "Allah's words, 'if you were to obey them,' mean with respect to permitting carrion, 'You would indeed be polytheists.' The verse indicates that anyone who legalizes what Allah forbade is associating partners with Him. In a clear text, Allah has stated that carrion is forbidden. If someone accepts its permissibility from any other source, he is committing *shirk*."²

Declaring Those Outside of the Group (*Jamaah*) to Be Disbelievers

Based on the extremists' conception of the *jamaah*, which was explained in the previous sections, is another issue: the disbelief of everyone outside their *jamaah*. They argue that it is not allowed to have more than one Muslim *jamaah*. Instead, there must be only one *jamaah* and that is the *jamaah* of the Muslims (their *jamaah*). Leaving this *jamaah* is considered *kufr*. Before presenting their specious arguments and statements, I would like to explain the ruling of leaving from the *jamaah* of the Muslims according to the Shareeah terminology.

The ruling for whoever abandons the *jamaah* of the Muslims differs depending on the different types of "abandoning":

If the abandoning of the *jamaah* is with respect to methodology and path that one follows, and it is a complete abandonment of that

¹ Recorded by ibn Jareer al-Tabari in his *Tafseer*, vol. 3, p. 233.

² *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 77.

methodology by apostatizing from the religion, it is *kufur*. Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا يَحِلُّ دَمُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
بِإِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ الثَّيْبُ الزَّانِي وَالنَّفْسُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالتَّارِكُ لِدِينِهِ الْمُفَارِقُ
لِلْجَمَاعَةِ

“It is not legal [to spill] the blood of a Muslim except in one of three cases: the fornicator who has previously experienced legal sexual intercourse, a life for a life and one who forsakes his religion and separates from *al-jamaah* (the community).”¹ Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid stated, “The meaning of *al-jamaah* here is the Muslim community. The forsaking of them is by apostatizing from the religion.”²

If the abandoning of the *jamaah* of the Muslims is in forsaking their community structure and make-up, the ruling differs [depending on the case]. If the case is that a person forsakes the *jamaah* by not pledging allegiance to an agreed-upon Imam or he negates his pledge, then this is not *kufur*, although it is a great sin. However, the person may have done so based on some interpretation of the law. It is confirmed that some of the Companions did not make the oath of allegiance to some of the Imams during their time. Ibn Hajar wrote about Abdullah ibn Umar, “He refused to make the oath of allegiance to Ali or to Muawiyah. Then he made the pledge to Muawiyah when he reconciled with al-Hasan ibn Ali³ and all the people gathered around him. He also refused to give the oath of allegiance to anyone during the time of disturbance until ibn al-Zubair⁴ was killed and all of the

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

² *Ihkaam al-Ahkaam Sharh Umdat al-Ahkaam*, vol. 4, p. 84.

³ He was al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Taalib al-Haashimi al-Qurashi. He was the caliph for six months after his father Ali ibn Abi Taalib. He was very beloved to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who stated that he would make peace between two factions of Muslims. That did in fact occur when al-Hasan stepped down in favor of Muawiyah for the caliphate. That was known as the year of the congregation. He died in 50 A.H. in Madinah. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 245; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, p. 295; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, pp. 199-200.

⁴ He was Abdullah ibn al-Zubair ibn al-Awwaam al-Qurashi, a noble Companion. He was the knight of the Quraish during his time and the first to be born after the Emigration [of the Prophet (peace and blessings of

rule was for Abdul Malik ibn Marwaan¹, at which time he gave his oath to him.”²

As for the two hadith,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شَيْبِرٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

“Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck,”³ and,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شَيْبِرًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

“The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance,” the meaning is that the person becomes like the people of the Days of Ignorance when they had no leaders or rulers. It does not mean that they die as disbelievers. Al-Nawawi explained, “The words, ‘The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance,’ with a *kasr* on the letter *meem* [meaning the mode of death] describes an attribute of their death in that it is anarchy with no leader for them.”⁴ Ibn Hajar also stated, “The meaning of the word, ‘death of the Days of Ignorance,’ with a *kasra* on the letter *meem*, is describing their circumstances at death in that it is like the death of the people of Ignorance in

Allah be upon him)]. He witnessed the conquering of North Africa. He was given the pledge as caliph in 64 A.H. He ruled over Egypt, Hijaz, Yemen, Khurasaan and Iraq. He had large battles with the Umayyads until he was killed by al-Hajaaj in 73 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 363; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 83; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 87.

¹ He was Abdul Malik ibn Marwaan ibn al-Hakam al-Umawwi al-Qurashi. He was one of the Umayyad’s greatest caliphs. He was raised in Madinah and was a jurist of great knowledge. Muawiyah appointed him governor over Madinah when he was sixteen years old. The position of caliph came to him after his father’s death in 65 A.H. He took good control of its affairs until his death in Damascus in 86 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 246; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 165.

² *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 12, p. 202.

³ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Haakim and ibn Hibbaan from the hadith of al-Haarith al-Ashari. The narration has supporting evidence in narrations from ibn Umar, Abu Hurairah, Abu al-Darda and Aamir ibn Rabeeah. About the source hadith, ibn Hajar (*Fath*, vol. 3, p. 17) stated, “Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Khuzaimah and by ibn Hibban who declared it *sahih*.” Al-Haithami (*Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 5, p. 217) stated, “Its narrators are of the *Sahih* save Ali who is Ishaq al-Sulami, and he is trustworthy.”

⁴ *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 238.

misguidance. They did not have an Imam who was followed because they were not aware of such things. It does not mean that he dies a death of a disbeliever. Instead, he dies as a sinner. It is possible to understand it according to its apparent comparison. In this case, the meaning would be that he dies a death like an ignorant person, if he is in fact not himself one of the people of Ignorance. In this manner, it is stated as a deterrence and strong warning. Its apparent meaning, though, is not what is meant. However, that it actually means to make a similarity to the Days of Ignorance is supported in the other hadith, 'Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck.'"¹

If the abandoning of the *jamaah* is done with weapons, and this is what the jurists call a rebellion, it is, according to the strongest opinion, also not *kufr*. This is because Allah still calls the rebels "believers." Allah says,

﴿ وَإِنْ طَافَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the Command of Allah. If it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just). The believers are but a single brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy" (*al-Hujuraat* 9-10).

Ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him, "O ibn Masood, do

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 7.

you know the ruling of Allah concerning the rebels of this Nation?" Ibn Masood said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He replied,

حکم الله فیهم ألا یتبع مدبرهم ولا یقتل أسیرهم ولا ینفذ علی

جریحهم

"Allah's ruling concerning them is that those among them who flee are not to be chased, their prisoners are not to be killed and [the deaths of] their injured are not to be hastened."¹

The extremists state that those outside of their *jamaah* are disbelievers. This is built upon an incorrect analogy as they claim that their *jamaah* is the Muslim community alone. Here is a view of this extremism found in a discussion between Abdul Rahmaan Abu al-Khair and another member of Shukri's group:

Abu al-Khair said, "Why do we not pray over Shaikh Saalih Surriyah and Kaarim al-Anaadhooli?"²

The other said, "Because the truth reached them and they rejected it."

Abu al-Khair said, "Concerning what were you in agreement and concerning what were you in disagreement?"

The other stated, "We disagreed about the statements of the Companions and the statements of the jurists. They take those statements while we do not follow them."

Abu al-Khair said, "But I read the transcripts of Saalih's trial and I heard Kaarim's self-defense. It clearly explained the terms *taaghoot*, *kufri*, *imaan*, *jaahiliyyah* and Islam. Not to speak of Karim's awareness of the members of the battle against the Islamic movement for many years."

The other man said, "But they refused to make the pledge to the *jamaah*. We are the *jamaah* of the truth. All other than us are not Muslims."

Abu al-Khair said, "Can't we face the reality that there are a number of *jamaats* established upon the same sound perception?"

¹ Recorded by al-Haakim and al-Baihaqi. Cf., al-Sanaani, *Subul al-Salaam*, vol. 3, p. 409. [However, this hadith is weak as ibn Hajar, al-Sanaani (in the reference the author refers to) and many other scholars concluded.—JZ]

² Saalih Surriyah and Kaarim al-Anaadhooli were two leading members of an opposing group, the well-known group of *al-Jamaah al-Fanniyyah al-Askariyyah*.

The other said, "It is not permissible for there to be a number of Muslim *jamaahs*."¹ For this reason, they called all of the other groups apostates.²

Their evidence for declaring all people outside of their *jamaah* disbelievers was:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ
تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ
أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

"Be not like those who are divided among themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs. For them is a dreadful penalty. On the day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black: To those whose faces will be black, (will be said), 'Did you reject faith after accepting it? Taste then the penalty for rejecting faith'" (*ali-Imraan* 105-106).

(2) They also quote the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned earlier,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شَيْبٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

"Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck," and,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شَيْبًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

"The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance."

Their proofs are refuted in the following:

¹ Cf., *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, pp. 93-95; also see p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

(1) The verse quoted is in reference to division concerning the foundation of the religion. It was stated with respect to the sectarianism of the People of the Book. Ibn Katheer stated, "Allah forbade this Nation from being like the previous nations with respect to division and differences, and their abandoning of the ordering of good and eradicating of evil with the proof established against them."¹ After stating that, he presents the hadith about dividing into sects. The only protection from this type of division is by clinging to the Book and the Sunnah and by adhering to the Community (the *jamaah*). The *jamaah* in reality represents a number of characteristics that by abiding by them one is a member of that *jamaah*. However, if a group of Muslims joins together for a particular good purpose, that does not mean that they will fall outside of the name of the *jamaah* of the Muslims. Instead, they would simply be a part of that greater *jamaah*.

(2) The *jamaah* that is referred to in the hadith they quoted is not their *jamaah* in particular. Instead, it is the greater Muslim community (*jamaah*) as a whole.²

(3) Even the abandoning of the *jamaah* of the Muslims in the manner they discussed is not considered a form of *kufur*, as was shown earlier.

Declaring as a Disbeliever the Resident Who does Not Migrate

Hijrah (migration) for the sake of Allah from the land of *kufur* to the land of Islam is a matter that is sanctioned and its performer is praised. However, the person who remains in the land of warfare (*daar*³ *al-harb*) is not unconditionally declared a disbeliever. Indeed, he is not necessarily considered sinful. The ruling concerning him depends on the details of his case. Shaikh Hamad ibn Ateeq⁴ categorized those who live in *daar al-harb* into three categories:

¹ Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 1, p. 390.

² See the previous discussion on the concept of the *jamaah* of the Muslims.

³ [*Daar* means above, "land of..." "abode of..." Hence, there is *daar al-Islam* or the land of Islam, *daar al-kufur* or the land of *kufur*, *daar al-salaam* or the land of peace for the Muslims and *daar al-harb* or the land at war with the land of Islam.—JZ]

⁴ He was Shaikh Hamad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ateeq, a judge from the scholars of Najd, Saudi Arabia. He was born in al-Zulfi in 1227 A.H. He studied in Riyadh and held the post of judge in al-Hulwah and then in al-Aflaj until his death in 1301 A.H. He produced a number of writings, including *Ibtaal al-Tandeed bi-Ikhtisaar Sharh Kitaab al-Tauheed*. Cf., *Ulamaa Najd*, vol. 1, p. 228; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 272.

The first category consists of those who live in *daar al-harb* out of want and choice, being pleased with what they follow as a way of life, pleasing the people of *daar al-harb* by censuring and blaming the Muslims or supporting such people with their lives and wealth. Such people are disbelievers and enemies of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This conclusion is based on Allah's statement,

﴿ لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ فَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ ﴾

"Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah" (*ali-Imraan* 28). Allah also says,

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَتَّيِّبُهَا ءَامِنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى
أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ
مِنْهُمْ ﴾

"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he among you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them" (*al-Maaidah* 51). And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

أَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ يُقِيمُ بَيْنَ أَظْهَرِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"I am free of every Muslim who resides amid the polytheists."¹

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa'ee. Al-Tirmidhi said, following al-Bukhari's view, that the hadith is defective because the final link between the narrator and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is missing. However, the hadith has supporting evidence in the hadith of Bahz ibn Hakeem on the authority of his father from his grandfather who stated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Allah does not accept any deed from a polytheist who associated partners with Allah until he leaves the polytheists and joins the Muslims." The chain of this hadith is *hasan*. It was recorded by Ahmad, ibn Maajah and al-Nasaa'ee. Cf., al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, hadith #1474. [Note that the translation of the hadith in this footnote is based on

The second category consists of those people who reside in *daar al-harb* for the purpose of wealth, a child or a homeland. He does not publicly display his religion and he has the ability to migrate. He also does not assist them against the Muslims with his life, wealth or tongue. He also does not ally with them. This person is not declared a disbeliever simply due to that kind of living with them. However, he is committing an act of disobedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by his not migrating. This conclusion is based on Allah's words,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً
فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾

“When angels take the souls of those who die in sin wronging their souls, they say, ‘In what (plight) were you?’ They reply, ‘Weak and oppressed were we in the earth.’ They say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?’ Such men will find their abode in Hell, what an evil refuge” (*al-Nisaa* 97). Ibn Katheer stated, “This verse was revealed applying in general to everyone who lives in the midst of the polytheists while he has the ability to emigrate but he does not have the ability to establish [and practice] his faith properly. He is wronging his own soul and committing a sin according to the consensus of the scholars.”¹

The third category consists of those for whom there is no harm if they remain in the midst of the disbelievers. This category is further subdivided into two subsets:

(1) The person is able to publicly declare his religion, free himself of their ways, show them the falsehood of their ways and show them that they are not upon the truth. For this person, it is still preferred that he emigrate in order to increase the number of Muslims [in the Muslim land], to support them, to wage jihad against the disbelievers, to be safe from their intrigues and to be at

the wording in *Sunan ibn Maajah*. The meaning is less apparent in the wording of some of the other collections.—JZ]

¹ *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 1, p. 542.

rest from seeing their evils while among them.¹ This view is proven by the following hadith:

(a) Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَصَامَ رَمَضَانَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى
اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ هَاجِرًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ جَلَسَ فِي أَرْضِهِ الَّتِي وُلِدَ
فِيهَا قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا نُنَبِّئُ النَّاسَ بِذَلِكَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةَ
دَرَجَةٍ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ كُلُّ دَرَجَتَيْنِ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا كَمَا بَيْنَ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَسَلُّوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ

“For whoever believes in Allah and His Messenger, establishes the prayer and fasts Ramadhaan, it is a right upon Allah that He should enter him into Paradise, whether he emigrates² for the sake of Allah or sits in the land in which he was born.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we not inform the people about that?” He replied, “In Paradise, there are one hundred levels that Allah has prepared for the *mujahideen*³ [people who take part in jihad] for His sake. Between each level there is [a distance of] what is between the heavens and earth. If you beseech Allah, ask Him for *al-Firdaus* [the finest part of Paradise].”⁴

(b) This is also indicated in the hadith of the Bedouin who asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about the *hijrah*. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him,

¹ Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 190; Muhammad Diraz, *al-Mukhtaar min Kunooz al-Sunnah*, p. 403.

² [Another narration in al-Bukhari with the same chain states, “whether he makes jihad for the sake of Allah or sits...” Allah knows best.—JZ]

³ [Note once again the specific reference to those who make jihad and not *hijrah*. Allah knows best.—JZ]

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

وَيْحَكَ إِنَّ الْهَجْرَةَ شَأْنُهَا شَدِيدٌ فَهَلْ لَكَ مِنْ إِبِلٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَتُعْطِي
صَدَقَتَهَا قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَاَعْمَلْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْبَحَارِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَنْ يَبْرَكَ مِنْ
عَمَلِكَ شَيْئًا

“Woe to you, the *hijrah* is a very difficult matter. Do you possess camels?” He said, “Yes.” He asked, “Do you give their zakat?” He replied, “Yes.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him, “Do good deeds even from beyond the seas, for Allah will not leave any of your deeds unrewarded.”¹

(c) Another piece of evidence is the hadith of Buraidah ibn al-Husaib who said, “Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would appoint a commander for an army or expedition, he would advise him personally to have fear of Allah and to treat the Muslims with him in a good way. Then he would say,

اغْزُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ اغْزُوا وَلَا تَغْلُوا
وَلَا تَغْدِرُوا وَلَا تَمْتَلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وَلِيدًا وَإِذَا لَقِيتَ عَدُوَّكَ مِنْ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَادْعُهُمْ إِلَى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ أَوْ خِلَالٍ فَأَيُّتَهُنَّ مَا أَجَابُوكَ فَأَقْبَلْ
مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ فَإِنْ أَجَابُوكَ فَأَقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ
عَنْهُمْ ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى التَّحَوُّلِ مِنْ دَارِهِمْ إِلَى دَارِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَأَخْبِرْهُمْ
أَنَّهُمْ إِنْ فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ فَلَهُمْ مَا لِلْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَعَلَيْهِمْ مَا عَلَى الْمُهَاجِرِينَ فَإِنْ
أَبَوْا أَنْ يَتَحَوَّلُوا مِنْهَا فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ يَكُونُونَ كَأَعْرَابِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ يَجْرِي
عَلَيْهِمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي يَجْرِي عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَكُونُ لَهُمْ فِي الْغَنِيمَةِ
وَالْفَيْءِ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا مَعَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَبَوْا فَسَلِّمُوا الْجَزِيَّةَ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasa'ee and Ahmad. [The above is a slightly abridged version of what is found in most of these references.]

فَإِنْ هُمْ أَجَابُوكَ فَأَقْبَلْ مِنْهُمْ وَكُفَّ عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَبَوْا فَاسْتَعِينْ بِاللَّهِ
 وَقَاتِلْهُمْ وَإِذَا حَاصِرْتَ أَهْلَ حِصْنٍ فَأَرَادُوكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ
 وَذِمَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ فَلَا تَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا ذِمَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ وَلَكِنْ اجْعَلْ لَهُمْ ذِمَّتَكَ
 وَذِمَّةَ أَصْحَابِكَ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَنْ تُخْفِرُوا ذِمَّتَكُمْ وَذِمَّةَ أَصْحَابِكُمْ أَهْوَنُ مِنْ أَنْ
 تُخْفِرُوا ذِمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَذِمَّةَ رَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا حَاصِرْتَ أَهْلَ حِصْنٍ فَأَرَادُوكَ أَنْ
 تُنْزِلَهُمْ عَلَى حُكْمِ اللَّهِ فَلَا تُنْزِلْهُمْ عَلَى حُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ أَنْزِلْهُمْ عَلَى
 حُكْمِكَ فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَدْرِي أَتُصِيبُ حُكْمَ اللَّهِ فِيهِمْ أَمْ لَا

'Fight in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah. Fight whoever disbelieves in Allah. Fight and do not steal from the booty, do not commit any treachery, do not mutilate and do not kill a child. When you meet your enemy polytheists, call them to one of three matters. If they agree to any of them, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. Invite them to Islam. If they accept, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. Ask them to move from their residence to the land of the Emigrants [in Madinah]. Inform them that if they do that, they will have the same rights and responsibilities as the Emigrants. However, if they refuse to move, inform them that they will be treated like the Bedouin Muslims, for whom the law of Allah will be implemented among the believers but they will not be given any war booty or bounties unless they participate in the jihad with the Muslims. If they refuse [to embrace Islam], ask them to pay the *jizyah*.¹ If they accept that, accept it from them and refrain your hand from them. If they refuse even that, seek help in Allah against them and fight them. If you encircle a people of a fortress and they want you to make for them a pact with Allah and His Messenger, do not make a pact with them in the name of Allah and His Messenger. But make with them a pact in your name and the name of your companions. Certainly, if you break the pact of you and your companions that will be a lighter matter than if they break the pact of Allah and His Messenger. If you encircle a people of a fortress and they want to surrender

¹ [This is the payment that non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic State pay to the government in lieu of military service.—JZ]

according to the judgment of Allah, do not accept their surrender according to the judgment of Allah. Instead, accept it according to your judgment, for you do not know if you have correctly applied the judgment of Allah concerning them or not.”¹

(2) The second subset consists of those who are weak and oppressed, not able to emigrate. Allah says about them [after the verse quoted above concerning the angels taking the souls of those who wronged themselves],

﴿إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا﴾

“Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed, men, women, and children who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to direct their way” (*al-Nisaa* 98). This is an exception for whoever does not have the means and cannot find a way to emigrate.²

This clarifies that the one who resides in a land and does not make *hijrah* is not to be declared a disbeliever. He is only declared a disbeliever if he is pleased with and follows their ways, demonstrating complete loyalty to them and supporting them against the Muslims.

Declaring the One Who does not Migrate a Disbeliever

Some people went to an extreme and declared those who did not migrate to be disbelievers. Maahir Bakri stated, “The weak and oppressed in the land while he has the ability to emigrate and leave that oppression is, therefore, sitting on a point of *kufr*. He has no portion of faith; he is a disbeliever. He is not a believer. That is the clear, unambiguous ruling of Allah.”³

To prove his point, he invokes two pieces of evidence:

(1) Allah says in the Quran,

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi.

² See Hamad ibn Ateeq, *al-Difaa an Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Itibaa*, pp. 12-19; also see Muhammad al-Qahtaani, *al-Walaa wa al-Baraa*, pp. 273-278; also see ibn Hajar’s division of the different types of *hijrah* in *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 190.

³ *Al-Hijrah*, p. 68.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً
فَتَهَاجَرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَاوَأْتُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾

“When angels take the souls of those who die in sin wronging their souls, they say, ‘In what (plight) were you?’ They reply, ‘Weak and oppressed were we in the earth.’ They say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?’ Such men will find their abode in Hell, what an evil refuge” (*al-Nisaa* 97). After presenting this verse, he stated, “This indicates that the principle that they were upon when death came to them was clear *kufr* and not Islam.”¹

He defines the conditions for declaring one who does not emigrate to be a disbeliever in the light of this verse: “He has knowledge of the position of being downtrodden and oppressed – oppression, with the ability to remove himself from there and flee with his religion while he sits not removing himself from it and fleeing with his religion without an excuse that would permit that in general, all of that = blatant *kufr*.”² He shows that this is the condition for declaring one who does not migrate to be a disbeliever. He claims that the evidence for that is taken from the Book of Allah.³

(2) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

كُلُّ مُسْلِمٍ عَلَى مُسْلِمٍ مُحَرَّمٌ أَخْوَانٍ نَصِيرَانِ لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ
مُشْرِكٍ بَعْدَمَا أَسْلَمَ عَمَلًا أَوْ يُفَارِقَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ إِلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“All of a Muslim is inviolable to every other Muslim, [they are] brethren and helpers of one another. Allah does not accept any deed from a polytheist who associated partners with Allah after he accepts Islam until he leaves the polytheists and joins the

¹ *Al-Hijrah*, pp. 67-68.

² *Al-Hijrah*, p. 68. His words in the original are not well tied together as is clear above.

³ *Al-Hijrah*, p. 68.

Muslims.”¹ Bakri states, explaining the argument from this hadith, “This is a clear, authentic text showing that the one who dwells among the polytheists while he has the ability to leave them, but he then refrains from leaving them while knowing the prohibition of living among them, he is a disbeliever. Allah will not accept any deed from him.”²

The Refutation of Their View

It is apparent that this verse and hadith are from those texts that threaten a punishment, and yet which were presented as they are without discussing their particular circumstances. Texts of this nature must be examined in the light of the sound principle, which is that the people of *tauheed* are not disbelievers who will remain forever in the Hell-fire. This is true even if they perpetrate some great sins. These texts are only labeling the remaining in the land of *kufur* with the label of *kufur* out of consideration of what remaining with them could lead to. Remaining in the land of *kufur* could drive a believer to be pleased with the acts of the non-believers and to show loyalty to them. However, if nothing of this nature occurs, the ruling concerning his remaining with them is according to the different categories that were discussed earlier. The fact that Allah confirms faith for those who did not migrate is evidence that remaining in the lands of the disbelievers is not always *kufur*. Allah has said,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ

¹ Recorded by al-Nasaa`ee, Ahmad and ibn Hibbaan in his *sahih*. The hadith is *hasan*.

² *Al-Hijrah*, p. 69.

“Those who believed, migrated, and fought for the faith, with their property and their persons, in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave (them) asylum and aid, these are (all) friends and protectors, one of another. As to those who believed but migrated not, you owe no duty of protection to them until they come into exile. But if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance” (*al-Anfaal* 72). In this verse, Allah mentions different categories of believers. He divides them into those who migrated and left their homes and wealth to support Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), those who helped them from the Muslims of Madinah and those believers who did not migrate but remained in their lands. Allah has confirmed faith for all of them.¹

Declaring a Specific Person to Be an Unbeliever Without Due Regard to the Shareeah Restrictions

One of the accepted principles among the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* is the principle of differentiating between a general declaration of [an action being] *kufr* and an individual himself becoming a disbeliever. The texts that describe a person unconditionally as a disbeliever for doing a certain act may not be applied upon a specific person if their conditions were not met or if there were certain mitigating factors. On this point, there is no difference between the fundamental aspects of the religion and the secondary aspects. [For example,] a statement could be belying Allah and the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), however the one who said it may be new to Islam or raised in a distant land or desert. In this case, he is not declared a disbeliever due to such a denial unless and until the proof is established against him. It could have been the case that the person had never heard that text before, it was not confirmed for him or it seemed to him that other evidences contradicted it and, hence, he had to reinterpret that text, even if he were mistaken in doing so.² [All of these would be mitigating factors such that he would not be called a disbeliever for the statement he had made.]

This point is evidenced in what Hudhaifah narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

¹ Cf., ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 2, pp. 328-329.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 231; vol. 10, p. 372 and vol. 28, p. 500.

كَانَ رَجُلٌ مِمَّنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ يُسِيءُ الظَّنَّ بِعَمَلِهِ فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ إِذَا أَنَا مِتُّ
فَخَذُونِي فَذَرُونِي فِي الْبَحْرِ فِي يَوْمٍ صَائِفٍ فَفَعَلُوا بِهِ فَجَمَعَهُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ
قَالَ مَا حَمَّاكَ عَلَى الَّذِي صَنَعْتَ قَالَ مَا حَمَّلَنِي إِلَّا مَخَافَتَكَ فَغَفَرَ لَهُ

“There was a man from those before you who had bad feelings about his deeds. He told his family, ‘When I die, take me, [burn me] and spread my ashes over the sea on a windy day.’ They did so and Allah brought him back together and said, ‘What led you to do what you have done?’ He replied, ‘Nothing led me to do it except for fear of You.’ Therefore, he was forgiven.”¹

Ibn Taimiyyah noted, “That man had doubts about Allah’s ability and in His ability to bring him back when he was ashes. In fact, he believed that He would not bring him back. Such a belief is *kufir* according to the agreement of the Muslims. However, he was ignorant and did not know that [such was *kufir*]. And he was a believer who feared that Allah would punish him. Therefore, he was forgiven due to that. The scholars who make *ijtihaad* [improperly] reinterpreting [the verses or hadith] while eagerly desiring to follow the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are more deserving of forgiveness than that [man].”²

The story of Qudaamah ibn Madhoon³ is also evidence for this principle. He was taken to Umar after he had drunk alcohol. Umar said, “I wish to apply the legal punishment on you.” He replied, “You have no right to do that for Allah has said, ‘On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness there is no blame for what they ate’ [*al-Maaidah* 93].” Umar replied, “You are mistaken in your interpretation. The remainder of the verse says, ‘If they had *taqwa* [fear of Allah and God-consciousness].’ If you had had *taqwa*, you would have remained away from what Allah forbade you.” Then he gave the order to have him flogged.⁴ This Companion had declared

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad. This hadith has been narrated in longer and shorter versions from numerous Companions, including Abu Saeed al-Khudri, Abu Hurairah and others.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 3, p. 231.

³ He was Qudaamah ibn Madhoon ibn Habeeb al-Jamhi, a Companion who had migrated to Abbyssinia. He participated in the Battle of Badr and the other battles. Umar appointed him over al-Bahrain (al-Hasa) and then removed him. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 161; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 191.

⁴ This incident was recorded by Abdul Razzaaq in his *Musannaf* (vol. 9, #17076).

[alcohol] permissible for himself yet Umar did not declare him an unbeliever due to the argument that he presented to him. This was the way of the pious early generations. Imam Ahmad did not declare specific individuals of the Jahamiyyah disbelievers nor did he say such for everyone who said, "I am a Jahamite." Nor did he say so for those who agreed with the Jahamites in some of their heresies. In fact, he even prayed behind some of the Jahamites who were calling to their innovation, putting people to inquisitions and punishing those who disagreed with them. He did not declare them disbelievers. In fact, he believed in their faith and capacity to be Imams. He prayed for them but he also objected to the false beliefs that they were stating, which were clearly great *kufur* but they did not know that such was *kufur* due to their interpretations and mistakes and following of those who told them those things.¹ Similarly, al-Shafi'ee said to one who said that the Quran is created, "You have committed *kufur* in Allah, the Great."² He explained to him his *kufur* but he did not declare him an apostate at the moment of that statement. This was because the evidence that such was *kufur* was never explained to him. Had he believed that the person was an apostate, he would have moved quickly to have him killed.³

Many of those who declare others to be disbelievers have fallen into this mistake of declaring specific individuals to be disbelievers without taking into consideration the Shareeah restrictions and parameters. This occurred a lot among them. An example was given earlier wherein Shukri's group declared Saalih al-Surriyah and Kaarim al-Anaadhooli disbelievers because they refused to make the pledge to the *jamaah* of the truth—according to their claim—and whoever is outside of that *jamaah* is not a Muslim.⁴ This is extremism in two aspects: (1) Declaring those who do not join the group disbelievers, as was clarified earlier; (2) Declaring a specific individual a disbeliever [without adhering to the proper relevant principles of the Shareeah].

¹ See ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 507 and vol. 23, p. 348.

² This story was related by Abu al-Qaasim al-Laalakaa'ee in *Sharh Usool al-Itiqaad* (vol. 1, p. 53) and ibn Abi Haatim in *Adaab al-Shafi'ee wa Munaaqibuhu* (p. 195).

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 23, p. 349.

⁴ See Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair, *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, pp. 93-95.

Making *Takfeer* for Those Who do Not Consider the Disbelievers—In Their View—to Be Disbelievers

Whoever does not consider the Jews, Christians and polytheists—those who are well-known for their disbelief based on the texts of the Shareeah and even based on what they admit about themselves—is belying what Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have said. Allah [for example] says,

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ﴾

“Those who say that God is the Messiah, son of Mary, have certainly disbelieved” (*al-Maaidah* 72). If anyone says that they are not disbelievers, he is denying what Allah has said and is disbelieving in Him. For that reason, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab¹ counted not considering the disbelievers to be disbelievers one of the aspects that negate one’s Islam. He said, “You must know that the aspects that negate one’s Islam are ten... The third: Not considering the polytheists to be disbelievers, or having some doubt about their disbelief or saying that their *kufur* way of beliefs is sound and acceptable.”² Muhammad ibn Sahnoon³ said, “The scholars have concurred that whoever reviles the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a disbeliever. His ruling, according to the Imams, is that he should be killed.

¹ He was Shaikh al-Islam Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab ibn Sulaimaan al-Tameemi. He was the “reviver of the faith” for the twelfth century of the Hijrah. He was born and raised in al-Uyainah in Najd. He traveled to the Hijaz, al-Shaam and al-Ahsaa. He returned to Najd and lived in Huraimla. He called people to the pure *tauheed* and the leaving of heresies. He traveled to al-Uyainah and it was not long before harm came to him there. He went to al-Duriyyah and was generously received by its ruler. He made a pact with him that was known as the “Pact of al-Duriyyah,” thereby establishing [the first] Saudi state. He died in 1206 A.H. He produced many writings, most famous being *Kitaab al-Tauheed*. Numerous people have written about his life, including Masood al-Nadwi, Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Attaar, Ahmad ibn Hajar ali-Baatoomi and others. Cf., *Ulamaa Najd*, vol. 1, pp. 25-47; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 257.

² *Majmooh al-Tauheed*, p. 371.

³ He was Muhammad ibn Abdul Salaam (Sahnoon) ibn Saeed al-Tanookhi, a Maliki jurist. He wrote many works. No one in his era had as comprehensive knowledge of the different fields as he did. He traveled to the East. He was noble and of lofty purpose. He died in 256 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 13, p. 60; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, pp. 204-205.

Anyone who has any doubts as to said person's unbelief also commits *kufir*."¹

It is one of the greatest forms of misguidance for someone to introduce a heretical belief in Islam, wanting the people to follow it and when they do not agree upon it, he declares them all disbelievers. To declare someone a disbeliever is a Shareeah ruling. It is not permissible to remove it from someone whom Allah has branded with it. Similarly, it is not permissible to ascribe it to someone whom Allah has declared innocent of it. For that reason, it was the manner

of the people of knowledge and of the Sunnah not to declare those who disagreed with them disbelievers, even if that opponent declared him a disbeliever. This is because *takfeer* is a Shareeah ruling and it is not permissible to do it simply as a reciprocal act. For example, if someone lies about you or commits illegal sexual intercourse with your wife, it is not allowed for you to lie about him or commit illegal sexual intercourse with his wife. This is because lying and illegal sexual intercourse are forbidden as a right of Allah. Similarly, declaring another person a disbeliever is a right of Allah. Hence, one cannot declare a person an unbeliever save for that person whom Allah and His Messenger have declared a disbeliever [that is, by having a clear proof from the Quran and Sunnah that such a person is a disbeliever].²

The heretics have both the characteristics of ignorance and of wrongdoing (*dhulm*). They invent a heresy that contradicts the Quran, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Companions and then they declare whoever opposes their innovation a disbeliever. For example, the Khawaarij introduced the idea of not following any Sunnah which they claimed was in contradiction to the Quran. Then they declared those who disagreed with them disbelievers, to the point that they declared Uthmaan ibn Affaan, Ali ibn Abi Taalib and others disbelievers.³ Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "Whoever calls to a call, giving vent to pure ignorance that contradicts what all the people of knowledge follow and then, while differing from them, he wants to declare those who do not agree with him disbelievers and

¹ Quoted from ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Saarim al-Maslool*, p. 5.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Radd ala al-Bakri*, p. 258.

³ Cf., Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Radd ala al-Bakri*, p. 255.

deviants, he is committing one of the gravest acts that the truly ignorant perform.”¹

In contemporary times, when some people started to declare the rulers disbelievers and Professor Hasan al-Hudhaibi² and those with him disagreed with them, they also declared him and the people with him disbelievers.³ Declaring others disbelievers became something common on the tongue to the point that it was even stated when there was the slightest difference of opinion.⁴ Different members of a group or party would even use this expression for each other.

The Innovation of Suspending Judgment and Verifying People’s Islam

With respect to the judgment concerning an individual’s Islam, human societies may be divided into three groups.

The first group is the society in which the normal case and basic ruling is that of *kufir*. This would be societies like America, France, Japan and other contemporary [non-Muslim] societies. If someone wants to state that an individual from those societies is a Muslim, he must first suspend judgment and verify the matter. We suspend judgment concerning that person’s Islam until we are able to verify his situation. The reason for this is that the person being a Muslim is not in accord with the normal case in that society and is, therefore, in need of evidence being established to prove it.

The second group is the society that is mixed, like the Indian society. Its ruling is the same as for the previous group. One must suspend judgment and verify the case. This is because there is no clear sign showing that a person is a Muslim. There is no way to distinguish between a disbeliever and a Muslim unless the person verifies and demonstrates his case.

The third group is the society in which the normal case and basic ruling is that of Islam. This would be like the societies in the

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Radd ala al-Bakri*, p. 125.

² He was Hasan al-Hudhaibi from Egypt. He was the second supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood. He was a judge and was chosen as the successor to Hasan al-Banna. After the Egyptian revolution, he was accused of plotting against the life of Gamal Abdunnasser. He was arrested, then released, then arrested again and then finally released after Gamal Abdunnasser’s death. He continued in his position with the Muslim Brotherhood until his death in 1393 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 225.

³ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 116.

⁴ Cf., Rajab Madkooor, *al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, pp. 277-278.

Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan and elsewhere. In this case, there is no need to suspend judgment and verify the person's religion. This is because the normal case is the ruling case and there is no need to bring forth evidence. If, for example, someone says that Allah did not obligate six daily prayers upon us, he does not have to present evidence for his claim. This is because the absence of an obligation (or the principle of freedom of responsibility) is the basic ruling. However, if someone says that five daily prayers are obligatory, he must prove that from the Quran and the Sunnah because the existence of an obligation differs from the basic, general rule. Based on that, we are not in need of suspending judgment and verifying the case in declaring a person a Muslim when he lives in a land whose basic ruling is that of Islam. Indeed, it is the disbelief and the claim that he left the religion that is in need of proof.¹

For this reason, there are hadith that warn against declaring another person a disbeliever. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ لِأَخِيهِ يَا كَافِرٌ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهِ أَحَدُهُمَا

“If a man says to his brother, ‘O disbeliever,’ it will certainly stick to one of them.”²

Therefore, we are not in need of suspending judgment and verifying the case for a Muslim who lives in a land whose normal and general ruling is that of Islam. The basic ruling concerning him is that he is a Muslim. Similarly, if someone shows to us the outward signs of Islam, we are not in need of suspending judgment and verifying his case. The following provides evidence for this position:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ ءَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْغُونَ

¹ [Basically, what the author said above is the following: If a person is from one of the first two groups of societies in which non-Muslims are dominant or the society is mixed, he will be thought of and treated like a non-Muslim until there is evidence or some sign to show otherwise, such as his stating the testimony of faith. If someone is from a Muslim society, he will be thought as and treated as a Muslim until there is evidence or some sign to show otherwise.—JZ]

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنْ أَلَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنْ أَلَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا
 تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

“O you who believe! When you go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to anyone who offers you a salutation, ‘You are not a believer,’ coveting the perishable goods of this life: with Allah are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were you yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favors: therefore carefully investigate. Allah is well aware of all that you do” (*al-Nisaa* 94). In this verse, Allah ordered the believing *mujahideen* for His sake to be careful and to investigate the matter. They should not kill anyone whose case is questionable when he shows them any sign of Islam. They should not move towards killing anyone unless they are certain about him, that he is an opponent of theirs, Allah and the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).¹ Allah is ordering them in a situation where *kufir* is the normal case, that if a person of those they are fighting against shows any sign of Islam, they must stop and investigate the matter [and not kill anyone who could possibly be a Muslim]. Obviously, then it must even more so be the case that one should not declare an individual a disbeliever when he is showing signs of Islam in a setting where the normal case or ruling is also that of Islam.

(2) Usaamah ibn Zaid said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent us on a military expedition. In the morning, we raided the Huruqaat from Juhainah. I came across a man and he said, ‘There is none worthy of worship except Allah.’ I then killed him. This bothered my soul so I mentioned it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Did he say, “There is none worthy of worship except Allah” and you still killed him?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he said that only out of fear of the weapon.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said, ‘Why didn’t you open his heart so you would know why he said it.’ He kept repeating that statement to the point that I

¹ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 5, p. 221.

wished that I had embraced Islam only on that day.”¹ In this case, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not order Usaamah to suspend judgment and investigate the case of a person whose basic ruling and whose ruling of his people was that of *kufir*. As long as he made the statement of faith and spoke the two testimonies of faith [that was sufficient to accept him as a Muslim]. This ruling must apply even more so to a person who lives in a society whose normal case or ruling is that of Islam.

Some contemporaries went to an extreme and claimed that in order to consider someone a Muslim, one must first suspend judgment and verify with assuredness the person’s Islam. The people of this approach became known as, “The Group of Suspending Judgment and Verification.”² I have not been able to obtain any of their writings as none of them has been published. However, there was one book that was published in 1410 A.H. that contains some of the statements of the people of suspending judgment.³ The author categorizes the people of the different societies, which he calls societies of *jaahiliyyah* (Ignorance) into three categories: “(1) A Muslim whose Islam has been made clear; (2) A disbeliever whose disbelief has been made clear; (3) The unknown case, the ruling concerning him is to suspend judgment.”⁴

Explaining further the third set, he stated,

The third group: The unknown case, the ruling concerning him is to suspend judgment. When Allah created humans, they fell into two categories, “Some of them are disbelievers and some of them are believers” [*al-Taghaabun* 2]. The case during the era in Madinah was as follows: There were Muslims who testified that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. Their affairs were all under the hand of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). There were the People of the Book who were distinguished by being denigrated by paying the *jizyah* while being subjugated. They were people who associated partners with Allah and whose disbelief was manifest. However, today there is no clear sign by which we may definitively state

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Cf., Muhammad Suroor ibn Naaif Zain al-Abideen, *Majallah al-Sunnah*, No. 2, back cover.

³ This is the book *Duaah ala Abwaab Jahannam* by Yoosuf ibn Haamid al-Fakee.

⁴ Yoosuf al-Fakee, *Duaah ala Abwaab Jahannam*, p. 148.

something about the individuals of society. Should it be the prayers or the beard? We find people whose fathers named Muhammad and Ibraaheem, for example, and he is the head of the socialist party, reviling and censuring Islam. If it were the prayer, well, we can find people who pray the prayers in their times and then they go out and circumambulate the graves [thus committing *shirk*]. When they are prevented, they become arrogant and haughty... We find them praying and crying while reciting the Quran but when the prayer is finished, they enter their courtrooms and judge the people according to man-made laws and they force the people to the best of their ability to such laws. They call the halls of the courts the halls of justice. When the *taaghoot* [oppressive leader who becomes like a deity in a sense] feels very confident and assured, he builds mosques [meant in reality] for his worship wherein Allah is also worshipped. Hence, the prayer becomes a righteous deed concerning which both the disbeliever and polytheist perform it as well as the Muslim. As for the beard, it is accepted among the fashion experts that if a man desires to keep his sign of manhood, he should grow his beard. Hence, today we find Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims all growing beards. Among some of the Arab tribes, it is a disgrace for a man to shave his beard... All of those groups in our times continue to display these signs. Therefore, these are not signs that we can build upon to say that the one we are seeing is a Muslim. The existence of a *jaahili* society does not mean that there are no individual Muslims among them who do not speak with their ways or do their acts. However, their cases are unknown. I do not affirm their *kufr* nor do I affirm their Islam. I do not affirm *kufr* for them out of fear of the threat in the hadith from Muslim, 'If a man says to his brother, "O disbeliever," it will certainly stick to one of them.' Similarly, I do not affirm Islam for a person who could be a disbeliever even though he has some outward signs of Islam or of being a Sunni because if I did that I may be belying the Quran. I think using the term "unknown case" for the one whose situation is not known is completely just and also safest for the one who is making

that statement. And I seek refuge in Allah from what the tongues reap.¹

One may summarize the refutation of his views as below:

(1) Those opinions are based on the principle that the general ruling for anyone living in a Muslim society is that of *kufr*. This is not correct. The general ruling is that of Islam, as we have already discussed. Indeed, that opinion is based on the belief that these societies are *jaahili* and that their land is the land of the disbelievers. These views are rejected and shall be discussed in detail in the upcoming sections.

(2) Suspending judgment on the one who announces his Islam and displays some of the acts of the Shareeah is of no benefit at all. The one who suspends his judgment will only be able to find similar matters about the person. In other words, he will never be able to verify what is in the heart of the person, regardless of what acts he performs. In fact, the only thing he can verify is what the person says with his tongue and the deeds he performs with his being.

(3) The actions that he [al-Fakee] mentioned do not necessarily make the person an unbeliever. Resorting to a law other than the law of Allah does not imply *kufr* unless the person does so willingly and happily. Similarly, the ruler is not declared a disbeliever unless the Shareeah restrictions and parameters are met, as was discussed earlier.

(4) In its origin, this suspending of judgment is an innovation. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions and the early scholars never did such a thing. Hence, it is an act that is rejected from its doer, as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever innovates [anything] into this affair of ours that is not from it, it is rejected [that is, not accepted by Allah].”²

(5) Even according to the opinion that one should suspend judgment concerning a person in a land whose ruling is that of *kufr* or a mixed society between Muslims and disbelievers, it would be sufficient if the person states the testimony of faith to verify his

¹ Yoosuf Haamid al-Fakee, *Duaah ala Abwaab Jahannam*, pp. 152-153. His words have obvious mistakes with respect to beliefs as well as in his language.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah.

case. For that reason, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) objected to Usaamah's action when he was not satisfied with the person's statement of the testimony of faith [in the hadith discussed earlier about the person Usaamah killed even after he made the testimony of faith]. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him, rebuking him, "Why didn't you rip open his heart?"¹

(6) If a Muslim declares another person's Islam based on what he sees from him while the reality of the matter is the opposite, he has not belied the Quran [as al-Fakee claimed above]. A person can only act upon what he sees openly from another person. The evidence for this statement is ample, from experience, logic and the Shareeah. A proof related to the question of declaring another person a disbeliever is the aforementioned hadith of Usaamah ibn Zaid wherein the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him, "Why didn't you rip open his heart?"² Umar ibn al-Khataab also said, "People were [sometimes] judged by the revealing of a divine inspiration during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But now that is no longer. Now we judge you by the deeds you publicly practice. We will trust and favor the one who does good deeds in front of us, and we will not call him to account about what he is really doing in secret, for Allah will judge him for that. But we will not trust or believe the one who presents to us an evil deed, even if he claims that his private deeds are good."³

Saying that the Contemporary Muslim Societies are *Jaahill* [Ignorant, non-Islamic]

The Lexical Meaning of the Word *Jaahiliyyah/Jaahili*:

The root letters of the word *jaahiliyyah* are three, *al-jeem*, *al-ha* and *al-lam*. Its meanings go back to two roots: "The first of them is 'the opposite of knowledge.' The other is 'rashness and a lack of calmness.'"⁴ The Arabs used the word *al-jahl* in a wide sense, inclusive of both lacking knowledge as well as not acting upon knowledge. Al-Raaghib al-Asfahaani stated, "*Jahl* is of three varieties: The first is the soul being free of knowledge... The second is to believe something that is different from what is in reality...

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Ibn Faaris, *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic *jahl*.

The third is to do something in contradiction to what should be done, regardless of whether this is accompanied with a sound belief or a false belief... In accord with that, Allah says, ‘They said, “Do you try to make a laughing-stock of us?” He [Moses] said, “Allah save me from being an ignorant (fool)”’ [al-Baqarah 67]. He considered the ridiculous act to be ignorance. Allah also says, ‘Ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly (bijhaalah)’ [al-Hujuraat 6].”¹

The Meaning of Jaahiliyyah in the Quran and Sunnah:

To describe a time or people as *jaahili* is not a simple customary description. Instead, it is a Shareeah description that implies a certain ruling. Hence, one must take due consideration of the Shareeah parameters and restrictions in this case. Indeed, this ruling has many grave and serious consequences.

Upon study of the texts of the Quran and Sunnah, we find that the word *jaahiliyyah* is used according to very specific meanings. The word *jaahiliyyah* is found in the Quran four times.

(1) Allah says,

﴿ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قَتَلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴾

“After (the excitement) of the distress, He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred

¹ Al-Mufradaat fi Ghareeb al-Quran, topic *jahl*.

to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions of Allah, suspicions due to ignorance (*jaahiliyyah*). They said, 'What affair is this of ours?' Say [to them], 'Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's.' They hide in their minds what they dare not reveal to you. They say (to themselves), 'If we had had anything to do with this affair, we should not have been in the slaughter here.' Say, 'Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death.' But (all this was) that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts. Allah knows well the secrets of your hearts" (*ali-Imraan* 154).

(2) Allah says,

﴿ وَأَنْ أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
وَأَحْذَرَهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ
تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

"And this (He commands): Judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile you from any of that (teaching) which Allah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, be assured that for some of their crimes it is Allah's purpose to punish them. And truly most men are rebellious. Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*)? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?" (*al-Maaidah* 49-50).

(3) Allah also says,

﴿ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ
لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴾

"And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*): and

establish regular prayer, and give the zakat; and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless” (al-Ahzaab 33).

(4) Finally, Allah says,

﴿إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾

“While the unbelievers got up in their hearts pride and haughtiness—the pride and haughtiness of Ignorance—Allah sent down His Tranquillity to His Messenger and to the believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah has full knowledge of all things” (al-Fath 26).

All of these verses use the word *jaahiliyyah* in a limited sense with respect to some kind of action: the thoughts of *jaahiliyyah*, the rule of *jaahiliyyah*, the exposing of oneself to *jaahiliyyah* and the pride and haughtiness of *jaahiliyyah*.

The word *jaahiliyyah* is used in the Sunnah in two senses.

The first usage: It is used in a general, absolute sense. Such was the case during the farewell pilgrimage in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ تَحْتَ قَدَمَيَّ مَوْضُوعٌ

“Verily, all the affairs of *Jaahiliyyah* are under my feet, done away with.”¹

Such is also the case in the hadith narrated by ibn Abbaas wherein the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah.

أَبْغَضُ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثَلَاثَةٌ مُلْحِدٌ فِي الْحَرَمِ وَمُبْتَغٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةَ
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَمُطَلِّبٌ دَمَ امْرَأٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ لِيُهْرِقَ دَمَهُ

“The most hated of people to Allah are three: The one who deviates from right conduct in the sanctuary [of Makkah or Madinah], the one who desires that the practices of *Jaahiliyyah* remain in Islam and the one who seeks to spill the blood of a man without any right to do so.”¹

“The statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in this hadith, ‘The one who desires that the practices of *Jaahiliyyah* remain in Islam,’ includes all of *Jaahiliyyah* in both a general or a specific sense.”² “The *Jaahiliyyah* sunnah are all of the customs that they used to follow.”³

The second usage: This is where the word *jaahiliyyah* is used in a conditional or restricted sense [with respect to some action, for example]. For instance, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Abu Dharr when he insulted a man by reference to his mother,

إِنَّكَ امْرُؤٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ

“Verily, you are a man who has [some aspect of] *jaahiliyyah* in you.”⁴ Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

وَمَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“Whoever dies and does not have on his neck a pledge of allegiance dies a death of the Days of Ignorance.”⁵

In this hadith, the word *jaahiliyyah* is used in conjunction with something else. Attributing an act to *jaahiliyyah* implies its blameworthiness and its prohibition. However, it does not confirm that it is an act of unbelief.⁶

In the light of these texts, the meaning of the word *jaahiliyyah* can be made clear. The Lawgiver has used the word *jaahiliyyah* to

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 228.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 222.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and others.

⁵ Recorded by Muslim.

⁶ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 215 and p. 220.

indicate a form that is the antithesis of Islam. "It is a chosen word, chosen precisely due to its wide connotation indicating the purpose and the goal of what is truly meant. It gives a direct meaning, which is a clear feeling of absolute censure. It gives the indication that the doer is ignorant in every sense of the word."¹

In its original state, the word *jaahiliyyah* is an adjective. However, due to common and repeated usage, it became a noun describing the time before the sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Before the sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the people were living in a general, comprehensive state of Ignorance. All of their beliefs and actions were invented for them by the ignorant and performed by the ignorant. However, after the sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it is not possible for there to be a complete, general *jaahiliyyah* [dominating all spheres of the world. So now, no time can be called a time of Ignorance in a general, all-inclusive sense]. This is because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا يَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُمْ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ

"A group of my Nation will continue to be predominant until Allah's command comes."²

However, *jaahiliyyah* is divisible and can be divided into parts. It is possible to find some of its customs or deeds coming from an individual Muslim. As the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Abu Dharr,

إِنَّكَ أَمْرٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ

"Verily, you are a man who has [some aspect of] *jaahiliyyah* in you."³ But that does not confirm *kufr* for that person. Al-Bukhari stated in his chapter title containing that hadith, "Chapter: Acts of disobedience [to Allah] are from the matters of *jaahiliyyah*. The one who perpetrates them does not commit *kufr* unless he actually commits an act of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah)."⁴ Similarly, one may find some of the practices of *jaahiliyyah* in some

¹ Abdul Sattaar al-Saeed, *al-Bashariyyah bain al-Islam wa al-Jaahiliyyah*, p. 139.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and others.

⁴ *Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitaab al-Imaan*, vol. 1, p. 84.

of the Muslim countries when the laws of *jaahiliyyah* rule them. [As Allah says,] “Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*)?” (*al-Maaidah* 50). This is how the Muslim scholars have understood the matter. Approving of this meaning, ibn Taimiyyah stated, “Before the sending of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the people were in a state of Ignorance attributed to pure ignorance... That was the general state or time of *jaahiliyyah*. After the sending of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it could exist in one area and not in another area, as it exists in the lands of the disbelievers. It could also exist in particular individuals, such as a person before he embraces Islam is in a state of *jaahiliyyah* even if he is living in the land of Islam. However, as a complete era [of Ignorance], there is no such *jaahiliyyah* after the sending of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).”¹ Ibn Hajar stated, “*Jaahiliyyah* was what existed before Islam. It is used with respect to a particular individual meaning he is in an ignorant state.”²

The Ruling Concerning Giving the Attribute of *Jaahiliyyah* in an Absolute Sense:

The ruling concerning describing something in an absolute sense to be *jaahili* (Ignorant) depends on how that term is used, based on the following classification:

(1) The first case is its use in a general sense describing the era or the Muslim nation by saying, for example, “Humans are now living in *Jaahiliyyah*,” or, “All of the Muslim societies today are *jaahiliyyah* societies.” From a Shareeah point of view, this is not permissible based on the following:

(a) When the word *jaahiliyyah* is used in this unconditional, absolute sense, its meaning in the texts is the time period in which the Shareeah is completely violated. This was exhibited in the time period before the sending of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, it existed before the sending of each particular prophet of Allah. However, after the sending of the Seal of the Messengers (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it is not possible for there to be this kind of general, absolute Ignorance. Again, the evidence for this point is the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, pp. 226-227.

² *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 85.

لَا يَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُمْ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ

“A group of my Nation will continue to be predominant until Allah’s command comes.”¹ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْمَعُ أُمَّتِي أَوْ قَالَ أُمَّةً مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ اللَّهُ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ إِلَى النَّارِ

“Verily, Allah does not gather together this Nation—or he said the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—upon a misguidance. The Hand of Allah is with the congregation. Whoever separates from it, separates to the Hell-fire.”²

(b) Upon an examination of the texts in which the word *jaahiliyyah* is found, one does not find any case where the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used it as such a general attribute without conditioning or restricting it in some sense [by, for example, referring it to a specific action].

(c) The characteristic of Ignorance is one that is divisible into parts. If a society is ruled by other than what Allah revealed, this does not necessarily mean that it is a disbelieving, Ignorant society. The members of that society may not be pleased with the situation they are in. Instead, one would describe them by saying that they are being ruled by a rule of *jaahiliyyah*. [As Allah says,] “Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*)?” (*al-Maaidah* 50).

(2) The second case is its use in a particular sense with reference to a certain individual or land. Again, here the circumstances differ based on the following classification:

(a) The one being described with it deserves the use of this term. For example, one might say about the lands of the

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Abi Aasim, al-Laalakai in *Sharh Usool al-Itiqaad* and al-Haakim. Al-Tirmidhi said, “It is solitary through this chain.” Its chain contains Sulaimaan ibn Subyaan and he is weak, as it states in *al-Taqreeb* [by ibn Hajar]. Al-Tabaraani records it via two chains. The narrators of one of them are the narrators of the *Sahih* save for Marzooq, the ex-slave of the family of Talhah, and he is trustworthy, as al-Haithami stated in *Majma* (vol. 5, p. 218). Al-Albaani said about the narration in *al-Tabaraani* that its chain is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Dhilaal al-Jannah fi Takhreej al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 40.

disbelievers that they are lands of Ignorance. This usage is permissible. Ibn Taimiyyah said, "After the sending of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it could exist in one area and not in another area, as it exists in the lands of the disbelievers. It could also exist in particular individuals, such as a person before he embraces Islam is in a state of *jaahiliyyah* even if he is living in the land of Islam."¹

(b) It is being used to describe some Muslims who commit grave sins. In this case, it is not allowed to use this term in an absolute, unrestricted sense unless the person is saying that those sins are permissible. The ruling concerning such a person is what was discussed earlier concerning applying the term of unbelief to a sinner.

(3) The third usage is where *jaahiliyyah* is attributed to a nation or individual in a conditional sense with mention, for example, of a specific circumstance or action that is being performed. For example, one could say, "This land is being ruled by a rule of *jaahiliyyah*. Its women are going out in the fashion of the days of *jaahiliyyah*," and so forth. This type of usage is found in the texts. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described Abu Dharr as having within him some aspect of *jaahiliyyah* when he insulted a man's mother. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also explained that there are some matters from the time of the Days of Ignorance that this nation will refuse to give up. He stated,

أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ
وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ

"There are four matters found in my Nation from the matters of *Jaahiliyyah* that you will not abandon: boasting of high rank, slandering ancestries, seeking rain via the stars and wailing [over the dead]."²

The statement that the contemporary Muslim societies are *jaahili* and disbelieving has come from some of the contemporary extremist groups. In fact, it is very clear that this thought has dominated many of the extremist groups as many of their other beliefs and opinions are based on the view that the societies are

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 227.

² Recorded by Muslim.

jaahili. On just one page of one of their writings that was chosen at random, I found the words “*jaahili* society,” “land of *kufr*,” “disbelievers”—all of them while describing the society they were living in—tens of times.¹ Their writings indicate that the Islamic societies are entirely *jaahili* with the exception of only their *jamaah*. Maahir Bakri stated, “All of the societies today who claim to be attached to Islam are all *jaahiliyyah* societies without any exception.”² While discussing the group’s stance toward the society, Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair stated, “We were in need of propping up the manifestations of an Islamic society that was created by the *jamaah* in the heart of the *jaahili* society in the face of the dominant *jaahiliyyah* society phenomenon.”³ He also said, “The *jamaah* represented the healthy outward manifestation in the midst of a diseased, decayed body which was the *jaahili* Egyptian society.”⁴ He stated, after he had some differences with Shukri Mustafa on some specific issues and after he felt some apprehension, “It was sufficient that if someone was not pleased with the argument given by another that he would consider him outside of his circle and he would then be treated in the way that the people of the *jaahiliyyah* were being treated.”⁵ The meaning of his being treated like the people of *jaahiliyyah* was that he was to be declared a disbeliever and then killed. He wrote about Shaikh al-Dhahabi [whom they assassinated], “He did not have any weight among any individuals in the group. He was simply one of the rubbles of European *jaahiliyyah* and *jaahiliyyah* customs and traditions that are clothed in a white *imaamah* (headcovering).”⁶ The view that the society was *jaahili* must be considered one of the foundations of their thought and ideology. Indeed, Abdul Rahman Abu al-Khair considered it one of the principles that he agreed with Shukri Mustafa about from the first time they had met.⁷ The connection is very clear between the view that the society is *jaahili* and the view that the lands of the Muslims of today have gone from being the lands of Islam to the lands of *kufr* and its inhabitants committing *kufr*. This can be made even clearer by looking at the expressions that were counted on just one page from their book *Kitaab al-Hijrah*. The expressions [all of them being in reference to Egypt and its society] are:

¹ See Maahir Bakri, *al-Hijrah*, p. 9.

² *Al-Hijrah*, p. 62.

³ *Dhikriyaati ma Jamaah al-Muslimeen*, p. 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

- (a) "From within the *jaahili* society";
- (b) "From the land of the disbelievers and sinners";
- (c) "Living in the *jaahili* society in the land of *kufur*";
- (d) "The Muslim living in the *jaahili* society is weak and oppressed";
- (e) "The disbelievers in the *jaahili* society are the ones with the power";
- (f) "Residing in the land of *kufur* and harm";
- (g) "Everyone found in the *jaahili* society";
- (h) "The numbers of those disbelievers are increasing."¹

These and similar other expressions demonstrate the extent of the correlation in their perceptions between the view that the society is *jaahili* and the view that it is a *kufur* society. This is what led them into extremism.

One writer stated, "When Islam first came for the people in the Seventh Century, it encountered a *jaahili* society. Today, it also is encountering the *jaahili* society of the West of the Twentieth Century. The features are the same features [as those of old]. And its characteristics are the same characteristics."²

Then he shows that there is a feature that distinguishes the two *jaahili* societies. He wrote,

The first *jaahili* society had very clear signs to it and prominent features that made it clear that it was outside of the fold of Islam. One could spot at first glance the distinctive feature and behavior of *jaahiliyyah*. And the people of that society never claimed that they were Muslims... However, concerning the contemporary *jaahiliyyah* society that Islam is currently encountering, it is a bewildering society with respect to its signs and it is a society in which the features have been mixed and merged together. It lingers around the perimeter of the circle of Islam; it does not enter it and come to rest in its center but at the same time it does not refuse to stay close to its perimeters such that it can touch its outer limits. It is a society whose people claim that they are Muslims. In fact, you will see from some of them that vehement, angry outburst whenever they come close and they are touched with that final description. At that time, you will hear one of them say, "Do you not see the mosques filled with men? Do you not hear the call to

¹ *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 9.

² Abdul Jawaad Yaseen, *Muqadimah fi Fiqh al-Jaahiliyyah al-Muaasirah*, p. 8.

prayer? Do you not see the large groups of pilgrims?" We do not deny that this *jaahiliyyah* has something of that nature. However, we reject their view that that and similar other acts are sufficient to confirm their Islam. This is because Islam does not accept for any society to be affiliated with it unless Islam's pillars and conditions which Allah has delineated in His Book and upon the tongue of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and upon which the first Islamic state were established are established in it.¹

In that general introductory work, the author limited himself to a study of Egyptian society and he believed that there is great similarity between it and all other societies in the world. Hence, he declares them all to be *jaahili* societies.²

A historical survey leads us to find that the first person to use this type of terminology was Abu al-Ala Maudoodi. He wrote in his book *al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah fi al-Quran* (*Four Basic Quranic Terms*), "Those who were born and raised in an Islamic society no longer had with them the understandings of the words, 'God,' 'Lord,' 'worship,' and 'religion' (*deen*) that were widespread in the *jaahili* society at the time of the revelation of the Quran."³ He even had a small booklet entitled, *Islam and Ignorance* wherein he clarified what he meant by "the pure *jaahiliyyah*."⁴ Then Sayyid Qutb greatly expanded the use of that term as he opined that *jaahiliyyah* was not simply an era of time. He wrote, "*Jaahiliyyah*, as Allah describes it and as the Quran defines it, is the rule of humans over humans as it is a type of servitude or worship of one human to another human, leaving the worship of Allah and rejecting the Godhood of Allah. It is, in its stead, the accepting of the 'godhood' of some humans by serving them instead of Allah. *Jaahiliyyah*, in the light of this text [of the Quran,] 'Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of Ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*),' therefore, is not a particular era but it is a situation or circumstance. This situation was found yesterday, is found today and will be found tomorrow, as it is the adopting of the attributes of *jaahiliyyah* as opposed to Islam."⁵

¹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

² Ibid., p. 17.

³ *Al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah fi al-Quran*, p. 10.

⁴ *Al-Islam wa al-Jaahiliyyah*, p. 10.

⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Dhilaal al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 904. Also see *Maalim fi al-Tareeq*, pp. 88, 89, 91.

This text quoted from him shows the extent of the relationship between *jaahiliyyah* and *haakimiyyah* in Sayyid Qutb's perception. Muhammad Qutb¹ was greatly influenced by this thought, as he stated in defining *jaahiliyyah*, "*Jaahiliyyah*, as it is meant by the Quran and defined by it, is the state of mind wherein the guidance of Allah is rejected and a man-made system is created in refusal of ruling by what Allah had revealed."²

However, none of them, Maudoodi, Sayyid Qutb or Muhammad Qutb, intended by their description as *jaahili* to imply that the society is a disbelieving society. Abu al-Ala Maudoodi wrote, "No one could efface the permanent effects of the enormous strength that the Islamic movements possessed from the structure of the Islamic Nation. It is for that reason that if one were to ask any individual from the Muslim masses, no matter how evil his values have become, is alcohol permissible or forbidden, he will never say that it is permissible. You can ask him about any of the evils and virtues that he finds and he will show displeasure for them. Why? Because the Islamic values that he believes in have not changed for him to such an extent. He still looks at those Islamic values with a look of awe and esteem. He feels their loftiness and grandeur even though his customs and manners may have much evil and wickedness to them... You can travel to all of the corners of the Islamic world and you will not find any group of Muslims save that they will have the same feelings and emotions that I referred to."³

He stated in *al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah*, "If the understanding of these terms is muddled and confused in the minds of men and the knowledge of their meanings deficient, there is no doubt that all that the Quran has of guidance and direction will also be confusing to him. His beliefs and all his deeds will also be deficient although

¹ He is Muhammad Qutb Ibraaheem born on 4/26/1919 C.E. in Egypt. His father was a farmer who loved knowledge and he taught his children. Muhammad completed his primary and secondary studies and then graduated from college, specializing in English language and literature. He studied at the Institute of Higher Education for Teachers and obtained a diploma in education and psychology. His brother Sayyid influenced him. He has written many works. He mostly concentrates on matters of *aqeedah* (creed and faith) and contemporary thought. He currently teaches those topics at Umm al-Qura University in Makkah. Cf., *Ulamaa wa Mufakkiroon Araftuhum*, vol. 2, pp. 275-293.

² *Jaahiliyyah Qarn al-Ishreen*, p. 9.

³ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 67, quoting from *Majallah al-Mujtama*, No. 343.

he is a believer in the Quran.”¹ This makes it clear that Shaikh Maudoodi did not intend by *jaahiliyyah* the meaning *kufr*. Similarly, Sayyid and his brother Muhammad, as is clear to me from their words, mean by *jaahiliyyah* the *jaahiliyyah* of rule and law not a general *jaahiliyyah*. I have read through most of their statements concerning *jaahiliyyah* and I found that the words “the rule or law” and the word *jaahiliyyah* are sister terms in their usage. This shows that the word indicates the *jaahiliyyah* of the law and system and not a general or comprehensive *jaahiliyyah*. Based on that, it is not possible to describe the usage of these callers to Islam (Maudoodi, Sayyid and Muhammad Qutb) of the description of *jaahiliyyah* as part of the phenomenon of extremism. The most that can be said is that they used this term according to their manner while failing to restrict it and use it in a limited sense according to the Shareeah parameters.²

It would have been sufficient for them to call the *jaahiliyyah* of the Twentieth Century, the *jaahiliyyah* in the rule and law as man-made laws dominated the lands of the Muslims—save for the places Allah has protected. This term is completely consistent with their concept of *jaahiliyyah* and, more importantly, it is in accord with what the texts indicate concerning there not being any general, comprehensive *jaahiliyyah* after the sending of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Extremism Related to the Ruling of a Land

(1) The Determining Factor for the Categorization or Ruling Concerning a Land:

The scholars hold different opinions concerning the determining factor for the ruling of a land. Their opinions may be summarized into two general opinions:

(a) The first opinion states that the determining factor is the manifestation and enactment of laws.

(b) The second opinion states that the determining factor is the issue of security and protection.

Here is an explanation of these two views:

¹ *Al-Mustalahaat al-Arbaah fi al-Quran*, p. 8.

² For a more detailed discussion interpreting Sayyid’s discussion of *jaahiliyyah* and *takfeer*, see al-Bahinsaawi, pp. 214-216.

The First Opinion:

The majority of the jurists are of the opinion that the determining factor in the ruling concerning a land, whether it be the land of Islam (*daar al-Islam*) or the land of *kufur* (*daar al-kufur*), is the manifestation and appearance of the laws. In *al-Iqnaa*, it defines *daar al-harb* (the warring state) as, "The land in which the law and rule of *kufur* is dominant."¹ Al-Kasaanee² said, "There is no difference of opinion among our companions [of the Hanafi school] that the land of *kufur* becomes the land of Islam by the appearance of the laws of Islam therein."³ Ibn al-Qayyim said, "The land of Islam is the land in which the Muslims have settled and the laws of Islam are applied. If the laws of Islam are not applied there, it is not the land of Islam even if it is geographically connected to it."⁴

Such is the view of the majority of the scholars.⁵ However, they differ in the explanation of the laws that are implemented, whether it is from the role of the leader or it is the actions of the populace, that is, the outward signs of Islam and so on. These two trends are explained below:

The first trend: The first group sees that the laws refer to the actions of the Imam, that is, the political leader. If the political control is in the hands of the Muslims, the land is the land of Islam and the opposite is true if it is in the hands of the disbelievers. This is the view of the Hanafis.⁶ Al-Sarakhsi⁷ stated, "The aspect to be considered in the categorization of a land is the ruler and power in bringing about the laws."⁸ Ibn Hazm explains this reasoning by

¹ Cf., al-Bahooti, *al-Iqnaa wa Sharhuhu Kishaaf al-Qinaa*, vol. 3, p. 43; also see ibn Muflih, *al-Mubdi*, vol. 3, p. 313.

² He was Imam Alaa al-Deen Abu Bakr ibn Masood al-Kaasaani al-Hanafi, nicknamed "the king of the scholars." He died in Aleppo in 587 A.H. He produced a number of writings, the most famous being *Badaai al-Sanaai fi Tarteeb al-Sharaai*. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 70.

³ *Badaai al-Sanaai*, vol. 7, p. 130.

⁴ *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah*, vol. 1, p. 366.

⁵ Cf., *al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 232; ibn Muflih, *al-Adaab al-Shariyyah*, vol. 1, p. 213; ibn al-Qayyim, *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah*, vol. 1, p. 366. And ibn al-Qayyim states that such is the opinion of the majority.

⁶ Cf., *al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 232; al-Kasaani, *Badaai al-Sanaai*, vol. 7, p. 130; ibn Abideen, *al-Haashiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 271.

⁷ He was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Sahl, a judge, one of the greatest Hanafi scholars and one of their *mujtahids*. His most famous book is *al-Mabsoot* which he dictated while in prison in Jibb due to his giving some words of advice to one of the rulers. When he was released, he lived in Farghaatah and died there in 483 A.H. Cf., *al-Juwaahir al-Mudheeah fi Tabaqaat al-Hanafiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 28; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 315.

⁸ Al-Sarakhsi, *Sharh al-Sayyar*, vol. 5, p. 1073.

saying, "This is because the land is ascribed to those who dominate it, rule it and control it."¹

Contemporary scholars, including Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem², Abdul Rahmaan al-Saadi³ and Muhammad Rasheed Ridha⁴, have given the same ruling. The implication of this view is that a land could be the land of Islam even if almost all of its residents are disbelievers, as long as the ruler is a Muslim and he rules by the laws of Islam.⁵

The second trend: The second group sees the determining factor in categorizing a land to be the deeds of the inhabitants—that is, the manifest, apparent major signs and deeds. If the laws of Islam, such as the prayers and so forth, are manifest and dominant, then the land is the land of Islam. If not, it is the land of *kufur*. This is the explanation of some of the Hanafi scholars. One said, "*Daar al-harb* becomes the land of Islam by the implementation of the laws of the people of Islam therein, such as the establishment of the Friday prayers and Eid prayers, even if disbelievers remain in that land."⁶ One jurist said, "The land of Islam is where the testimony of faith and the prayers are manifest and none of the characteristics of *kufur* appears therein...except by protection, permission or pact from the Muslims. *Daar al-harb* is the land wherein the power is in the hand of the people of *kufur* with there being no covenant from the Muslims for them."⁷

It is clear from ibn Taimiyyah's words that he is in agreement with the people of this trend. He stated, "The categorization of a place as being a land of *kufur*, a land of faith or a land of evildoers is

¹ Ibn Hazm, *al-Muhalla*, vol. 11, p. 200, issue 2198.

² *Al-Fatawwa*, vol. 6, p. 166.

³ *Al-Fataawa al-Saadiyyah*, p. 98. Al-Saadi was Abdul Rahmaan ibn Naasir al-Saadi, born in 1307 A.H. in Unaizah, Saudi Arabia. He studied there. He was a genius and the far reaches of knowledge were opened to him. Although his area concentrated on the study of Hanbali fiqh, he went beyond that and specialized in Quranic commentary, hadith, *tauheed* and the works of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. He was open to study all areas and he moved from the level of a follower of a school to that of a *mujtahid*. He sacrificed greatly for the sake of knowledge. He was also the reference for *fatwas* in his time. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 1376 A.H. Cf., ibn Basaam, *Ulamaa Najd*, vol. 2, p. 422.

⁴ *Fataawa Muhammad Rasheed Ridha*, vol. 5, p. 1918.

⁵ Cf., al-Raafi'ee, *Fath al-Azeez*, vol. 8, p. 4; Abdul Kareem Zaidan, *Ahkaam al-Dhimiyyeen*, p. 50.

⁶ Mulla Khasaru, *al-Durar al-Hukaam Sharh Gharar al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 259. Also see *al-Durr al-Mukhtaar*, with the notes by ibn Abideen *al-Haashiyyah*, vol. 4, p. 175.

⁷ Ibn Yahya al-Murtadha, *Uyoon al-Azhaar*, p. 228.

not a permanent classification. It is a temporal attribution depending on its inhabitants. Every land that is inhabited by the pious believers is the land of the devoted servants of Allah at that time. Every land inhabited by the disbelievers is a land of *kufur* at that time. Every land inhabited by the evildoers is a land of immorality at that time. If the inhabitants change what we mentioned or if others change it, it becomes their [respective] land.”¹

The Second Opinion:

Some Hanafis are of the opinion that the determining factor in categorizing a land is the issue of security and safety. If the Muslims are secure and safe in a land, it is the land of Islam. If the Muslims are not so, it is the land of *kufur*. Al-Sarakhsi stated, “The land of Islam is a name given to the place which is under the control of the Muslims. The sign of [that control] is that the Muslims live there in a state of peace and security.”²

The Strongest Opinion:

The weightier opinion, Allah knows best, is the view that the determining factor in categorizing a land is the manifestation and appearance of laws. It is the laws that distinguish a land from being Islamic or *kufur*. Islam and *kufur* both have a set of branches—which are the laws, regulations and practices. If a particular [relative] amount of the branches of Islam and its laws are found in a land, it is the land of Islam. If such an amount of the branches of *kufur* is found, it is the land of *kufur*. As for the question of security and peace in a land, this is a temporal state coming from a government and it is an attribute that has no effect to it [with respect to the question at hand].

These laws are the combined actions of the people and the ruler. One cannot make a judgment as to a land being the land of Islam or the land of *kufur* without taking into consideration both of these aspects. Furthermore, the following principles must also be taken into consideration:

(1) When it is said that the determining factor of a land is the manifestation and appearance of the laws, that does not mean that all [of the laws of Islam, for example] must be present. This is, in fact, a very rare scenario. It did not occur in the history of the

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 18, p. 282.

² *Sharh al-Sayyar*, vol. 3, p. 81. Also see al-Kaasaani, *Badaai al-Sanaai*, vol. 7, p. 130; Abdul Qaahir al-Baghdaadi, *Usool al-Deen*, p. 270.

Muslims save during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the time of the rightly guided caliphs. That was followed by some shortcomings afterwards. There has been no time or place in which some of the laws of the Muslims have not been absent.

(2) These laws which determine the categorization of a land are of different importance. The most important is the prayer—that is the most important in general but in particular when discussing the status of the land—from the government, that is, in the actions of the Imam or ruler. The following indicates this point:

(a) Abu Umaamah al-Baahili¹ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لِيَنْقُضَنَّ عَرَى الْإِسْلَامِ عُرْوَةَ عُرْوَةَ فَكَلَّمَا انْتَقَضَتْ عُرْوَةٌ تَشَبَّثَ
النَّاسُ بِالَّتِي تَلِيهَا وَأَوْلَهُنَّ نَقْضًا الْحُكْمَ وَأَخْرَهُنَّ الصَّلَاةَ

“The laws [cords] of Islam will be demolished, law by law. Whenever a law is demolished, the people [will try to] cling desperately to the next one. The first of them to be demolished is the system of government, and the last of them will be the prayer.”²

(b) There are also hadith which state that it is permissible to revolt against a ruler who abandons the prayer. This is because this is the last thing by which a people can be judged to be Muslims.

Therefore, if one does not hear the call to prayer in a land and does not find mosques therein, this is evidence that that land is the land of *kufr*. If one hears the call to prayer and finds mosques, even if some of the manifestations of the land are missing, the land is still a land of Islam.

Hadith provide evidence for this view, including the following:

First, Anas ibn Maalik said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would attack at dawn. He would listen for the call to prayer. If he heard the call to prayer, he would refrain from attacking. Otherwise, he would attack.”³ Al-Nawawi stated, “This hadith indicates that the call to prayer

¹ Abu Umaamah Sadi ibn Ajlaan al-Baahili was a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He died in the land of Hims. He was the last of the Companions to die in al-Shaam. 250 of his hadith are found in either *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Sahih Muslim*. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 42; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 203.

² Recorded by Ahmad. Al-Haithami stated in *al-Majma* (vol. 7, p. 281), “Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tabaraani. Its narrators are from the *Sahih*.”

³ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and al-Daarimi.

prevents an attack on the people of that place because it is an indication of their Islam.”¹

Second, Isaam al-Muzani² narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would send out a military expedition, he would tell them,

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مَسْجِدًا أَوْ سَمِعْتُمْ مُؤَذِّنًا فَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَحَدًا

“If you see a mosque or hear a caller to prayer, do not kill anyone.”³ Al-Shaukaani noted, “This hadith... contains evidence that it is permissible to make a judgment based on [such] evidence as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refrained from fighting at the moment of hearing the call to prayer.”⁴ He also stated, “It also indicates that one should proceed with caution in matters related to blood [that is, lives]. His refraining from that in those circumstances indicates this, although that may not have been their true case [that is, it is possible that it was not a land of Muslims].”⁵ He also noted, “This hadith contains evidence that simply on the basis of the existence of mosques one can use that as evidence that its inhabitants are Muslim. This is so even if one does not hear the call to prayer from them because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would order his military expedition to refrain due to either of two matters: the existence of a mosque or hearing the call to prayer.”⁶

There are two comments that still need to be made. First, someone may try to refute the use of these two hadith as evidence for this issue because the most that may be said is that the hadith show that the lands should not be attacked, but they do not make any statement concerning the categorization of the land [as being that of Islam or *kufir*]. The response to this is that it is that categorization that prevents one from attacking the land. This is because the most important ruling that is a ramification of

¹ *Sharh al-Nawawi ala Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 84.

² He was Isaam al-Muzani who, according to al-Bukhari, was a Companion. Ibn Saad also includes him among those who were Muslim by the time of the Battle of the Ditch. He narrated a number of hadith, including the one presented above. Cf., ibn Hajar, *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 5.

³ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood. [Also recorded by Ahmad. Al-Albaani has declared this hadith weak. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Dhaeef Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1991), p. 184.—JZ]]

⁴ Al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 7, p. 278.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 278.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 278.

declaring a land the land of *kufr* is the permissibility of waging war against that land and its people. Al-Shaafi'ee stated, "It is the categorization of the land that prevents the attack on that land."¹

The second comment is that someone could refute the above argument by noting that in the lands of *kufr* one finds mosques and hears the call to prayer. The response to this is that the existence of the mosques and calls to prayer referred to above means that it is a dominant, manifest aspect of the land. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prevented them from attacking due to the call to prayer, he was dealing with the Bedouin areas wherein a call to prayer would be a manifest sign and evidence of the Islam of its inhabitants due to the smallness of their areas and their very few inhabitants. Hence, the issue is a relative one. In a small village, one mosque could be a dominant, manifest sign that its people are Muslims while, at the same time, ten mosques in a large city would not be a dominant, manifest sign indicating that the people are Muslims.

The following examples may make this clearer. The Muslims in France adhere to the outward manifestations of Islam and they have mosques. However, these are not from the distinguishing features and manifest aspects of the land. Hence, it is a land of *kufr*. On the other hand, the Muslims in Morocco adhere to the outward manifestations of Islam and these are the salient features and dominant aspect of the land. Hence, it is a land of Islam.

Therefore, it is clear that the land of Islam is the land in which the laws of Islam, in particular the prayers, are manifest and dominant. The land of *kufr* is that land in which the laws of Islam, in particular the prayers, are absent.

The meaning of the performing of the prayers does not just mean that some individuals among the people meet this obligation. However, in particular, it means that it is one of the actions of the ruler or Imam. [The hadith to be discussed in detail later concerning revolting against the ruler state, for example,]

لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيكُمْ الصَّلَاةَ

"No, [do not fight against them] as long as they establish the prayer among you,"² and

¹ *Al-Risaalah*, p. 300.

² Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.

لَا مَا صَلُّوا

“No [do not revolt against them] as long as they pray.”¹ Although these hadith are about revolting against the ruler, that issue has a strong connection with this issue of the categorization of the land. In both cases, the existence of the prayers makes it impermissible to wage war against that land.

The Ruling Concerning a Land Changing from the Land of Islam to the Land of *Kufr*:

Now that the definitions of the land of Islam and the land of *kufur* have been given, a very important issue must now be discussed. This is the issue of a land changing its ruling from being a land of Islam to being a land of *kufur*. This case can take many forms. One jurist described these forms when he wrote, “The forms that this case can take are the following three: (1) The warring [non-Muslim nations] overrun one of our [Muslim] lands; (2) The people of a land apostate and are dominated by or implement the laws of *kufur*; (3) The [non-Muslims living in a land under a covenant with the Islamic state] repudiate their covenant and take control of their land.”²

On this issue, there are five different opinions among the scholars. They are:

The First Opinion:

This view states that any land that was ever at one time a land of Islam cannot be changed into a land of *kufur*. Ibn Hajar al-Haitami³ stated, “Apparently, it not possible for it to return to a land of *kufur*, even if the disbelievers take control of it. It is as is stated in the authentic report, ‘Islam is to be dominant and not dominated over.’”⁴

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad.

² *Al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 232.

³ He was Shihaab al-Deen Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hajar al-Haitami al-Sadi al-Ansaari, a jurist from Egypt. He produced numerous writings including *al-Fataawa al-Haitamiyyah* and *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj fi Sharh al-Minhaaj*. He died in 974 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 234.

⁴ *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 9, p. 269. Al-Bukhari recorded that hadith in *mualaq* form [that is, without its complete chain]. He joined it with the words of ibn Abbaas giving the wrong impression that he thought it was part of his speech. The correct view is that these words have been narrated both as a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as a statement of a Companion. Al-Daaraqutni narrates it as a

Al-Ramli¹ stated in his definition of the land of Islam, "It includes the land in which the Muslims inhabited, even if that was in the past, and the disbelievers took control of it, like Cordoba [in Spain] based on the fact of our control of it in the past."²

Some Shafi'ees understand this definition to be with the condition that the Muslims are not prevented from such lands. If they are prevented from those lands, then these lands become the lands of *kufur*.³ Some of the people of this opinion say that in a case like that, we call it a land of *kufur* but this is just with respect to its appearance and form but not with respect to the actual ruling concerning it. One jurist wrote, "It becomes a land of *kufur* in form but not in ruling."⁴

Ibn Hajar al-Haitami said, in explaining the statement of the Shafi'ees, "Their statement, 'It becomes *daar al-harb*,' means it is in the process of becoming so in form only and not in ruling."⁵

Zain al-Deen ibn Nujaim⁶ stated, "In our times and after the general invasions by the Mongols, those provinces that they took over and applied their laws, such as Khawaarizm, Transoxiana, Khurasan and others, have become *daar harb* in their outward form."⁷

hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and ibn Hajar (*Fath*, vol. 3, p. 220) said that his chain is *hasan*. Al-Aini (*Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 7, p. 58) said that it is *sahih* according to the criteria of al-Haakim. Ibn Hajar stated that al-Khaleeli narrated it in his *Fawaaid* as part of a lengthy story. As for the narration from a Companion, ibn Hazm records it in *al-Muhalla* as a statement of ibn Abbaas. Ibn Hajar stated about that chain, "Its chain is *sahih* but until now I do not know who recorded it." Cf., *Taghleeq al-Taleeq*, vol. 2, p. 490.

¹ He was Shams al-Deen Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Hamzah al-Ramli, the jurist of the land of Egypt during his time and the reference for legal rulings. He is called, "the small Shafi'ee." He was born and died in Cairo. He wrote a number of works including *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj* and *Fataawa al-Ramli*. He died in 1004 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 7.

² *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 5, p. 454.

³ Cf., al-Nawawi, *Raudhah al-Taalibeen*, vol. 5, pp. 433-434; al-Ramli, *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 5, p. 454.

⁴ This was stated by al-Subki. Cf., *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 9, p. 350; *Nihaayah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 5, p. 454.

⁵ *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 9, p. 269.

⁶ Zain al-Deen ibn Ibraaheem ibn Muhammad, known as ibn Nujaim, was a Hanafi jurist from Egypt. He produced a number of writings, including *al-Ashbaah wa al-Nadhaa`ir*. He died in 970 A.H. Cf., *al-Tabaqaat al-Sunniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 275; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 64.

⁷ *Al-Bahr al-Raaqi*, pp. 230-231; cf., al-Zaila'ee, *Tabyeen al-Haqaa`iq*, vol. 3, p. 285.

The proponents of this opinion use the following evidence to support their view:

(1) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

الإسلامُ يَعْلوُ ولا يُعَلَى

“Islam is to be dominant [or superior] and not dominated over.”¹ I could not find anyone who clarifies the manner in which this is a proof. What comes to mind is that we give preference to the aspect of Islam since the land had the rule of Allah since it is dominant and superior over all other religions.

(2) The opinion that the land becomes a land of *kufur* leads to a very harmful result. Ibn Hajar al-Haitami explains, “This necessarily leads to some evil. That is, if they take over a land of Islam by possessing its inhabitants and then we re-conquer it by force, we would then own them [their Muslim captives] over their ownership and that is extremely far-fetched.”²

The Second Opinion:

The second view is that a land of Islam becomes a land of *kufur* at the moment when the laws of the *kufur* are manifest and dominant in it or at the moment the disbelievers take over that land.³

This was the opinion of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and Abu Yoosuf [the two close companions and students of Abu Haneefah]. *Al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah* quotes them as saying, “The land of Islam becomes *daar harb* by meeting one condition and one condition only: the appearance of the laws of *kufur*.”⁴ Muhammad Rasheed Ridha made a ruling about Lebanon in 1348 A.H. that it was a land of *kufur* because it was being ruled by laws other than the Shareeah and the authority was in the hands of non-Muslims, although all

¹ Discussed earlier. Al-Bukhari recorded that hadith in *mualaq* form [that is, without its complete chain]. Al-Daaraqutni narrates it as a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and ibn Hajar (*Fath*, vol. 3, p. 220) said that his chain is *hasan*. Al-Aini (*Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 7, p. 58) said that it is *sahih* according to the criteria of al-Haakim. Ibn Hajar stated that al-Khaleeli narrated it in his *Fawaaid* as part of a lengthy story.

² *Tuhfah al-Muhtaj*, vol. 9, p. 269.

³ Cf., *al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 232; al-Kasaani, *Badaai al-Sanaai*, vol. 7, p. 130; ibn Abideen, *al-Haashiyah*, vol. 3, p. 271; Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 6, p. 166.

⁴ See the cited references in the previous footnote.

agree that it used to be a land of Islam.¹ The proponents of this view explain it by saying that ascribing a land to Islam implies that Islam is manifest therein and its manifestation is via the manifestation and appearance of its laws. If these laws are removed and in their place are put the laws of *kufir*, it no longer remains a land of Islam.²

The Third Opinion:

A land of Islam does not become a land of *kufir* unless it meets three conditions:

(1) The laws of *kufir* are enforced in a declared manner and the laws of Islam are not applied therein.

(2) It is geographically in contact with *daar al-harb* with no area of the lands of Islam in between them, cutting them off from one another.

(3) Neither a believer nor a non-Muslim citizen of the Islamic state still lives under their original covenant [of protection from the Islamic state].³

This was Abu Haneefah's view. Al-Sarakhsi explained his reasoning, "This is because that land was from the lands of Islam, obtained for the Muslims, and that possession will not be negated except by a complete subjugation by the polytheists. That does not occur unless all three of these conditions are met."⁴

The Fourth Opinion:

The land of Islam does not become a land of *kufir* simply upon the appearance and manifestation of the laws of *kufir* therein or upon the disbelievers overrunning the land. [Such is not sufficient] as long as its Muslim inhabitants are able to defend their religion and still establish some of the outwards signs of Islam, in particular the prayer. Al-Dasooqi⁵ stated, "The land of Islam does not become a *daar harb* simply at the moment that they overtake it. It will only be so when the establishment of the outward signs of Islam are

¹ *Fataawa Muhammad Rasheed Ridha*, vol. 1, p. 373; vol. 6, p. 2302 and vol. 5, p. 1918.

² Cf., al-Kasaani, *Badaai al-Sanaai*, vol. 7, p. 130.

³ Cf., *al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 232.

⁴ Al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsoot*, vol. 10, p. 114.

⁵ He was Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Arfah al-Dasooqi al-Azhari. He was born in Dasooq, wherein he studied. He was one of the leading Maliki scholars during his time. He produced a number of writings and commentaries on other works. He died in 1230 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 17.

discontinued therein. As long as the outward signs or most of them are established therein, it does not become a *daar harb*.”¹

One Shafi’ee jurist wrote, “If they have the ability to separate themselves and forbear in *daar al-harb* and they cannot expect the victory of the Muslims if they emigrate and they have the ability to display their religion without any fear of persecution or trial, it is forbidden for them to emigrate from that land. This is because that place is a land of Islam but if they emigrate from there it will become *daar harb*. Every place in which the people are able to protect themselves from the non-Muslims becomes a land of Islam.”²

Imam al-Ramli was asked about Muslims living in a part of Andalus known as Aragon. They were under the protection of a Christian ruler who would take a land tithe from them. He did not mistreat them. They had mosques that they prayed in. They fasted Ramadhaan and gave the zakat. They even implemented the penal laws of Islam, in public as they are supposed to be done. The Christians did not oppose any of their religious deeds. Al-Ramli’s response was, “It is not obligatory upon those Muslims to emigrate from their homes because they are able to openly declare their religion. And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Uthmaan on the Day of Hudaibiyah to Makkah because he had the ability to openly declare and practice his religion there. In fact, it is not allowed for them to emigrate from that land as by their remaining there it is hoped that others will become Muslim. Furthermore, it is a land of Islam and if they emigrate from it, it will become a land of *kufur*.”³

The Fifth Opinion:

Ibn Taimiyyah was of the opinion that those types of lands are neither lands of Islam nor lands of *kufur*. Instead, they are of a third category. When he was asked about the land of Maardeen, he replied, “As for it being a land of *harb* (war) or peace, it has components of each one. It is not a land of Islam in which the laws of Islam are implemented with its soldiers being Muslims. Nor is it of the status of a land of *kufur* because its inhabitants are Muslims. Instead, it is a third category. A Muslim is supposed to behave in it according to what it deserves. And those who go against the

¹ *Haashiyyah al-Dasooqi ala al-Sharh al-Kabeer*, vol. 2, p. 188.

² *Al-Ardabeeli, al-Anwaar li-Amal al-Abraar*, vol. 2, p. 555; also see al-Baijarumi, *Haashiyyah al-Baijarumi ala al-Khateeb*, vol. 4, p. 220.

³ *Fataawa al-Ramli*, vol. 4, pp. 52-54.

Shareeah in it are supposed to be fought according to what they are deserving.”¹

Determining the Strongest Opinion:

Allah knows best, but the strongest opinion is the fourth opinion for the following reasons:

(1) A principle in the Shareeah is that if something is of a certain status, it is considered to be remaining in the same status. Its ruling will not be changed unless there is a definitive proof of it having changed. Therefore, a country that was conquered and became a land of Islam will not change from that status unless there is a very clear change in its nature. The following two examples demonstrate this point. The first example is that of Andalus (Muslim Spain). After the Muslims were removed from that land, it became a land of *kufr* because the manifestations of Islam became absent. The second example concerns those Islamic countries that are being ruled by other than what Allah revealed although the outward manifestations of Islam are still present. Due to these manifestations of Islam, these lands are considered lands of Islam, as there is nothing to definitively change its ruling from its original case.

(2) The Islamic aspect in situations like this will be given more weight due to the following justifications:

(a) Islam is to be dominant and not dominated over.

(b) This opinion is the safest opinion with respect to sparing the lives and wealth [of other Muslims].

(3) If one finds in a land some manifestation of Islam, this is an indication that a portion of the determining factor still exists. If a portion of the determining factor still exists, that means that the ruling still continues. Imam al-Asbeejaabi², while discussing the ruling of those lands which have been taken over by the disbelievers, stated, “It has been accepted that if part of the determining factor remains, the ruling remains. We judged, without any difference of opinion, that these lands, before the Mongols overran them, were from the lands of Islam. After their subjugation of those lands, there still remain the outward manifestations of

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 240-241.

² He was Bihaa al-Deen Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Asbeejaabi, from Asbeejaab along the boundaries of Turkey. He was one of the leading scholars of the Hanafis in the Seventh Century Hijri. Cf., *al-Jawaahir al-Mudheeah*, vol. 3, p. 74; vol. 4, p. 132; *al-Fawaaid al-Bahiyyah*, pp. 42 and 108.

Islam, such as the call to prayer, congregational prayers, Friday prayers and so on. Therefore, it remains a land of Islam.”¹

A Hanafi jurist stated, “If all of its conditions are met, it becomes a *daar harb*. However, if there is some contradiction in its indications or conditions, then it remains with the same ruling that it had or, out of precaution, we give more weight to the Islamic aspect.”²

(4) The ruling that the case remains the same and does not change from a land of Islam except after the most prominent signs of the religion are removed is analogous to another case in the Shareeah. The other case concerns the differentiation between a person who is originally a disbeliever and an apostate. A Muslim will not be declared an apostate until after the evidence is made clear to him, the evidences are presented and all means of getting him to repent are exhausted. [In other words, he remains a Muslim until definitively proven that he has apostatized. The same principle can be applied to a land as a whole.]

After explaining the determining factor for the rule concerning a land and after describing *daar al-Islaam* and *daar al-kufr*, there are a number of other very important points related to this topic I need to discuss.

First, the question of dividing the countries into different categories is a novel one [meaning, it was not discussed in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah]. It has no clear definite basis in the texts. It is something that the jurists determined during the time when the *fiqh* was being recorded. Muhammad Abu Zahrah³ stated, “The jurists dividing the world into two or three categories: *daar al-Islaam*, *daar harb* and *daar ahd* (a country in which there is a treaty between it and the Muslim state) is not a Shareeah ruling. It is something the *mujtahideen* jurists derived for the reality they were facing.”⁴ I searched through some of the texts that would possibly

¹ Quoted from Abdul Kareem Zaidan, *Ahkaam al-Dhimiyyeen*, p. 51, who in turn had quoted it from Muhammad Faraj al-Sanhooori, *al-Ijra`at al-Qudhaaiyyah*, pp. 39-41.

² This was stated by al-Halwaani, quoted from the source mentioned in the previous footnote. Note that many contemporary scholars, such as Muhammad al-Haamid and others, reproduce the last two quotes above but I have not been able to locate any earlier sources.

³ He was Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abu Zahrah, one of the leading scholars of Egypt during his time. He was the dean of the College of Law in the University of Cairo. He authored many writings. He died in Cairo in 1394 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 13.

⁴ “*Nadhariyyah al-Harb fi al-Islaam*,” *Majallah al-Misriyyah li-l-Qanoon al-Dauli*, No. 13, p. 14. Quoted from Aarif Abu Eid, *al-Alaaqaah al-Khaarijiyyah fi*

be a place wherein this division would be found and I did not find anything definitive.¹ The most that could be used for this differentiation are the verses and hadith that are related encouraging people to make the *hijrah* (migration). The most explicit of those pieces of evidence is the previously quoted narration from Buraidah who said, "Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would appoint a commander for an army or expedition, he would advise him personally to have fear of Allah and to treat the Muslims with him in a good way. Then he would say, 'Fight in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah. Fight whoever disbelieves in Allah... Ask them to move from their residence to the land of the Emigrants [in Madinah].'"² One scholar wrote, "'From their residence,' means from the land of *kufir* to 'the land of the Emigrants,' meaning to the land of Islam."³

Abu Yoosuf also recorded a report from Khaalid ibn al-Waleed who wrote a pact for the people of al-Heerah, "I have determined for them: Any old man who is too weak to work, has been afflicted with an affliction or was rich and is now poor such that his fellow religionists give him charity, he does not have to pay the *jizyah* and he shall be supported from the public treasury of the Muslims as well as his dependents for as long as he remains in the land of *hijrah* and the land of Islam. If he leaves to other than the land of *hijrah* and the land of Islam, the Muslims are not required to support his dependents."⁴

The mention of the land of the *hijrah* is not a definitive proof distinguishing the two types of lands. Such a distinguishing

Daulah al-Khilaafah, pp. 49-50. Also see Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Athaar al-Harb fi al-Fiqh al-Islaami*, p. 194. I also benefited a great deal on this point from my questions to Shaikh Abdul Azeez ibn Baaz.

¹ [There is a hadith in *Mujam al-Kabeer* by al-Tabaraani which states, "The center of *daar al-Islaam* is al-Shaam." According to al-Haithami, the narrators of that hadith are trustworthy. Furthermore, in *Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah* by al-Maawardi, he quotes a hadith that states, "The *daar al-Islaam* protects what is in it and the *daar al-shirk* makes allowable what is in it." Unfortunately, al-Maawardi neither mentioned the chain of this hadith nor its source. This translator has never been able to trace that hadith in any of the source works of hadith. Indeed, al-Harastaani and al-Zaghli, in their footnotes to al-Maawardi's work, state, "This is not a hadith." Cf., Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Maawardi, *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah wa al-Walaayaat al-Deeniyyah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1996), p. 99. Allah knows best.—JZ]

² Recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi.

³ Al-Albaani, comments on *Mukhtasar Saheeh Muslim li-l-Mundhiri*, p. 294.

⁴ *Kitaab al-Kharaaj*, p. 290.

between the two lands was simply a result of the circumstances in which the Muslims were living at that time. It is as if when the earliest jurists noted the rulings concerning *hijrah* and *jihad*, they determined that there must be a distinction between the land of *kufir* and the land of Islam. None of them who stated such a distinction based their determinations concerning the lands on a clear definitive text. It was a matter of *ijtihaad* wherein the scholar studied to see what would be the effective legal reason for such a distinction.

The *ijtihaad* regarding the determining factor was influenced by the political situation in which jurists lived, wherein the Muslim nation was united, powerful, spreading and ruled by the Shareeah or otherwise [without any in-between cases].

However, with respect to the available evidence, the issue is ambiguous and cloudy concerning two matters:

(a) The source of the distinction between the two lands, as there is no clear definitive source for that distinction.

(b) Identifying the determining factor for the rulings, as all of that was a matter of *ijtihaad* from the jurists, may Allah have mercy on them.

The earliest whom I could find that made a distinction between the two lands were Abu Haneefah and his two companions Abu Yoosuf and Muhammad al-Hasan, may Allah have mercy on them.

The second important issue is that the scholars were driven to divide the world into two types of lands, the land of *kufir* and the land of Islam, due to the following:

(1) In the light of the Islamic conquests, it became of utmost importance to distinguish between *daar al-Islaam* and *daar al-harb* at the time of *jihad*, since both lands have their own particular rulings. Hence, this issue of differentiating the lands is really an issue of *jihad* [or, in other words, something directly related to the regulations related to *jihad*].

(2) The Islamic lands were under one banner at that time, the banner of the Islamic caliphate, while there existed other nations, like the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, this categorization came to establish the foundation of the practical relationship between the Muslims and others, whose ruling was predominantly one of being in a warring state.¹

¹ Cf., Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Athaar al-Harb fi al-Fiqh al-Islaami*, p. 192.

(3) There are some Shareeah laws that, according to some scholars, differed depending on which land one was in. Hence, there developed this categorization.

A third important point is that if one says that a particular land is a land of *kufr*, this does not mean that all of the people in that land are disbelievers. This is a mistaken conception. Everything, therefore, based on that conception is also mistaken. Residing in a land of *kufr* [in itself] is not a reason for declaring said resident a disbeliever (as was discussed earlier).

Fourthly, the ruling concerning a land and the differentiation between different lands is not of great benefit to the individual. It has no effect in the laws related to the individual.¹ The benefit of this knowledge is restricted to the Muslim ruler. Hence, it is a political fiqh issue. The following shall bear this out:

(a) The explicit, authentic hadith state that if a disbeliever makes the statement of Islam, his blood (life) and wealth will be protected regardless if he is in the *daar al-harb* or *daar al-Islam*. The Muslim's blood is also protected under any circumstances. Evidence for this point can be found in the verse,

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ ۝﴾

¹ [This contradicts the author's earlier discussions wherein the importance of *hijrah* and loyalty were discussed. Regardless of one's view of *hijrah*, for example, one should know the ruling concerning the land he is in to be able to properly consider whether or not he should migrate. Similarly, one should have loyalty to the land of Islam and not to the land of *kufr*. This can only be done after the status of the lands and countries is first determined. Furthermore, as the author himself just noted, some scholars do see that some rulings may be different in the land of Islam than in the land of *kufr*. Indeed, the next verse the author is about to quote demonstrates that in the case of involuntary manslaughter, the expiation will be different depending on whether the individual killed was from the Islamic state itself, a warring state or a state with which there was a peace treaty. Hence, once again, it becomes important for the individual to know which type of land he is living in. Allah knows best.—JZ]

مُسْلِمَةً إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ
شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿

“Never should a believer kill a believer. But (if it so happens) by mistake, (compensation is due). If one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means (is prescribed) a fast for two months running by way of repentance to Allah, for Allah has all Knowledge and all Wisdom” (*al-Nisaa* 92). Al-Shafi'ee stated, “Upon killing a believer unintentionally, Allah has obligated compensation and freeing of a slave. If the person killed is from those with whom there is a treaty, one must pay the compensation and free a slave if his life were protected due to him being a believer and also due to the treaty. If the believer were in a land not protected by a treaty, he is protected only due to his faith. In that case, there is only expiation due to his death and there is no compensation as his life was only protected due to faith [and not due to being in the same country or in a country with a peace treaty].”¹

(b) The laws related to the individual do not differ regardless of what land he is in. The permissible is permissible and the forbidden is forbidden no matter what the land. Imam al-Shafi'ee wrote, “The Quran and Sunnah are in accord and the Muslims also understand it and all agree that what is permissible in the land of Islam is permissible in the land of *kufr*. Also, what is forbidden in the land of Islam is also forbidden in the land of *kufr*. Whoever falls into what is forbidden will receive his due from Allah according to what He wills and the fact that he was in the land of *kufr* will not relieve him of anything.”²

¹ *Al-Risaalah*, pp. 301-302; also see ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 240; al-Shaukaani, *al-Sail al-Jarraar*, vol. 4, p. 554; *Fath al-Qadeer*, vol. 1, p. 498.

² *Al-Umm*, vol. 4, p. 165 and vol. 7, pp. 222-223. Also see Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Athaar al-Harb*, p. 186.

(c) The blood of the warring disbeliever is permissible in any place as long as he has not received a pact of security from the Muslims.¹

(d) Supporting anyone who is violating the Shareeah is forbidden regardless of whether that take place in the land of Islam or *daar al-harb*.²

This now clarifies the limits of extremism with respect to the concept of the land of *kufur* and the land of Islam, which can be summarized as declaring the land of Muslims to be the land of *kufur*. This is then followed by one of two extreme matters:

(a) The blood and wealth of the people become permissible and jihad is declared against that land which they claim to be the land of *kufur*.

(b) The inhabitants of that land are declared disbelievers based on the attribute of their land being the land of *kufur*.

Although I view it as a mistake to declare a land that is not ruled by the law of Allah to be a land of *kufur*, I am not able to say that such a view is an extremist view. This is because some Muslims scholars declared that same view. However, at the same time, not one of them ever said that the life and wealth of the people then become permissible or that jihad is to be declared against them. Even if they were to have said that, it is an accepted principle among the majority of the scholars that the commands related to fighting and jihad are directed to the Muslim Nation as a whole, as personified in the rulers and leaders. If they were directed to every individual and Muslim group, such that they could declare jihad instead of the Nation as a whole, that would lead to numerous killings, evil tribulations and civil war.

In observing the contemporary reality, we find that both of the above aspects of extremism have occurred among some Muslim groups. [For example,]

(1) Shukri's group declared the land [of Egypt] to be a land of *kufur* and this allowed them to declare all of its residents disbelievers, as was discussed earlier. Their writings make clear the very strong relationship between the attribution of *jaahiliyyah* and the description of the land as being *daar kufur* as well as their categorizing its people as disbelievers. In a passage excerpted earlier from a page of *Kitaab al-Hijrah* one finds expressions like "living in a *jaahili* society," "living in *daar* of *kufur*," "those disbelievers are increasing in number," and so on. All of these expressions make one

¹ Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Al-Sail al-Jarraar*, vol. 4, p. 572.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 240.

perceive the relationship between their view that the land is a land of *kufur* and their view that its inhabitants are disbelievers.

(2) The "Jamaah of Jihad" [in Egypt] described that land as a land of *kufur* and this was one of its greatest justifications for fighting the rulers who rule not in accord with the Shareeah and for declaring jihad. However, at the same time, they did not say that its inhabitants were disbelievers. In the book, *al-Fareedhah al-Ghaaibah*, the author states, after quoting the views of Abu Hanifah and his two companions and of ibn Taimiyyah, "In reality, we do not find any contradiction in the statements of the Imams. Abu Hanifah and his two companions did not state that its inhabitants are disbelievers... Peace is for the [one or land] that deserves peace and war is for the one who deserves war. A country may possibly be ruled by the laws of *kufur* even though most of its inhabitants are Muslims."¹ In support of their view, they quoted the statements of the scholars concerning the issue of differentiating between the different types of lands and countries.

One may refute the extremist views by the following points:

(1) The previous pages showed that the conception of the land of Islam and the land of *kufur* are not something precise and exact. They do not have defined, clear limits by which, if a land violates them, they abandon their attribute of being the land of Islam. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to use this type of conception as justification for permitting the spilling of the blood and taking of the wealth of people. Life and wealth are very serious issues in Islam. They do not become permissible save with a very clear proof and definitive evidence.

(2) Using the statements of the scholars on this issue is not sound due to the following:

(a) One cannot separate the statements of the scholars in distinguishing the different types of lands from the environment and time in which they were living. Most of the scholars who spoke on this issue and differentiated between the lands were living during the time of the caliphate that represented a united political entity for the Muslim lands. If you wish to understand the importance of this point, study the views of ibn Taimiyyah, al-Subki, al-Ramli, al-Asbeejaabi, al-Halwaani and other scholars who lived during the time in which the Mongols overran many of the Muslim lands and compare them with the views of Abu Haneefah, Abu Yoosuf and Muhammad who lived during the time of the Islamic caliphate. The issue is definitely influenced by the situation

¹ *Al-Fareedhah al-Ghaaibah*, p. 228.

under which one is living as its conclusions are built upon that reality, as was noted earlier.

(b) The discussion of this differentiation and its ramifications are directed to the Imams and rulers. Therefore, to permit the fighting against those who violate the Shareeah of Allah in a land in which the manifestations of *kufur* and Islam are contending with one another—as was the case in the ruling from ibn Taimiyyah—is not an issue for individuals among a population but it is applicable to one who is under the banner of the Muslim Imam or ruler [who has the right to make such declarations].

(3) Declaring Muslims to be disbelievers is very serious. It must definitely be built upon clear evidence, as was discussed in detail earlier.

Introducing New Sources for the Shareeah

The words of the scholars are in agreement concerning the authority¹ of the three fundamental sources of the Shareeah. These three are the Quran, the Sunnah and the consensus. The majority of the scholars also consider analogy an authority.² They differ concerning the authority of a number of sources, such as *al-istihsaan* (“juristic preference in favor of less apparent sources”), *al-istislaah* (“deciding in the light of general needs and interests”), *al-istishaab* (“continuance of a rule until proven otherwise”), the statement of a Companion, the laws (Shareeah) of the [prophets] before us and the consensus of the people of Madinah. Both those who consider these valid authorities and those who do not consider them authorities provide Shareeah and rational evidence for their views. The sources are the indicators that make a Shareeah ruling apparent. Al-Amidi³ stated, “Each one of these types [that is, the Quran, Sunnah, consensus, analogy and *istidlaal* or *istishaab*] is an

¹ Authority (*hujjiyah*) means, “disclosing, uncovering and indicating. It is binding to act upon what it indicates as such is considered the judgment of Allah.” Abdul Ghani Abdul Khaaliq, *Hujjiyah al-Sunnah*, p. 244.

² See, for example, al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 345; ibn Qudaamah, *Raudhah al-Naadhir*, p. 61; *Fawaatih al-Rahamoot*, vol. 2, p. 2; al-Badakhshi, *Manaahij al-Uqool* and al-Asnawi, *Nihaayah al-Sool*, both being commentaries on al-Baidhaawi, *Minhaj al-Wusool*, vol. 1, p. 39.

³ He was Saif al-Deen Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Saalim al-Taghlabi, a legal theorist and researcher. He was originally from Aamad. He was born there and studied in Baghdad and al-Shaam. He then moved to Cairo. He authored more than twenty writings, including *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*. He died in 631 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 332.

indicator for manifesting the Shareeah ruling for us.”¹ The foundation for all of those sources is the Quran only. Imam al-Ghazaali stated, “Know that if we looked at the reality of the matter, it becomes clear that the source of the laws is one only, and that is the word of Allah.”² Al-Amidi stated, “The foundation for those [that is, the five sources mentioned above] is only the Quran. This is because they all return to the word of Allah for legislating the laws. The Sunnah is a report concerning Allah’s words and ruling. The basis of consensus goes back to those two. As for analogy and *istidlaal*, their result goes back to adhering to what is understood from the texts or consensus. The text and consensus are a foundation while analogy and *istidlaal* are branches subservient to them.”³

Shukri Mustafa’s group fell into a form of extremism that was, to the best of my knowledge, unprecedented as they invented new sources for the Shareeah. Shukri Mustafa wrote in a book of his entitled *al-Hujjiyaat*,

What are the containers in which Allah pours for us the guidance? There is no doubt that the containers are limited to what Allah created and what He ordered. Is there anything else that one could imagine to contain knowledge? Certainly not. One does not find knowledge outside of the realm of the creation. And one does not find a creation without knowledge. Therefore, every part of creation is connected to knowledge. And every piece of knowledge is connected to the creation. It is not possible to learn something that does not exist or is not created. Here is a point that one must turn one’s attention to. The general knowledge that we mean here is that which is related to the worship of Allah; that is, it is the knowledge by which we worship Allah. Even if we ascribe it to Allah, by calling it the “knowledge of Allah,” this is what we mean by it. We do not mean by that the knowledge of Allah Himself. Here is a question: But is it possible for us to partition the creation and command into what is simpler than that, of additional clarity and additional explanation? As for the creation, it may be summarized by the heavens and the earth (and, of course, what they contain and what is between them). It

¹ *Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 227.

² *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 100; cf., ibn Qudaamah, *Raudhah al-Naadhir*, p. 61.

³ *Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 227.

also includes the human as he is the subject of the matter that we are discussing. Definitely, it is not permissible for there to be any creations other than what we have limited it to: the heavens and the earth, what is between them and what is in them, and the human and what Allah has sent him with of natural disposition. As for the command—of the command that is connected or in existence in what Allah has created, there is nothing remaining save for the *Shareeah* and guidance that Allah sent down to us. That is the “Reminder” (*al-dhikr*), which is the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore, the sources in which guidance is found are now the following: (1) The heavens and the earth and what they contain of order; (2) the human being and what he possesses of sound natural disposition; (3) the Quran; and (4) the Sunnah or *hikmah* (wisdom). The distinguishing features of these containers are that they are all truth and everything else is falsehood. The authentic Quranic texts and non-Quranic texts provide evidence for this.¹

He uses a number of texts to prove his point. Concerning his first source, the heavens and earth and what they contain of order, he uses the following as proofs:

(1) Allah’s statement,

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ﴾

“We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, but in truth” (*al-Hijr* 85).

(2) Allah’s words,

﴿ إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا

يَبُتُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ ءَايَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

“Verily in the heavens and the earth are signs for those who believe. And in the creation of yourselves and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are signs for those of assured faith” (*al-Jaathiyah* 3-4).

(3) Allah’s statement,

¹ *Al-Hujyyaat*, pp. 3-4.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَلْعِبِينَ ﴾

“Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between” (*al-Anbiyaa* 16).

(4) Allah’s words,

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ﴾

“Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between” (*Saad* 27).

(5) Also, Allah’s statement,

﴿ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ﴾

“We created not the heavens and the earth and all between them but with truth, and for a term appointed” (*al-Ahqaaf* 3).

(6) Finally, they quote Allah’s words,

﴿ إِنَّا فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣١﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُبْحَثُكَ فَعِنَّا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴾

“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): ‘Our Lord! Not for naught have You created (all) this! Exalted You be. Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire” (*ali-Imraan* 190-191).

They also quote other evidence which all have the same purport. In general, they quote as evidence the verses that order the

contemplation and reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and earth and what is between them.¹

As for their second source, which is the human being and what Allah has filled him with of natural disposition, they quote the following as proof:

(1) Allah's words,

﴿ فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا
لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“So set your face steadily and truly to the faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind. No change (will there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah. That is the upright religion, but most among mankind understand not” (*al-Room* 30).

(2) Allah's words,

﴿ بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ ﴿١٥﴾ ﴾

“Nay, man will be evidence against himself, even though he were to put up his excuses” (*al-Qiyaamah* 14-15).

(3) Allah's statement,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ
فَسَوَّكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾

“O man! What has seduced you from your Lord Most Beneficent? Him Who created you, fashioned you in due proportion, and gave you a just bias; In whatever form He wills, does He put you together” (*al-Infitaar* 6-8).

(4) Allah's words,

﴿ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

“Have We not made for him a pair of eyes? And a tongue, and a pair of lips?” (*al-Balad* 8-9).

(5) Allah's statement,

¹ Cf., Shukri Mustafa, *al-Hujjiyaat*, pp. 190-191.

﴿ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴾

“We have indeed created man in the best of molds” (*al-Teen* 4).

(6) And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ

“Every child is born upon the *fitrah* (the natural disposition to believe in the oneness of God).”¹

They also quote other texts of the Quran as evidence. They indicate the completeness of the creation of humans and that Allah has breathed into humans a spirit created by Him. After presenting these evidences, Shukri states, “A person cannot be guided if he divides himself from these four specific sources or if he tries to distinguish between them. The guidance is in them all as one general thing. In fact, whoever distinguishes one from the others or does away with one of them is a disbeliever, as there is no contradiction between any of them. Allah has said, ‘On the earth are signs for those of assured faith, as also in your own selves: will you not then see? And in heaven is your sustenance, as (also) that which you are promised. Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very truth, as much as the fact that you can speak intelligently to each other’ [*al-Dhaariyaat* 20-23].”²

By such statements in which they have introduced new sources for the Shareeah, this *jamaah* (group of Shukri) has violated the consensus of the Nation that states that the Quran and Sunnah are to take precedence over everything else. They also violated the consensus which states that the sources of the Shareeah are restricted to those discussed earlier—regardless of whether it be the agreed-upon or the disagreed-upon sources. One may concisely refute their views in the following points:

The First Point:

When the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* clarified the sources of the Shareeah, they explained how the laws are to be derived from those sources and they put such into practice. The first thing that is sought from Shukri’s group is an explanation of these sources and a clarification of how laws are to be derived from them. However, that

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Shukri Mustafa, *al-Hujjiyyaat*, p. 5.

never occurred. Instead, these sources were simply presented in general and briefly.¹

The Second Point:

The verses related to the heavens and earth—that were presented as evidence that the heavens and earth and what is between them form some form of authority—point to the fact that the perfection and detail of their creation indicate that they must have had a former and a creator. However, this is true not just for the heavens and the earth. This is true for all of the creation. For that reason, in *soorah al-Baqarah*, Allah mentions a number of creations that all indicate the necessary existence of a creator. Allah says,

﴿ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind, in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead, in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth, in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth, (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise” (*al-Baqarah* 164).

In other words, all of those aspects of creation are “indicators indicating [Allah’s] oneness and ability.”² Allah did not just explain His oneness by informing of it. Instead, He accompanied that

¹ Cf., Muhammad Suroor, *al-Hukum Bi-Ghair ma Anzalallah*, p. 124.

² Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quran*, vol. 2, p. 201.

information with the command to contemplate and reflect. He said to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

﴿ قُلْ أَنْظِرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴾^٤

“Say: ‘Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth’” (Yoonus 101). Allah also says,

﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴾

“Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth?” (al-Araaf 185). And Allah says,

﴿ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴾

“As also in your own selves [are signs]: will you not then see?” (al-Dhaariyaat 21). That is, “do they not look at those things while contemplating and reflecting”¹ in order to attain by them knowledge of the attributes of the Creator, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, the All-Powerful, the All-Hearing and the All-Seeing. Certainly, reflection and contemplation are from the means of faith and paths of certainty. Taking indications from the heavens and the earth is of the nature of noticing the effect of the source of the cause upon the object being affected. Otherwise, the heavens and the earth are creations that one cannot fathom. There is no way for them to be a source upon which one builds a religion or an authority that one uses as evidence to forge along a path.

The Third Point:

Allah confirms that the creation of the heavens and the earth is with truth. But this is not an indication that they are some sort of authority. Instead, it means that they were not created purposeless or in vain. [As Allah says,]

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ﴾

“Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between” (Saad 27). “That is, [We did not create them] out of jest or play. Instead, We created them not except for a sound purpose: to be an indication of Our power and ability.”² Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِينًا ﴾

¹ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 202.

² Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 15, p. 191.

“Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between” (*al-Anbiyaa* 16). So, this creation was not created for fun or in vain. In fact, this creation has a wise creator and He created it for a far-reaching purpose. The “sport” that is denied in this verse is that which is the opposite of wisdom.¹

The Fourth Point:

The scholars differ concerning the meaning of the word *fitrah* as found in Allah’s words,

﴿ فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ﴾

“(Establish) Allah’s handiwork (*fitrah*) according to the pattern on which He has made mankind” (*al-Room* 30), and in the Prophet’s saying,

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ

“Every child is born upon the *fitrah* (the natural disposition to believe in the oneness of God).”² A number of opinions are expressed, as follows:

The First Opinion: This opinion states that the *fitrah* means Islam. This opinion “was well-known among most of the early scholars.”³ Abu Hurairah, ibn Shihaab⁴ and others stated this. This was also al-Bukhari’s opinion. They quote the following as evidence for this view:

(1) Allah says,

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا

“So set your face steadily and truly to the faith: (establish) Allah’s handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind” (*al-Room* 30). Ibn Hajar stated, “The scholars of Quranic interpretation all agree that the meaning of, ‘Allah’s handiwork

¹ Cf., Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 11, p. 276.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

³ Ibn Abdul Barr, *al-Tamheed*, vol. 18, p. 72. Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Daru*, vol. 8, p. 367; ibn Hajar, *al-Fath*, vol. 3, p. 248.

⁴ He was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihaab al-Zuhri, the first to make a systematic recording of hadith. He was one of the leading gatherers of knowledge and jurists among the generation of the Followers. He was from the people of Madinah. He died in 124 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 97.

according to the pattern on which He has made mankind,' is Islam."¹

(2) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ

"Every child is born upon the *fitrah* (the natural disposition to believe in the oneness of God)."² This is quoted as evidence as other narrations of this hadith state,

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ إِلَّا وَهُوَ عَلَى الْمِلَّةِ

"No child is born except that he is upon the religion (*millah*)."³ Another narration states,

إِلَّا عَلَى هَذِهِ الْمِلَّةِ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ عَنْهُ لِسَانُهُ

"Except that he is upon this religion until his tongue explains for himself [what he is on]."⁴

(3) Iyyaadh ibn Himaar⁵ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) narrated from his Lord,

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ أَتَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَن دِينِهِمْ

"I created all of my servants upon pure monotheism. Then the devils came to them and turned them away from their religion."⁶

Al-Qurtubi stated, "Based on this interpretation, the meaning of this hadith is: The child is created free from *kufir* on the covenant that Allah took from the descendants of Adam when He extracted them from his loins."⁷

¹ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 248.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim.

⁵ He was Iyyaadh ibn Himaar ibn Naajiyah ibn Uqaal al-Majaashi. He was a Companion. He has hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan Abi Dawood* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. He lived in Basrah and a number of the Followers narrated hadith from him. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 185.

⁶ Recorded by Muslim.

⁷ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quran*, vol. 14, p. 25.

Ibn Taimiyyah was asked about the Prophet's statement, "Every child is born upon the *fitrah* (the natural disposition to believe in the oneness of God),"¹ and he said, "The correct stance is that it is Allah's disposition that He created mankind upon. It is the natural disposition of Islam. It is the natural disposition that He set them upon on the day He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Certainly [you are]' (*al-Araaf* 172)."² He also said, "It is not necessary that their being born upon the natural disposition means that they are at the time of their birth believing in Islam in practice. Allah takes us out of the wombs of our mothers while we know nothing. However, the heart is pure and it accepts and desires the truth which is Islam, to the point that if it were left without any alteration it would accept nothing other than being a Muslim."³ He also said, "The messengers were sent to affirm and complete the *fitrah* and not to change or modify the *fitrah*."⁴

The Second Opinion: "The *fitrah* is the beginning upon which Allah begins them. In other words, it is what Allah began His creation upon as He started them for life and death, happiness and misery and what they become when they reach the age of puberty."⁵ Imam Ahmad was of this opinion but then he recanted and followed the first opinion stated above. Ibn Abdul Barr⁶ stated, "The reports that Malik recorded in his *Muwatta* and mentioned in the Chapter on *Qadar* (Predestination) indicate that his opinion on this matter was of this nature."⁷ They offer the following verse as evidence for this position:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 4, p. 245.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 4, p. 247. Cf., what Ibn Hajar quoted from al-Teebi in *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 3, p. 249.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 10, p. 135.

⁵ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 14, p. 25.

⁶ He was Abu Umar Yoosuf ibn Abdillah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdil Barr al-Namri al-Qurtubi, the Maliki. He was one of the greatest gatherers of knowledge and a jurist. He was a historian and a man of letters. He was called the *haafidh* of the West. He was born in Cordoba in 368 A.H. He traveled through Andalus on a lengthy journey. He acted as a judge in many of its lands. He died in Shaatibah in 463 A.H. He wrote many famous works, including *al-Tamheed lima fi al-Muwatta min al-Maani wa al-Asaaneed*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 153; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 240.

⁷ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 14, p. 25.

﴿ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الضَّلَالَةُ ﴾

“Such as He created you in the beginning, so shall you return. Some He has guided. Others have (by their choice) deserved the loss of their way” (*al-Araaf* 29-30).

The Third Opinion: This opinion states that the verse and the hadith are not in reference to all of mankind. The meaning of “*al-nass* (the people, humans)” here is only the believers. If everyone had the disposition towards Islam, no one would ever become a disbeliever while it is confirmed that some people have been created for the Hell-fire. As Allah has said,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ ﴾

“Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell” (*al-Araaf* 179).¹

The Fourth Opinion: The *fitrah* is the natural disposition upon which the child is born giving him the ability to recognize his lord. In other words, every child is born upon a natural disposition via which he recognizes his lord when he is conveyed the information about Him. Hence, this is a natural disposition that differs from the natural instincts of animals that do not take them to the point of recognizing their lord. The people of this view cite the verses in which the word *faatir* is used to mean creator. For example, Allah says,

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴾

“Praise be to Allah, Who created (*faatir*) (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth” (*Faatir* 1). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَالِيَ لَأَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي ﴾

“It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me (*fatarani*)” (*Yaaseen* 22).

The first opinion is the strongest due to the strength of its evidence. Regardless of which of these opinions is strongest, they all agree that the *fitrah* is the origin by which humans come into life and it is not a source of *aqeedah* or beliefs. It is the innate

¹ Cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 14, p. 26.

disposition that is prepared to accept the sound beliefs once such reaches him via the books or the messengers by which Allah establishes the proof against mankind,

﴿لَئِنَّا يَكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ﴾

“That mankind, after (the coming) of the Messengers, should have no plea against Allah” (*al-Nisaa* 165).

The Fifth Point:

The verses that mention Allah’s blessing about man by making his creation excellent, fashioning him in the best of molds and breathing into him of a spirit from Allah, do not contain any indication that humans themselves are a source and authority. A source is that from which humans derive their beliefs and practical laws. It is not possible that the human himself is a source for such laws as he is wont to follow his desires and cravings and other internal and external influences. It seems to be the case that by making humans—including the *fitrah*—one of the sources of the Shareeah, they are simply trying to magnify the role of the human intellect and reasoning. “Whoever studies their writings with a critical eye will note that they are greatly concerned with logic and rational arguments. They give them precedence over the Quran and Sunnah.”¹

Extremism with Respect to Censuring *Taqleed*

Extremism with Respect to the Conception of *Taqleed* and In Rejecting Consensus

The scholars define *taqleed* as, “Acting on the basis of another’s statement (or opinion) without a proof.”² This is the well-known definition among the legal theorists and the one that their majority accepts.³ Al-Sheeraazi⁴ defined it as, “Accepting a statement without

¹ Muhammad Suroor, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzalallaah*, p. 127.

² Al-Shaukaani, *Irshaad al-Fahool*, p. 265; *Musalim al-Thaboot bi-Sharhih Fawaatih al-Rahamoot*, vol. 2, p. 400.

³ Cf., *Musalim al-Thaboot bi-Sharhih Fawaatih al-Rahamoot*, vol. 2, p. 400.

⁴ He was Abu Ishaq Ibraaheem ibn Ali ibn Yoosuf al-Fairoozabaadi al-Sheeraazi. He was a scholar and debater. He was born in Fairoozabaad and then moved to Sheeraaz where he first studied. He completed his studies

an evidence.”¹ Al-Aamidi defined it as, “Its meaning is the acting according to another’s statement without any binding authority [upon one to do so].”² Excluded from the concept of *taqleed* is the following of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) since he is the legislator and taking his statements is taking something based on knowledge and certainty.³ Allah has ordered us to follow his commands and refrain from what he forbade:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ﴾

“So take what the Messenger gives to you, and deny yourselves that which he prohibits for you” (*al-Hashr* 7). Similarly, acting on the basis of the consensus is excluded, as it is not a kind of *taqleed* of the masses of the Nation. Instead, it is an agreement among the masses concerning what a specific text that is used as evidence indicates. Furthermore, proofs have been cited demonstrating the authority of that source. Thus following it is not a type of blameworthy *taqleed*.

Also excluded from the category of blameworthy *taqleed* is the layman⁴ turning to the *mufti* (or scholar) for a religious verdict. The scholars are agreed that such is not blameworthy *taqleed*. After a very enlightening discussion censuring *taqleed*, ibn Abdul Barr stated, “This [censuring] is directed to the non-laymen [that is, it is directed to the scholars and specialists]. The masses [non-scholars] must make *taqleed* of its scholars when any new occasion arises as it will not be clear to them wherein lie the proofs and, due to their lack of understanding, they will not be able to reach that knowledge. This is because knowledge is of different levels. One cannot reach its higher levels until one attains its lower levels. This is, in fact, the barrier between the masses and seeking the proof.”⁵

in al-Basrah and Baghdad wherein his genius became apparent. He was known for being very strong in arguments and debates. He died in Baghdad in 476 A.H. He produced many famous works in fiqh, legal theory and dialectics. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 452; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 51.

¹ *Al-Luma*, p. 70.

² *Ihkaam al-Ahkaam*, vol. 4, p. 220. For other definitions of *taqleed* see ibn Abdul Barr, *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm wa Fadhlilihi*, vol. 2, p. 117; Imam al-Haramain, *al-Waraqaat fi al-Usool*, p. 248; ibn Hamdaan, *Sifah al-Fatwa wa al-Mustafti*, p. 51; al-Subki, *Jami al-Jawaami*, vol. 2, p. 292.

³ Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Irshaad al-Fahool*, p. 266.

⁴ [The terms layman and laymen may, technically speaking, not fit into Islamic terminology. However, they are used here to refer to the commoner, non-scholar or non-specialist.—JZ]

⁵ *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm wa Fadhlilihi*, vol. 2, p. 114.

He also said, "The scholars do not differ on the point that the masses must follow (make *taqleed* of) their scholars. They are the ones meant by the verse, 'Ask the people of the reminder if you know not' [*al-Nahl* 43]... Similarly, the scholars do not differ on the point that the masses are not permitted to give religious verdicts. That is due to, and Allah knows best, their ignorance of the meanings and understandings that allow one to say that something is permissible or forbidden and to speak about knowledge."¹

Even those scholars who are very strict when it comes to matters of *taqleed* do not consider a layman asking a scholar a question blameworthy *taqleed*. Ibn Hazm stated, "We do not object to people asking the scholars for religious verdicts. What we object to is their taking the statement without any proof to support it, without [the scholar] referring it to any text of the Quran or Sunnah, because this will necessarily result in the following of mistakes. If during the time of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) there were some who gave incorrect religious verdicts, after his death, they are more in number and more widespread. Therefore, it is an absolute must that one be very cautious concerning getting rulings from any scholar who does not strengthen his ruling by basing it on the Quran, Sunnah or consensus."² While explaining the behavior of the early scholars of Islam, al-Shaukaani stated, "The one with less knowledge would ask the scholar about an issue that had come to him. He would give him a religious verdict with the texts that he knew of the Quran and Sunnah."³

This is the concept of *taqleed* among the scholars of this Nation from the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah*. Some people went to an extreme and considered the taking of the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the consensus of the scholars of this Nation to be *taqleed*. Ibn Hazm wrote, "Some people were mistaken as they called the taking of the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or what the scholars of this Nation agreed upon *taqleed*. This is what the people involved in sophistry did. They want to distort and destroy knowledge. They want to falsify truths and cause confusion. Nothing helps their cause more than distorting the meanings of terms and mixing them until what is truth is given a false name so

¹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 114.

² Ibn Hazm, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

³ *Irshaad al-Fahool*, p. 248. Also see al-Shaukaani, *al-Qaul al-Mufeed*, p. 21.

that the people flee from it. The [ignorant] who [naively] have good opinions of those people will then fall into [their trap].”¹

This is the kind of extremism that Shukri Mustafa’s group fell into. Shukri stated, “We can summarize the forms of *taqleed* taken in this Nation as proofs regarding the religion as the following: the opinions of the jurist, the opinions of the Companion, the practices of the people of Madinah (in opposition to Malik), the opinion of the majority and the consensus.”²

Since there is a difference of opinion about [most of] these forms that he mentioned briefly, I shall concentrate my discussion on following the consensus which he claims is a form of *taqleed*. I do not know of anyone who made such a statement before him.

Shukri Mustafa considered following the consensus a type of *taqleed* and he denied its authority. He wrote, “The authority is in what they [the consensus] used as a basis if that is made clear to us. If that is not made clear to us, it is not proper for humans to legislate a religion for us and then we follow them, they thereby becoming lords instead of Allah.”³ He did not provide any evidence for what he said. He refutes the evidence of the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* concerning the authority of the consensus by only rational arguments and sophistry such as what was done by those before him who rejected the consensus. Concerning this matter, he did not stop at just commenting upon *ijtihaad* and *taqleed* but he widened the scope by speaking about consensus itself. Therefore, I shall discuss this topic in the light of three major topics:

First: The meaning of the consensus (*al-ijmaa*);

Second: The evidence for the authority of the consensus;

Third: Clarification that following the consensus is not a form of *taqleed*.

Here is the detailed explanation:

The Meaning of the Consensus (*al-Ijmaa*):

Al-Aamidi defines “consensus” as, “The agreement of all the ‘people who bind and unbind’⁴ of a particular era of the Nation of

¹ Ibn Hazm, *al-Ihkaam fī Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 6, p. 1089.

² *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 14.

³ Cf., *al-Hujjiyaat*, pp. 40-41; Muhammad Suroor, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzalallaah*, p. 61.

⁴ [This is the expression al-Aamidi used in this definition. It is an expression, as discussed earlier, that refers to the leaders in society. However, in this context it refers to the scholars and *mujtahideen*. Allah knows best.—JZ]

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning the ruling on a particular issue.”¹

The Evidence for the Authority of the Consensus:

The *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* see the consensus as an authority and consider it one of the sources of the Shareeah, as opposed to what the Shiah, the Khawaarij and al-Nadhaam² of the Mutalazah say.³ They cite a number of evidences in its support, including:

(1) From the Quran:

(a) Allah says,

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

“If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge” (*al-Nisaa* 115). This verse is one the most famous indicating the authority of the consensus. This is the verse that the leading scholars, such as Umar ibn Abdul Azeez, Malik and others, clung to concerning this issue.⁴ The line of reasoning from the verse is that Allah has made a threat concerning following a path other than that of the believers. If such behavior were not forbidden, why would Allah make such a threat.⁵

(b) Allah also says,

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكَ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ﴾

¹ *Al-Ihkaam*, edited by Shaikh Abdul Razaq al-Afeefi, vol. 1, p. 196.

² He was Abu Ishaq Ibraaheem ibn Sayaar ibn Haani al-Basri, one of the Imams of the Mutazilah. He was accused of being a *zandiqah* (hypocritical apostate) and some scholars declared him a disbeliever. He died in 231 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 10, p. 541; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 43.

³ Cf., al-Aamidi, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 200.

⁴ Cf., al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, *Al-Faqeeh wa al-Mutafaqih*, vol. 1, p. 173; ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, pp. 178-179.

⁵ Cf., al-Aamidi, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 200.

“Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves” (*al-Baqarah* 143). The reasoning here is that Allah has declared them to be just and has made them witnesses against mankind with respect to the acceptance of their statements. There is no meaning to consensus being an authority save the fact that the opinion concerning which there is a consensus is an authority over all the people.¹

(c) Allah also says,

﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ﴾

“You are the best of peoples raised for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong” (*ali-Imraan* 110).

There are other verses that the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* cite as evidence for the authority of the consensus. However, they are of a more general nature. They include, for example,

﴿ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ﴾

“And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves” (*ali-Imraan* 103);

﴿ وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴾

“Of those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth, and dispense justice therewith” (*al-Araaf* 181). These verses are as al-Ghazaali stated, “They are general in their meaning and not specific texts concerning the goal [of establishing the authority of the consensus].”²

The strongest, most direct evidence in the texts is found in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

(2) From the Sunnah:

(a) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Cf., al-Aamidi, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 212.

² Al-Ghazaali, *al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 175.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْمَعُ أُمَّتِي أَوْ قَالَ أُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ لِلَّهِ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ إِلَى النَّارِ

“Verily, Allah does not gather together this Nation—or he said the Nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—upon a misguidance. Allah is with the congregation. Whoever separates from it, separates to the Hell-fire.”¹

(b) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شَيْزًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

“The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the days of Ignorance.”²

(c) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

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

“A group of my Nation shall continue to be established upon the command of Allah. They will not be harmed by those who abandon them or differ from them, until the command of Allah comes and they are victorious over the people.”³

(d) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ أَرَادَ بُحْبُوحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ فَلْيَلْزِمِ الْجَمَاعَةَ مِنْ سِرَّتِهِ حَسَنَتُهُ وَسَاعَتِهِ سَيِّئَتُهُ فَذَلِكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُ

“Whoever wants the comfort of Paradise, let him stick to the congregation. Whoever is made happy by his good deeds and

¹ [Discussed earlier. Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Abi Aasim, al-Laalakai in *Sharh Usool al-Itiqaad* and al-Haakim. Al-Tabaraani records it via two chains. Al-Albaani said about the narration in al-Tabaraani that its chain is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Dhilaal al-Jannah fi Takhreej al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 40.]

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Daarimi and Ahmad.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

saddened by his evil deeds is, in fact, a believer.”¹ In commenting upon this hadith, al-Shafi’ee noted,

If that community is spread throughout the lands, it is not possible for one to physically be united with a people who are in separate lands. I have found people being physically together in societies made up of Muslims and disbelievers, pious and impious. Hence, there is no real meaning to a simple physical adherence [to the community by being physically close to them] as such is not possible and the coming together in a geographical sense alone does not produce anything. Therefore, adhering to the community can only mean adhering to what that community is following concerning what is permissible or forbidden, and obeying them in those matters. Whoever has the same views as that of the Muslim community is adhering to that community. Whoever differs from what the Muslim community is adhering to is differing from the community that he has been ordered to adhere to. Negligence and forgetfulness are only found in the sects. As for the *jamaah*, it is not possible that all of them would be negligent or forgetful of the meaning of the Quran, Sunnah or analogy, Allah willing.²

These hadith all continue to be known and accepted. From them, we can derive definitive knowledge that this Nation as a whole will be protected from falling into error. Although these reports are not individually *mutawaatir*, from such similar reports we find ourselves by necessity believing in [for example] the bravery of Ali and the generosity of Haatim³ although none of the individual reports concerning these matters is *mutawaatir*, as it is possible that each one of them was a lie [but so many different reports make this inconceivable]. Furthermore, these hadith were well-known among the Companions, Followers and those who

¹ [Discussed earlier. Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, ibn Abi Aasim and by al-Haakim who said it is *sahih* and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Albaani declared it *sahih* in his discussion of the hadith of ibn Abi Aasim.]

² Al-Shafi’ee, *al-Risaalah*, pp. 474-476.

³ He was Abu Adi Haatim ibn Abdullah ibn Saad al-Taa’ee, a knight, poet and generous person from the Days of Ignorance. His generosity was so well known it became proverbial. He died in the land of Tai eight years after the birth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 150.

came after them. They adhered to these hadith in affirming the place of consensus until al-Nadhaam of the Mutazilah appeared. Furthermore, it is normally impossible for the peoples of different eras to continually accept something that has no verifying evidence.¹

Clarification that Following the Consensus is Not a Form of Taqleed:

Following the consensus is not some form of *taqleed* of the masses of the Nation, nor does it imply that one takes them as lords instead of Allah. This is true due to two reasons:

(1) Earlier we showed that *taqleed* means, “to act upon another’s statement without any authority.” However, the proof or authority has been established showing that the consensus is one of the sources of the Shareeah that is to be depended upon. In this way, it is similar to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If Allah did not order us to follow the commands of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), following his Sunnah would have then been a type of *taqleed* of him and taking him as a lord other than Allah. However, when the proof was established that one must follow Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), no one could call that following a form of blameworthy *taqleed*. Similar is the case with the consensus. Ibn Hazm noted, “In actuality, *taqleed* is the acceptance of a statement by someone other than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) without any proof. This is what the Nation has agreed is termed *taqleed*. There is evidence to show that it is false and it is different from what has been proven to be sound. It is forbidden to call the truth with a name of falsehood or to term falsehood with a name of truth.”²

(2) The consensus must be based on some verse or hadith from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “One never finds an agreed-upon point except that there must have been some clarification from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, that may be obscure to some people who, though, are aware of the consensus [on that issue] and use it as a proof.”³ If this is known, it becomes clear that the consensus is not simply the

¹ Cf., al-Ghazaali, *al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 176; al-Aamidi, *al-Ihkaam*, vol. 1, pp. 219-223.

² *Ihkaam al-Ahkaam*, vol. 6, p. 1089.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 19, p. 195.

statements or views of some men. Instead, it is a view that is based on evidence and texts of the Shareeah. Those who are aware of its basis are aware of it and those who are ignorant of it are ignorant of it.

Extremism with Respect to Censuring Those Who Make *Taqleed*

The *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah*, and in particular those who censure *taqleed* among them, do not declare those who make *taqleed* disbelievers. This is because *taqleed* in itself is not *kufr*. Those who censure *taqleed* and who argue by the verses in which followers followed their leaders in *kufr* do not mean to imply that the act of *taqleed* itself is *kufr*. The final ruling is determined by what the follower is following the other person in. Ibn Abdul Barr stated, "The scholars quote these verses as evidence to negate *taqleed*. But they do not mean to declare it as *kufr* based on these verses as the similarity [between *taqleed* and what is mentioned in said verses] is not with respect to the belief of one or the faith of another. The similarity between the two is that the follower follows without any evidence for the follower, like when one blindly follows another person and commits *kufr*. Another person may blindly follow somebody else and [simply] commit a sin. Yet another person may blindly follow another in a worldly mistake and [simply] commit a mistake. All of these people are blamed for their act of *taqleed* without basing themselves on any evidence. And all of these acts of *taqleed* resemble one another although the sins of the persons involved differ [greatly]."¹

Shukri Mustafa expanded the censuring of *taqleed* to the point of declaring those who make *taqleed* disbelievers. He said, "What we are discussing now is the division of the people (Muslims according to their claims) into those who make *taqleed* and those who are *mujtahideen*. The one who makes *taqleed* among them (the Muslim according to their claim) is the one who blindly follows the *mujtahid* and takes from him *fiqh* issues. He accepts his rulings in *fiqh* issues in totality without asking him for any evidence."² He also stated, "We shall confirm, by Allah's permission, that the first *kufr* committed in this Nation was the *kufr* of *taqleed* or, in other words, the abandoning of the guidance (making *ijtihad* concerning it) for *taqleed*."³ He seeks to prove that by general proofs, such as the verse,

¹ *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm wa Fadhlili*, vol. 2, p. 110.

² *Al-Hujjyaat*, p. 9.

³ *Al-Hujjyaat*, p. 10.

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبِنَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ, the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One God: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)” (*al-Taubah* 31). The hadith that explain this verse, that were presented earlier in our discussion concerning those who declare the followers to be disbelievers, do not need to be reproduced here again as what was presented earlier should be sufficient.

Requiring Everyone to Make *Ijtihad*

People’s situations and abilities differ greatly. Some have the ability to study and learn. Some are relatively weak-minded and even if they studied their whole lives, they would not benefit. Between these two extremes are many different people in different circumstances and with different mental capabilities. For that reason, Allah has commanded those who do not know to ask those who do know. Allah has said,

﴿ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“Ask the people of the *dhikr* (reminder) if you do not know” (*al-Nahl* 43). He entrusted a group of the Nation to study and learn the religion. He has said,

﴿ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ
وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴾

“If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)” (*al-Taubah* 122). This command came after stating the impossibility of all the believers going out,

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً ﴾

“Nor should the Believers all go forth together” (*al-Taubah* 122). The practice of the early scholars of this Nation, from the time of the Companions and afterwards, was in accord with this command. “The one with lesser knowledge would ask the scholar on an issue that occurred and he would give him a verdict with texts that he knew from the Quran and Sunnah.”¹ For that reason, a group of the Companions became famous for giving many religious verdicts due to their prominent positions and deep knowledge in understanding the Quran and Sunnah.² This is an agreed-upon matter. Ibn Abdul Barr stated, “The scholars do not differ on the point that the masses must follow (make *taqleed* for) their scholars. They are the ones meant by the verse, ‘Ask the people of the reminder if you know not’ [*al-Nahl* 43].”³

Those scholars who were very strict regarding the matter of *taqleed*, such as ibn Abdul Barr, ibn Hazm, ibn al-Qayyim, al-Shaukaani and others, were speaking about what some of the learned of particular schools would do in replying to questions without relying on evidence. They were also speaking about when a layman would ask a scholar about the opinion of the school of fiqh without paying any attention to the evidences. After his discussion censuring *taqleed*, ibn Abdul Barr wrote, “This [censuring] is directed to the non-laymen [that is, it is directed to the scholars and specialists]. The masses [non-scholars] must make *taqleed* of its scholars when any new occasion arises as it will not be clear to them wherein lie the proofs and, due to their lack of understanding, they will not be able to reach that knowledge. This is because knowledge is of different levels. One cannot reach its higher levels until one attains its lower levels. This is, in fact, the barrier between the masses and seeking the proof.”⁴ Ibn Hazm also stated, “We do not object to people asking the scholars for religious verdicts. What we object to is their taking the statement without any proof to support it, without [the scholar] referring it to any text of the Quran or Sunnah, because this will necessarily result in the following of mistakes. If during the time of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) there were some who gave incorrect religious verdicts, after his death, they are more in

¹ Al-Shaukaani, *Irshaad al-Fahool*, p. 248.

² Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen*, vol. 1, pp. 12-14.

³ *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm*, vol. 2, p. 114.

⁴ *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm wa Fadhlilihi*, vol. 2, p. 114.

number and more widespread. Therefore, it is an absolute must that one be very cautious concerning getting rulings from any scholar who does not strengthen his ruling by basing it on the Quran, Sunnah or consensus.”¹

Ibn al-Qayyim wrote, “A scholar may err. This is inevitable as he is not protected from error. It is therefore not permissible to accept everything that he says and raise his statements to the status of the one who is protected from error. This is what every scholar on the face of the earth censures. They forbid it and they censure those who practice it. Indeed, this is the source of the afflictions and trials of those who practice *taqleed*.”² Al-Shaukaani stated, “The one making *taqleed*...does not truly make *taqleed* unless he does not ask for any evidence. If he does ask for the evidence, he is not making *taqleed*.”³

When they censured *taqleed*, they were not demanding that everyone make *ijtihad* in understanding the texts and deriving rulings from them. They knew that the *mujtahideen* are a particular class of people from among the Nation. For that reason, they laid down the conditions for a *mujtahid*.⁴ If they believed that everyone

¹ Ibn Hazm, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

² *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen*, vol. 2, p. 192.

³ Al-Shaukaani, *al-Qaul al-Mufeed*, p. 21. Some scholars require the questioner to ask for the evidence when seeking a religious verdict. There is some doubt as to the validity of this view requiring the questioner to do such. This doubt is due to the following points: (1) When a layman asks any scholar a question, he is seeking to know Allah and His Messenger's judgment even though the questioner may not specifically declare that that is what he is seeking. (2) The commoner or layman does not benefit from the mention of the evidence as he does not have the ability to encompass what it really means, especially in cases where there are seemingly contradictory evidences. For that reason, Imam al-Shaatibi concludes that, “The rulings of the *mujtahideen* are for the laymen like the Shareeah evidences are for the *mujtahideen*.” He supports that view by saying, “The existence or non-existence of evidence is the same for a person making *taqleed*, as they do not benefit at all from them. Studying the evidences and deriving laws from them is not their affair. In fact, such is not permissible for them at all. Allah has said, ‘Ask the people of the reminder if you know not.’” (3) It also must be pointed out that the views of those scholars [referred to above as being strict or harsh on this question] were actually in response to the actions of those extreme blind followers of the jurists. It is for that reason that there is some aspect of a similar [extreme] response in their stances. Allah knows best. Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 4, p. 261; Muhammad Suroor, *al-Hukum bi-Ghair ma Anzalallaah*, pp. 43-44.

⁴ For the conditions to be a *mujtahid*, see al-Raazi, *al-Mahsool fi Ilm al-Usool*, part 3, vol. 2, p. 30; what al-Dahlwai quoted in *al-Ijtihad wa al-Taqleed* from al-Baghawi, p. 7; al-Shaukaani, *Irshaad al-Fahool*, pp. 249-252.

was obliged to make *ijtihaad*, they would not have stated those conditions. The prohibition of *taqleed* does not necessarily imply the order to make *ijtihaad*. Not requiring everyone to make *ijtihaad* is based on many considerations, most notably:

(1) The natures of individuals are not equal. Some of them are receptive to knowledge and qualified to make *ijtihaad*. Some of them fall short on those counts.

(2) If we ordered everyone to make *ijtihaad*, the worldly affairs would collapse. The farmer would leave his farm and the craftsmen would leave his craft. Those workers would be busy working to attain the level of *ijtihaad*. This would result in destruction of worldly life and systems and also cause obvious harm and hardship.

(3) No matter how high a person reaches in matters of knowledge, it will be impossible, due to many reasons, for him to reach a level where he is able to make *ijtihaad* on every individual issue.

In sum, the issue of *taqleed* is between two fringes:

One fringe requires *taqleed* for the schools of fiqh [for everyone].

The other fringe requires study and *ijtihaad* [for everyone].

The truth, however, is between these two fringes.

In approving of this point, ibn Taimiyyah wrote,

The extreme among the theologians and jurists say that everyone, even the layman, is required to study and make *ijtihaad* concerning the secondary issues. This is a weak opinion. This is because even if the seeking of that knowledge were required upon every individual, it would be obligatory only according to one's ability. And the ability to understand the perplexing evidences is something impossible or very difficult for the majority of the commoners. On the opposite end, there are the followers of the schools of fiqh who require everyone, scholars and laymen, after the Imams of the schools to make *taqleed*... The opinion of the majority of the Nation is that *ijtihaad* is permissible in general and *taqleed* is permissible in general. They do not obligate *ijtihaad* upon everyone and forbid *taqleed*. And they do not obligate *taqleed* upon everyone and forbid *ijtihaad*. *Ijtihaad* is permissible for the one who has the ability to make *ijtihaad* while *taqleed* is permissible for the one who is not able to make *ijtihaad*. However, is it permissible for the one who has the ability to make *ijtihaad* to make *taqleed*?

On this issue there is a difference of opinion. The correct view is that it is permissible for him whenever he is not able to make *ijtihad*. [For example, it is permissible when] the [opposing] evidences are equal to each other, when he does not have the time to make *ijtihad* or when the evidences concerning the issue are not manifest to him. In these cases, he is incapable and, therefore, when he is incapable, the obligation is dropped from him and he then moves to its substitute, which is *taqleed*.¹

In contemporary times, Shukri Mustafa has gone to an extreme concerning the issue of *taqleed*. He was of the opinion that the members of the Muslim society are all to be declared disbelievers due to their *taqleed* and that it is a must that each one of them make *ijtihad*. In describing the Muslim *jamaah*, he stated, "It is one *jamaah* with one leader. It is based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah. They declare disbelievers those who make *taqleed*. Every Muslim among them is a *mujtahid*. There is no room for sects, schools of fiqh or parties. Instead, they are all around its leader, clinging to the rope of Allah."²

While refuting the *ahl al-sunnah*, he stated, "In refutation to their statement that Allah would not require of those ignorant people Islam³, we say: The reality is that they were not ignorant except due to their leaving of Islam and being preoccupied with worldly matters. It was after they became ignorant that they were no longer knowledgeable and hence they left Islam completely and became preoccupied with this world. They blindly followed others [made *taqleed*] in the matter of their religion and of their Lord until they became learned in their worldly matters and then they blindly followed others [in religious matters]."⁴

He also said, "The problem is that those people hypothesize that the reality in which they are living is Islamic and it is upon that that they build their opinions and fantasies... One finds among those people that they claim to be Muslims people who can hardly understand a hadith and do not know anything about Islam except the name. They argue that such people could not be burdened with

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, pp. 203-204.

² *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 14.

³ [Apparently, what he is saying here is that by virtue of those Muslims not being *mujtahideen*, they are ignorant people who have left Islam. Allah knows best.—JZ]

⁴ *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 11.

making *ijtihad* to know the laws of Islam. However, our statement, that the principle is that we must use Islam to judge the reality we are living in, removes that problem. This would make it clear that those people do not have the slightest connection to Islam. From the beginning, they are not Muslims. Therefore, there is no need to try to understand why anyone without any intelligence would be made responsible by Allah to carry the weight of Islam.”¹

He cites general evidences to show that everyone has the ability to make *ijtihad*. He wrote, “Allah shows that mankind has the ability to ponder over Allah’s signs. ‘Here is a message for mankind: let them take warning therefrom, and let them know that He is (no other than) One God. Let men of understanding then take heed’ [*Ibraaheem* 52]. Allah also says, ‘Do they not consider the Quran (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy’ [*al-Nisaa* 82]. Allah also says, ‘Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or are their hearts locked up by them?’ [*Muhammad* 24]. And Allah says, ‘Do they not ponder over the Word (of Allah), or has anything (new) come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?’ [*al-Muminoon* 68].”²

He also presents some rational arguments that may be summarized as follows:

(1) The Word of Allah is not in need of explanation and clarification. Shukri Mustafa stated, “Is Allah in need of a commentator without His permission or is He not in need of such? If they say He is not in need of such, then the provisions are enough to refute them. If they say that He is in need of such, they have associated a partner with Allah, the Great, for which He has given no authority.”³

(2) We do not know of the good intentions of those who give religious verdicts. Therefore, according to Shukri Mustafa, we cannot take their religious verdicts. He stated, “This is all if we accept the fact that they have good intentions. But we must leave that also. For can you, assuming that they are leading scholars, say with certainty that they have good intentions? If they say with certainty that they have good intentions, they are giving to themselves a right that belongs only to Allah, that is knowing what is in the hearts. If they answer that Allah alone knows about them,

¹ *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 12.

² *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 11.

³ *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 11.

it is obligatory upon them to leave that source which may contain an evil intention.”¹

(3) The jurists do not carry any more knowledge than we do. The jurist has an understanding that is particular to him and which we are not in need of. If the Word of Allah were in need of jurists to be understood, the jurist would then need someone who could understand his words. This vicious circle would then continue ad nauseum. Furthermore, the means of education today are easier than in any previous era.²

The Refutation of Their Arguments:

First, the generality of the verses they use to indicate that everyone has the ability to ponder over the signs of Allah is not relevant as evidence on this issue. They are stated concerning pondering over the signs of Allah; that is, contemplate them and understand them. They are a call to contemplate the texts of the Quran and to think about them. However, after that contemplation, people are at different levels according to what Allah has opened up to them and inspired them with. They are also different according to the amount of knowledge they have acquired that helps them understand the texts of the Quran. Hence, there is nothing in these verses that indicate that all people will have the ability to make *ijtihad* in understanding the texts from the Lawgiver. To highlight this point, I shall present Imam al-Tabari's comments on some of the verses that Shukri Mustafa used as proofs.

(1) Allah says,

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ
اٰخْتِلَافًا كَثِيْرًا ﴾

“Do they not ponder over the Quran (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy” (*al-Nisaa* 82). Imam al-Tabari said, “The meaning of Allah's words, ‘Do they not ponder over the Quran,’ is: Do not the schemers ponder over the things other than what you say to them, O Muhammad, as the Book of Allah? They would then know the proof of Allah against them concerning obeying you and following your command. What you are presenting them is a revelation from their Lord, perfectly harmonious in meaning, consistent in its

¹ *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 15.

² Cf., *Al-Hujjiyaat*, p. 15.

rulings and each part supports the veracity of the other and bears witness to its truth. If it were from other than Allah, its rulings would not be consistent, its meanings would be contradictory and its different parts would make clear its unsoundness.”¹

(2) Allah says,

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴾

“Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or are their hearts locked up by them?” [Muhammad 24]. Al-Tabari stated, “Do those hypocrites not ponder over the admonition that Allah gives them in these verses of the Quran revealed to His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? And do they not think about the proof made clear to them in its revelation, thereby knowing the mistake of what they are upon?”²

(3) Allah also says,

﴿ أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آبَاءَهُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴾

“Do they not ponder over the Word (of Allah), or has anything (new) come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?” [al-Muminoon 68]. Concerning this verse, al-Tabari wrote, “Allah is saying: Don’t those polytheists ponder over the revelation of Allah and His Word to know what lessons it contains and to learn the proofs of Allah that He establishes against them? Or has anything (new) come to them that did not come to their fathers of old? He says to them: Has something come that had not come before to their ascendants and therefore they are haughty and turn away.”³

Second, he makes the argument, “Is Allah’s word in need of a commentator...?” In response, one can say, “Yes, Allah’s words are in need of explanation and elucidation.” This has occurred by Allah’s will as He has made the Sunnah an explanation of the Quran. [Allah says,]

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ﴾

“We have sent down unto you (also) the *dhikr* (Reminder) that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought” (al-Nahl 44). The role of the scholars is not simply to explain the wording of the text. They also study the texts that seem to be conflicting and they explain how they are not contradictory by

¹ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 5, p. 179.

² Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 26, p. 57.

³ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 18, p. 41.

reconciling the evidences or showing which is stronger. The fact that the Quran is in need of explanation, elucidation and clarification is something concerning which there is no difference of opinion among the scholars of this Nation.

Third, he also argued that we do not know of the good intentions of those who give religious verdicts. The basic ruling is that one should have good expectations of the scholar who is giving a religious verdict. Allah has not commanded us to look into their intentions as such is beyond what humans can sense. Instead, humans are to judge according to what is apparent to them. Umar ibn al-Khattaab stated, "People were [sometimes] judged by the revealing of a divine inspiration during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But now that is no longer. Now we judge you by the deeds you publicly practice. We will trust and favor the one who does good deeds in front of us, and we will not call him to account about what he is really doing in secret, for Allah will judge him for that. But we will not trust or believe the one who presents to us an evil deed, even if he claims that his private deeds are good."¹ What is sought is that a Muslim ask about knowledge and religion from those whom he trusts. These are the aspects that are apparent to him and the remaining affairs are left to Allah.

Fourth, Shukri argues that the jurists do not bear more knowledge than what we bear. In response, the fact that humans are at different levels of knowledge is something accepted by the Shareeah, human reasoning and experience. Allah says in the Quran,

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

"Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?" (*al-Zumar* 9). Allah also teaches His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to say,

﴿ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴾

"Say, 'O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge'" (*Taha* 114). Allah says to the one who has no knowledge,

﴿ فَسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

“Ask the people of the *dhikr* (reminder) if you do not know” (*al-Nahl* 43). Allah also distinguishes between those well-grounded in knowledge and others. Those well-grounded in knowledge are more complete in their beliefs. Allah says,

﴿ لَنْ كِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ
الرِّزْقَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا

عَظِيمًا ﴿

“But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, (especially) those who establish regular prayer and practice regular charity and believe in Allah and in the Last Day. To them shall We soon give a great reward” (*al-Nisaa* 162).

Human reasoning also knows that knowledge is not something that is taken all at once and a person becomes a scholar. Instead, knowledge is something that is accumulated. A person spends his whole life accumulating and amassing knowledge and understanding until he becomes a scholar. In this way, people are at very different levels, some being ignorant, some being learners and others being scholars.

Perception also witnesses this fact. You might find a person, ask him a question and he will show you his ignorance. On the other hand, you may ask another and he responds with knowledge. Only the most obstinate person would deny that there are such differences in the people. If they mean by denying the differences that the people are all the same in understanding and comprehending, this argument is also rejected. There are tools for understanding, like having the knowledge of the language that one is speaking, the knowledge and practice of deriving laws and so forth. This is in addition to the fact that understanding is truly a divine grace. Therefore, based on all of that, people are also at different levels of understanding. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed that Allah would give Ibn Abbaas the understanding of the religion. He said,

اللَّهُمَّ عَلِّمْنَا الْحِكْمَةَ

“O Allah, teach him the wisdom.” Another wording states,

اللَّهُمَّ عَلِّمَهُ الْكِتَابَ

“O Allah, teach him the Book.”¹ Another narration states,

اللَّهُمَّ فَفِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ وَعَلِّمَهُ التَّأْوِيلَ

“O Allah, give him understanding of the religion and teach him the interpretation [of the Quran].”² The *fiqh* mentioned here is the understanding. If all of the people were of the same ability in understanding, why did the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) single ibn Abbaas out for this supplication?

Being Harsh upon the People

This religion is built upon ease and removing hardship. The evidence for that is substantial. An examination of the evidences of the Shareeah will conclude that Allah made this religion a mercy for mankind, with simplicity and ease. The foundation of the Messenger’s mission is that of compassion and mercy for the people and the removing of the chains and fetters that a group of mankind was suffering under. Allah says,

﴿ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾

“Now has come unto you a Messenger from among yourselves. It grieves him that you should perish. Ardently anxious is he over you, to the Believers is he most kind and merciful” (*al-Taubah* 128). Allah also says,

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by Ahmad. [The first portion, “O Allah, give him understanding of the religion,” is also recorded by al-Bukhari.—JZ]

“We sent you not save as a mercy for the worlds” (*al-Anbiyaa* 107). The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَبْعَثْنِي مُعَذِّبًا وَلَا مُتَعَذِّبًا وَلَكِنْ بَعَثَنِي مُعَلِّمًا مَيِّسْرًا

“Allah did not send me as someone causing hardship [for the people] or one who seeks out their mistakes, but Allah has sent me as a teacher and one who brings ease [to the people].”¹ From the most noticeable characteristics of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is:

﴿ وَيَجْلُ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾

“He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them” (*al-Araaf* 157). Indeed, for that reason, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would sometimes abandon some actions or matters out of fear that they would be a hardship for his Nation. In the narration concerning *Salaat al-Taraweeh* [the voluntary late night prayers during the month of Ramadhan], it is stated that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed, some people also prayed with him. On the next night, even more people prayed with him. When the third or fourth night came, a number of people had gathered waiting for him but he did not go out [and pray]. In the morning, he said to them,

قَدْ رَأَيْتُ الَّذِي صَنَعْتُمْ فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْنِي مِنَ الْخُرُوجِ إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا أَنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَفْرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ

“I saw what you did. Nothing prevented me from coming out to you except that I feared that it would be made obligatory upon you.” In one narration [from al-Bukhari and Muslim], it [explicitly] states,

فَتَعَجَزُوا عَنْهَا

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

“And you would not be able to do it.”¹ Abu Hurairah also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَوْلَا أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي لَأَمَرْتُهُمْ بِالسُّوَاكِ مَعَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ

“If it were not to be a hardship upon my Nation, I would order them to use the toothstick (*siwaak*) for every prayer.”²

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would order his Companions to be easy upon the people. He told Muaadh ibn Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ashari when sending them to Yemen,

يَسْرًا وَلَا تَعْسْرًا وَبِشْرًا وَلَا تَنْفَرًا

“Be making things easy and not making things hard. Be giving good tidings to the people and not making them flee.”³

A person with respect to his own self may take a path that is sanctioned and more difficult. For example, he may perform long prayers [when praying by himself]. However, he is not allowed to force others to perform the same types of acts. For that reason, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would perform the longest prayers of anyone when he prayed by himself but he would lighten the prayers when praying with the people, taking their various circumstances into consideration. In describing the Prophet’s prayer, Anas ibn Maalik stated, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would be easy on the people in the prayer while still making it complete.”⁴ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would order his Companions to be easy on the people with respect to the prayer. One night, Muaadh ibn Jabal led his people in prayer by starting with *soorah al-Baqarah*. One of the followers left the prayer, made the salutations, prayed by himself and then left. They said to him, “Have you become a hypocrite, O so and so?” He replied, “No, by Allah. I shall certainly go to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and inform him of it.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

¹ This story is recorded in a number of different sources. The narrations above are from al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa`ee.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa`ee.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

came and he told him, "O Messenger of Allah, we are people who work tending to the camels used for watering during the day. Muaadh prayed with you the Isha (Night) Prayer and then he came to us and began with *soorah al-Baqarah*." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then turned to Muaadh and said,

يَا مُعَاذُ أَفْتَانٌ أَنْتَ أَقْرَأُ بِكَذَا وَأَقْرَأُ بِكَذَا

"O Muaadh, are you one who puts people to trials? Recite such and such, recite such and such." In a narration in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, he repeated that three times. In one narration, it states that he said, "Read 'By the sun and its (glorious) splendor' [*soorah al-Shams*], 'By the glorious morning light, and by the night when it is still' [*soorah al-Dhuha*] and 'Exalt the name of the Guardian-Lord Most High' [*soorah al-Ala*]." His statement to Muaadh, "O Muaadh, are you one who puts people to trials?" means, "One who makes people flee from the religion and prevents them from it."²

Abu Masood al-Ansari said, "A man said, 'O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we refrain from the Fajr [Morning] Prayer because so and so makes it very long.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) got upset and I have never seen him more upset than on that day. He then said,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُنْفِرِينَ فَمَنْ أَمَّ النَّاسَ فَلْيَتَجَوَّزْ فَإِنَّ خَلْفَهُ
الضَّعِيفَ وَالْكَبِيرَ وَذَا الْحَاجَّةِ

'O people, there are among you some who drive others away. For whoever is an Imam for the people, let him lighten [the burden on the people] for behind him are the weak, the aged and the ones with needs to attend to."³

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explicitly stated the order to lighten the burden on the people while at the same time he left the door open for an individual [by himself] to follow a stricter course as long as he did not go beyond

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa'ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

² Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 182.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

the limits of the Shareeah.¹ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ لِلنَّاسِ فَلْيُخَفِّفْ فَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ الضَّعِيفَ وَالسَّقِيمَ وَالْكَبِيرَ
وَإِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ لِنَفْسِهِ فَلْيُطَوِّلْ مَا شَاءَ

“If one of you leads the people in prayer, he should lighten [its burden] for among them are the weak, the ill and the elderly. If a person is praying by himself, he may make it as long as he wills.”²

Insisting that the people adhere to what Allah has sanctioned does not fall under the scope of being harsh on the people. Instead, being harsh on the people is making the people adhere to something that Allah has not sanctioned. This is of two categories:

(1) Matters which were never originally sanctioned.

(2) Matters which were sanctioned in essence but extremism has occurred with respect to their characteristics or amounts.

Here is an explanation of these two points.

First, binding the people with what Allah never bound them by: Allah has completed and perfected this religion. By this, He has granted this Nation a great bounty. Hence, Allah says,

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ
لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (*al-Maaidah* 3). Therefore, any ruling that is introduced after the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for which there is no evidence in the texts of the Shareeah or in its general principles is rejected from its doer. Aishah, the Mother of the Believers, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

¹ There is a discussion of extremism with respect to being harsh or strict on oneself in the coming chapter.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad.

“Whoever introduces anything into this matter of ours that is not from it shall have it rejected.”¹ Another narration states,

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever does an act that is not in accord with our matter will have it rejected.”² In blaming the polytheists for ascribing partners to Allah who bound them by things that Allah did not bind them and who made for them a religion that Allah did not permit, Allah says,

﴿ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾

“What! Have they partners (in godhead), who have established for them some religion without the permission of Allah? Had it not been for the decree of judgment, the matter would have been decided between them (at once). But verily the wrongdoers will have a grievous penalty” (*al-Shoora* 21).

Similarly, in censuring the Christians for making themselves abide by monasticism, that they did not even live up to, Allah says,

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴾

“And We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the monasticism that they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them. (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari without its complete chain (see *Taghleeq al-Taleeq*, vol. 3, pp. 396-398) and recorded by Muslim.

them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors” (*al-Hadeed* 27). Ibn Katheer notes, “This is a censure of them in two ways: First, they invented in the religion what they were not ordered to do. Second, they failed to abide by what they claimed was a way of getting closer to Allah.”¹

In this religion, which Allah completed as a bounty and of which He is pleased for this Nation, all of the responsibilities are within the capabilities and means of the servants. Allah says,

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

“On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear” (*al-Baqarah* 286). While describing the deeds of the believers, Allah also says,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجَلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

“Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord, those who believe in the signs of their Lord, those who join not (in worship) partners with their Lord, and those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear because they will return to their Lord: It is these who hasten in every good work, and these who are foremost in them. On no soul do We place a burden greater than it can bear” (*al-Muminoon* 57-62). In commenting on this last verse, al-Tabari noted, “Allah says, ‘On no soul do We place a burden greater than it can bear,’ and what is proper for them in matters of worship. Therefore, We have burdened them with some responsibilities such as knowing the oneness of Allah and We have sanctioned for them what We have of the laws.”²

Al-Shaatibi said, “It is confirmed in legal theory that a condition of responsibility or a cause for it is the existence of the

¹ Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 4, p. 315.

² *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 18, p. 35.

ability by the responsible party to perform the act. Concerning anything that a person has not the ability to perform, from a Shareeah perspective, it is not valid that such a responsibility be put upon him.”¹ Based on all of this, it is not valid for anyone, regardless of who he may be, to require of anyone else something that Allah has not required of him. In this type of responsibility, there is a burdening and hardship that will lead the person so burdened to discontinue that act, as was the case with the Christians. Such has occurred in contemporary times. The group of Shukri required of people that which Allah did not require of them. It required them all to join their *jamaah* and established that as the greatest of the obligatory deeds. They made abandoning that *jamaah* a form of *kufir* in Allah. They also obliged the people to make *ijtihad* to know the laws of the Shareeah although Allah never obliged all the people to do such. All of this is a type of extremism in the religion that Allah never permitted. Since these two aspects were elaborated upon earlier, there is no need to repeat that discussion here.

Second, being harsh upon the people by equalizing laws of different legal value: The laws of the Shareeah are of different legal value. There are some deeds that are obligatory and some that are recommended. Even the obligatory deeds are of varying degrees. Believing in Allah and His Messenger, which is the first of all obligations, is not like maintaining one’s family or child. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “The majority of the jurists opine that there are varying levels among what is obligatory and what is forbidden. They state that the obligatory nature of one deed may be greater than that of another obligatory deed. Similarly, the forbidden nature of one deed may be greater than the forbidden nature of another forbidden deed. One is a greater obligation and the other is a greater prohibition.”²

It is a form of being too harsh upon the people to reckon their deeds as if they were all of the same level, treating a recommended act as if it were an obligatory act or a lesser obligatory act like a greater obligatory act, making them all equal. In contemporary times, this trend was seen very clearly in Maahir Bakri who stated in *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, “The word ‘disobedient sinner’ is one of the names for the disbeliever and it is completely equivalent to ‘disbeliever.’”³ Declaring people disbelievers due to sins they

¹ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 107.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 17, p. 59.

³ *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 72.

commit is a type of equating acts of different legal values as they have made disobedience of any kind to be equivalent to *kufr*.

Chapter Four: Practical and Behavior-Related Spheres of Extremism

Extremism in Individual Behavior

Being Very Harsh and Strict upon Oneself

The Lawgiver has laid down the Shareeah in its normal state according to the capabilities and means of humans. The forms of hardship that occur every now and then are causes of legal concessions that make matters easier, out of mercy for His servants and to lighten their burden. Similarly, He has forbidden humans from going to extremes and being harsh upon themselves. Allah says,

﴿ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴾

“Say: O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes in your religion, trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the even way” (*al-Maaidah* 77).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also warned about becoming like the People of the Book. A man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “There are some types of food that I feel uneasy about.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied to him,

لَا يَتَخَلَّجْنَ فِي صَدْرِكَ شَيْءٌ ضَارٌّ عَنَّا فِيهِ النَّصْرَانِيَّةُ

“Do not let such feelings enter your soul like those similar to the Christians.”¹ The meaning is, “Do not let any hardship or bad feelings enter your heart as you are on the monotheistic, plain way. If you doubt and make things hard on yourselves in that fashion, you will be similar in that manner to the monks.”²

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also forbade being very harsh upon oneself. Anas ibn Maalik narrated that he said,

لَا تَشَدُّوْا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيُشَدِّدَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِنَّ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ
فَشَدَّدَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَلْكَ بِقَائِيَهُمْ فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالذِّيَارِ (وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ
ابْتَدَعُوْهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ)

“Do not be very strict on yourselves for then Allah will be strict upon you. Verily, a people were strict upon themselves so Allah was strict upon them. It is the remnants of those people in the hermitages and monasteries. [Then he quoted the verse,] ‘But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them.’”³

The hadith prohibiting being harsh and very strict upon oneself as well as the hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) showed the remedy for such behavior are many. [In fact, many were presented earlier in this work.] From these texts, one can distinguish the standards by which one can judge an act as to whether it is being overly harsh and strict or not. I shall make these points clear in the following:

Being harsh upon oneself refers to every deed that leads to hardship and makes the person suffer. “Being harsh is sometimes in treating an act of worship which is neither obligatory nor recommended as being obligatory or recommended. It can also be in treating something of the good things which is neither forbidden nor disliked as being forbidden or disliked.”⁴ Since this issue is very

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood and Ahmad. [According to al-Albaani, this hadith is weak. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Dhaeef Sunan Abi Dawood* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1991), pp. 485-6.—JZ]

² Abu al-Taib al-Abaadi, *Aun al-Mabood*, vol. 3, p. 412.

³ Discussed earlier. Recorded by Abu Dawood and Abu Yala. It is *hasan*.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, vol. 1, p. 283.

closely related to the concept of hardship, one should know that hardship is of two types:

(1) The Customary [Acceptable] Type of Hardship

No worldly or religious act is free of this type of hardship. Every Shareeah requirement has some aspect of work and effort related to it. This effort and burden is of different levels. For example, the effort related to the Fajr (Morning) Prayer is not the same as that related to the Dhuhr (Noon) Prayer. The fact that such requirements are termed obligations and burdens is a sign that they do require some type of effort. However, it is a customary, acceptable type of effort. It is only called "hardship" in a figurative sense. Furthermore, the burden in itself is not the goal of the Shareeah. It is not meant for its own purpose but it is due to the overall benefit of the act itself that the doer reaps in his worldly life and in the Hereafter.

Similarly, worldly actions all contain some effort and hardship to them. Earning a livelihood involves effort. However, in general, it falls within the ability of a human and it is something that they can normally bear. In fact, the intelligent people consider not earning one's livelihood [supposedly] due to hardship a type of laziness for which the person is held blameworthy.

The point is that this type of hardship does not free the person from responsibility. Everybody's situation in this world contains some hardship and burdening. However, Allah gives him the ability such that these interactions are under his control and he is not under their control. This is the way it is with [the Shareeah] responsibilities and burdens.¹

(2) The Uncustomary [Beyond the Norm] Hardship

As for this type of hardship, if we want to define it precisely in the light of the Shareeah texts, we look at the deed and what it will lead to. If a [temporary] continual practice of the deed will lead to that act, all of it or part of it, being discontinued or will lead to some shortcoming in its doer, it is considered a type of uncustomary [unacceptable] hardship. Here is a further explanation of these two categories:

(1) Discontinuance of the Act:

¹ Cf., Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 119-120.

The act will be discontinued for one of two reasons:

(a) Aversion and Boredom Followed by Inability: The texts refer to this sometimes as becoming adverse to an act of worship, bored by it and becoming unable to perform it anymore. The following texts give these meanings:

(1) Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to her while another woman was with her. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked who that was and Aishah answered that it was so and so. Then Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) began to speak about how much that woman prays. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

مَهْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا تُطِيقُونَ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يَمَلُّ اللَّهُ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا وَكَانَ أَحَبَّ الدِّينِ
إِلَيْهِ مَا دَامَ عَلَيْهِ صَاحِبُهُ

“That shouldn’t be done. You should do what is within your ability. By Allah, Allah will not get bored until you get bored. The most beloved way of action to Him is what the person does continually.”¹

(2) Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ مَتِينٌ فَأَوْغِلُوا فِيهِ بِرِفْقٍ وَلَا تَبْغَضُوا إِلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ عِبَادَةَ
اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ الْمَنْبِتَ لَا أَرْضًا قَطَعَ وَلَا ظَهْرًا أَبْقَى

“This religion is very solid, so penetrate into it with gentleness [and you will reach your goal]. And do not make an act of worship of Allah disliked to yourself. Verily, the one who injures his steed due to harsh riding does not traverse the land nor is there a steed left to ride.”²

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bazaar from the hadith of Jaabir. Ibn Hajar mentioned it in *Fath* and said that the correct view is that it is *mursal* [missing the name of the Companion and hence weak]. Al-Haithami stated, “Its chain contains Yahya ibn al-Mutawakil Abu Aqeel and he is a liar.” Ibn Hajar stated that it has supporting evidence in a narration in *al-Zuhd* by ibn al-Mubaarak. It is number 1334 in that work. The first sentence is narrated by Anas and recorded by Ahmad. Al-Haithami stated, “Its narrators are trustworthy, however Khalf ibn Mahraan never met Anas.” By this supporting evidence, one may strengthen the above hadith. In fact, al-

(3) There is also the story of Abdullah ibn Amr presented earlier. After he got old, he stated, "Woe to me, if only I had taken the concession of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." Al-Nawawi noted, "Its meaning is that he got old and was unable to continue to perform those deeds he made binding upon himself and continued to practice during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It became difficult for him to perform them due to his inability while he was unhappy to leave them as he had made them binding upon himself. He wished that he had accepted the concession and taken the lighter path."¹

(4) [In the hadith presented earlier concerning the three who wanted to perform more acts of worship than what they found the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) doing,] Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would order them, he would order them to do deeds that were within their ability. They said, "We are not like you, O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Allah has forgiven what has preceded and what will come of your sins." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) got mad such that his anger could be seen on his face. He then stated,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَّقَاكُمْ لَهُ

"By Allah, I am most fearful of Allah and most conscious of Him."² The meaning is that whenever he ordered them to do something, he would order them while being easy upon them and not causing hardship out of fear that they would be unable to continue the act. He would do similar acts to what he ordered the people to do. However, they requested that he burden them with hardship as they believed that they were in need of going to the furthest extreme so that their ranks might be raised. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) became upset for achieving the higher ranks does not necessitate falling short in one's deeds. Indeed, it necessitates a steady increase and therefore he ordered them to do

Albaani declared the first sentence *hasan* in *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* #2442. [Al-Albaani has discussed this hadith in sufficient detail and has declared it weak. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Dhaeefah*, vol. 5, pp. 501-503.—JZ]

¹ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 220.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

the lighter acts so that they would be able to perform them continuously.¹

(b) Discontinuing the Act Due to Its Conflicting with Other Rights:

When one is burdened with responsibilities and Shareeah deeds, he must perform them while fulfilling the rights of Allah and the rights of the other humans. If a person goes deeply into a difficult, burdensome act, this may cause him to cut off other acts. This, in fact, occurred among some of the Companions.

Abu Juhaifah² narrated from his father who said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forged a brotherhood between Salmaan³ and Abu al-Dardaa.⁴ Salmaan visited Abu al-Dardaa and found his wife Umm al-Dardaa⁵ dressed in shabby attire. He asked her, "What is going on with you?" She replied, "Your brother Abu al-Dardaa has no need for this worldly life." Abu al-Dardaa then came and he prepared some food for him. He told him, "Eat." He replied, "I am fasting." Salmaan replied, "I will not eat until you eat," so he then ate. At night, Abu al-Dardaa went to perform late night prayers. Salmaan told him, "Sleep," so he slept.

¹ Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 71. For more details, see al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 136-138.

² He was Wahf ibn Abdullah al-Sawaa`ee. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died before he reached the age of puberty. He died in 74 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 202; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 11, p. 164.

³ He was the Companion Salmaan al-Farisi. He was one of the earliest Companions. He lived a long life. The story of his conversion to Islam is a long, marvelous story, as he went from being a Magian to a Christian to a Muslim. He was the governor of al-Madaain. He was very humble and would give his salary away in charity. He died in al-Madaain in 36 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 505; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 223; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 112.

⁴ He was Abu al-Dardaa Uwaimir ibn Maalik ibn Qais ibn Umayyah al-Ansaari al-Khazraji. He was a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was a businessman in Madinah before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) received his first revelation. He then left all of that for the purpose of worship. He was a judge in Damascus. He was one of the people who had memorized the entire Quran. He died in al-Shaam in 32 A.H. 109 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 335; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 182; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 328.

⁵ She was the Companion Khairah bint Abi Khadrad, known as Umm al-Dardaa. She learned and passed on knowledge directly from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his wives. A number of the followers narrated from her. She died in al-Shaam around the year 30 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 328.

He then went again to perform late night prayers and Salmaan told him again, "Sleep," so he slept. It was the last portion of the night, Salmaan told him, "Now get up." They then both prayed. Salmaan then told him, "Your Lord has a right over you, your own self has a right over you and your wife has a right over you. And give everyone who has a right its proper due." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then came and he mentioned what Salmaan had said and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him [Abu al-Dardaa], "Salmaan has spoken the truth."¹

Ibn Hajar noted, "This contains a permissibility to forbid one from recommended deeds if one fears that that would lead to adversity towards the act and boredom or the failure to perform obligatory rights or more deserving recommended acts than the respective recommended act that one is going to perform."²

The Presence of the Shortcoming:

When a deed leads to a shortcoming in the person—either psychological or physical—such that he is tormenting himself or making himself fail in the performance of his religion and worship, that act is considered a type of hardship upon the person. Anas ibn Maalik narrated that a group of three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked about his acts of worship. When they were told of his actions, it was as if they considered them little. They then said, "Where are we with respect to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? Verily, Allah has forgiven for him his past and later sins." One of them then said, "As for me, I shall pray the whole night long." Another said, "I shall fast continuously without breaking my fast." The third said, "I shall remain away from women and will never marry." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then came and said,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ
وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and al-Tirmidhi.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 212. Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 143-146.

“By Allah, I am most fearful of Allah and most conscious of Him. However, I fast and break my fast, pray and sleep and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my way of life is not from me.”¹

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) objected to their acts as they were a type of forbidding the good things that a human is naturally inclined towards. By preventing oneself those good things, the person will cause a shortcoming within himself. As Ibn Abbaas narrated: While the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was delivering a speech there was a man who was standing. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked about him and they said that it was Abu Israaeel² who had taken a vow to stand in the sun and not to sit, nor seek shade, nor speak and he also vowed to fast. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

مُرُّهُ فَلْيَبْكَلْكُمْ وَلْيَسْتَظِلَّ وَلْيَقْعُدْ وَلْيَتِمَّ صَوْمَهُ

“Order him to speak, seek shade and sit. And let him continue his fast.”³ Ibn Hajar stated, “[This hadith indicates] that everything by which a person hurts himself, even if in the long-run, and for which there is no sanction in the Quran or Sunnah, such as walking barefoot or sitting in the sun, is not an act of obedience to Allah. Therefore, a vow of that nature is not to be fulfilled.”⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, “As for the pure act of tormenting oneself or one’s body without any overriding benefit to it, this is not sanctioned for us. Instead, Allah has ordered us what benefits us and forbidden us from what harms us.”⁵ The conclusion from these two categories is that a deed is a type of unacceptable hardship upon oneself when it causes a shortcoming in the person himself or when it leads to a discontinuance of a Shareeah act either due to aversion, boredom or conflict with other rights. After presenting these parameters, there are a number of important issues that need to be discussed.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² He was Abu Israaeel, a Companion who was well known by his *kunya* [father of...]. Some scholars said that no other Companion had the *kunya* Abu Israaeel. It is said that his name was Yaseer while other say that it was Qasheer. There is also a difference of opinion concerning his lineage; some say that he was from the Quraish while others say he was from the Ansar. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 8, p. 160 and vol. 11, p. 12.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawood.

⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 11, p. 590.

⁵ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 22, p. 314.

The First Issue:

The existence of hardship for individuals is not on the basis of an absolute standard. Instead, it is a relative issue that differs with different individuals and circumstances. For that reason, we see that the resultant ruling exists when its legal cause is present—which is discontinuance of an act or the presence of a shortcoming in the person—and does not exist when its legal cause is absent. If that legal cause is present, the deed is a type of unacceptable hardship upon the person.¹ People are actually of two types:

The first type: Some people are affected by performing certain burdening actions and hence the legal cause is present in their case. For such people to practice those types of acts would be a type of extremism and unacceptable causing of hardship to oneself. It was for this reason that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said about the woman whose prayers were mentioned,

مَهْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا تَطِيقُونَ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يَمَلُّ اللَّهُ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا

“That shouldn’t be done. You should do what is within your ability. By Allah, Allah will not get bored until you get bored.”² He also forbade Abu Israaeel from what he was doing [concerning standing in the sun, not seeking shade and so forth]. Similarly, he forbade Abdullah ibn Amr from his continuous fasting to the point that when he got older he said, “Woe to me, if only I had accepted the concession of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).” “Even though he became less capable and had wished that he had accepted that concession, he continued to practice what he had set out for himself although he did take some lessening measures.”³ In a narration it states, “when Abdullah became weak and old, he would fast those days by connecting some fasts with others and then break his fasts for an equal number of days, thereby regaining some of his strength.”⁴ Abdullah ibn Amr explicitly stated that he was harsh upon himself, “I was harsh, so Allah was harsh on me.”

The second type: The second type of people are not affected with boredom or laziness due to a self-discipline that is stronger

¹ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 138.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 220. Also see *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 218; al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 138.

⁴ Ibn Hajar mentioned this and ascribed it to ibn Khuzaimah via the chain of Husain from Mujaahid. I found this report in *Sahih ibn Khuzaimah* (vol. 3, p. 293) but I did not find said wording.

than the hardship or a seriousness that makes the difficulty easy. Therefore, that hardship, in their case, no longer remains a hardship. They do not suffer any of the defects that make that act a form of extremism. Instead, they are blessed with being able to combine both acts and, therefore, they have more good deeds. They are able to perform Shareeah deeds related to the heart and limbs that others consider overbearing. Hence, their deeds are not considered extreme.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pointed to this fact when discussing the fast of David. He said,

كَانَ يَصُومُ يَوْمًا وَيُفْطِرُ يَوْمًا وَلَا يَغِيرُ إِذَا لَاقَى

“He would fast one day and break his fast the next day. And he would not flee when the [two armies would] meet.”¹ Hence, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pointed out that his fasting would not make him too weak to face the enemy, thus, due to his weakened state, fleeing and abandoning the jihad when it was needed.²

Al-Tabari stated, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) informed that the fast of the Prophet of Allah David was more virtuous than that of others. This was because, although he performed those [many] fasts, they did not weaken him from performing the other deeds that are more virtuous than fasting. For example, he was firm in his fighting against the enemies of Allah at the time of the confrontation and he did not flee from such fighting. The reason the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) judged his voluntary fast the best is the reason we just gave. Hence, everyone whose fast does not weaken him [thus preventing him] from performing his other obligations to Allah or from doing what is more virtuous than his fast, then it is a voluntary deed from his life that is sound and it is not disliked for him due to his situation. For anyone whose fast weakens him from performing the obligations to Allah, such a fast is not permissible for him. In fact, it is forbidden for him. By such a fast, he is causing a hardship. If, however, that fast does not weaken him from performing the obligations to Allah but it does weaken him from performing more virtuous voluntary deeds, then said fast is disliked for him, not beloved, if, in fact, we do not consider him sinful. What we have described that is not according to what the Messenger of Allah

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Nasaa` ee.

² Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 301.

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) chose for his Nation does not apply to him [Dawood because he met all the necessary conditions to keep his act from being negative].”¹

One gets the same impression from what Aishah narrated concerning the fasts of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She stated, “He would fast until one would say that he is not going to discontinue his fasts. And he would not fast until one would say that he is not going to fast. And, from the time he came to Madinah, I never saw him fasting the entire month save for Ramadhaan.”² Imam al-Shaatibi noted, “You must consider the aspects of energeticness and spare time with respect to related rights or strength in performing the deeds.”³

It has been recorded concerning many of the Companions and those who came afterwards that they performed deeds that only certain individuals could perform. “In doing so, they were not going against the Sunnah. Indeed, they were reckoned among those who went forward in doing good deeds, may Allah make us one of them. This is because the reason behind the prohibition of such difficult deeds was not present in their case. Therefore, the prohibition did not arise concerning them.”⁴

The Second Issue:

The acts that put hardship upon oneself are not all at one level with respect to their ruling. They do differ. For example, with respect to the ruling concerning discontinuing something because it interferes with other rights, the case of the act preventing one from the prayer is a much stronger case than wherein it causes one to fail to fulfill the spouse’s rights. In accepting this principle, ibn Taimiyyah noted, “When the act of worship is such that it brings about harm to the person by preventing him from performing a more beneficial obligatory deed, the act is then forbidden. An example is that of fasting to such an extent that it makes a person too weak to earn his livelihood or it prevents him from being able to think or understand in a proper manner. The same would be the ruling if it prevented him from an obligatory jihad. The same ruling is true if it would be expected that the person would fall into a forbidden situation whose harm is not equaled by its good. Such

¹ *Tahdheeb al-Athaar: Musnad Umar ibn al-Khataab*, p. 323.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa`ee.

³ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 311.

⁴ Al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 141. For more details, see al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 138-143; al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, pp. 308-313.

would be the case, for example, if he were to give away all of his wealth and then he would seek the wealth of the people and beg from them. However, if said act were simply to weaken him from a more virtuous act or it is expected to put him in an undesirable circumstance, the act would then be considered simply reprehensible.”¹

The Third Issue: Should a Person Seek Acts of Hardship as a Means of Earning Rewards from Allah?

An individual should not intend hardship in a deed, viewing a greater reward. Instead, he may seek the deed that has a greater reward due to its greater hardship. The intent is taken into consideration here because deeds are according to their intentions. A hadith states,

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَىٰ

““Surely, all actions are but driven by intentions and, verily, everyone shall have but that which he intended.”² No deed is proper if it is not in accord with the goals of the Lawgiver. If the person’s intention is to undergo hardship, he is contradicting the intent of the Lawgiver. Every intention that contradicts the intent of the Lawgiver is void.³ Hardship is not a parameter for reward. Reward is the result of hardship being a necessary consequence of something requested by the Shareeah and something that may be expected to occur when fulfilling such an act. However, it is never a goal in itself. The following aspects prove this:

(1) A study of the texts of the Shareeah leads to the definite conclusion that removing hardship, seeking ease upon the people and lessening of burdens is a distinguishing characteristic of this nation.⁴

(2) There are explicit texts in which certain individuals were prohibited from specific deeds entailing hardship that they had believed would entail them reward and blessings. It was also made clear that such an approach was in contradiction to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, pp. 272-273.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, al-Tayaalisi and al-Baihaqi.

³ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 128-129.

⁴ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 133; Dr. Saalih ibn Humaid, *Rafu al-Haraj fi al-Shareeah*, p. 352.

being only torture and hardship for which Allah would do nothing. Examples of these reports include:

(a) There is the group of three who came to the Prophet's wives. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told them, after asking them if they had said the things they had said,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ
وَأَتَزَوِّجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي

"By Allah, I am most fearful of Allah and most conscious of Him. However, I fast and break my fast, pray and sleep and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my way of life is not from me."¹

(b) Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw an old man walking while leaning on his two sons. He said, "What is the case with him?" They said, "He made an oath that he would walk [while performing the pilgrimage]." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَن تَعْذِيبِ هَذَا نَفْسَهُ لَغَنِيٌّ

"Allah is not in need of that man tormenting himself," and he ordered that he ride.²

(c) Uqbah ibn Aamir³ said, "My sister swore to walk to the House of Allah barefoot and she ordered me to ask the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about that, so I did. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, 'Let her walk and let her ride.'"⁴

(d) There is also the previously discussed hadith of Abu Israa'el [who had vowed to stand in the sun and so forth].

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa'ee.

³ Uqbah ibn Aamir was a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He was present at the conquering of Egypt with Amr ibn al-Aas. He was the governor of Egypt in 44 A.H. He then led the battle on the seas. He died in Egypt in 58 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 467; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 240.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaa'ee.

These hadith and similar others clearly indicate that intending hardship is not part of the religion whatsoever. Indeed, it is only torment and punishment that is inconsistent with the ease and simplicity of this religion.¹ Imam al-Izz ibn Abdil Salaam² stated, “It is not proper to get closer to Allah by hardship. This is because all means of getting closer are forms of extolling Allah and the essence of suffering hardship is neither extolling nor respecting.”³

(3) The reality in the Shareeah is that rewards are varying but not due to hardship. In fact, a great reward could be the result of a “small” deed. A hadith states,

الإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ شُعْبَةً فَأَفْضَلُهَا قَوْلُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَدْنَاهَا
إِمَاطَةُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

“*Imaan* (faith) has seventy some-odd branches. The highest of them being the statement, ‘There is none worthy of worship except Allah,’ and the lowliest being removing something harmful from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith.”⁴ This contains an indication that deeds are of varying degrees according to their amount of honor and benefit as well as the good that results from them. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “It must be known that Allah is not pleased or loved due simply to torturing one’s self or forcing the soul to withstand some hardship in such a way that whenever a deed has more hardship it is more virtuous. Many of the ignorant think this way, thinking that the reward is according to the amount of hardship in every thing. No [this is not so]. But the reward is according to the beneficial aspect of the deed, its goodness and benefit, and according to the amount of obedience there is to the command of Allah and His Messenger. Any action which is better and its doer more obedient and following will be more virtuous.

¹ Cf., Dr. Saalih ibn Humaid, *Rafu al-Haraj fi al-Shareeah*, pp. 352-353.

² He was Imam Abdul Azeez ibn Abdil Salaam, nicknamed, “the Sultan of the scholars.” He was a Shafi’ee jurist, born and raised in Damascus. He visited Baghdad and then returned to Damascus. He gave the Friday *khutbahs* and taught. He was known to be very strong in standing for the truth. He had a number of run-ins with the rulers. He was a judge and *khateeb* for Sultan Salaah al-Deen ibn Yoosuf in Egypt. He then left that job and remained in his house. He produced a number of famous works, including *Qawaaid al-Ahkaam*. He died in 660 A.H. Cf., al-Subki, *Tabaqaat al-Shafi’iyyah*, vol. 5, p. 80; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 21.

³ *Qawaaid al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 36.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The deeds are not more virtuous by mere number. The levels of superiority are based on the result in the hearts while the deed is performed.”¹

Al-Shaatibi affirms this. Then he presents an objection, whose purport is that that foundation differs from what has been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and some of the Companions. They understood that the amount of reward was in relation to the amount of hardship. These reports include the following:

(1) Aishah, the mother of the believers, said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the people are returning having performed two rites [both the Hajj and the Umrah] but I am returning with just one.” He said,

انْتَظِرِي فَإِذَا طَهَّرْتِ فَأَخْرُجِي إِلَى التَّعِيمِ فَأَهْلِي ثُمَّ اثْنَيْنَا بِمَكَانٍ كَذَا
وَلَكِنَّهَا عَلَى قَدْرِ نَفَقَتِكَ أَوْ نَصَبِكَ

“Wait until you become pure and then go to al-Taneem. Enter the inviolable state and [after performing the Umrah] meet us at such and such place. But it [the reward for Umrah] is according to your spending and hardship.”² Al-Nawawi noted, “This is clear in meaning that the reward and virtue of an act of worship is increased by an increased amount of toil and expense. The meaning of toil is that which is not censured by the Law. The same is true for expenses.”³

(2) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told the tribe of Salimah⁴, when they wanted to sell their homes and move close to the mosque,

يَا بَنِي سَلِيمَةَ دِيَارِكُمْ تُكْتَبُ أَثَارُكُمْ دِيَارِكُمْ تُكْتَبُ أَثَارُكُمْ

“O tribe of Salimah, [remain in] your homes. Your footsteps are recorded for you. [Remain in] your homes. Your footsteps are recorded for you.” He also told them,

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 282; for a further discussion, see vol. 10, pp. 621-624.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 8, pp. 152-153.

⁴ Salimah was Salimah ibn Saad ibn Ali ibn Asad, a grandfather from the time of the Days of Ignorance. His descendants were one of the main tribes of the Khazraj, from which came some of the Companions. Cf., al-Samaani, *al-Insaab*, vol. 7, p. 114; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 113.

إِنَّ لَكُمْ بِكُلِّ خَطْوَةٍ دَرَجَةٌ

“For every step, there is for you [an increase in] rank.”¹

(3) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed the late-night prayer until his feet were cracked.²

Al-Shaatibi responded to this in three ways. His response may be summarized as follows:

(1) These reports are concerning one issue and they do not constitute a definite conclusion. Furthermore, probable aspects cannot contradict what is known definitively. On this issue, we are discussing what is known definitively [that seeking hardship is not a goal of the Shareeah].

(2) These hadith do not indicate that the goal was to undergo hardship. In the hadith of the Tribe of Salimah, for example, it is narrated that, “He [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] did not like to have that area of Madinah left vacant such that there would be no one left guarding that district.”³

(3) The objection that the objector presents is contradicted by the Prophet’s prohibition to the three who wanted to be more strict in their worship and in his prohibition of what Abu Israaeel was doing. Indeed, the prohibition of being harsh is something well-known in the Shareeah, to the point that it is one of its definitive basic principles. If being harsh upon the soul is not one of the goals of the Shareeah, when an individual intends that, he is intending something that is in contradiction with the intent of the Lawgiver with respect to the well-known, definitive aspect of lessening the burden on the people. If the act’s intent is in contradiction to the intent of the Lawgiver, the act is void and not sound.”⁴

The result is that the matter revolves around the intention. The individual is not to intend hardship. However, if hardship occurs along his path, he will be rewarded in accordance with its amount. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, “A deed having hardship is not the cause for its merit and preference. But a meritorious deed could be a hardship and its merit is due to some reason other than its hardship. Persevering in it with its hardship increases its reward and recompense. The reward may be increased by hardship, like the one who lives further away from the House [of Allah] having a greater reward for Hajj and Umrah than one who lives closer. This

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaaqaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 128-133.

was as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told Aisha, 'But it [the reward for Umrah] is according to your hardship.'¹ This is because the reward is dependent upon the amount of effort in the work. When the distance is far, the far distance increases the hardship that in turn increases the reward. The same is true for jihad... Often the reward is increased according to the amount of hardship and exhaustion. However, this is not because exhaustion and hardship are intended by the deed. Instead, it is because the action itself is necessarily accompanied by exhaustion and hardship."²

Being harsh and very strict upon oneself is a form of individual behavioral extremism that is difficult to find exemplified in our times. However, there are some books that speak about the spiritual side of the caller to Islam in which one finds some connection to extremism. In describing the daily obligations, Saeed Hawa wrote, "(6) He should have among his good deeds a preoccupation with the words of remembrance, from seeking forgiveness to saying prayers on the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the statement of *tauheed* to other general words of remembrance. He should try to make those statements 70,000 times [a day]."³ It is well known that this number has not been recorded from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or any of the Companions. Furthermore, adhering to that is definitely a kind of hardship upon the soul.

Forbidding the Good and Pure Things

Allah created humans, placed them as successors on the earth, provided for them from the good and pure things and made subservient to them what is found in the heavens and the earth. [Allah says,]

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ
مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾

"We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure;

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 10, p. 621-622.

³ Saeed Hawa, *Tarbiyatuna al-Roohiyyah*, p. 125.

and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of Our creation” (*al-Israa* 70).

At the same time, this world has been made a place for trial and examination. [Allah says,]

﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ ﴾

“He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving” (*al-Mulk* 2). Included in the trials and examination of the servants of Allah is the fact that Allah has made all of their acts fall into one of four rulings:

- (1) The obligatory acts concerning which it is forbidden to miss them.
- (2) The limits set concerning which it is forbidden to transgress them.
- (3) The forbidden acts concerning which it is obligatory to refrain from.
- (4) The permissible acts concerning which there is silence [from the Lawgiver].

Abu al-Dardaa narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

ما أحل الله في كتابه فهو حلال وما حرم فهو حرام وما سكت عنه
فهو عفو فاقبلوا من الله عافيته فإن الله لم يكن ينسى شيئاً و تلا وما
كان ربك نسياً

“Whatever Allah allowed in His Book is permissible. And what He forbade is forbidden. What He was silent about is forgiven. So accept from Allah His forgiveness. Verily, Allah has never been forgetful.” And then he read the verse, “And your Lord is not forgetful” (*Maryam* 64).¹

¹ Recorded by al-Haakim who said, “Its chain is *sahih*.” Al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Haithami presents the hadith in *Majma* (vol. 7, p. 55) and states, “Recorded by al-Bazaar and its narrators are trustworthy.” At another place (vol. 1, p. 171), he states, “Recorded by al-Bazaar and by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer* and its chain is *hasan*; its narrators can be trusted.” Al-Bazaar said, as quoted by ibn Rajab in *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm* (p.

Every action in contradiction to what Allah ordered concerning any of these aspects is an act of disobedience to Allah. As for the permissible—and this is what is meant here—it is forbidden to forbid it. This is because “forbidding is only for Allah and His Messenger. It is not allowed for anyone to forbid anything. Allah censures those who did that when He said, ‘Do not forbid the good things Allah has made permissible for you and do not transgress’ (*al-Maaidah* 87). He has made that a type of transgressing. He also said, ‘But say not—for any false thing that your tongues may put forth—“This is lawful, and this is forbidden,” so as to ascribe false things to Allah’ (*al-Nahl* 116).”¹

Forbidding the permissible is one of the foundations of misguidance. Most of the misguidance on earth springs forth from two roots:

- (1) Following a religion which Allah did not sanction,
- (2) Forbidding that which Allah did not forbid.

For this reason, the basic principle upon which Imam Ahmad and other Imams built their schools is that the deeds of the creation can be divided into two categories: ritual acts of worship and customary acts of this world. The basic principle concerning the ritual acts of worship is that nothing is sanctioned unless it is clearly sanctioned by Allah. The basic principle concerning the customary acts of this world is that nothing is prohibited unless Allah prohibited it.²

For that reason, Allah invited His messengers to eat of the good things. He stated,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

“O messengers! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness: for I am well-acquainted with (all) that you do” (*al-Muminoon* 51). He also forbade the believers from forbidding the good things. He said,

242), “Its chain is *saalih* (‘good’).” [It seems that the strongest opinion is that this hadith is weak. This translator has discussed it in more detail in Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo, *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi* (Boulder, CO: al-Basheer Company for Publications and Translations, 1998), vol. 3, pp. 1125-1130.—JZ]

¹ Ibn Hubairah, *Sharh al-Bukhari*, quoted from al-Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 329.

² Cf., Ibn Taimiyyah, *Iqtidhaa*, vol. 1, p. 329 and *al-Fataawa*, vol. 14, p. 450.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

“O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, but commit no excess. Verily, Allah loves not those given to excess” (*al-Maaidah* 87). In commenting on this verse, al-Tabari noted, “Allah is saying: O believers, believe in what Allah and His Messenger have said and accept what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has come with as it is the truth from Allah. And, ‘Make not unlawful the good things that Allah has made lawful for you.’ The ‘good things’ are the enjoyable things that the soul desires and the heart has an inclination to. Forbidding them would be acting like the priests and monks who forbade for themselves women, pure food and tasty beverages. Some of them enclosed themselves in monasteries while others traveled through the earth. Allah is saying: O believers, do not do what they have done. Do not transgress the limit of Allah that sets for you what is permitted for you and what is forbidden for you. By exceeding this limit that He has set, you will be going against His obedience. Verily, Allah does not love those who go beyond the limits He set for His creation concerning what He has permitted for them and what He has prohibited for them.”¹

Allah condemned those who forbade the adornments and beautiful things that He has made for His servants. Allah says,

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۗ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who understand” (*al-Araaf* 32). In this verse, Allah has refuted anyone who forbids something of His [permissible] adornments. In

¹ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 7, p. 8. Also see ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 14, p. 449.

this way, “He has made it clear that such people are forbidding for their own selves what Allah has not forbidden.”¹ Then Allah makes it clear that those good and pure things—which is a general term for everything that is pleasing of possessions and food²—are for the believers and the others of disbelievers and polytheists in this world while on the Day of Judgment they will be solely for the believers. “That is, Allah will give the good things in the Hereafter exclusively to the believers only. The polytheists will have no share in them like they had in this world.”³

In the following verse, Allah clarifies the head of the forbidden matters when He says,

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ
وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ
تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“Say: The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He has given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge” (*al-Araaf* 33).

Allah also reproached the disbelievers of Makkah for forbidding the good things that Allah had sent down for them. Allah says,

﴿ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا
وَحَلَالًا قُلْ ءَأَلَّهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴾

“Say: ‘See what things Allah has sent down to you for sustenance? Yet you hold forbidden some things thereof and (some things) lawful.’ Say: ‘Has Allah indeed permitted you, or do you invent (things) to attribute to Allah?’” (*Yoonus* 59). This is a rhetorical question implying a censure. In other words, it is saying, “Say to them, O Muhammad, did Allah permit you to permit or forbid what

¹ Al-Qurtubi, *Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 195.

² Ibid., vol. 7, p. 198.

³ Ibid., vol. 7, p. 199. Also see al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 8, pp. 162-167.

you will? No, indeed, you are just making fabrications about Allah.”¹

However, here we must distinguish between avoiding excessive permissible things, things which are beyond what a person needs for the welfare of this religion and which he is rewarded for leaving, and leaving permissible things absolutely or in general. The latter is not from the permissible type of abstinence. Indeed, it is a type of forbidding what Allah has permitted.²

This also makes clear the refutation of those who say they are forbidding something due to the desirable great piety and fear of Allah. The desirable great piety is “where one avoids what one fears may be a cause for blame and punishment when the stronger view concerning that act is not clear to him. This includes performing the obligatory deeds as well as those deeds which, due to some ambiguity, seem like they may be obligatory. It also includes avoiding the forbidden acts as well as those acts which, again due to some ambiguity, seem like they may be forbidden. If one also adds the disliked acts, I would say that such is out of fear that they may be a cause for a shortcoming and punishment.”³

Based on this, if there is something unquestionably permissible, it is not permissible to refrain from it in the name of great piety. This shows that forbidding the good and pure things is a type of extremism and exceeding the bounds, as Allah has said,

﴿ وَلَا تَعْدُوا ﴾

“But commit no excess” (*al-Baqarah* 190). “This means to go beyond the established limit.”⁴ Anyone who forbids what Allah has permitted is an extremist in the religion.

This forbidding of good things has also taken shape in contemporary times. However, rarely it is a practice that does not have some theoretical basis to it. For example, some people forbid driving cars. They argue that it is a product of the disbelievers. Similarly, they prohibit other contemporary apparatus on the same basis.

¹ Cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 8, p. 355. For more details, see al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 11, p. 127.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, pp. 133-134.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, p. 138.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 14, p. 449.

Extremism in Societal Behavior

Revolting against the Rulers

Violence is one of the most prominent features of extremism. It takes a very prominent place in any discussion on extremism, be it in the media or academic circles. In the media, journalistic symposiums and relevant articles, one finds a discussion on the phenomena of extremism every time there is an extremist incident or an act of terrorism that is attributed to the Islamic groups. Similarly, academic studies and conferences usually proliferate after some such incident.

There is a difference of opinion concerning attributing violent acts to Islamic groups. Some people claim that they are completely innocent of such deeds. Another group accuses them completely, even if there is no evidence to support it. In fact, they go so far in describing the Islamic groups as violent that they start predicting what they will do in the future. They state that if those groups were to take over the reins of government, they would rule the people with terror and respond to every counterview with force. They paint such pictures in a ridiculing and frightening manner.¹ In fact, one finds on the cover of a book by Faraj Faudah, entitled *al-Irhaab* ("Terrorism"), a picture of a man with a thick beard down to his knees, wearing a shortened garment [well above his ankles], smeared with blood, carrying an iron chain. It is understood what that picture is trying to say.

This violence is given different names depending on which side is viewing it. Among the secularists and the general trend of the media, it is called terrorism. Those who have been accused of extremism call it jihad. The terms themselves play a serious role in this topic. However, in reviewing the texts of the Shareeah as well as the historical development of the first term and the excitement surrounding it, we conclude that neither term is completely appropriate or acceptable.

The word "terrorism" is not acceptable because it gives a negative connotation under all circumstances. Sometimes, using force is praiseworthy, such as the striving against the disbelievers in order to make the word of Allah supreme.

¹ See Fuad Zakariyyah, *Nadwah al-Tatarruf al-Deeni*, p. 107; Husain Ahmad Ameen, *al-Islam fi Aalim Mutaghayir*, p. 287.

The use of the word “jihad” is also not acceptable. This is because jihad, the rightful struggle against the disbelievers, itself is always praiseworthy. However, the use of force is blameworthy in some cases.

The Shareeah name that is found in the books of the *ahl al-sunnah* is “revolting against the rulers.” This “revolution” does not have one ruling for all cases. Instead, its ruling differs depending upon whom the revolt is directed against and the intent of the revolutionists.

For this reason, I shall use this term. I studied the statements of the scholars concerning revolting against a disbelieving ruler and against an impious ruler¹ and the bounds of extremism concerning such a revolution. Then I present below, seeking the aid of Allah, the clearest forms of contemporary extremism in revolting against the ruler.

Revolting against a Disbelieving Ruler

The scholars all agree that the *Imaamah* (“rule”) of a disbeliever is not sound from the outset. A disbeliever is not to have the reins of control over the affairs of the Muslims. If he changes to *kufri*, it is obligatory to remove him if possible. Otherwise, the Muslims must revolt against him if they have the ability to do so. Ibn al-Mundhir² stated, “Everyone I have memorized from of the people of knowledge agrees that a disbeliever is not to have authority over a Muslim under any circumstances.”³

Qaadhi Abu Yala⁴ said, “If he commits disbelief after his belief, he leaves the position of his leadership. There is no ambiguity

¹ I did not discuss the question of revolting against a just ruler as the ruling concerning that is abundantly clear.

² He was Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem ibn al-Mundhir, a *mujtahid* and preserver of knowledge. He was called Shaikh al-Haram. He wrote a number of works, including *al-Mabsoot* concerning fiqh and *al-Ijmaa*. Al-Dhahabi stated, “Ibn al-Mundhir is the author of books the likes of which no one has written.” He died in 319 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 14, p. 490; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 294.

³ Quoted from ibn al-Qayyim, *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah*, p. 237. I did not find it in *al-Ijmaa* by ibn al-Mundhir. Al-Safaaqasi also quotes this consensus. Cf., *Irshaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 217.

⁴ He was Abu Yala Muhammad ibn al-Husain ibn Muhammad ibn Khalf, the scholar of his age in legal theory and fiqh. He was from the people of Baghdad. His position became prominent during the reigns of the Abbasid Caliphs al-Qadir and al-Qaaim. Al-Qaaim appointed him his judge. He produced a number of writings including *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*. He died

concerning that point, as he has left the fold of Islam and it is obligatory to give him the death penalty.”¹

Qaadhi Ayyaadh stated, “The scholars agree that the *Imaamah* (‘rule’) is not put into effect for a disbeliever. If disbelief comes to him and a change in the law or a [disbelieving] heresy, he is no longer the ruler. Obedience to him is suspended and it is obligatory upon the Muslims to oppose him and remove him from office. [They must then] put a just ruler [in his place] if they are able to do so. If that does not occur, it is obligatory upon them to rise and remove the disbeliever.”²

Ibn Hajar stated, “There is a consensus that he is removed due to disbelief. It is obligatory upon every Muslim to rise against him at that point. Whoever puts out the effort to do so shall be rewarded. Whoever retreats [from that responsibility] shall be sinful. And whoever lacks the capacity [to work to remove him] must emigrate from that land.”³

Many of the texts of the Quran and Sunnah prove this position. These include:

(1) Allah says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي
الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

“O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you” (*al-Nisaa* 59). The words, “among you,” mean “from the believers.” Whoever is not from the believers does not have the right of obedience.

(2) Ubaadah ibn al-Saamit said, “We made the oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to listen and obey when we are either energetic or exhausted, in our difficult times and in our easy times, and even if others are given preference over us. And we would not fight against the ruler unless we see a clear disbelief for which you have a proof from Allah.”⁴ Ibn Bataal clarified that the scholars say, “If a clear *kufr* occurs in the ruler, it is not allowed to obey him in that. In fact, it is obligatory to struggle against him for the one who has the

in 458 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 18, p. 89; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 100.

¹ *Al-Mutamad fi Usool al-Deen*, p. 243.

² Quoted from al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229.

³ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 123.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

ability to do so. This hadith is the basis of their position.”¹ There are a number of narrations for this hadith. One narration states, “Unless it is a clear disobedience to Allah.”² Another states, “As long as he does not order you to commit a clear sin.”³

In explaining these narrations, al-Nawawi stated that what is meant by *kufr* in al-Bukhari’s narration is sin. He stated, “The meaning of *kufr* here is sin... The meaning of the hadith is, ‘Do not dispute with the one in charge concerning his command and do not object to him unless you see a clear vice from him that is verified from the principles of Islam. If you see that, object to it and speak the truth wherever you are. However, as for rebelling against them and fighting them, that is forbidden according to the consensus of the Muslims even if they are evildoers, oppressors.”⁴

It is also said that the meaning of sin and disobedience here is actually *kufr*. That is, one does not go against the ruler unless there occurs a clear *kufr* from him. Al-Kirmaani stated that the meaning of “Unless you see from them a clear *kufr*” is “*kufr* in accord with its apparent meaning.”⁵ This is all a difference of opinion in variation [and are not contradictory] as each narration can be applied to particular cases. Ibn Hajar stated, “What is apparent is that the narration stating *kufr* is to be applied to the case where the dispute is over the rule itself. In other words, it is not allowed to dispute and fight in such a way that damages the rule unless a clear *kufr* has been perpetrated. The narration stating sin is understood to refer to a dispute less than that touching the rule itself. If it is not damaging the rule itself and a sin has been perpetrated, the act must be objected to and repelled with kindness in order to confirm the truth to him without any form of violence.”⁶

Those scholars, however, do not differ in their interpretations when it comes to the permissibility of rebelling against a disbelieving ruler. Their difference of opinion is only regarding the meaning of the word *kufr* in the hadith since other narrations have stated sin or disobedience to Allah.⁷

¹ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 7.

² See ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 8.

³ Recorded by Ahmad. See ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 8.

⁴ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229.

⁵ *Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari*, vol. 24, p. 148. Also see ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 8.

⁶ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 8.

⁷ I presented this due to the misconception that some have that it indicates the permissibility of an armed rebellion against a sinful ruler.

This hadith explicitly states that the *kufr* that permits a rebellion must be a clear, unquestionable *kufr* (*kufr buwaah*). In explaining the word *buwaah*, al-Khataabi stated, “[It means] manifest, abundantly clear. One says, ‘A thing has *baah*, *yabooh bihi*, *boohaah* and *buwaahaan*’ when it is made public and manifest.”¹

Similarly, the proof must be established that it is in fact *kufr*. Ibn Hajar stated concerning the words, “for which you have a proof from Allah,” “that is, an explicit verse or authentic report that is not open to interpretation.”²

(3) Umm Salamah³ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يُسْتَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمْرَاءُ فَتَعْرِفُونَ وَتُنْكِرُونَ فَمَنْ كَرِهَ فَقَدْ بَرِيَ وَمَنْ
أُنْكَرَ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ
قَالَ لَا مَا صَلَّوْا

“Leaders will be appointed over you. You will recognize some of what they do and reject other aspects. The one who dislikes [that situation] will be innocent [of sin]. The one who objects to it will be safe [with respect to his religion]. But the one who is pleased and follows [will have his sin upon him].” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we not fight them?” He said, “No, not as long as they pray.”⁴

(4) Auf ibn Maalik⁵ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 8.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 8.

³ She was the mother of the believers Hind bint Suhail, one of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He married her in the fourth year after the Hijrah. She was one of the most intelligent and best mannered of the people. She had an opinion that influenced the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the Day of Hudaibiyah, thus demonstrating her intelligence. She died in Madinah. There is a difference of opinion about the date of her death but it is certain that she lived a long life. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 3, p. 221; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, pp. 97-98.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim.

⁵ He was Auf ibn Maalik al-Ashja'ee al-Gatifaani, one of the Companions. The first battle he participated in was Khaibar. He carried the banner of the tribe of Ashja at the Conquest of Makkah. He lived in Hims for a while and settled in Damascus. He died in 73 A.H. 67 hadith were narrated on his

خِيَارُ أُمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُصَلُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيُصَلُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَشِرَارُ أُمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُبْغِضُونَهُمْ وَيُبْغِضُونَكُمْ وَتَلْعَنُونَهُمْ وَيَلْعَنُونَكُمْ
 قَالُوا قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا نُنَابِذُهُمْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ قَالَ لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيكُمْ
 الصَّلَاةَ لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيكُمْ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَلِيَ عَلَيْهِ وَالِ فَرَأَهُ يَأْتِي
 شَيْئًا مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ فَلْيَكْرَهُ مَا يَأْتِي مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْزِعَنَّ يَدًا
 مِنْ طَاعَةٍ

“The best of your rulers are those whom you love and they love you. You pray over them and they pray over you. The worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and they hate you. You curse them and they curse you.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we fight and oppose them over that?” He replied, “No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you. No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you. If someone is appointed over a person and he sees some act of disobedience to Allah from him, he should dislike what he does of disobedience to Allah but he should not remove his hand from obedience.”¹

These hadith clarify that rebellion against the rulers occurs when they abandon the prayers or they do not establish them among the people. Commenting on the words, “No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you,” al-Shaukaani noted, “This indicates that it is not allowed to fight against the rulers with the sword as long as they are establishing the prayer.”²

Abandoning the prayer is a type of *kufir* in Allah, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

العَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 487; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 7, p. 179; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 96.

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Ahmad, al-Daarimi, ibn Abi Aasim and al-Baihaqi.

² Al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 7, p. 197.

“The covenant that is between us and them [the disbelievers] is the prayer. Whoever abandons it has committed an act of unbelief.”¹

Qaadhi Ayyaadh stated, “The scholars agree that the *Imaamah* (‘rule’) is not put into effect for a disbeliever. If disbelief comes to him and a change in the law or a [disbelieving] heresy, he is no longer the ruler. Such is the case if he abandons establishing the prayer and calling [people] to it.”²

Even according to the opinion that abandoning the prayer out of neglect is not a form of *kufur*, if the ruler does not establish the prayer among the Muslims this is an indication that he is denying the [obligation of the] prayers. Hence, the issue is not a question of not praying itself, such that he can be considered simply negligent, but it is an issue of him not allowing its establishment. This is not possible simply out of negligence. This must mean that he is denying its obligatory status.³

That is the sum of the texts that indicate the permissibility of revolting against a disbelieving ruler and related hadith prohibiting the listening to and obeying [the command to] disobey Allah. As for the Prophet’s statement,

اسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَإِنِ اسْتُعْمِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ حَبَشِيٌّ كَانَ رَأْسُهُ زَبِيبَةً مَا
أَقَامَ فِيكُمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“Hear and obey, even if an Abyssinian slave whose head is like a raisin is put in charge of you as long as he establishes the Book of Allah among you,”⁴ this does not indicate that it is sanctioned to revolt against an unjust ruler. All that it indicates is that there is no hearing or obedience to the ruler in something that involves disobedience to Allah. If some ruling of impiety, other than what Allah has revealed, occurs, it is not allowed to revolt against the ruler, as I shall make clear, Allah willing. However, if *kufur* occurs, then it is sanctioned to revolt against him as the previous evidences indicate while taking into consideration the Shareeah parameters that I shall discuss later in this section. And Allah knows best.

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Haakim also recorded it and declared it authentic. Al-Dhahabi concurred.

² Quoted from al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229.

³ For more on the question of the disbelief of one who abandons the prayer, see ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitaab al-Salaat*, *passim*.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, ibn Maajah, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad. [The last and most relevant portion of the hadith above is actually only from Ahmad.—JZ]

Revolting against an Impious or Tyrant Ruler

The people of the Qiblah [the Muslims] differ greatly concerning the ruling for the unjust rulers. The opinions are so varied that many opinions sprout from one view, as each group adds a new condition or restriction. This issue is considered one of the greatest controversial issues in this Nation. Due to it, blood has been spilled and wealth has been taken. Al-Shahrastaani stated, "The greatest difference of opinion in this Nation is the difference concerning the caliphate. The swords have not been drawn in Islam over any religious issue as they have over the question of the ruler in every era."¹

Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari² has summarized the different views on this issue: "The people divided concerning [the use of] the sword into four opinions. (1) The Mutazilah, Zaidis, Khawaarij and many of the Murjites say it is obligatory to use it if we are able to use the sword to remove the rebels and institute truth and justice. (2) The Rawaafidh [Shiah] say that the use of the sword is not valid, even if one is killed, until the [expected] Imam appears and he orders its use. (3) Abu Bakr ibn al-Asm³ and those who agree with him say that if the people agree upon a just Imam, they should revolt and use the sword with him and remove the rebels and tyrants. (4) Others say that the use of the sword is void even if men are being killed and whether or not the Imam is just or not just. We are not to remove him even if he is impious. They reject the idea of rebelling against the ruler and are not of that opinion at all. This is the view of the *ashaab al-hadeeth* ('followers of hadith')."⁴

Al-Tabari stated, "The early scholars differed over the ordering of the good."⁵ One group says that it is obligatory under all

¹ *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

² He was Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismaaeel ibn Ishaaq. He originally accepted the Mutazilah view and then he left their views and became famous for opposing them. He then followed the Kullaabiyyah view and also left them, returning to the way of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. He died in Baghdad in 324 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 15, p. 85; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 263.

³ He was Abu Bakr Abdul Rahmaan ibn Kaisaan al-Asam, one of the most eloquent of the people and most knowledgeable in his time. He considered Ali wrong and Muawiyyah to be in the right. He was from the Mutazilah. Cf., *Firaq wa Tabaqaat al-Mutazilah*, pp. 65-66.

⁴ *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 2, p. 140.

⁵ The scholars have used different terms to express this same concept: sometimes calling it, "rebelling against the ruler," "ordering the good and eradicating the evil," or "[the use of] the sword."

circumstances... Another group says that it is obligatory to remove the evil with the condition that the one repelling the evil does not meet with harm or he will not be killed and so forth. Others say that he should repel it by his heart..."¹ Then he stated, "The correct view is to take into consideration the stated conditions."²

In the light of these opinions, we may group them into two sets of views:

(1) The prohibition of rebelling against oppressive or impious rulers.

(2) The permissibility of rebelling against oppressive or impious rulers.

Below is an explanation of these two views, with their evidence, and a discussion of which is the stronger view:

The First Opinion:

The majority of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* are of the view that it is forbidden to make an armed rebellion against oppressive or unjust rulers, as long as their wrong does not reach the level of *kufr*. This was the opinion of a number of the Companions, including Saad ibn Abi Waqqaas,³ Usaamah ibn Zaid, ibn Umar, Muhammad ibn Maslamah⁴ and others. This is also the view of the vast majority of the *ahl al-hadith* ("followers of hadith").⁵ A number of scholars claimed a consensus on this point, including al-Nawawi who said, "As for rebelling against them and fighting them, this is forbidden according to the consensus of the Muslims, even if they were impious, oppressors."⁶ Al-Kirmaani also said, "The jurists all

¹ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 53.

² Ibid.

³ He was Saad ibn Maalik ibn Zahrah, one of the ten who received the glad tidings of Paradise and the last of those ten to die. He was the first to shoot an arrow for the sake of Allah. Allah responded to his supplications. He conquered Iraq. He planned the new city of Kufah and then returned to Madinah. He died in 55 A.H. 271 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 92; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 160; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 87.

⁴ He was Abu Abdul Rahmaan Muhammad ibn Maslamah al-Ausi al-Ansaari, one of the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He attended Badr and the following battles, save for Tabook. During some expeditions, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would leave him in charge of the affairs. He remained out of the Civil War and died in Madinah in 43 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 369; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 9, p. 131; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 97.

⁵ Cf., ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal*, vol. 4, p. 19; al-Baaqilaani, *al-Tamheed*, p. 186; Abu Yala, *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*, pp. 4-5.

⁶ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229.

agree that the Imam who has taken over the power must be obeyed as long as he establishes the congregational prayers and the jihad. [This is so] unless he commits a clear *kufur* in which it is not permissible to obey him. Indeed, [in that case] it is obligatory to struggle against him by those who have the ability to do so.”¹ Ibn Battaal also said, “The jurists all agree that it is obligatory to obey and make jihad with the ruler who has taken control. Obeying him is better than rebelling against him. [This option] prevents the spilling of blood and repels catastrophes... There is no exception to that unless the ruler falls into a blatant *kufur*.”²

Those who claim a consensus on this point are responded to by pointing out the rebellion of al-Hasan, ibn al-Zubair and the people of Madinah against the Umayyads.³ Apparently, though, the *ahl al-sunnah* settled and agreed upon the prohibition of rebelling after those civil wars. Indeed, one scholar stated, “Originally, there was a difference of opinion on this issue and then the consensus was reached that it is forbidden to rebel against them.”⁴ The affirmation of the *ahl al-sunnah* that it is forbidden to rebel against the rulers is extremely clear in their writings. In fact, some consider that a matter of creed and include it among their points of belief.⁵ Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “The opinion of the *ahl al-sunnah* settled on

¹ Al-Kirmaani, *Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari*, vol. 10, p. 169.

² Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 7, p. 13.

³ Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229. The Umayyads who ruled al-Shaam and Andalus were the descendants of Umayyah ibn Abd Shams ibn Abd Manaaf ibn Qasi, who was a military leader of the Quraish in the Days of Ignorance. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 23.

⁴ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, p. 229.

⁵ In his creed of the *ahl al-Sunnah*, Imam Ahmad stated, “[We believe in] hearing and obeying the Imams and commander of the faithful, be they pious or impious, and whoever assumes the position of caliph and the people gather around him and are pleased with him.” Cf., al-Laalakaa’ ee, *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 160. Also see the creed of ibn al-Madeeni in the same work, vol. 1, p. 168. Also see what ibn Abi Haatim narrated from his father and from Abu Zarah in the same work, vol. 1, p. 177. Also see al-Ajuri, *al-Shareeah*, p. 38, where he has a chapter entitled, “Concerning hearing and obeying whoever is in charge of the affairs of the Muslims, and having patience with them if they are unjust, and not rebelling against them as long as they establish the prayer.” And Imam al-Tahaawi stated [in his famous creed], “We do not believe in rebelling against our rulers and those in our charge, even if they are unjust. We do not supplicate against them nor do we remove our hands from their obedience. We view obedience to them as an obligatory obedience to Allah as long as they do not order an act of disobedience [to Allah]. We pray for them to have goodness and well-being.” *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 540.

the view that fighting must be avoided during civil wars due to the authentic hadith confirmed from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They [the *ahl al-sunnah*] then began to mention that in their creeds. They ordered patience in the face of the injustice of the rulers and [they ordered] avoiding fighting against them. [This was their conclusion] although a number of people of knowledge and faith had fought in civil wars.”¹ Ibn Hajar refuted those who censured al-Hasan ibn Saalih al-Hamadhaani² for holding the view that one may rebel against the rulers. Ibn Hajar stated, “They used to believe in using the sword; that is, they believed in armed rebellion against unjust rulers. That was an old opinion among the early scholars. However, the issue settled upon abandoning that as it was seen that such an act leads to something even greater [in harm]. The events of al-Harrah and ibn al-Ashath³ and others are indeed lessons for whoever reflects.”⁴

This makes it clear that this opinion is the one that the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* has settled upon and agreed upon. In fact, some of their jurists are of the view that such is their consensus, as one said, “The prohibition of rebelling against an unjust ruler is taken from the consensus of the later generation of the Followers.”⁵

The Proofs for the First Opinion:

The proponents of this first view support their opinion with a number of proofs. These may be classified as follows:

(1) The texts that mention the order to obey and not to violate one’s pledge. In fact, they explicitly state that one must be patient in the face of the injustice of the rulers. These texts include the following:

(a) Allah says,

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, pp. 529-530.

² He was al-Hasan ibn Saalih al-Hamadhaani al-Kufi, one of the leaders of a Zaidi sect. He was a jurist. He died in 168 A.H. while hiding from the caliph al-Mahdi who sought his life. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 7, p. 361; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, p. 285; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 193.

³ He was Abdul Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ashath, a brave military leader. He revolted against the command of al-Hajaj. He marched on Iraq. At first he was successful and then he was defeated. Finally, he was killed in 58 A.H. and his head was sent to al-Hajaj. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 323.

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, p. 288.

⁵ Al-Sharqaawi, *Haashiyah al-Sharqaawi*, vol. 2, p. 398. Cf., al-Baijrami, *Haashiyah al-Baijrami*, vol. 4, p. 300.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي
الْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ ﴾

“O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you” (*al-Nisaa* 59). As long as those in authority are within the description of having faith, it is not allowed to rebel against them.

(b) Ubaadah ibn al-Saamit said, “We made the oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to listen and obey when we are either energetic or exhausted, in our difficult times and in our easy times, and even if others are given preference over us. And we would not fight against the ruler unless we see a clear disbelief for which you have a proof from Allah.”¹ Al-Kirmaani stated, “In this hadith [there is evidence] that the ruler is not removed due to impiety, as in removing him there will be civil war, spilling of blood and disunity. The evil and harm of removing him is greater than what occurs if he remains.”² About this hadith, ibn Taimiyyah said, “He has ordered them to obey and forbade them from removing the people from their positions and he has ordered them to stand for the truth.”³ This is the case if the matter has not reached the state of clear, unambiguous *kufir* for which there is evidence and proof against the ruler.

(c) Auf ibn Maalik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

خِيَارُ أُمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُصَلُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيُصَلُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَشِرَارُ أُمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُبْغِضُونَهُمْ وَيُبْغِضُونَكُمْ وَتَلْعَنُونَهُمْ وَيَلْعَنُونَكُمْ
قَالُوا قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا نُنَابِذُهُمْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ قَالَ لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيكُمْ
الصَّلَاةَ لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيكُمْ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَلِيَ عَلَيْهِ وَآلٍ فَرَأَهُ يَأْتِي

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Al-Kirmaani, *Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari*, p. 169.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Istiqamah*, vol. 1, p. 41.

شَيْئًا مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ فَلْيَكْرَهُ مَا يَأْتِي مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْزِعَنَّ يَدًا
مِنْ طَاعَةٍ

“The best of your rulers are those whom you love and they love you. You pray over them and they pray over you. The worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and they hate you. You curse them and they curse you.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we fight and oppose them over that?” He replied, “No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you. No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you. If someone is appointed over a person and he sees some act of disobedience to Allah from him, he should dislike what he does of disobedience to Allah but he should not remove his hand from obedience.”¹ This hadith provides a clear indication that justice is to dislike what those rulers do of sins while, at the same time, not removing one’s hand from obedience as long as they establish the prayer in the Nation. Al-Shaukaani stated, “This indicates that it is not allowed to fight against the rulers with the sword as long as they are establishing the prayer.”²

(d) Umm Salamah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يُسْتَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرَاءُ فَتَعْرِفُونَ وَتُنْكِرُونَ فَمَنْ كَرِهَ فَقَدْ بَرِيءٌ وَمَنْ
أَنْكَرَ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ
قَالَ لَا مَا صَلَّوْا

“Leaders will be appointed over you. You will recognize some of what they do and reject other aspects. The one who dislikes [that situation] will be innocent [of sin]. The one who objects to it will be safe [with respect to his religion]. But the one who is pleased and follows [will have his sin upon him].” They said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), shall we not fight them?” He said, “No, not as long as they pray.”³ Ibn Taimiyyah said, “This clarifies that the leaders, who are the rulers and those in charge of the affairs, are to be disliked and rebuked whenever they

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Ahmad, al-Daarimi, ibn Abi Aasim and al-Baihaqi.

² Al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 7, p. 197.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

bring an act of disobedience to Allah. However, one does not remove his hand from obedience to them. Instead, one obeys them for the sake of Allah. [It also shows] that some of them are good and some of them are evil.”¹ Al-Nawawi noted, “This contains evidence... that it is not allowed to rebel against the caliphs simply due to oppression or impiety, as long as they do not change any of the foundations of Islam.”²

(e) Ibn Abbaas narrated that Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ فَلْيَصْبِرْ عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ
شَيْرًا فَمَاتَ إِلَّا مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“For whoever sees something from his leader that he does not like, let him be patient. The one who separates a handspan from the community and then dies, dies not except a death of the Days of Ignorance.”³ Another narration states,

مَنْ كَرِهَ مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا فَلْيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ السُّلْطَانِ شَيْرًا
مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“Whoever dislikes something from his ruler should remain patient for whoever leaves [the obedience to] the ruler the amount of a handspan and dies [in that state] dies a death of the Days of Ignorance.”⁴ Al-Aini noted, “‘Whoever leaves from the ruler,’ means leaves his obedience. The words, ‘should remain patient,’ mean that he should be patient concerning the thing he dislikes and not forsake his obedience, as such protects the blood [from being spilled] and quells the tribulations. [Such is the case] unless the ruler commits *kufir* and manifests what is opposing the call of Islam. There is no obedience for him by the created [that is, the people in such a case].”⁵ He also stated, “This indicates that the ruler is not to be removed due to impiety or wrongdoing. It is not allowed to

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 117.

² Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 12, pp. 243-244.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Daarimi and Ahmad.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Daarimi.

⁵ Al-Aini, *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 24, p. 178.

remove him from his rule for that.”¹ This hadith indicates that it is not allowed to have an armed rebellion against the leaders. Whoever leaves obeying them and tries to remove the oath of allegiance to them and dies while in that state will die a death of the Days of Ignorance.²

There are numerous other hadith which give the same meaning.³

(2) [Other proofs are] those hadith which indicate that it is forbidden for the Muslims to fight each other and that warn against civil wars and tribulations that usually occur when a group of Muslims rebels against the impious or oppressive rulers who are still Muslims. These hadith include the following:

(a) Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

سِيَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

“Abusing a Muslim is wickedness (*fusooq*) and fighting him is *kufur*.”⁴

(b) Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais⁵ said, “I went out to help this man—meaning Ali ibn Abi Taalib—and Abu Bakrah⁶ met up with me. He said, ‘Where do you want to go?’ I said, ‘To help this man.’ He said, ‘Go back, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say,

¹ Ibid., vol. 24, p. 178. Cf., al-Kirmaani, *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 24, p. 147; *Irshaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 169; ibn Battaal as quoted in ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 7.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 111; see the quote from ibn Abi Hamzah in ibn Hajar, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 7.

³ Cf., Sadeeq Hasan Khaan, *Al-Raudhah al-Nadiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 363.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad.

⁵ He was al-Ahnaf ibn Qais ibn Muaawiyah al-Munqari al-Tameemi. His gentleness has become proverbial. He lived during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but he never saw him. He went with a delegation to Umar and then he returned to al-Basrah. He participated in the battles against Khurasaan. He remained away from the civil war. He died in 72 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 86; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 191; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 276.

⁶ He was Abu Bakrah Nufai ibn al-Harith ibn Kaldah al-Thaqafi, a Companion from Taif. He died in Basrah in 52 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 5; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 11, p. 42; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 44.

إِذَا تَقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بَسِيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمَقْتُولِ قَالَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ

“If two Muslims engage each other with their swords, the killer and the killed will be in the Hell-fire.” I said, “O Messenger of Allah, that is for the killer but what is the case with the killed?” He replied, “He was anxious to kill his fellow [Muslim].”¹

(c) Jareer ibn Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفَّارًا يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ

“Do not return after me to be disbelievers, striking the necks of one another.”²

(d) Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

سَتَكُونُ فِتْنٌ الْقَاعِدُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْقَائِمِ وَالْقَائِمُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَاشِيِ
وَالْمَاشِيِ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ السَّاعِيِ مَنْ تَشَرَّفَ لَهَا تَسْتَشْرِفُهُ فَمَنْ وَجَدَ
مِنْهَا مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَعَاذًا فَلْيَعُذْ بِهِ

“There will be trials and tribulations wherein the one sitting is better than the one standing. The one standing will be better than the one walking. The one walking will be better than the one running. Whoever will expose himself to these afflictions, they will destroy him. So whoever can find a place or protection or refuge from them should take shelter in it.”³

These hadith and others with similar meaning⁴ prove that it is forbidden for Muslims to fight among themselves. Armed rebellion against impious rulers is a form of fighting among the Muslims. This is a type of affliction and trial, as the meaning of affliction in these hadith is, “The differences that result in seeking the kingdom

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

⁴ For some such hadith, see the hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, with its commentary *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, pp. 23-26 and pp. 31-32; al-Ajuri, *al-Shareeah*, chapter on sitting during times of affliction, p. 42.

to the point that one cannot tell the one who has the right from the one who is in the wrong.”¹

(3) [A third set of proofs] is what is recorded of the Prophet’s statements as to what will be done by some rulers while at the same time his not ordering the people to rebel. These hadith include:

(a) Amr ibn Yahya ibn Saeed² said: My grandfather narrated to me saying, “I was sitting with Abu Hurairah in the Prophet’s mosque in Madinah and Marwaan was with us. Abu Hurairah said, ‘I heard the truthful, the trustworthy say,

هَلَكَةُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى يَدَيِ غُلَمَةٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ

“The destruction of my Nation will be at the hands of young men from the Quraish.” Marwaan then said, ‘The curse of Allah be upon the young men.’ Abu Hurairah said, ‘If I wished to say the tribe of so and so and the tribe of so and so, I could do so.’” I then went with my father to the Clan of Marwaan after they gained control of al-Shaam. When he saw that they were young, inexperienced men, he said to us, “Perhaps these are from among them.” We said, “You know best.”³ Ibn Battaal said, “This hadith also contains proof for what was stated earlier that one should not revolt against the ruler even if he were unjust. This is so because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) informed Abu Hurairah of their names and the names of their fathers but he did not order him to revolt against them. At the same time, though, he informed him that the destruction of the Nation would be at their hands. This implies that rebellion is even greater in destruction and takes them closer to being completely rooted out than what occurs when they are obeyed. Hence, he chose the lesser of the two evils and the easier of the two matters.”⁴

(b) Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan said:

¹ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 31.

² He was Amr ibn Yahya ibn Saeed ibn Amr ibn Saeed ibn al-Aas, who narrated from his grandfather Saeed ibn al-Aas. A number of scholars of hadith, including al-Daaraqutni and ibn Hibbaan, declared him trustworthy. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 118.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

⁴ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 11.

كَانَ النَّاسُ يُسْأَلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الْخَيْرِ
وَكُنْتُ أَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا كُنَّا
فِي جَاهِلِيَّةٍ وَشَرٌّ فَجَاءَنَا اللَّهُ بِهَذَا الْخَيْرِ فَهَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ
قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ وَهَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الشَّرِّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَفِيهِ دَخَنٌ قُلْتُ
وَمَا دَخَنُهُ قَوْمٌ يَهْدُونَ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى تَعْرِفُ مِنْهُمْ وَتَتَكْرَهُ قُلْتُ فَهَلْ بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ قَالَ نَعَمْ دُعَاءَ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ جَهَنَّمَ مَنْ أَجَابَهُمْ إِلَيْهَا
قَذَفُوهُ فِيهَا قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صِفْهُمْ لَنَا قَالَ هُمْ مِنْ جِلْدَتِنَا وَيَتَكَلَّمُونَ
بِأَلْسِنَتِنَا قُلْتُ فَمَا تَأْمُرُنِي إِنْ أُدْرِكَنِي ذَلِكَ قَالَ تَلْزَمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَأِمَامَهُمْ قُلْتُ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ جَمَاعَةٌ وَلَا إِمَامٌ قَالَ فَاعْتَزِلْ تِلْكَ الْفِرْقَ
كُلَّهَا وَلَوْ أَنْ تَعَضَّ بِأَصْلِ شَجَرَةٍ حَتَّى يُدْرِكَكَ الْمَوْتُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ

“The people used to ask the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about the good things while I would ask him about evil out of fear that it may reach me. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we were in ignorance and evil and Allah came with this good. Will there be any evil after this good?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Will there be any good after that evil?’ He replied, ‘Yes, but it will contain some smoke [or fume, that is, it will be polluted and not completely pure].’ I said, ‘What will be its smoke?’ He said, ‘A people who will guide but not by my guidance. You will recognize some things from them [as correct] and you will reject others.’ I said, ‘Will there be any evil after that good?’ He replied, ‘Yes, [there will be] callers upon the gates of Hell. Whoever responds to them will be flung into it.’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), describe them to us.’ He said, ‘They are of our skin and they speak our language.’ I said, ‘What do you order me to do if I should encounter that?’ He said, ‘Stick to the community of the Muslims and their Imam [leader].’ I said, ‘Suppose there is no such community or Imam?’ He said, ‘Withdraw from all of those sects, even if you have to bite on the roots of trees until death comes

upon you while you are in that state.”¹ Ibn Battaal said, “This contains evidence for a number of the jurists concerning the obligation to adhere to the community of the Muslims and to avoid rebelling against unjust rulers. This is so because he described the last group as, ‘callers upon the gates of Hell,’ and he did not say about them, ‘You will recognize some things from them [as correct] and you will reject others,’ as he said about the first group. They are not of that nature except that they are upon other than truth. Given all of that, he still ordered him to adhere to the community.”²

(c) Abdullah ibn Masood said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to us,

إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرُونَ بَعْدِي أُمَّةً وَأُمُورًا تُتَكْرَمُونَهَا قَالُوا فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ قَالَ أَدُوا إِلَيْهِمْ حَقَّهُمْ وَسَلُّوا اللَّهَ حَقَّكُمْ

‘After me, you will see selfishness and some matters that you will disapprove of.’ They said, ‘What do you order us to do [at that time], O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?’ He said, ‘Fulfill their rights and ask Allah for your rights.’”³ Ibn Taimiyyah noted, “He mentioned to them their wrongdoing, yet he ordered them to have patience, give them their rights and, for the wronged, to seek his rights from Allah. He did not permit the wronged to rebel against him with an armed rebellion in such a case, wherein rebellion would be an affliction.”⁴

(4) Taking into consideration the goals of the Shareeah forms more evidence showing that it is impermissible to rebel against impious or oppressing rulers. Allah sent the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to achieve and complete welfare while eliminating and reducing harm. And one should repel two evils by adhering to the lesser of two evils. Even though ordering good and eradicating evil is one of the greatest obligations and recommended deeds, it must be the case that its good outweighs any resulting evil. Any time the evil of any matter and its removal is greater than its benefit, then the act is not something that Allah has ordered.⁵ Evidence for this view is found in the

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 37.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Istiqamah*, vol. 1, p. 35.

⁵ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, p. 527 and *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 126-127.

Prophet's accepting of Abdullah ibn Ubayy¹ and others like him of the leaders of hypocrisy and wickedness due to the supporters that they had. Had the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) removed his evil by punishing him, that would have necessarily led to the removal of a benefit which was greater and more important. It would have led to the anger of his people and the arousal of their patriotism towards their own. Furthermore, it would have driven people away once they heard that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was killing his own companions.²

A study of the historical incidents of rebellion against unjust rulers demonstrates that its evil is greater than its benefit. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "Perhaps, no group is known to have revolted against a ruler except that in the rebellion more evil was the result than the evil they sought to remove."³ Ibn al-Azraq⁴ said in explaining why rebellion against an unjust ruler is not justified, "Second: The proof that it is obligatory to repel the greater evil, and there is no doubt that the evil of disobeying him is given preference over the evil of supporting him in matters of obedience, is what they say concerning making jihad with him. Furthermore, it is also said that disobeying the rulers destroys the pillars of the nation."⁵ Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi stated, "As for adhering to obedience to them even if they are unjust, it is because the evil result of rebelling against obeying them is many times greater than what occurs due to their injustice. Indeed, by having patience in the face of their injustice, one expiates sins and multiplies the rewards."⁶

Ibn Taimiyyah said, "For that reason it is forbidden to rebel with the sword against the one in power for the purpose of ordering

¹ He was Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Maalik al-Khazraji, the head of the hypocrites in Islam. He was one of the people of Madinah; in fact, he was the leader of the Khazraj in the last of the Days of Ignorance. He made a public showing of Islam after the Battle of Badr. Many events are related to him, including his betrayal of the Muslims at Uhud and Tabook. He died in 9 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 65.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 131.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 391.

⁴ He was Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Ujaimi al-Andalusi, a scholar of what is today called sociology. He was from Granada and had the post of judge there until the Christians took over that land. He then moved to Tilmisaan and then to the East. He performed the Hajj and returned to Egypt and then was a judge in Jerusalem. He died in 896 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 289.

⁵ *Badaai al-Salak*, vol. 1, p. 78.

⁶ Ibn Abi al-Izz, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 543.

good and eradicating evil. This is because the resultant forbidden acts and abandoning of what is obligatory is greater than what results by their acts of vices and sins... If the evil of the forbidden act is removed by eradicating it and there is an overriding benefit to eradicating it, then it is something good. However, if its evil simply becomes more and greater and there is no reciprocal greater good, then it is not sanctioned to remove it unless there is a responding additional benefit. If it simply leads to greater harm, it is not legally sanctioned. Such would be the case if the one ordering the good is someone who is not patient and when he is punished for his actions, he becomes so fearful and worried that he commits a sin due to this act, lessening thereby his faith and religion."¹ "What the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered concerning being patient with the injustice of rulers and not fighting them or rebelling against them is the best for the affairs of the humans in both this life and the Hereafter. Whoever goes against that command, either intentionally or mistakenly, will not achieve by his act any good. Indeed, he will achieve evil."²

It is sufficient to realize that rebelling against unjust rulers ruins the safety of the society. It, thereby, "exchanges security for fear, spilling of blood, letting loose the hands of the fools; it opens the door for an attack on the Muslims and it spreads evil on the earth."³

(5) Additional evidence is that a historical survey will render the conclusion that the rebels do not achieve their goals. In fact, they get nothing from their rebellion except evil. Ibn Taimiyyah noted, "Very rarely is it the case that the one who revolts against the ruler with power finds anything except a greater evil than any good brought about. This was the case with those who revolted against Yazeed in Madinah. This was also true for ibn al-Ashath who revolted against Abdul Malik in Iraq. Such was true for ibn al-Muhallab⁴ who revolted against his son in Khurasaan. The same

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 14, pp. 472-473.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, p. 531.

³ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami Li-Ahkaam al-Quran*, vol. 2, p. 109.

⁴ He was Yazeed ibn al-Muhallab ibn Abi Safrah, a courageous leader. He was the governor of Khurasaan until Abdul Malik ibn Marwaan removed him from the post. Then Sulaimaan ibn Abdul Malik appointed him over Iraq. Umar ibn Abdul Azeez later removed him from that post. When Umar died, he was released from prison, went and entered Basrah and began a war between himself and the governor of Iraq, Maslamah ibn Abdul Malik, until he was killed in 102 A.H. Cf., *Wafiyat al-Ayaan*, vol. 2, p. 264; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 190.

was true for Abu Muslim¹, the leader of the call in revolting against them in Khurasaan also. And such was true for those who rebelled against al-Mansoor² in Madinah and Basrah. [And the same was true for] other similar examples. The most that occurred for them is that they were defeated or they defeated others for a short period of time and then were removed leaving behind no [positive] legacy. Abdullah ibn Ali³ and Abu Muslim killed a large number of people and both of them were killed by Abu Jafar al-Mansoor. As for the people of [the Battle of] al-Harrah, ibn al-Ashaath, ibn al-Muhallab and others, they were defeated and their companions were defeated and they did not establish religion nor did they leave a worldly legacy. Allah did not order any deed that does not result in either good for the religion or good for this world. Even if the people involved are from the devout and pious servants of Allah and from the people of Paradise, they cannot be more virtuous than Ali, Aishah, Talhah,⁴ al-Zubair¹ and others but these people were not

¹ He was Abdul Rahman ibn Muslim, one of the leaders of the Abbasid state. He was born in Basrah. He came into contact with Ibraaheem ibn Muhammad who sent him to Khurasaan to gain support for the Abbasids. He gained control over Naisapoor. Then he led an army to fight against Marwaan ibn Muhammad and he killed Marwaan. The political control then rested in the hands of al-Abbaas al-Sifaah and then with al-Mansoor, who in turn killed Abu Muslim out of fear of him in 137 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 48; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 337.

² He was Abu Jafar al-Mansoor Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ali, the second Abbasid caliph. He built the city of Baghdad. He became the caliph after his brother al-Sifaah. He would remain away from useless pleasures; he would contemplate a lot and was serious, with a great deal of knowledge. He died in 158 A.H. Cf., al-Khataab al-Baghdaadi, *Tareekh Baghdaad*, vol. 10, p. 53; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 117.

³ He was Abdullah ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbaas, the uncle of the caliph al-Mansoor. He was the one who defeated Marwaan ibn Muhammad and killed most of the individuals of the Clan of Umayyah. He remained the governor of al-Shaam during the reign of al-Sifaah. When al-Mansoor became the caliph, Abdullah revolted against him with an army led by Abu Muslim. Abdullah was defeated and went into hiding. Al-Mansoor then gave him a pledge of security and he surrendered. He was imprisoned and then the house in which he was imprisoned was attacked and he was killed. Cf., *Tareekh Baghdaad*, vol. 10, p. 8; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 104.

⁴ He was Talhah ibn Ubaidullah ibn Uthmaan al-Qurashi, a Companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), known for his generosity. He was one of the ten given the glad tidings of Paradise. He participated at Uhud and the following battles. He was killed [immediately after] the Battle of al-Jamal while he was next to Aishah. He was buried in Basrah in 36 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 23; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 5, p. 250; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 229.

praised for their fighting although they have a greater place with Allah and a purer intention than others.”²

Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari lists twenty-five members of the Prophet’s descendants who revolted and none of them ever achieved their goal.³ If the rebellion ends in evil—even if the revolutionary intends ordering good and eradicating evil—it is not permissible as the Lawgiver did not command anything except what has benefit and good to it.

(6) A tyrant ruler is not evil in every aspect. Ibn Taimiyyah noted, “The oppressive king is used by Allah to repel a harm greater than his own wrongdoing. It is said, ‘Sixty years under an oppressive leader is better than one night without a leader.’ And if He decrees to increase his oppression, that is something harmful in the religion and it is like an affliction that acts as expiation for their sins. They are also rewarded for it and they return to Allah, seeking forgiveness and repenting to Him. The same is true when the enemy overtakes them... For that reason, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered the fighting against those who fight for a distorted religion from the heretics, such as the Khawarij, while he ordered patience with respect to the unjust rulers and he prohibited fighting them and revolting against them.”⁴ In fact, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُؤَيِّدُ هَذَا الدِّينَ بِالرَّجُلِ الْفَاجِرِ

“Verily, Allah supports this religion [even with] a wicked man.”⁵ As long as the matter is like this, it is not allowed to revolt against a ruler simply due to his impiety. His impiety returns to himself while, at the same time, through him benefit is achieved that is greater and more important.

¹ He was al-Zubair ibn al-Awwaam ibn Khuwailid al-Qurashi, a brave Companion. He was also one of the ten given the glad tidings of Paradise. He was the first to draw his sword for the sake of Islam. He was at Badr and the following battles. He was murdered after the Battle of al-Jamal in 36 A.H. 38 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 41; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 6; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 43.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, p. 626.

³ *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 1, pp. 150-166.

⁴ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 14, p. 269.

⁵ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Daarimi.

The Second Opinion:

A group from the *ahl al-sunnah* and all of the Mutazilah, Khawaarij and Zaidiyyah say that it is permissible to make an armed revolt against the ruler. In fact, under certain circumstances, it is an obligation. Ibn Hazm attributes this view to a number of the Companions for whom it is recorded that they rebelled, be it during the civil wars between Ali and Muawiyah or in later days such as the Battle of al-Harrah and so forth.¹ He also mentioned the same for some of the Followers and those of the next generation. He then stated, "All of those whom we have mentioned of past and present either stated such in their religious verdicts or did so in practice by drawing their swords in repelling what they saw as evil."²

The Evidence for the Second Opinion:

The proponents of this view support their position with a number of proofs, including:

(1) Allah says in the Quran,

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ أَحَدُهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ﴾

"If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah" (*al-Hujuraat* 9). The wording of this verse requires going out and fighting against the group that has transgressed the bounds while the tyrannical ruler and whoever is with him have transgressed the bounds vis-à-vis the other parties.³

(2) Allah also says,

﴿ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾

"My Promise does not extend to the wrongdoers" (*al-Baqarah* 124). The argument here is that the position of the Imam (ruler) is part

¹ Ibn Hazm, *Al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwaa wa al-Nihal*, vol. 5, p. 20.

² Ibid., vol. 5, p. 21.

³ For the use of this verse as a proof, see ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl*, vol. 5, p. 22; *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 134; al-Ashari, *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 2, p. 140.

of the pact or promise of Allah. It is not permissible for that to be obtained by a wrongdoer. In fact, it is obligatory to rebel against him and make him leave his wrongdoing.¹

(3) Allah says,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

“Help one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancor” (*al-Maaidah* 2). The argument here is that by not revolting against the tyrant, one is actually helping him in his sin and rancor. Furthermore, rebelling against him is a part of helping the rebels in righteousness and piety.²

(4) They also invoke the general texts concerning ordering good and eradicating evil. These texts include the following:

(a) Allah says,

﴿ وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity” (*ali-Imraan* 104).

(b) Allah also says,

﴿ لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ
وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾
كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنِ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

¹ See, for the use of this verse as an argument, al-Ashari, *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 2, p. 140; also see Dr. al-Dumaiji, *al-Imamah al-Uthmaa*, p. 520 for how this verse is used.

² For the use of this verse as a proof, see ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl*, vol. 5, p. 24; al-Ashari, *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 2, p. 140; al-Dumaiji, *al-Imamah al-Udhma*, p. 520.

“Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected faith, by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary, because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did” (*al-Maaidah* 78-79).

(c) Qais ibn Abi Haazim¹ narrated that Abu Bakr said, after praising and extolling Allah, “O people, you read this verse but you misinterpret it:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ ﴾

‘O you who believe! Guard your own souls: if you follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray (*al-Maaidah* 105).’ Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say,

إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعْمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ مِنْهُ

‘If the people see a wrongdoer and they do not take him by his hands, soon Allah will inflict them all with a punishment from Him.’”²

(d) Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ

¹ He was Abu Abdillah Qais ibn Abi Haazim Husain ibn Auf al-Kufi. He was alive during the Days of Ignorance and traveled to pledge allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died while he was on his journey. He narrated from a number of Companions. There is a difference of opinion concerning the year of his death, with numerous years being given. Some say he died in 84 A.H., others say in 87 A.H., while others say it was in 90 A.H. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 8, p. 388.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Ahmad Shaakir said that its chain is *sahih*. In *al-Tahdheeb*, ibn Hajar states that it is also recorded by ibn Khuzaimah and he says that its chain is good.

“Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart. And that is the slightest [effect of] faith.”¹

(5) They also cite some texts that indicate that one should remove an oppressor and keep him from his acts. Ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَبْلِي إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ حَوَارِيُونَ
وَأَصْحَابٌ يَأْخُذُونَ بِسُنَّتِهِ وَيَقْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِنَّهَا تَخْلُفُ 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 حَبَّةُ خَرْدَلٍ

“There is no prophet that was sent to a nation before me except that he had from his nation helpers and companions. They would follow his way and implement his orders. Then came afterwards generations that would say what they did not do and do what they did not say. Whoever struggled against them with his hand is a believer. Whoever struggled against them with his tongue is a believer. And whoever struggled against them with his heart is a believer. Beyond that there is no faith, even equivalent to the amount of a mustard seed.”² Ibn Rajab stated, “This indicates that one should make a physical jihad against the rulers.”³

(6) Other evidence that they cite is what is recorded concerning no obedience in a matter involving disobedience to Allah. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ
بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ

¹ Recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and ibn Maajah.

² Recorded by Muslim.

³ Ibn Rajab, *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm*, p. 304.

“Upon the person is hearing and obeying concerning what he likes and what he dislikes, unless he is ordered to do an act of disobedience [to Allah]. If he is ordered to do an act of disobedience, there is no hearing or obeying.”¹

(7) Their proofs also include what is related concerning the dangers of misguiding rulers. For example, Thaubaan narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّمَا أَخَافُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي الْأَيْمَةَ الْمُضِلِّينَ

“I fear for my Nation from the misguiding rulers.”²

(8) Their evidence also includes the fact that the scholars are agreed that any group which refuses the laws of Islam is to be fought. Ibn Taimiyyah wrote, “Every group that refuses to abide by any law of the definitely established, manifest Islamic Shareeah must be fought until the religion is completely for Allah. This is by the agreement of the scholars.”³

One contemporary wrote a treatise on this topic based on the issue of making jihad and fighting against those governments that rule by man-made laws and not by the Islamic Shareeah.⁴

This ends the presentation of the two views and their respective evidence. A discussion and decision as to which opinion is stronger shall now follow.⁵

Discussion and Conclusion:

A review of the statements of the scholars and their evidence shows that the stronger view belongs to the first group due to the

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee, Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi who said it is *hasan sahih*. Al-Daarimi, Ahmad and Abu Dawood also recorded it. It has supporting evidence in hadith from Umar, Shadaad ibn Aus and others. Cf., *Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 5, p. 239. Al-Albaani declared the hadith *sahih* in his footnotes to *Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh*, vol. 3, p. 1484.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 308.

⁴ This tract was written by Isaam al-Deen Darbaalah and entitled *Hukum Qitaal al-Taaifah al-Mumtaniah an Shaarai al-Islaami*. It is in manuscript form.

⁵ See the following discussions of this issue: Dr. Saalih Samee, *Azmah al-Huriyyah al-Siyaasiyyah*, pp. 615-660; Dr. Naifain Abdul Khaaliq, *al-Muaaridhah fi al-Fikr al-Siyaasi al-Islaami*, pp. 227-415; Dr. Abdullah al-Dumaiji, *al-Imamah al-Udhmaa ind Ahl al-Sunnah*, pp. 501-548; Aarif Khaleel Abu Eid, *Wadheefah al-Haakim fi al-Daulah al-Islaamiyyah*, pp. 245-331; Sadi Abu Jaib, *Diraasah fi Minhaj al-Islaam al-Siyaasi*, pp. 430ff.

strength and authenticity of the evidence presented prohibiting rebelling against unjust and wrongdoing rulers. Due to its clarity, it must be considered an explicit, definitive text on this issue.¹

As for the evidence offered by the proponents of the second opinion, in sum, they are evidence of a general nature that are particularized by unambiguous evidence on this specific issue. I shall take their proofs and discuss them one by one.

(1) As for Allah's statement,

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَت إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ﴾

"If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah" (*al-Hujuraat* 9), the argument from this verse may be responded to with the following:

(a) This contains a command to fight the group that is transgressing. Other explicit texts show that it is forbidden to revolt against unjust rulers. Therefore, rebelling against the ruler is a form of transgression. Al-Qurtubi noted, "In this verse is evidence that it is obligatory to fight against the transgressing group who is known by transgressing against the Imam or any one of the Muslims."² The criteria that define who the transgressor is are the

¹ Due to the clarity of the evidence forbidding rebelling against the ruler, ibn Hazm has claimed that these texts are abrogated. Cf., ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl*, vol. 5, p. 25. However, that is not correct, as it is an accepted principle in Islamic legal theory that one does not resort to abrogation unless there is no way to reconcile the conflicting evidences. Reconciliation here is very easy. There is a general and specific relationship between the sets of evidences, those texts forbidding rebellion and those commanding one to order good and eradicate evil. The texts forbidding rebellion are specific and particular while those commanding one to order good and eradicate evil are general. [Therefore, in this case, the particular evidence takes precedence over the general evidence that applies to all other cases.] For more on the accepted principle among the legal theorists that contradicting evidences are to be reconciled, see al-Fatoohi, *Sharh al-Kaukab al-Muneer*, pp. 426-427; al-Subki, *Jami al-Jawaami ma Sharh al-Muhalli*, vol. 2, pp. 359-361; al-Sheeraazi, *al-Luma*, p. 55; Aali-Taimiyyah, *Al-Musawadah*, p. 229; al-Qaraafi, *Sharh Tanqeeh al-Fusool*, p. 421.

² Al-Qurtubi, *Jaami li-Ahkaam*, vol. 16, p. 318.

texts of the Shareeah that make it clear that those who revolt against the rulers are transgressors.

(b) This verse does not indicate that whenever transgression exists it is obligatory to counter it by fighting. Accepting this principle, ibn Taimiyyah wrote, "The mere existence of transgression from the ruler or a party does not necessarily require fighting. In fact, a principle that is indicated by the texts is that the people are ordered to be patient with, and not fight, the injustice, oppression, and transgression of an unjust, wrongdoing ruler. Such is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered in more than one hadith. He did not permit repelling the transgression by fighting in all cases. In fact, if such would lead to trials and afflictions, it is then prohibited to repel the transgression and, instead, one is ordered to have patience."¹

(2) Allah has said in another verse they quote,

﴿ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾

"My Promise does not extend to the wrongdoers" (*al-Baqarah* 124). This verse contains no proof that it is permissible to revolt against the rulers. Its indication is that there will be none from the descendants of Abraham who will be Imams and guides while they are in fact wrongdoers. In explaining this verse, ibn Katheer stated, "When Allah made Abraham an Imam, he asked Allah for the Imams after him to be from his progeny. That was responded to but he was informed that among his progeny would be evildoers and the pact of Allah would not extend to them and they would not be Imams and they would not be followed."²

(3) Allah also says,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

"Help one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancor" (*al-Maaidah* 2). The most that this verse could be used to prove is that it is forbidden to help in a sin with the Imam or anyone else. However, the claim that it implies an obligation to assist in rebelling against the rulers, taking that as an act of righteousness, is not correct. This is because the texts indicate that it is forbidden to revolt and it is a sin. Therefore, the verse actually indicates the opposite of what they claim.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Istiqamah*, vol. 1, p. 32.

² *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 1, p. 167.

(4) As for the texts related to ordering good and eradicating evil, those evidences are general, being particularized by the hadith used as evidence by the proponents of the first opinion. Al-Shaukaani stated, "Those who argue that it is obligatory to rebel against unjust rulers, remove them by force and oppose them by fighting use the texts of the Quran and Sunnah giving the general meaning of the obligation to order good and eradicate evil. There is no doubt or question that the hadith that... we mentioned are more specific than those general, unrestricted proofs. And they are *mutawaatir* (definitive) in their meaning. The one who is familiar with the Sunnah is aware of that."¹

(5) The texts indicating that one should remove a wrongdoer are not particular related to what is being claimed here. This is because removing a wrongdoer is different from revolting against him. If it is possible to remove him without any civil war or affliction and to replace him with someone better than he is, it is obligatory to do so. However, if that requires the spilling of blood, it is forbidden based on the previously-cited evidence. Abu Amr ibn al-Salaah² said about the hadith that they quote as evidence, "There is no prophet that was sent to a nation before me except that he had from his nation helpers and companions..." "What is mentioned in this hadith concerning encouragement to struggle against the people in the wrong with one's hand and tongue is only if such does not ignite a trial and affliction."³ Furthermore, this hadith is stated as a statement of fact [not as a command]. Ibn al-Salaah said, "This hadith has been stated in reference to the previous nations. There is no mention in its wording of this Nation."⁴

(6) The texts indicating that there is to be no obedience concerning a sinful matter also do not contain any relevant evidence on this point. They just indicate that obedience is forbidden concerning a sin, such that when one is ordered to commit a sin, he does not obey. However, removing him from his position is not allowed. Obedience to the ruler is not just with respect to the just ruler, it is also true for the unjust ruler. This is indicated in a

¹ Al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 7, p. 199.

² He was Abu Amr Uthmaan ibn Abdul Rahmaan (Salaah al-Deen) al-Nasri, well known as ibn al-Salaah. He was one of the nobles of the Shafi'ees and their leader in Quranic commentary, hadith and fiqh. He taught in Jerusalem and Damascus. He died in 643 A.H. He produced a number of writings, most famous being *Marifah Anwaa al-Hadeeth*. Cf., al-Subki, *Tabaqaat al-Shaafi'iyyah*, vol. 5, p. 138; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, pp. 207-208.

³ Quoted from al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*

number of hadith. For example, Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرُونَ بَعْدِي أَثْرَةً وَأُمُورًا تَتَكْرَرُ وَنَهَا قَالُوا فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ قَالَ أَدُوا إِلَيْهِمْ حَقَّهُمْ وَسَلُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّكُمْ

“After me, you will see selfishness and some matters that you will disapprove of.” They said, “What do you order us to do [at that time], O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?” He said, “Fulfill their rights and ask Allah for your rights.”¹

(7) As for the evidence they presented concerning the dangers of misleading rulers, there is no difference of opinion on that issue. However, that danger does not justify rebelling against them.

(8) There is no disagreement about the evidence they present saying that the scholars all agree that the group that refuses to apply the laws of Islam is to be fought. However, this command is directed to the ruler himself, such as what Abu Bakr did when he fought those who refused to pay the zakat. When the scholars discuss this issue, they discuss it in the light of the responsibilities and roles of the ruler himself.²

Given that it is sanctioned to revolt against a disbelieving ruler and given the stronger opinion that it is forbidden to revolt against unjust [Muslim] rulers, it is necessary to point out some other issues. These may be summarized as follows:

The First Issue:

When one says that the scholars agree that it is sanctioned to revolt against a ruler who has entered into *kufir*, it is important to note that the Shareeah conditions that were mentioned in the earlier discussion must be fulfilled. [For example,] one cannot revolt against a ruler if he rules according to some law other than what is in the Shareeah unless that type of ruling is such that is truly *kufir*, as was clarified earlier. In the practice and lives of the scholars there are examples that indicate this principle. Imam Ahmad along with a large number of the *ahl al-Sunnah* said that the Jahamites and those who said that the Quran was created had fallen into *kufir*. However, at the same time, he lived under the rule of the Abbasid caliphs who called people to the heresy of believing in the

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

² Ibn Taimiyyah has discussed this issue in his work *al-Siyaasah al-Shariyyah*.

created nature of the Quran and they punished scholars with beating, death and imprisonment due to this call. Even given all of that, they never revolted against them nor did they say it is obligatory to rebel against them. On the contrary, they believed in their rule and their being of faith and they would pray for them—all along refuting the falsehood that they believed in, which was a greater *kufir* even though they may not have realized it was *kufir*.¹

The Second Issue:

If the ruler [changes and] displays a clear *kufir* wherein the proof is established against him, it is obligatory to revolt against him. However, that revolt is not upon “the individuals of the Nation in the outskirts of the country making a revolution. If they did that, they would be eradicated and destroyed. And that would just be a cause for greater trials and flaring up of a civil war. However, if a man who has followers and a party agrees and he stands hoping to order good and eradicate evil, and he is supported by a sufficient number of Muslims to be able to defend him, he may proceed in that action abiding by the conditions that were mentioned earlier, taking into consideration the best interests and looking out for the proper results, weighing what he is repelling with what he is raising, according to what can be expected.”² Therefore, it is obligatory that the revolt against the disbelieving ruler be led by the “people who tie and untie” (that is, the religious, political and social leaders of society). Revolting against the ruler is not an emotional stance or a temporary flare-up to the point that the masses take control. It is a very serious matter. So it must rest in the hands of the “leaders of society.”³ They must all gather and agree together. For if “the people of truth come together, the people of falsehood will not be able to oppose them.”⁴ Al-Juwaini stated, “If it is said, ‘Who will remove⁵ him?’ We say, ‘The deposition will go to the one who has the pledge.’”⁶ One Maliki scholar said, “Everyone who is a wrongdoing oppressor cannot be a prophet,

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 7, p. 507 and vol. 23, p. 348; al-Shanqeeti, *Adhwa al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, pp. 68-69.

² Imam al-Haramain Abu al-Maali al-Juwaini, *Ghiyaath al-Umum*, pp. 115-116; also see Dr. Mustafa Hilmi, *Nidhaam al-Khilaafah*, pp. 443-445.

³ Cf., Saadi Abu Jaib, *Diraasah fi Minhaaj al-Islam al-Siyaasi*, p. 432.

⁴ Ibn Hazm, *Al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa wa al-Nihal*, vol. 4, p. 174.

⁵ [The text says, “Who will succeed him?” However, the work that the author is quoting from states, “Who will remove him?” Allah knows best.—JZ]

⁶ *Ghiyaath al-Umum*, p. 126.

caliph, ruler, *mufti* and Imam for prayers, and what he narrates from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is unacceptable and his testimony is not accepted in legal rulings—however, he is not removed until the ‘people who tie and untie’ (the leaders in society) remove him.”¹

Therefore, the one being addressed in the [previously mentioned] hadith, “Unless you see a clear *kufir*,” and, “No, not as long as they establish the prayer among you,” is actually the Muslim *Ummah* (Nation) as a whole as represented by “the people who tie and untie.” The small number of individuals from the nation who live in societies in which the real meaning of Islam is missing and in which the difference between faith and *kufir* is missing—in addition to the fact that they are limited in numbers and ability—are requested to support the propagation of the faith to improve the Nation and call it to what is good, while all along speaking out openly for the truth, ordering good and eradicating evil.²

In fact, those who say it is permissible to revolt against impious rulers do not say that individuals among the people may rebel. They differ as to the exact amount that the revolutionaries must reach for it to be permissible for them to rebel.

The Mutazilah say: If we are in a group and the view among us is that we would be able to handle our opposition, we then make the pledge to a leader, arise, fight and put an end to the ruler.

One of the Zaidis said: The minimum amount for which it is permissible to revolt is like the number of participants at the Battle of Badr. They make a pledge to the Imam and then they revolt with him against the ruler.

One said that any number that gathers together, pledges to a leader and arises is sufficient as long as they are from the good people.

Another said that if the people of truth are at least half the number of the transgressors, they must fight against them. This is based on Allah’s words,

¹ This was stated by ibn Khawizmindaad. Cf., al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 19.

² This is not meant to free the Nation from responsibility. Indeed, if the Nation as a whole is silent in the face of a disbelieving ruler, they are all sinners. The discussion here is not about the position of the Nation as a whole but about the stance of individuals within the Nation.

﴿الَّذِينَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

“For the present, Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is a weak spot in you. But (even so), if there are a hundred of you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred. And if a thousand, they will vanquish two thousand, with the leave of Allah: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere” (*al-Anfaal* 66).¹

In the course of his presentation of the views of those who permit such a rebellion, ibn Hazm noted, “If they are a number such that, due to their small quantity and weakness, they cannot hope for a victory, they are then from those who are allowed to abandon the changing [of evil] with one’s hand.”²

The truth is—and Allah knows best—that it is not allowed to revolt against the impious and oppressors. As for revolting against the disbelievers, it is like any other obligation that is dropped given an inability to perform it or a small number that cannot accomplish it. Allah says,

﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ﴾

“So fear Allah as much as you can” (*al-Taghaabun* 16). Allah also says,

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

“On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear” (*al-Baqarah* 286). Furthermore, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade the Muslim from humiliating himself. Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ For these views, see al-Ashari, *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyeen*, vol. 2, pp. 157-158.

² Ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl*, vol. 4, p. 20.

لَا يَنْبَغِي لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يُذِلَّ نَفْسَهُ قِيلَ وَكَيْفَ يُذِلُّ نَفْسَهُ قَالَ يَتَعَرَّضُ مِنَ
الْبَلَاءِ لِمَا لَا يُطِيقُ

“A Muslim must not humiliate himself.” It was said, “How does he humiliate himself?” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “By exposing himself to an affliction that he is not able to bear.”¹

Those who revolt to fight against the disbelievers while they are small in number are simply presenting themselves to a trial and affliction that they cannot bear.

The Third Issue:

The statement that it is forbidden to rebel against unjust rulers does not mean that one is passive in the face of falsehood and wrong. Openly declaring the law and making its word supreme is an obligation upon humans, even if the matter results in his being killed. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةٌ عَدَلٍ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ

“The best jihad is a statement of justice in the presence of an unjust ruler.”² The prohibition of rebelling does not mean there is to be no ordering of good and eradicating of evil. It may be possible for a person to order and eradicate in legal manners without causing any commotion or affliction. “Many people see a contradiction in the Shareeah on that point. They think that ordering [good] and

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi who called it *hasan ghareeb*. Also recorded by Ahmad and it has supporting evidence in a narration from ibn Umar recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*. [Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain has declared the chain *hasan* while al-Albaani has declared the hadith *sahih*. Cf., Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain’s footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 16, p. 628; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1988), vol. 2, p. 1286.—JZ]

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah. In its chain is Attiyah al-Aufi, whose hadith cannot be used as proofs. However, the hadith has supporting evidence that strengthens it in the narration from Taariq ibn Shihaab recorded by al-Nasaa`ee. Al-Mundhiri declared it *hasan* in *al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb*, vol. 3, p. 168. See *Tuhfah al-Ahwadhi*, vol. 6, p. 3396. [Al-Albaani has declared it *sahih* in *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 1, p. 248.—JZ]

eradicating [evil] can only exist with affliction. Either they are all completely ordered or they are all completely forbidden. However, such is not the case. Instead, one orders and prohibits while having patience in the face of any affliction. As Allah says, 'Enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever befalls you' [Luqmaan 17]. And Ubaadah said, 'We made the oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to listen and obey when we are either energetic or exhausted, in our difficult times and in our easy times, and even if others are given preference over us. We would not try to contend for power from its people. And we would stand or speak the truth wherever we may be, not fearing for the sake of Allah the reproach of any reproacher.' He ordered them to obey and forbade them from contending with the people for the rule; and he also ordered them to stand for the truth."¹

Hence, when it comes to ordering good and eradicating evil, two groups of people commit mistakes:

(1) One group abandons the ordering of good and eradicating of evil based on their explanation of the verse,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مِّنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ﴾

"O you who believe! Guard your own souls: if you follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray" (*al-Maaidah* 105). In refutation of them is the speech of Abu Bakr wherein he said, "O people, you read this verse but you misinterpret it. Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say,

إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعْمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ مِنْهُ

'If the people see a wrongdoer and they do not take him by his hands, soon Allah will inflict them all with a punishment from Him.'"²

(2) A second group wants to order good and eradicate evil, either by their speech or their hand, unconditionally without

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Istiqamah*, p. 41.

² Discussed earlier; it is *sahih*.

recourse to understanding, patience, calmness and reflection as to what is proper and what is not proper, what is within reach and what is not. They then order good and eradicate evil thinking that they are obeying Allah and His Messenger in that while, in reality, they are transgressing Allah's limits.¹

It is obligatory upon people to order good and eradicate evil while having knowledge, gentleness and patience. Knowledge must come before the ordering and forbidding. Gentleness must accompany the act. And patience must come afterwards. For this reason, one of the early scholars stated, "No one should order good or eradicate evil unless he is knowledgeable of what he is ordering and knowledgeable of what he is eradicating, gentle with respect to his ordering and gentle with respect to his forbidding, calm with respect to his ordering and calm with respect to his forbidding."²

Patience is the fuel that prepares the Nation, with men who are reformed, to spread the religion to the corners of the earth. It is not a type of fleeing. Instead, it is a deed of reforming, propagating, disseminating of the good and building of a society; and if that society is sound, its leaders will be rightly guided. The reformation of the Nation is the path of reformation of the leaders. Allah puts wrongdoers in authority over similar wrongdoers. Allah has said,

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ نُورِي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا

يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾

"Thus do We make the wrongdoers supporters and helpers to each other, because of what they earn" (*al-Anaam* 129). Ibn Taimiyyah said, "The authority going to the kings and their deputies from among the governors and judges is not due to any shortcoming in themselves. On the contrary, it is due to a shortcoming in both the ruling class and the citizenry... As Allah has said, 'Thus do We make the wrongdoers supporters and helpers to each other.'³"¹

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 128.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 28, p. 137.

³ [The translations of this verse by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and by Mohsin Khan and Taqi al-Deen al-Hilaali, the sources for the translation above, do not capture the essence of the verse as it is understood by ibn Taimiyyah and others. For example, ibn Katheer explained this verse saying, "Such is also how we shall treat the wrongdoers. We shall put some of them in charge of others. We shall destroy them by each other. We shall recompense them by each other as a reward for their wrongdoing and transgression." Sadeeq ibn Hasan al-Bukhaari also stated, "In this verse is a strong threat to the

The Limits of Extremism Related to the Issue of Revolting against the Rulers

In the light of this presentation of the rules concerning revolting against the rulers, it is possible for us to explain the extent of extremism concerning this issue. I have explained so far that:

(1) Revolting against a just ruler is extremism.

(2) Revolting against a disbelieving ruler is not extremism. [This is not extremism] unless it is done by an individual or a small number of individuals. This would be considered a form of being extremely hard upon themselves as they would be burdening themselves with something beyond their capability. Therefore, the extremism in this case would not be due to the rebelling in itself. In this case, it would only be due to the manner and timing of the act. It would be an extremism of an act and a deficiency in one's methodology for acting.

(3) Revolting against an unjust or impious—in their view—ruler: On this point, such people fall into two categories:

The First Group: These are the rebels who believe they are doing a religious act; however, it is not religious and the Law has not commanded it. They fight the people over this issue and they declare those who oppose them to be disbelievers. They continue in their mistaken way in fighting anyone who disagrees with them. These are the Khawaarij and similar other heretical groups. These are extremists without doubt.

The Second Group: These are the people who fight based on an opinion that draws them to it—while the fighting itself is going against the Sunnah and the community—but they are intending only the ordering of good and eradicating of evil, such as in the Battle of al-Harrah², Deer al-Jamaajim³ and elsewhere. They believed that by fighting, the desired benefit would be obtained. However, by fighting they did not achieve that. On the contrary, the evil just became greater than it was before. It became clear to them at the end what the Lawgiver had already indicated from the beginning;

wrongdoers as, if they do not refrain from their wrongdoing, Allah will put another wrongdoer and oppressor in authority over them.”—JZ]

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 35, p. 20.

² [This is a place close to Madinah from which the Umayyads took complete control of Madinah during the time of Yazeed ibn Muaawiyah around the year 63 A.H.—JZ]

³ [This is a place in Iraq close to Kufah. This is where al-Hajaaj, with the support of the Syrian army, defeated Abdul Rahman ibn al-Ashath.—JZ]

that is, that they were mistaken. The source of their mistakes was due to one of four reasons:

(a) The texts forbidding rebelling against the rulers were unknown to them.

(b) Such texts were not confirmed in their view.

(c) They believed, like ibn Hazm, that those texts were abrogated.

(d) They reinterpreted those texts. This was the greatest cause behind their actions.¹

As for this group, according to what is apparent to me, as long as the proof had not been established for them, their actions were extreme but they were simply mistaken, trying to interpret correctly. Some of the members of the early generations fell into this mistake. However, this does not justify the acts of those who came later and did the same as they did. Al-Husain ibn Ali, the people of al-Harrah and the Quranic specialists who revolted against al-Hajaaj² all did so out of anger for the religion due to the injustice of the governors and their abandoning the way of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They sought truth and justice, although they were wrong in their actions. Their mistakes were made clear to them and, at the end, they did not praise their previous actions of fighting.³ The door to *ijtihaad* and interpretation is very wide. A person may reinterpret something and believe that the forbidden is permissible. Indeed, he may even believe that it is obligatory to kill someone whose life is actually protected by the law. As for those people, even if they are to be excused and even if their rank in knowledge and religion is acknowledged, it is not permissible for anyone to leave what has

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, pp. 537-538.

² He was al-Hajaaj ibn Yoosuf ibn al-Hakam al-Thaaqifi, a leader, cunning, eloquent and vicious. He was born and raised in Taif and then he moved to Damascus. His skills continued to be noted and Abdul Malik ibn Marwaan appointed him the head of the army. He ordered him to fight against ibn al-Zubair. He then marched on the Hijaz and killed Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him). Abdul Malik appointed him the governor of the Hijaz and then added Iraq to his territory. He was a vicious murderer according to the agreement of the historians, even though he had some good qualities. However, he was swallowed in the ocean of his sins, as al-Dhahabi stated. His affair rests with Allah. He died in 95 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 343; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 168.

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 4, p. 528; ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 12, p. 286.

been made clear from the Sunnah and guidance on the basis of their [mistaken] interpretations.¹

(4) The ruler being unjust or oppressive does not allow for spilling of the blood of people or violating their honor. Whoever permits the spilling of the blood of the people and the taking of their wealth on the basis of the claim of injustice or *kufir* of the ruler has committed an act of extremism. He has performed one of the acts of the Khawaarij who fought the people of Islam and called them polytheists.

Rebelling against the Ruler In Contemporary Times

Revolting against the rulers represents a phenomenon of the use of force as a means of calling to Allah. Some writers emphasize it and consider it one of the Shareeah commands, such that the whole Nation is sinful for failing to perform it.

This contemporary rebelling against the rulers is of two types, as was the case in previous times:

(1) A rebelling that is built upon an incorrect belief due to which the rulers are fought. This is, without doubt, a form of extremism.

(2) A rebelling that has a Shareeah intent behind it, being the ordering of good and eradicating of evil. This is a mistake and also extremism but it is milder than the first form as the doer is making an [incorrect] interpretation [of the texts].

Given that I do not possess the needed evidence, since I have no knowledge of the exact events and I have no confidence in the reports and news, I shall not present the actual events and try to classify them into either of the two categories. Rather, I shall present some of what is written on the issue of revolting against the rulers in order to establish the foundation, the foundation that is applied to many rulers. I shall do that without getting into the practical aspects for which I do not have sufficient evidence to make any judgment. In any case, that ruling is not part of my concern in this research.

In the book, *Minhaj Jamaah al-Jihaad al-Islaami* ("The Methodology of the Group of Islamic Jihad"), the author wrote, "Rebelling against disbelieving rulers, fighting them, removing them and putting a Muslim ruler in their place is an obligation upon every capable individual according to the consensus of the

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 21, p. 64.

Muslim scholars. None of the individuals—until a sufficient number have done so—is free of sin unless he presents his life and wealth for the sake of fulfilling this obligation.”¹ Under the title, “The necessity of confrontation,” one author explained the different forms of confrontation ordered by the Shareeah. He explained that they are four:

(1) The removal of the disbelieving ruler who has changed the laws of Allah;

(2) Fighting against any party that refuses to submit to the Shareeah of Islam;

(3) To establish the caliphate and install a caliph for the Muslims;

(4) Freeing the lands, rescuing the prisoners and spreading the religion.²

They use the previously-cited proofs, discussed under the topic of the rule concerning revolting against the rulers, as evidence that it is obligatory to rebel. They also cite the consensus of the scholars to revolt against disbelieving rulers as well as their consensus to fight those who refuse to apply the Islamic Shareeah. All of these points were discussed and critiqued earlier. However, I shall conclude by refuting, in the following points, portions of what they stated:

(a) The main reason for their declaring the ruler a disbeliever was his ruling by other than what Allah revealed, in addition to a number of other justifications. In the book, *al-Fareedhah al-Ghaaibah* (“The Absent Obligation”), after quoting ibn Katheer’s statement that he who rules by *al-Yaasiq*, a compendium of laws made by the Tartars, is a disbeliever, the author wrote, “The contemporary rulers have exited from the religion of Islam through a number of doors of *kufir* to the point that their matter is unambiguous to anyone who has followed their lives. This is in addition to the issue of the rule and law.”³

I have previously shown that not every ruler is to be declared a disbeliever for not ruling in accord with what Allah revealed. There are different cases concerning ruling not in accord with what Allah revealed. Some are *kufir* in belief while others are *kufir* in action. Some are sinful acts. Furthermore, the *ahl al-sunnah*, who say that it is *kufir* for a ruler to rule according to man-made laws, will suspend

¹ Abood al-Zumar, *Minhaj Jamaah al-Jihaad al-Islaami*, p. 37.

² *Hatmiyah al-Muwaajaha*, p. 17, quoted from Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, *Shubahaat Haul al-Fikr al-Islaami al-Muaasir*, p. 17.

³ Muhammad Abdul Salaam Faraj, *al-Fareedhah al-Gaaibah*, p. 229.

judgment when it comes to declaring a specific individual a disbeliever [that is, until the matter is clear and the proofs are presented to said person].

While discussing the declaration that the Khawaarij, Raafidhah and others who made statements of *kufr* or performed acts of the disbelievers are disbelievers, Ibn Taimiyyah said, "It is correct that these statements they make, which are known to contradict what the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought, are *kufr*. Similarly, the acts they perpetrate, which are the acts of the disbelievers towards the Muslims, are acts of *kufr*... However, declaring a specific individual among them a disbeliever and judging that he will remain forever in the Hell-fire is suspended until the conditions of such a declaration of disbelief are confirmed and all impending factors are removed. We state what the texts containing promises, threats, descriptions of disbelief and descriptions of impiety state, but we do not make a judgment that a particular individual falls under those general texts until all of its requirements, with no contradiction, are met."¹

(b) Calling this rebellion jihad is a mistake. Jihad is fighting against the polytheists and it is always praiseworthy. However, rebelling against the ruler is not always praiseworthy. Indeed, its merit depends upon who is being revolted against and according to the intentions of the one rebelling. It is not to be called jihad but it is *khurooj* (rebellious, revolting) and *qitaal* (fighting). The issue of terminology here is not a simple matter. This is because if one were to say that it is called jihad, then all of the texts related to jihad would apply to it. And this is not acceptable.

One can recognize this fact in the Quran. The fight that takes place between two parties of believers is not called by Allah jihad. Instead, it is called *qitaal* (fighting). This is blameworthy with respect to both parties. The peace-making efforts that are then done by a group of Muslims, if they should reach the point of drawing swords to discipline the transgressing party, are also called *qitaal* although they are praiseworthy. Hence, the laws concerning fighting against a transgressing group are different from those of jihad. In fact, the jurists put that topic into a separate chapter in their books.

(c) Even if the disbelief of the ruler is clearly confirmed, the rebellion does not fall on the shoulders of a small number. Instead, it is the Nation as a whole that is addressed with that command, as was discussed previously.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Fataawa*, vol. 28, pp. 500-501.

Assassinations

One of the clearest forms of violence that the extremists are often accused of is assassinations. Those who say that it is permissible base their argument on the story of the assassination of Kaab ibn al-Ashraf.¹ Jaabir ibn Abdullah narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ لِكَعْبِ بْنِ الْأَشْرَفِ فَإِنَّهُ قَدْ
 آذَى اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَامَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أُتَجِبُ أَنْ
 أَقْتُلَهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَأَذَنْ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ شَيْئًا قَالَ قُلْ فَإِنَّا هُوَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ
 مَسْلَمَةَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ قَدْ سَأَلَنَا صَدَقَةً وَإِنَّهُ قَدْ عَنَانَا وَإِنِّي قَدْ
 أُتَيْتُكَ أَسْتَسْقِئُكَ قَالَ وَأَيْضًا وَاللَّهِ لَتَمْلُنَّهُ قَالَ إِنَّا قَدْ اتَّبَعْنَاهُ فَلَا نُحِبُّ أَنْ
 نَدَعُهُ حَتَّى نَنْظُرَ إِلَى أَيِّ شَيْءٍ يَصِيرُ شَأْنُهُ وَقَدْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ تُسَلِّفَنَا وَسَقَا
 أَوْ وَسَقَيْنِ نَعَمْ ارْهُونِي قَالُوا أَيُّ شَيْءٍ تُرِيدُ قَالَ ارْهُونِي نِسَاءَكُمْ
 قَالُوا كَيْفَ نَرَهْنُكَ نِسَاءَنَا وَأَنْتَ أَجْمَلُ الْعَرَبِ قَالَ فَارْهُونِي أَبْنَاءَكُمْ
 قَالُوا كَيْفَ نَرَهْنُكَ أَبْنَاءَنَا فَيَسْبُ أَحَدُهُمْ فَيُقَالُ رَهْنٌ بَوَسَقٍ أَوْ وَسَقَيْنِ
 هَذَا عَارٌ عَلَيْنَا وَلَكِنَّا نَرَهْنُكَ اللَّأَمَةَ قَالَ سَفِيَانٌ يَعْنِي السَّلَاحَ فَوَاعَدَهُ أَنْ
 يَأْتِيَهُ فَجَاءَهُ لَيْلًا وَمَعَهُ أَبُو نَائِلَةَ وَهُوَ أَخُو كَعْبٍ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ فَدَعَاهُمْ
 إِلَى الْحِصْنِ فَنَزَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ امْرَأَتُهُ أَيْنَ تَخْرُجُ هَذِهِ السَّاعَةَ فَقَالَ
 إِنَّمَا هُوَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ وَأَخِي أَبُو نَائِلَةَ إِنَّ الْكَرِيمَ لَوْ دَعِيَ إِلَى

¹ He was Kaab ibn al-Ashraf al-Taa' ee, from the tribe of Nabhaan. He was a poet in the Days of Ignorance. His mother was from the tribe of al-Nadheer. He became a Jew and was a noble among his maternal relatives. He lived until the time of Islam and harmed the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He provoked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and ridiculed him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent someone to kill him in 3 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 225.

طَعْنَةَ بَلِيلٍ لَأَجَابَ قَالَ وَيُدْخِلُ مُحَمَّدٌ بَنُ مَسْلَمَةَ مَعَهُ رَجُلَيْنِ فَقَالَ إِذَا
مَا جَاءَ فَإِنِّي قَاتِلٌ بِشَعْرِهِ فَأَسْمُهُ فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي اسْتَمَكَنْتُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ
فَدُونَكُمْ فَاضْرِبُوهُ فَنَزَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مُتَوَشِّحًا وَهُوَ يَنْفُحُ مِنْهُ رِيحَ الطَّيِّبِ
فَقَالَ مَا رَأَيْتُ كَالْيَوْمِ رِيحًا أَيُّ طَيِّبٍ فَقَالَ أَتَأْذَنُ لِي أَنْ أَشُمَّ رَأْسَكَ
قَالَ نَعَمْ فَسَمَّهُ ثُمَّ أَشَمَّ أَصْحَابَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَتَأْذَنُ لِي قَالَ نَعَمْ فَلَمَّا اسْتَمَكَنَ
مِنْهُ قَالَ تَوْنَكُمْ فَفَقَتَلُوهُ ثُمَّ اتَّوَا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرُوهُ

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Who will take care of Kaab ibn al-Ashraf? Verily, he has harmed Allah and His Messenger.’ Muhammad ibn Maslamah said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, would you like him killed?’ He replied, ‘Yes.’ He then said, ‘Then allow me to say something [to deceive him.]’ He replied, ‘Yes [you may do so].’ So Muhammad ibn Maslamah went to Kaab and said, ‘That man [meaning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] demands charity from us and he has troubled us. So I have come to borrow something from you.’ So then Kaab said, ‘By Allah, you will get tired with him.’ Muhammad then said, ‘Since we have followed him, we do not want to leave him until we see what his end is. Now, we want you to lend us a camel load or two of food.’ Kaab said, ‘Yes, I will lend it to you but I need some collateral.’ Muhammad and his companion said, ‘What do you want.’ Kaab replied, ‘Give me your women as collateral.’ They said, ‘How can we give you our women when you are the most handsome of the Arabs?’ Kaab then said, ‘Then give me your sons.’ They said, ‘How can we give our sons to you? Later they will be abused by the people saying that so and so has been given as collateral for a camel load of food. That would disgrace us greatly. However, we will give you our arms as collateral.’ So Muhammad ibn Maslamah and his companion promised that they (or he) would return to him. He came to Kaab at night along with Kaab’s foster brother, Abu Naailah. He invited them to his fort and he went down to them. His wife asked him, ‘Where are you going at this hour?’ He replied, ‘None but Muhammad ibn Maslamah and my foster brother have come.’ She said, ‘I hear a voice as if blood is dropping from it.’ Kaab said, ‘They are none but my brother Muhammad ibn Maslamah and my foster brother Abu Naailah. An honorable man

should respond to a call even at night, even if they are going to kill him.' Muhammad ibn Maslamah went in with two men and said to them, 'When Kaab comes, I will touch his hair and smell it, and when you see that I have got hold of his head, strike him.' Kaab ibn Ashraf came down to them wrapped in his clothes and smelling of perfume. Muhammad ibn Maslamah said, 'I have never smelled a nicer scent than this.' Kaab replied, 'I have the best Arab women who know how to use the best type of perfume.' Muhammad ibn Maslamah said to Kaab, 'Will you allow me to smell your head?' Kaab said, 'Yes.' Muhammad smelled it and made his companions smell it as well. Then he said again, 'Will you let me smell your head?' Kaab said, 'Yes.' When Muhammad got a strong hold of him, he said, 'Get him.' They then killed him and went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to inform him of what happened."¹

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered the assassination of one of the leaders of disbelief. However, using this as proof that it is permissible to assassinate the rulers and others is not valid for the following reasons:

(1) The assassination must be by the order of the ruler. In the story of the assassination of Kaab ibn al-Ashraf, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Who will take care of Kaab ibn al-Ashraf? Verily, he has harmed Allah and His Messenger." The source of the order was from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Similarly, in the story of the killing of ibn Abi al-Huqaiq—which is similar to the story of the killing of Kaab ibn al-Ashraf—the narrator stated, "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent..."² So the one who sent them was the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Individual opinion was never the source of any order for assassination. It is well-known that if the matter of assassinations were left to personal, individual reasoning, that would lead to a great deal of evil.

(2) Assassination must only be of someone whose *kufir* is certain, like Kaab or ibn Abi al-Huqaiq, as both of them were definitively disbelievers in Allah. While discussing the points derived from the story of ibn Abi al-Huqaiq, ibn Hajar stated, "An

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari. For use of this hadith and other similar ones used as evidence to permit assassinations, see Abdul Salaam Faraj, *al-Fareedhah al-Ghaaibah*, p. 260.

² That story is also recorded by al-Bukhari.

important point from this hadith is the permissibility of killing a polytheist who has received the message [of Islam] but persists [in his disbelief].”¹ This is the conclusion from the hadith: the permissibility of assassinating the disbeliever and polytheist. But the source of knowing those titles is the Quran and the Sunnah and not the opinions of individuals who declare other individuals disbelievers and then permit their assassination.

(3) The one to be killed must be from among those who are fighting against the Muslims. This is why al-Bukhari entitled the two relevant chapters from his chapters on jihad, “Chapter: Assassinating a war combatant,” and, “Chapter: Lying in warfare.” Ibn Hajar stated, “The author [al-Bukhari] placing this in the chapter on jihad gives the meaning that Kaab was a war enemy.”² He also said, “He was assassinated only because he violated his treaty and assisted in the war against the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his degradation.”³ Al-Qastalaani noted, “If you say: How could he kill him after deceiving him? The answer is: He violated his pact and supported the war against the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his ridicule. If you say: How did he give him a surety of peace and then he killed him? The response is: He never explicitly gave him a surety of peace. He [Kaab] only thought that and became comfortable until it was possible to kill him.”⁴

(4) One must be certain that there will be no *fitnah* (evil affliction) as a result of that killing. This is clear from the story itself. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not order to have him killed until the power of the Muslims had become strong. This is indicated by the fact that the Jews did not do anything in response after one of their leaders was killed.

One should make a comparison between the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordering the killing of Kaab and his forbidding the killing of Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool although both of them had harmed and opposed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, one could not be safe from some evil results in the killing of a hypocrite while one could be safe from such results in the killing of the Jew. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not expose the disbelief of the hypocrite although the Messenger (peace and

¹ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 7, p. 345.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 7, p. 340.

³ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 160.

⁴ Al-Qastalaani, *Sharh al-Bukhari*, vol. 5, p. 156.

blessings of Allah be upon him) had that knowledge as it was told to him by Allah. However, the disbelief of the Jew was manifest and clear and did not need any further clarification.

Furthermore, the hypocrites did not make their warfare against Allah and the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) public while the Jews did. For that reason, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not order the killing of the hypocrites. And none of the Companions would go forth to kill any of them if the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not order it.

Forbidding Education and Calling People to Illiteracy

One of the fundamental principles that is stressed and encouraged by Islam is the seeking of knowledge. In fact, the first set of verses that was revealed of the Quran was a call to read:

﴿ أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴾

“Read in the name of your Lord Who created” (*al-Alaq* 1). Then Allah reminded mankind of His blessing upon them of teaching them how to write:

﴿ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۗ عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴾

“Who has taught [the writing] by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not” (*al-Alaq* 3-4). In explaining the words, “taught by the pen,” al-Qurtubi stated, “That is, by writing. He taught humans how to write with the pen... Qataadah stated, ‘The pen is a great blessing from Allah. If it were not for it, the religion would not be established and the worldly life would not be sound.’ He points to His perfect nobility by the fact that He taught humans that which they did not know. He took them from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. He alludes to the virtue of the knowledge of writing due to the great benefits that are not achieved except through it.”¹

Beneficial knowledge—regardless of its field—is a basic value from among the greater values of Islam. Allah says,

﴿ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴾

¹ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 120.

“And say: O Lord, increase me in knowledge” (*Taha* 114). The Islamic sciences are the supreme sciences for which there are texts of praise and honor upon its scholars. The worldly sciences, though, are sciences of service and use such that the needs of the body and material world are met via them.

Therefore, knowledge and the sciences are of two categories:

The first category is the beneficial knowledge and sciences that help in purifying the soul, reforming one’s manners and correcting one’s beliefs. The acts based on this knowledge are sound and virtuous, producing good. These are the Shareeah sciences.

The second category is the knowledge by which is not intended reform of character or correction of one’s deeds or beliefs. They are intended for the sake of worldly benefits only. The rulings concerning these differ depending upon the intention of the learner. If he intends good, built upon faith and piety, the worldly sciences become praiseworthy from a religious point of view. However, if he has no religious intent, the knowledge becomes purely worldly with no noble purpose to it. Instead, its purpose is only a lowly, deficient one.¹

Human knowledge is built upon practical experience in the creation as well as perception and pondering over the divine laws that rule this creation. This is something that the Quran calls people to in numerous verses.

For example, Allah says,

﴿ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ۚ ﴿٢١﴾ أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٢﴾
 ﴿٢٣﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾
 وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَحَدَاقٍ غَلْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾
 وَفَكْهَةً وَأَبًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ۚ ﴾

“Then let man look at his food, (and how We provide it): For that We pour forth water in abundance. And We split the earth in fragments. And produce therein grain, and grapes and nutritious plants, and olives and dates, and enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees, and fruits and fodder, for use and convenience to you and your cattle” (*Abasa* 24-32). Allah also says,

¹ Cf., Abdul Rahman al-Saadi, *al-Fataawa al-Saadiyyah*, pp. 104-105.

﴿ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ﴾

“Say: Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation” (*al-Ankaboot* 20). Allah also says,

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ

يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيغُ فِتْرَتَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ

يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَمًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

“See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and leads it through springs in the earth? Then He causes to grow, therewith, produce of various colors: then it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then He makes it dry up and crumble away. Truly, in this, is a message of remembrance for men of understanding” (*al-Zumar* 21). This creation moves according to divine laws. Knowledge of those laws makes it easier to benefit from what this creation contains. This is the human knowledge. Medicine, for example, is the result of the experience of humans in curing diseases that they are afflicted with. In view of the creation’s need for these sciences, the scholars have declared them a communal obligation. Al-Ghazaali said, “That which is a communal obligation is the knowledge that the worldly matters cannot do without, such as medicine. Medicine is a necessity for the continuation of the bodies. Accounting is a necessity for transactions, division of wealth and estates and so forth. These are the sciences that are such that if a land is void of anyone who knows them, the people will suffer. If one [or a sufficient number] gains this knowledge, it will suffice and the obligation will be dropped from the others.”¹

These sciences that humans are in need of for their worldly lives are not blameworthy. Indeed, they are praiseworthy and sought from the people so that they may fulfill what they need of them. They are blameworthy only if they are used to harm people or if people deviate with respect to the intention behind them. This is with respect to two facets:

First is wherein these sciences are a cause for worldly misery and destruction. This type is being witnessed today as the harms from some sciences are manifest in recent inventions and weapons

¹ *Ihya Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 1, p. 16.

of mass destruction that have brought about a great deal of evil for themselves and for others.

Second is wherein the people who attain that knowledge become arrogant, haughty and marveled by it. They make it [their specialty] the ultimate purpose of everything and they belittle everything else. They become hostile to the knowledge passed on by the messengers, which is, in fact, the beneficial knowledge. They refuse it and become arrogant towards it, being pleased with their knowledge that distinguishes them from the rest of humanity. The following words of Allah are applicable to them,

﴿ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴾

“For when their Messengers came to them with clear signs, they exulted in such knowledge as they had; but that very (wrath) at which they were wont to scoff hemmed them in” (*Ghaafir* 83).¹

Human sciences and knowledge were not well-known to the Arabs before the sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Shareeah came and confirmed what was correct of it and added to it what it added. It also declared false what was false of it. It also showed what was beneficial of it and what was harmful. An example of that nature deals with the knowledge of *al-nujoom* (astronomy/astrology). The Shareeah came warning about the forbidden astrology. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ اِقْتَبَسَ عِلْمًا مِنَ النُّجُومِ اِقْتَبَسَ شُعْبَةً مِنَ السِّحْرِ زَادَ مَا زَادَ

“Whoever acquires knowledge of *al-nujoom* (astrology) has acquired a branch of sorcery, increasing it as he increases.”² However, the knowledge of *al-nujoom* (astronomy) that is related to getting directions on the land and sea, differences of time and season, knowing the setting and places of the stars and so forth, is approved in the Quran:

¹ Cf., Abdul Rahman al-Saadi, *al-Fataawa al-Saadiyyah*, p. 105.

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, al-Tabaraani, al-Baihaqi and ibn Abdul Barr in *Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm* from the hadith narrated by ibn Abbaas. Al-Nawawi declared it *sahih* in *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen* (hadith #1679) as did al-Iraqi in *Takhreej al-Ihya* (vol. 4, p. 117). Al-Munaawi (*Faidh al-Qadeer*, vol. 6, p. 80) quotes al-Dhahabi as declaring it *sahih* in *al-Kabaair* but I did not find it therein.

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالْبَحْرِ ﴾

“It is He Who makes the stars (as beacons) for you, that you may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea” (*al-Anaam* 97). Allah also says,

﴿ وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴾

“By the stars (men) guide themselves” (*al-Nahl* 16).

Another example is that of medicine. The Arabs had some knowledge that they took from the experiences of other nations. The Shareeah came affirming some of the remedies and declaring others void, such as the use of forbidden objects as remedies or the use of incantations that contained aspects of association of partners with Allah.¹

The Shareeah and the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came with what proves the Shareeah sanction for learning the worldly sciences. Note the following:

(1) Zaid ibn Thaabit² was ordered by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to learn the writing of the Jews [Hebrew]. He said, “I would then write for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and read for him what they wrote whenever they wrote to him.”³ This indicates the sanctioning of learning such knowledge to the extent that it is needed and sufficient for the Muslims and so they will not have to rely upon others.

¹ Cf., al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, pp. 71-72. He mentions a number of sciences that were known to the Arabs and approved by the Shareeah.

² He was Abu Khaarijah Zaid ibn Thaabit ibn al-Dhahaak al-Ansaari, one of the elder Companions. He used to record the revelation. He was also a scribe for Umar and then for Uthmaan. He was a leader in being a judge and giving religious verdicts. Umar would leave him in charge of Madinah. 92 hadith have been narrated on his authority. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 426; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 41; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 57.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari without its complete chain. Al-Bukhari records its complete chain in his *Tareekh*, as ibn Hajar noted (*Fath*, vol. 13, p. 161). Ahmad and al-Haakim record that Zaid ibn Thaabit said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered me to learn Syriac.”

(2) Abu Humaid al-Saaidi¹ said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) employed a man from the Tribe of Asad, called ibn al-Lutbiyyah², to administer the zakat and when he came, he would go over the account with him."³ This hadith indicates the Prophet's knowledge of "calculating" which is one of the human sciences. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent with the laws of inheritance which contain a great deal of calculations.⁴

(3) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also employed scribes. In fact, he had some forty-two scribes, including the rightly guided caliphs.⁵

(4) Ibn Abbaas said, "Some of the prisoners after Badr had no ransom. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) therefore set their ransom at teaching ten of the children of the Ansaar how to read and write."⁶ Imam al-Shabi said, "The people of Makkah would know how to write while the people of Madinah did not write. Therefore, whoever could not make a ransom payment was sent ten young boys from Madinah for them to teach. When they became proficient, they were their ransom payment. And Zaid ibn Thaabit was from those who were taught."⁷

The teaching of the children of the Muslims proves the legality of learning how to read and write. If it were not legal, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would not have made the teaching of reading and writing to the Muslim children a ransom payment.

¹ He was Abdul Rahman—some say al-Mundhir—ibn Saad ibn al-Mundhir. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name as well as his grandfather's name. He was a Companion from the Ansar. He participated at Uhud and the following battles. A number of Companions and Followers narrated from him. He died either at the end of Muaawiyah's caliphate or at the beginning of Yazeed's. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 2, p. 481; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 11, p. 89; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 80.

² He was Abdullah ibn al-Lutbiyyah ibn Thalabah al-Azdi. His [first] name is not mentioned in the hadith in the two *Sahih*s but a number of scholars mentioned it. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 202.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

⁴ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 166.

⁵ Cf., Abdul Raof al-Munaawi, *al-Ujaalah al-Saniyyah Sharh Alfiiyyah al-Seerah al-Nabawiyah*, p. 244; ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 166.

⁶ Recorded by Ahmad. [According to Ahmad Shaakir, the chain of this report is *sahih*. Cf., Ahmad Shaakir, footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 3, p. 20.—JZ]

⁷ From Imam al-Saalihi, *Subul al-Huda wa al-Rishaad*, vol. 4, p. 104.

(5) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) borrowed some of the knowledge related to warfare from other nations. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard that the clans were gathering against him, he gathered the people and informed them of what the enemy was doing. He consulted with them and Salmaan al-Faarisi suggested digging the trench. He said, "O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we were in the land of the Persians and when we feared the horsemen, we would build a trench around us." In other words, that was the strategy of the Persians. They were pleased with that suggestion and so they built the trench around Madinah.¹

In the siege of Taif, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) bombarded the people of Taif with catapults.² The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was the first to launch one in Islam.³

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not forbid such knowledge even though some of it was taken from the Persians and Romans. Human sciences are based on experiences and nations can benefit from the others in this matter.

As for the means and places in which such knowledge is passed on, they differ from era to era. Although the learning and teaching during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was in the mosque, that does not mean that it is forbidden or not sanctioned to have it outside of the mosque. These kinds of means and places differ depending on the time, place and custom.

After this clarification of some points related to knowledge, I may conclude the following:

(1) Forbidding the learning of the human sciences is forbidding something that Allah has made permissible. Hence, it is a type of extremism in the religion.

(2) Forbidding attaining knowledge via newly introduced means, such as in colleges and other places, is also forbidding something while there is no evidence for that prohibition. Hence, it is also a form of extremism. Some people nowadays have gone to this extreme. In describing the *jamaah* of the last days, Shukri Mustafa stated, "The *jamaah* of the truth of the end of time will be

¹ Cf., Ali Burhaan al-Deen al-Halabi, *al-Seerah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 631.

² Cf., ibn Hishaam, *al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah*, vol. 4, p. 148-149.

³ Ibid.

the second coming of the best nation raised for mankind, with all of its distinguishing features. It will be an illiterate nation because it will fall under the Prophet's words, 'We are an illiterate nation.'¹ It will also fall under the words of Allah, 'As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them: and He is Exalted in Might, Wise' (*al-Jumuah* 3)."²

In his book, *al-Khilaafah*, he wrote,

Whoever thinks that this concentration of efforts, sciences and inventions that are filling the earth now have been done for the worship of Allah or that one may join together both sacrificing one's life in building up this radiant civilization and pompous world along with the worship of Allah by fasting, praying, supplicating, remembering, making the pilgrimage, conveying the message, making jihad for the sake of Allah as is His right, reciting the Quran in the proper fashion, remembering Allah day and night... I say to whoever thinks that the responsibilities of building a modern day civilization do not contradict with the responsibilities of worship and to those who say that the scholars of the West can build a civilization while worshipping Allah at the same time... Whoever thinks that can testify against himself that he has very little modesty and is completely brazen—after that, he may do whatever he wishes.³

One researcher on this topic noted,

In sum, the stance of Shukri forbidding his followers from attending the schools and scientific institutes is well-known for anyone who had even the slightest contact with this group. Most of the people who left the group admitted to this fact... It must be pointed out that forbidding studies was not restricted to medicine, engineering or foreign language studies. It extended to the universities and Islamic institutions in which non-Islamic subjects are not studied. This is because they are institutions of the *taghoot* and they are included under the realm of mosques by which evil is intended. Their teachers are all hypocrites. In fact, they are apostates

¹ This hadith will be discussed in more detail shortly.

² *Al-Tuwasimaat*, p. 16.

³ *Kitaab al-Khilaafah*, quoted from Muhammad Suroor Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi Ghair ma Anzalallaah*, p. 237.

because they do not believe that there exists the greater *kufr* that takes one out of the fold of the religion. As for the sanctioned knowledge, it cannot be achieved but in the classrooms that follow the *jamaah*. Indeed, it is not acceptable to approve of any curriculum save that which was laid down in detail by the leader of this *jamaah*.¹

Their evidence for their position is exemplified by the following:

(1) The evidence that describes this Nation as being *ummi*, including:

(a) Allah has said,

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾

“It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error” (*al-Jumuah* 2). After stating this verse, Shukri Mustafa wrote, “This is an unlettered Nation. It is not just those who the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was first sent to who were unlettered... but [the following verse states,] ‘As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them: and He is Exalted in Might, Wise’ (*al-Jumuah* 3). And these are the people who follow them in goodness until the Day of Judgment, those who follow along the same path [as they did].”²

(b) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ لَا نَكْتُبُ وَلَا نَحْسِبُ الشَّهْرُ هَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا يَعْنِي مَرَّةً تِسْعَةً وَعِشْرِينَ وَمَرَّةً ثَلَاثِينَ

¹ Muhammad Suroor Zain al-Abideen, *al-Hukum bi Ghair ma Anzalallaah*, p. 238.

² *Al-Tuwasimaat*, p. 16.

“We are an illiterate nation. We neither write nor do we calculate. The month is like this,” and he motioned twenty-nine [once] and thirty once.¹ Shukri Mustafa stated about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “His entire nation is illiterate, they do not write or calculate... What he meant by illiterate nation is the majority and general rule of this nation. This does not deny that some readers and writers may exist in this nation but they exist only to the extent that they are needed.”²

(c) The illiteracy of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) [is another proof]. Shukri Mustafa said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not read while it was in his ability to read and calculate.”³

(2) [They also cite] the hadith of cross-pollinating the date palm trees. Anas ibn Maalik narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by some people who were cross-pollinating and he said, “If they were not to do so, it may be good.” The product then was of very poor quality and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by them and said, “What is with your datepalms?” They replied, “You said such and such.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then told them,

أَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِأَمْرِ دُنْيَاكُمْ

“You have more knowledge of your worldly matter.”⁴

(3) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never taught his Companions anything except the Quran. Shukri Mustafa said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spent thirteen years in Makkah and he never taught the Muslims save the Book and the Wisdom. He himself did not learn anything other than that.”⁵

(4) There are also verses that censure being deceived by knowledge. Allah says,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and Ahmad.

² *Al-Tuwasimaat*, p. 16.

³ *Al-Tuwasimaat*, p. 16.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim.

⁵ *Al-Tuwasimaat*, p. 16.

﴿ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ
الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴾

“For when their Messengers came to them with clear signs, they exulted in such knowledge as they had; but that very (wrath) at which they were wont to scoff hemmed them in” (*Ghaafir* 83).

A Critique of Their Proofs:

First, there are the Quranic verses that revolve around the concept of the “illiteracy” of the Muslim nation. The word *ummiyyah* (“illiterate”) has been mentioned in six places in the Quran. In *soorah al-Baqarah*, Allah states about the Tribe of Israel,

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيٌّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يُظُنُّونَ ﴾

“And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture” (*al-Baqarah* 78). In *soorah ali-Imraan*, Allah says,

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ
أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴾

“And say to the People of the Book and to those who are unlearned, ‘Do you (also) submit yourselves?’ If they do, they are in right guidance, but if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message; and in Allah's sight are (all) His servants” (*ali-Imraan* 20). In the same *soorah*, Allah says about the Tribe of Israel,

﴿ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دَمَّتْ عَلَيْهِ
فَأَمَّا ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ ﴾

“Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a hoard of gold, will (readily) pay it back. [And there are] others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stood demanding, because, they say, ‘There is no call on us (to keep faith) with these ignorant (*ummiyyeen*)’” (*ali-Imraan* 75). In *soorah al-Araaf*, Allah says,

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا
عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ ﴾

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures)—in the Taurah and the Gospel...” (*al-Araaf* 157). In the following verse, Allah also says,

﴿ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيَّ ﴾

“So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet” (*al-Araaf* 158). And in *soorah al-Jumuah*, Allah says,

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾

“It is He Who has sent among the unscriptured a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error” (*al-Jumuah* 2).

Upon study of these verses and the statements of the scholars, it is clear that the word *ummiyyah* is used in two ways:

(a) Inability to read or write: In this usage, Allah describes some of the People of the Book as *ummiyyoon* (illiterate):

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِي وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يُظُنُّونَ ﴾

“And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture”

(*al-Baqarah* 78). Ibn Jareer stated, “The meaning of *ummiyyeen* are those who neither write nor read.”¹

(b) The second usage is in reference to a people who had not received a revealed book from Allah. This is found in the verses,

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ
 أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَكَدُوا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ
 وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴾

“And say to the People of the Book and to those who are unlearned, ‘Do you (also) submit yourselves?’ If they do, they are in right guidance, but if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message; and in Allah's sight are (all) His servants” (*ali-Imraan* 20), and,

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
 وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي
 ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾

“It is He Who has sent amongst the unscriptured a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error” (*al-Jumuah* 2). Ibn Abbaas said, “The *ummiyyoon* were the Arabs, all of them, those who could write and those who could not write. This is because they were not a People of a Book.”² Al-Tabari said, “The *ummiyyoon* are those who did not have a [revealed] book among the polytheistic Arabs.”³

In the light of this classification of the meaning found in the verses, the following is clarified:

(1) Before the sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Arabs had combined two characteristics. They were *ummiyyoon* in the sense that they were not a people of a [revealed] Book. And they were also *ummiyyoon* in the sense that most of them did not know how to read or write. When the

¹ *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 1, p. 373; cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 2, p. 5, and ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 4, p. 127.

² Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 18, p. 92.

³ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 13, p. 314. Cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 4, p. 45.

Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to them, they no longer had the first characteristic of not reading a book that was revealed for them. "In fact, they became people of a Book and knowledge. They became the most knowledgeable of the creation and the most excellent in beneficial knowledge. The blameworthy, negative attribute of not having the knowledge and the revealed book was removed from them."¹

(2) Being *ummiyyah* in the meaning of not being able to read or write is something blameworthy. That is why Allah has said,

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِي وَإِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا

يَظُنُّونَ ﴾

"And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture" (*al-Baqarah* 78). However, the illiteracy of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was something praiseworthy as he was turned away from the knowledge of reading and writing so that the miraculous nature [of the revelation] would be affirmed and so that his argument would be made even stronger.² This fact is indicated by Allah's statement,

﴿ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذَا

لَأَرْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴾

"And you were not (able) to recite a book before this (Book came), nor were you (able) to transcribe it with your right hand. In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted" (*al-Ankaboot* 48). Imam al-Qurtubi said, "That is, you, Muhammad, were not able to read before this and you would not go to meet with the People of the Book. Instead, We revealed to you in the greatest form of a miracle, including in it aspects of the unseen [such as the stories of the past prophets] and more. Had you been from those who read books or written letters, the people who talk—of the People of the Book—would have spread doubts and their doubts would have been pertinent."³

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, pp. 168-169.

² Cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 20, p. 121.

³ Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 13, p. 251; cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 21, p. 3.

“His illiteracy was not with respect to knowledge as he had knowledge and reciting from memorization in his heart. In fact, he is the Imam in that matter. It was simply from the point of view of not writing or reading something written... His illiteracy became something specific for him as a type of perfection in the sense that he was not in need of something [otherwise] more virtuous and complete than it. However, for others, it is a deficiency as they will lose many qualities that cannot be achieved without literacy.”¹

(3) The verses that mention *ummiyyah* are in the form of a statement of fact and are not requesting that act. There is no text requesting the continuance of the characteristic of illiteracy. At the most, there is a demand for a continuance of some of the rulings characteristic of that quality, as shall be discussed shortly when the hadith, “We are an illiterate nation,” is discussed.

(4) Allah’s statement,

﴿وَأٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ﴾

“As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them: and He is Exalted in Might, Wise” (*al-Jumuah* 3), does not indicate any virtue of *ummiyyah* for the following reasons:

(a) The meaning of *ummiyyeen* [in the verse previous to this one] is the Arabs who had not had a prophet sent to them before Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and who had not received a Book. The meaning is not those who know not how to read or write.

(b) Their use of the word [in the verse] “others” as a proof is not valid. This is because it is not allowed for the word “others” to be in conjunction with “*ummiyyeen*,” because “others” requires that it mean some other people than those mentioned. Hence, it must refer to someone other than the Arabs, that is, other than the *ummiyyeen*. It is in conjunction with the pronoun in, “to them,” in the words, “rehearse to them”; in other words, it means that the verses will be read to others [in the future]. Or, “others” is another actor along with the preceding referent. In other words, “Recite to the *ummiyyeen* our signs, purify them and teach them the Book and the Wisdom,” and do the same for others as well.

This is made clear by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explaining by a partial commentary in which he gave an example of the “others” as being the Persians. Abu Hurairah

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 172.

said, "We were sitting with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and *soorah al-Jumuah* was revealed. He recited it. When he reached the words, 'As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them,' a man asked him, 'Who are they?' He did not answer him until he had asked the question three times. Salmaan al-Faarisi was among us and he put his hand on Salmaan and said,

لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ عِنْدَ الثَّرِيَّا لَنَالَهُ رِجَالٌ مِّنْ هَؤُلَاءِ

'Even if the faith were at the highest star, men from these [people] would achieve it.'"¹

Therefore, the meaning is not as Shukri Mustafa understood it, "As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them," meaning those who cannot read or write.

Second, they quote the hadith,

إِنَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ لَا نَكْتُبُ وَلَا نَحْسِبُ

"We are an illiterate nation. We neither write nor do we calculate."² This is also not a proof that learning and knowledge are forbidden. This is true for the following reasons:

(1) The Prophet's statement, "We are an illiterate nation," was a statement of fact and not a directive or command from him. They were truly an illiterate people before the coming of the Shareeah. However, afterwards, they were not ordered to remain in that state for all matters. They were simply ordered to remain in that state regarding specific matters.³

(2) His statement, "We neither write nor do we calculate," was specifically related to the question of determining the beginnings of the months.⁴ Otherwise, there were some Companions who wrote and would make well-known computations and arithmetic. Therefore, this is a statement of fact comprising a prohibition. He is

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa'ee and Ahmad.

³ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 166. The last point is explained in the next paragraph.

⁴ They would use recordings and calculations to know the beginnings of the months. Ibn Taimiyyah noted that some people would record the movements of the sun and moon with alphabetical letters and so forth and they would calculate how much time had passed and when the last night of the month would occur. See ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 173.

stating that the Nation to which he was sent, which is the moderate nation, is a Nation that does not record or calculate. Instead, they know the beginnings of the months by sighting [the new moon].¹ Therefore, the attribute of *ummiyyah* in the hadith concerning fasting is a praiseworthy attribute for the following reasons:

First, recording and calculations are done away with by something much clearer and more manifest, which is the sighting.

Second, recording and calculations are often mistaken while sighting is not so.

Third, getting involved in recording and calculations preoccupies one from better things and exhausts a person, while the opposite is true for the sighting.²

(3) The meaning of the hadith is that there are some Shareeah rulings that remain upon the status of *ummiyyah*. To understand the Shareeah and its laws, one is not in need of astronomy and mathematics. The wisdom behind this is:

(a) Those who learned directly from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were *ummiyyoon* still upon their natural disposition.

(b) If the laws were not *ummiyyah*, as it spread to all of mankind, Arabs and non-Arabs, it would have been difficult for the masses of people to implement the orders and prohibitions that would be in need of scientific methods to, first, understand them, and then, second, to apply them. This is the meaning that one can derive from the Prophet's words, "We are an illiterate nation. We neither write nor do we calculate."³

(4) The meaning of the hadith is not to prohibit reading and writing. We have already mentioned what indicates their legitimacy. The recording and calculating that were forbidden were only those used in calculating the beginnings of the months.

Third, they quote the evidence showing that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was illiterate. We have already mentioned that the Prophet's illiteracy is to be reckoned as a miracle of his prophethood. Therefore, it is not a shortcoming with respect to him; indeed, it was a type of excellence. However, with respect to others it is a shortcoming because they will lose some virtues that are only achieved through reading and writing.

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 165.

² Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 25, p. 174.

³ Cf., Shaikh Abdullah Draaz's footnotes to al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat*, vol. 2, p. 69.

Fourth, they quote the hadith concerning the cross-pollination of the date palm trees. This hadith does not contain any evidence that knowledge is forbidden. The fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was unaware of some worldly matter and he approved of their knowledge is evidence that learning the aspects of this world is permissible and not forbidden, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed their knowledge.

Fifth, they say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) only taught his Companions the Quran and Sunnah. This was because the responsibility of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was to teach them those matters. He did not object to them learning worldly matters. In fact, he ordered the learning of some topics, as was discussed earlier.

Sixth, they quote some texts censuring being deceived by knowledge, such as Allah's statement,

﴿ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنْ

الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴾

“For when their Messengers came to them with clear signs, they exulted in such knowledge as they had; but that very (wrath) at which they were wont to scoff hemmed them in” (*Ghaafir* 83). This verse only shows that the blameworthy aspect of human knowledge is when the person becomes deceived by it and rejects what has come via inspiration, relying instead only upon his limited knowledge.

Seventh, the building of a modern civilization is not in contradiction with the fulfillment of the worship of Allah. This is because maintaining and adding to this world is part of the worship of Allah. The concept of worship of Allah is more comprehensive than simply the rituals. What is forbidden concerning the maintaining of this world is forgetting about Allah and not giving thanks to Him. Allah says, in quoting a righteous person from the people of Qaaron,

﴿ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴾

“But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion in this world. But do goodness, as Allah has been good to you. And seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief” (*al-Qasas* 77).

Prohibiting the Prayers in the Mosques

The mosque has a very important place in Islam. It is the place to perform worship and it is a place for learning. Under its roof, the Muslims come together like the heart of one person. Their goal is one, their action is one and their direction in prayer is one. The great importance and honor of the mosque is indicated by the fact that it is the most beloved place to Allah. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَحَبُّ الْبِلَادِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدُهَا

“The most beloved [pieces of land] to Allah are its mosques.”¹ The first mosque that was established was *al-bait al-haram* (“the inviolable house”) which Allah has made the hearts of mankind yearn for. He has made it a source of blessings and guidance.

﴿ إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

“The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka [Makkah]; full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings” (*ali-Imraan* 96). After that, other houses of Allah were built. The mosque was the first building that the Muslims considered building. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

him) first arrived in Madinah, the building of the mosque was one of the first matters he attended to. Anas ibn Maalik said, "When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Madinah, he stayed in the neighborhood of the Tribe of Amr ibn Auf. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stayed with them fourteen nights. Then he sent for the Tribe of al-Najjaar and they came armed with their swords. [I remember it so well that it is] as if I am looking [now] as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sitting on his mount and Abu Bakr was riding behind him and all of the Tribe of al-Najjaar around him until he dismounted at the courtyard of Abu Ayyoob's house. He used to love to pray whenever the time of prayer came. And he would pray in the sheep's pastures. He ordered that a mosque be built. He sent for some people of the Tribe of al-Najjaar and said, 'O Tribe of al-Najjaar, tell me the price for this piece of land of yours.' They answered, 'By Allah, we do not seek any price for it except from Allah.'" Anas also said, "There were graves of the polytheists there. Some of it was not level and there were also datepalm trees [on the land]. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that the graves of the pagans be dug up and the non-level land be leveled. And the date palm trees were cut down."¹

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged people to build mosques. He said,

مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى يَتَّبِعِي بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي
الْجَنَّةِ

"Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allah, desiring by it the face of Allah, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise."² The basic rule concerning the mosques that the Muslims build is that they are built upon piety and fear of God. If there happens to occur something in a mosque that leads one to acts of *shirk*, then that is an incidental occurrence that does not diminish the value of the mosque itself. Instead, one should remove that evil while the mosque remains in its place.

For that reason, the scholars differentiate between a mosque that is built upon a grave and the grave that is the place of a mosque. If the mosque was before the grave, the grave should be modified and changed. It should either be leveled or it should be

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa' ee.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad.

dug out and removed if it were new. If the grave was before the mosque, either the mosque should be removed or the form of the grave is to be removed.¹

The differentiation revolves around looking at the major purpose in the building of the mosque. Perhaps the destruction of the mosque of *dharaar* (“of evil and harm”) and its burning was due to it being a mosque that was built from its beginning on a foundation of disbelief and animosity.

The group of Shukri Mustafa went to an extreme and claimed that all existing mosques on the earth today are mosques of *dharaar*, with the exception of only four mosques—the Mosque of al-Haram [in Makkah], Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem], the Prophet’s Mosque [in Madinah] and Masjid Quba [near Madinah]. Therefore, it is not allowed to pray in any mosque other than these four.²

This thought is based upon two pillars:

(1) The necessity of accepting the fact that the Muslim societies today are *jaahili* societies.

(2) The conclusion, therefore, is the necessity of remaining away from these societies, in particular their mosques since they are places of worship for this *jaahiliyyah*.³

Their evidence for the above includes:

(1) In the story of Moses, Allah states,

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بِيوتًا
وَأَجْعَلُوا بُيوتَكُمْ قِبَلَةَ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

“We inspired Moses and his brother with this message: Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt, make your dwellings into places of worship, and establish regular prayers, and give glad tidings to those who believe” (*Yonus* 87). In his discussion of this verse, Sayyid Qutb wrote, “That experience that Allah presents for the group of believers is supposed to be an example for them and it was not only for the Tribe of Israel. It is a purely faith-related experience. At that time, the believers had found themselves as outsiders in a *jaahili* society wherein the trials were widespread and the false gods were in power. The people had become evil and the environment had become rotten. Such was the case during the time

¹ Cf., ibn Qaasim, *Haashiyah al-Raudhah*, vol. 1, p. 538.

² Cf., Rajab Mukhtaar Madkoor, *al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, p. 193.

³ Cf., Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 205.

of the Pharaoh¹ as well as during that time [of the Prophet]. Therefore, Allah guided them to the [following] matters: (1) Seclude and remain away from the *jaahiliyyah* society with its rampant evils and ills—as much as possible—while the pure, excellent group of believers should gather together by themselves in order to purify, cleanse, raise and clean themselves until their promise from Allah comes. (2) Remain away from the *jaahiliyyah* places of worship. The Muslim group should use some houses as mosques so they can feel their separation from the *jaahiliyyah* society. Therein, they can devote themselves to the worship of their Lord in the proper manner. The devotion by worship in itself is a form of organization in an environment of a pure form of worship.”²

His words here have some generality to them and are unrestricted by time or place. However, they were taken and applied to the contemporary situation because it is an ignorant (*jaahili*) era, according to their claims, and, therefore, it is obligatory to remain away from the *jaahiliyyah* places of worship.³

(2) Their evidence includes [their argument] that in order for a place to be truly a mosque of Allah, three conditions must be met. These conditions are not met in the mosques today save in the four mosques [mentioned earlier]. These conditions are:

(a) Allah alone must be called upon therein. Their evidence for this condition is Allah’s statement,

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

“And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): so invoke not anyone along with Allah” (*al-Jinn* 18).

(b) Those who attend and maintain the mosques must meet certain conditions and qualifications that are mentioned by Allah in the verse,

¹ *Firaon* is a word derived from two Egyptian words, *br* and *au*, which mean, “the greatest house.” This was a description for the palace of the king. It then became the common name for the kings of Egypt from the time of the First Century B.C. There were many pharaohs but no trustworthy biographical information exists for them. Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Arabiyyah al-Maisarah*, p. 1290.

² *Fi Dhilaal al-Quraan*, vol. 3, p. 1816.

³ Cf., Saalim al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, pp. 207-209.

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنِ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ
يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾

“The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance” (*al-Taubah* 18). Allah also says,

﴿ فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيَذَكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ
لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْعُدْوِ وَالْأَصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ
وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ
يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴾

“(Lit is such a light) in houses, which Allah has permitted to be raised to honor; for the celebration, in them, of His name: in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again), by men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of Allah, nor from regular prayer, nor from the practice of regular charity: their (only) fear is for the day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new)” (*al-Noor* 36-37). Allah also says,

﴿ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴾

“In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loves those who make themselves pure” (*al-Taubah* 108). It is not permissible for us, from the outset, to call any mosque a mosque of Allah unless those who attend it meet these conditions and qualities stated in these verses above.

(c) The mosque must have been founded on the basis of piety and fear of Allah. This is based on Allah’s saying,

﴿ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَّمَجِدْ أَسْسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ
أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ ﴾

“Never stand forth therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of your standing forth (for prayer) therein” (*al-Taubah* 108). According to their claims, a look at the mosques of today shows that they do not meet these conditions.¹

Critique of Their Evidence:

First, they use as a proof the verse,

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَ لِقَوْمِكَ مِمَّا بَمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا
وَأَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

“We inspired Moses and his brother with this message: Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt, make your dwellings into places of worship, and establish regular prayers, and give glad tidings to those who believe” (*Yoonus* 87). This verse was revealed to state what occurred to the Tribe of Israel when Pharaoh and his chiefs put them in dire straits. Al-Tabari recorded from ibn Abbaas concerning the words, “make your dwellings into places of worship,” “They were terrified from Pharaoh and his people from praying. So it was said to them, ‘Make your dwellings into places of worship.’ That is, make them mosques so that you may pray therein.”² In explaining this verse, Mujaahid said, “They would not pray except in the synagogues until they had fear of Pharaoh’s people, so they were ordered to pray in their houses.”³

These statements clarify that the reason they were ordered to take their houses as mosques was due to their fear and terror from the violence of Pharaoh and his chiefs. The scholars have discussed this point and have stated that the obligation of attending the

¹ Cf., Rajab Madkoor, *Al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, pp. 193-194.

² Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 11, p. 153.

³ Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Fath al-Qadeer*, vol. 2, p. 468. Note that there is a difference of opinion concerning the meaning of this verse. Some say that it means, “Make your places of worship in the direction of the Kaabah.” Others say that it means, “Make your houses facing each other.” Al-Tabari says that what is stated in the text above is the strongest opinion. Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 11, pp. 153-156.

congregation is dropped from the one who has reason to fear for himself.¹ However, abandoning the mosques for no Shareeah justification is forbidden. Verily, prayer in congregation is obligatory upon the individual. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَيْسَ صَلَاةٌ أَثْقَلُ عَلَى الْمُنَافِقِينَ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ وَالْعِشَاءِ وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا فِيهِمَا لَأَتَوْهُمَا وَلَوْ حَبْوًا لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أَمُرَ الْمُؤَدِّنَ فَيُؤَيِّمَ ثُمَّ أَمُرَ رَجُلًا يَوْمَ النَّاسِ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ شَعْلًا مِنْ نَارٍ فَأَحْرَقَ عَلَى مَنْ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدُ

“No prayer is heavier upon the hypocrites than the Morning [*Fajr*] Prayer and the Night [*Isha*] Prayer. If the people knew what they contained, they would come to them even if they had to crawl. I considered ordering the caller to prayer to announce the beginning of the prayer and then order someone to lead the people in prayer and then I would take a torch of fire and burn [their houses down] over those who had not yet come out to the prayer.”²

The verse does not say that the reason was to remain away from the *jaahiliyyah* places of worship. The reason was only due to fear. Hence, it is not allowed to leave the congregational prayers in the mosques except due to that reason and other similar reasons that are types of necessity.

(2) They also claim that the three conditions must be met before any place can be called a mosque from the Shareeah perspective. The refutation of their conditions may be summarized as follows:

The first condition: They say that Allah alone must be invoked in the mosque for it to be called a mosque. However, this is not proven by the verse they quote. The verse is a command to the Muslims to not associate any partner with Allah in His houses, as was the case with the People of the Book. Al-Tabari stated, “‘And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): so invoke not,’ O people, ‘anyone along with Allah,’ do not associate anything with Him. Instead, verify His oneness and make your worship purely for

¹ Cf., al-Nawawi, *Raudhah al-Taalibeen*, vol. 1, p. 345.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and al-Tirmidhi. Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 3, p. 142.

Him.”¹ Qataadah said, “When the Jews and Christians would go to their churches and synagogues, they would associate partners with Allah. So Allah ordered His prophet to worship Allah alone as one.”²

The issue is not one related to naming. In fact, whenever a mosque is founded and made an endowment, it is called a mosque. If, in the mosque, someone other than Allah is invoked or some of the worshippers call upon a deceased person and so on, this does not make the mosque then built upon associating partners with Allah, thereby losing its name “mosque.” Instead, the sin of associating partners with Allah falls only upon the one who does it. [As Allah says,]

﴿ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ﴾

“Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burden” (*Faatir* 18). If the simple existence of calling upon other than Allah in a mosque would remove the name of mosque from that building, then such occurs even in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Therein, many Muslims commit acts and make statements of *shirk*. Therefore, the point is not the incorrect practices that take place therein. The point is whether the mosque was founded upon *shirk* or not. If a mosque were built upon the grave of a “saint” or prophet, then the prayer said therein is not valid. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

“Allah cursed the Jews and Christians for they took the graves of their prophets as mosques [places of worship].”³

The second condition: The attributes that Allah mentions in a number of verses for those who maintain and visit His houses are not a condition for calling the mosque a mosque. It is not related to the naming of the place. It is related to the people themselves who attend the place. The verses are a testimony on their behalf. Ibn Katheer said concerning the words, “The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day,” “Allah is testifying to the faith of the one who visits and

¹ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 29, pp. 116-117.

² Recorded by al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 29, p. 117.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

attends the mosques.”¹ He mentions the hadith narrated by Abu Saeed al-Khudri in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ يَعْتَادُ الْمَسْجِدَ فَاشْهَدُوا لَهُ بِالْإِيمَانِ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
(إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ)

“If you see the man frequenting the mosque, testify for him that he has faith. Allah has said, ‘The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day.’”² If one of the people who frequent the mosque does not meet those characteristics, this does not justify prohibiting praying therein. This is because a human is not held accountable for the sins of another.

However, if the mosque were built by one of the deviant, misguided groups, such as the Qadianis³ and so on, then it is obligatory to remove them from the mosque while the name of the mosque remains and it is still sanctioned to pray therein.

The Third Condition: The *taqwa* (piety and fear of Allah) that they state as a condition in the founding of the mosque, in order for it to be called a mosque and be prayed in, is a matter of the heart which only Allah sees. People are only ordered to judge things according to what is apparent and seen. The secret matters are left only to Allah. The mere act of building a mosque to worship Allah therein should be founded on piety. However, Allah’s words, “There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety,” are in reference to the Mosque of Quba as opposed to the mosque of *dharaar* (established with evil intent by the hypocrites). That mosque was founded upon piety from its first day. It is not valid, though, to pronounce that all of the mosques are mosques of

¹ Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quraan al-Adheem*, vol. 2, p. 340.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan and al-Haakim. Al-Tirmidhi said it is a *hasan* hadith. The chain of the hadith is weak, as it contains Darraaj, who was Abu al-Samh, and he was weak in his hadith from Abu al-Haitham, and this is one of those narrations. Al-Uqaili declared this hadith weak, as al-Albaani quoted in *Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh* #723.

³ The Qadianis are a movement that began around 1900, as a plot from the English colonialists in the Indian subcontinent. Its propagator was a man named Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He claimed that he was the Messiah, then he claimed to be a prophet, and then he finally claimed divinity. Cf., *al-Mausooah al-Maisarah lil-Adyaan wa al-Madhaahib al-Muaarsirah*, p. 387.

dharaar. That is a statement without any evidence. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself did not know that the mosque of the hypocrites was a mosque of *dharaar* until Allah informed him of that. Furthermore, the mosque of *dharaar* combines together a number of the goals of its founders with evil intent, as stated in the verse:

(a) It is harmful to others, that is, it is harmful to the believers.

(b) It is formed on disbelief in Allah and competing against the people of Islam. The purpose of the hypocrites was to strengthen the people of hypocrisy.

(c) It was meant to divide the believers, as the hypocrites did not want all of them to attend the mosque of Quba. Hence, it made the community of the Muslims smaller. This leads to differences of opinion, the hearts not coming together and the lack of love between them.

(d) It was a type of lookout post for those fighting Allah and His Messenger. In other words, it was set up for the purpose of one who was fighting Allah and His Messenger.¹ That was Abu Amr al-Raahib² who met with the Romans and sought the support of their emperor against the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He wrote to the people who established the mosque of *dharaar* and told them to build that mosque so that he would be able to pray therein if he should return.³

All of these aspects—which allowed calling the mosque of the hypocrites the mosque of *dharaar* and permitted its destruction—are not present in today's mosques. In fact, the mosques of today that they consider mosques of *dharaar* were established by the noble generations, such as the Mosque of Namrah in Arafaat, the Mosque of Khaif in Mina, the mosques of Kufah, the mosques of Damascus and so on.

In conclusion, the claim that all of the mosques of the Muslims today are mosques of *dharaar* save for the four mosques is a claim that has no evidence for it.

¹ Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Fath al-Qadeer*, vol. 2, p. 403.

² He was Abu Aamir Amr ibn Saifi ibn Maalik ibn Umayyah, from the tribe of Aus of the Days of Jaahiliyyah of Madinah. He would mention the resurrection and the religion of the monotheists. When Islam appeared, he was envious of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and opposed him. He was at the Battle of Uhud on the side of the polytheists. He lived in Makkah. When Islam spread, he left to Europe where he died. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 79.

³ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 23, p. 11.

Halting the Friday Prayers

One of the outward, manifest signs of Islam, that is specific for the Muslims alone, is the Friday Prayer. The Friday Prayer is obligatory. The basis for its obligatory status is found in the Quran, Sunnah and consensus.

(1) In the Quran, Allah says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ﴾

“O believers, when the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business” (*al-Jumua* 9). Ibn Qudaamah¹ stated, “The command is to go and a command implies obligation. The ‘going’ cannot be obligatory unless it is going to something also obligatory. Furthermore, business dealings are forbidden so that they do not preoccupy one from going. If it were not obligatory, why are business dealings prohibited due to it?”²

(2) In the Sunnah, there are the following hadith:

(a) Taariq ibn Shihaab³ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

الْجُمُعَةُ حَقٌّ وَاجِبٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ إِلَّا أَرْبَعَةً عَبْدٌ مَمْلُوكٌ
أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ أَوْ صَبِيٌّ أَوْ مَرِيضٌ

¹ He was Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Qudaamah al-Jamaaeeli, a jurist from among the greatest of the Hanbalis. He was born in 541 A.H. and traveled seeking knowledge to Baghdad and elsewhere. He authored a number of beneficial works, including *al-Mughni* and *Raudhah al-Naadhir*. He died in 620 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 22, p. 165; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 67.

² *Al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 158.

³ He was Abu Abdillah Taariq ibn Shihaab ibn Abd Shams al-Ahmasi, a warrior. He lived during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and fought during the times of Abu Bakr and Umar. He lived in Kufah and narrated some hadith from the Companions. He died in 83 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 486; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 5, p. 3; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 217.

“The Friday [Prayer] is a duty and obligation upon every Muslim in a community except four: a slave, a woman, a child [non-adult] or one who is ill.”¹

(b) Hafsa² narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

رَوَّاحُ الْجُمُعَةِ وَاجِبٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُحْتَلِمٍ

“Going to the Friday Prayer is obligatory upon every adult [male].”³

(c) Abu Hurairah and ibn Umar narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَيَنْتَهِيَنَّ أَقْوَامٌ عَنْ وُدْعِهِمُ الْجُمُعَاتِ أَوْ لَيَخْتِمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَيَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

“People had better stop not coming to the Friday Prayers or Allah will certainly seal their hearts and they will definitely be from among the heedless.”⁴

(c) Abu al-Jad al-Dhamri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ تَرَكَ ثَلَاثَ جُمُعٍ تَهَاوَنًا بِهَا طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood. Its chain is broken as Taariq never heard any hadith directly from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as Abu Dawood noted. However, this is not a defect that affects the validity of the hadith [since it is assumed that he heard it from another Companion and all the Companions are trustworthy *a priori*]. Therefore, it was graded *sahih* by a number of scholars, including al-Haakim—and al-Dhahabi agreed with him—and al-Nawawi. Cf., *Nasb al-Raayah*, vol. 2, p. 199. For a detailed discussion, see al-Albaani, *Irwaa al-Ghaleel*, vol. 3, p. 50.

² She was the Mother of the Believers Hafsa bint Umar ibn al-Khattaab, a noble and pious Companion. She was born in Makkah. She was married to Khunais ibn Hadhaafah al-Sahmi. When Islam came, she embraced Islam and migrated. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died while she was still married to him and she thereafter remained in Madinah after his death. She died in 45 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 197; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, pp. 264-265.

³ Recorded by al-Nasaa'ee. Abu Dawood has a hadith with similar wording. [Al-Albaani has declared it *sahih* in *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 1, p. 660.—JZ]

⁴ Recorded by Muslim, al-Nasaa'ee, ibn Maajah, al-Daarimi and Ahmad.

“Whoever leaves three Friday Prayers, being lackadaisical, Allah will put a seal over his heart.”¹

(3) As for the consensus, a number of scholars have recorded a consensus on this point.² In fact, the obligation of the Friday Prayer is something known by necessity to be part of the religion.

Shukri Mustafa's group has a stance toward the Friday Prayer that no one had before—except for the Raafidhah (Shiah). They were of the opinion that the Friday Prayers should be halted until Allah establishes them [that is, their *jamaah*] on the earth. They said: The obligation of the Friday Prayer has some conditions to it. If these conditions are met, the Friday Prayer is held. Otherwise, we stop performing it until its conditions are met. They state that being established in the land is a condition for the performance of the Friday Prayer. They say that there is no Friday Prayer for those who are weak and oppressed [without power and control].³ They provide the following evidence for their view:

(1) Ibn Abbaas said, “When the Friday Prayer was made obligatory, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not able to perform it in Makkah due to his position with respect to the polytheists. He wrote to Musaab ibn Umair⁴ in Madinah and told him that when the Jews gather together [before] their Sabbath, wait until the sun passes the meridian, and get closer to Allah by performing two *rakats*, preceded by a speech.”⁵ Shukri Mustafa claims that this hadith is authentic. He said, “The words, ‘due to his position with respect to the polytheists,’ refers to the general weakness of the Muslim leader. [This is the understood meaning] because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could have gathered the Muslims in the house of al-

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa'ee, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, al-Haakim, Malik, ibn Hibbaan, al-Daarimi and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi said that this hadith is *hasan*. [Al-Albaani has declared it *sahih* in *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 2, p. 1058.—JZ]

² These include ibn Qudaamah, *al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 158; ibn al-Arabi, *Sharh al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 288.

³ Cf., Rajab Madkooor, *al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, pp. 199-200.

⁴ He was Musaab ibn Umair ibn Haashim al-Qurashi, a Companion and a brave from the earliest Muslims. He embraced Islam in Makkah and kept his conversion secret. When his family found out about it, they imprisoned him. He then emigrated to Abbyssinia. Then he returned to Makkah and emigrated to Madinah. He was a teacher for Muslims before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated to Madinah. He participated at Badr and became a martyr at Uhud. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 145; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 248.

⁵ They attribute this report to the *Tabaqaat* of ibn Saad but I did not find it there. This hadith shall be discussed later.

Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam.¹ Therefore, it is not correct to understand those words to refer to the [mere physical] possibility of performing the prayer itself.”²

(2) Kaab ibn Maalik³ said, “May Allah have mercy on Asad ibn Zuraarah⁴ as he was the first to lead us in the Friday Prayer in Hazm al-Nabeet [outside of Madinah] in the plain belonging to the Tribe of Bayaadhah⁵ in Naqee, called the Naqee [billabong] of al-Khadhamaat.”⁶ They argue that this was only done in the absence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In addition, it is not confirmed that he ever prayed the Friday Prayer in Makkah. We can conclude from that that being established in the land [and having political authority] is a condition for the Friday Prayer.⁷

¹ He was Abu Abdillah al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam Abd Manaf ibn Asad, a Companion of great nobility. He was one of the earliest Muslims. His house in Makkah was called, “the house of Islam.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would call people to Islam in his house. He participated in all of the battles and died in 55 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 1, p. 40; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 288.

² Quoted from Rajab Madkoo, *Al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, p. 200.

³ He was Kaab ibn Maalik ibn Amr ibn al-Qain, a Companion who participated at Badr. He was from the people of Madinah and a poet. He participated in all of the battles. Eighty hadith are narrated on his authority. He died in 50 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 8, p. 304; *al-Alaam*, vol. 5, p. 228.

⁴ He was Abu Umaamah Asad ibn Zuraarah ibn Uddas ibn Maalik al-Najaari al-Ansaari al-Khazraji, a Companion who embraced Islam very early. He witnessed both pledges of allegiance at Uqbah and he was one of the appointed leaders. He died before the Battle of Badr and was buried in al-Baqee cemetery. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 1, p. 199; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 1, p. 51; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 300.

⁵ The Tribe of Bayaadhah descended from Bayaadhah ibn Aamir ibn Zuraiq ibn Abd ibn Haarithah, one of the main tribes of the Khazraj from Azd. Cf., Umar Kahaalah, *Mujam Qabaail al-Arab*, vol. 1, p. 112.

⁶ Recorded by Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah, al-Haakim, al-Baihaqi, who said that its chain is *hasan sahih*, and ibn Hishaam in *al-Seerah*. Ibn Hajar declared this hadith *hasan* in *Talkhees al-Habeer* (vol. 3, p. 68). Cf., al-Albaani, *Irwaa al-Ghaleel*, vol. 3, p. 67; al-Arnaaoot, footnotes to *Zaad al-Maad*, vol. 1, p. 373.

⁷ Cf., Rajab Mukhtaar Madkoo, *Al-Takfeer wa al-Hijrah Wajhan li-Wajh*, p. 200.

Critique and Refutation:

First, as for the hadith that they ascribe to the *Tabaqaat* of ibn Saad¹, I could not find it in the *Tabaqaat* although I did a detailed search.² However, there are two passages in the *Tabaqaat* that point to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performing the Friday Prayer in Madinah before he arrived there. These two passages are:

(1) Al-Zuhri stated, "The camel of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stopped at the place of the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)... Asad ibn Zuraarah's house was there and he would pray with his companions there. They used to gather together on Fridays there before the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came [to Madinah]."³

(2) Al-Nawaar Umm Zaid ibn Thaabit⁴ narrated that she saw Asad ibn Zuraarah before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Madinah leading the people in the five daily prayers. He would perform the Friday Prayer with them in a mosque he built on the pen of Sahl and Suhail⁵, the two sons of Raafi ibn Abi Amr ibn Aaidh ibn Thalabah ibn Ghanam ibn Maalik al-Najaar. She added, "It is as if I am now seeing the Prophet (peace and

¹ He was Muhammad ibn Saad al-Zuhri, a historian. He was born in Basrah and lived and died in Baghdad. He was a companion of and scribe for the historian al-Waaqidi. He also narrated from him. His most famous book is *al-Tabaqaat*. He died in 230 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 5, p. 182; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 9, p. 182; *al-Alaam*, vol. 6, p. 136.

² [In the *Tabaqaat* (vol. 3, p. 118), there is the story of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) writing to Musab ibn Umair and telling him to lead the first Friday Prayer in Madinah. However, it does not specifically state that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could not perform it in Makkah due to his position vis-à-vis the polytheists, as the reported quoted above specifically states from ibn Abbaas. Allah knows best.—JZ]

³ Recorded by ibn Saad in his *Tabaqaat* (vol. 1, p. 239).

⁴ She was al-Nawaar bint Maalik ibn Sarmah from the tribe of al-Najaar. She was a Companion and she narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 13, p. 155.

⁵ Sahl and Suhail were the owners of the [sheep or camel] pen. There is a difference of opinion as to whether they were the sons of Amr or of Raafi ibn Abi Amr. For that difference of opinion, see ibn Hajr, *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 278. According to what ibn Saad mentioned here, Suhail was Suhail ibn Raafi. Ibn Ishaq mentioned him among those who attended Badr and Uhud. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 285. Sahl was also a Companion who attended Uhud. He died during the caliphate of Umar. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 274.

blessings of Allah be upon him) as he came and prayed in that mosque and they built it into his mosque of today.”¹

Regardless of what the case may be with respect to the authenticity of the hadith from *al-Tabaqaat*, there is a difference of opinion over the history of when the Friday Prayer was made an obligation. There are two views among the scholars:

The first opinion is that it was made obligatory [while the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was still] in Makkah. This is the view of Abu Haamid al-Ghazaali, ibn Hajar, al-Haitami, al-Khateeb al-Shirbeeni², al-Shaukaani, al-Suyooti³ and others.⁴ Al-Shaukaani wrote, “The Friday Prayer was made obligatory upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while he was in Makkah before the emigration.”⁵ Al-Suyooti counts among those verses of the Quran whose revelation came after their ruling being implemented the verse concerning the Friday Prayer. He stated, “It was revealed in Madinah while the Friday Prayer was made obligatory in Makkah.”⁶

This opinion has a number of proofs, including:

(1) The just mentioned hadith of Kaab ibn Maalik.

(2) Ibn Abbas said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was given permission to perform the Friday Prayer before he migrated. However, he was not able to perform it in Makkah. He wrote to Musaab ibn Umair, saying, ‘To proceed: Wait for the day that the Jews read the Psalms aloud and gather together your women and children. When the day is halfway through, at midday from the day of Friday, get closer to Allah by two *rakats*.’ He

¹ Recorded by ibn Saad, *Tabaqaat*, vol. 3, p. 609.

² He was Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Shirbeeni, a Shafi’ee jurist and Quranic commentator. He was from Egypt. He authored a number of books, including *al-Siraaj al-Muneer* and *al-Iqnaa fi Hill Alfaadh Abi Shujaa*. He died in 977 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 302.

³ He was Jalaal al-Deen Abdul Rahmaan ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muhammad al-Suyooti. He was an Imam, preserver of knowledge, historian and man of letters. He was encyclopedic in his knowledge and wrote numerous books, about a thousand in number, including both small and large works. He grew up as an orphan in Cairo and studied there. When he turned forty, he isolated himself from the people and wrote most of his works. He died in 911 A.H. Cf., *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 302.

⁴ Cf., ibn Hajar al-Haitami, *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaq bi-Sharh al-Minhaaj*, vol. 2, p. 405; al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 3, p. 262; ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 2, p. 354; Khaleel Ahmad al-Sahaarnfoori, *Badhil al-Majhood*, vol. 6, p. 47; al-Suyooti, *al-Itqaan*, vol. 1, p. 49; Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Ahkaam al-Jumuaah wa Makaanaatuhu*, p. 33.

⁵ Al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar*, vol. 3, p. 262.

⁶ Al-Suyooti, *al-Itqaan fi Uloom al-Quraan*, vol. 1, p. 49.

was the first one to perform the Friday Prayer until the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Madinah. He made the Friday Prayer after high noon and that became public.”¹

(3) Al-Zuhri said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Mussab ibn Umair to the people of Madinah to read the Quran for them. He sought the Messenger of Allah’s permission to gather them for the Friday Prayer and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed him. At that time, he was not the one in authority but he had gone to teach the people of Madinah.”²

(4) Ibn Seereen said, “The people of Madinah made the Friday Prayer before the coming of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and before it was revealed. They were the ones who named it *al-jumuah*. The Ansaar said, ‘The Jews have a day in a week in which they gather together. The Christians have the same. Shall we not select a day so that we may gather together, remember Allah and thank Him therein.’ Or they said something to that effect. They said, ‘Saturday is for the Jews and Sunday is for the Christians. So we shall make it the day of *Uroobah* [Friday]. They used to call Fridays *Uroobah*. They gathered at Asad ibn Zuraarah’s and he led them in prayer that day and reminded them [of Allah]. They called it *jumuah* because they gathered together on that day. Asad ibn Zuraarah slaughtered a lamb for them and they ate lunch and dinner from that one lamb. That was because they were small in number. Then Allah revealed [verses] concerning it afterwards.”³

¹ This hadith has been attributed by a number of scholars, including Ibn Hajar in *Fath* (vol. 2, p. 356) and *Talkhees al-Habeer* (vol. 2, p. 60) and al-Bahooti in *Kishaaf al-Qinaa* (vol. 2, p. 32) and others, to al-Daaraqutni. However, after searching, I did not find it therein. Then I found al-Albaani saying (*Irwaa*, vol. 3, p. 68), “I did not see it in *Sunan al-Daaraqutni*. Apparently, it is in one of his other books.” He also said, “Its chain is *hasan* if the people after al-Mughirah are sound.” Its chain is as follows, as stated in *Talkhees al-Habeer* (vol. 2, p. 60), “Al-Daaraqutni narrated it from the chain of al-Mugheerah ibn Abdul Rahmaan on the authority of Malik on the authority of al-Zuhri on the authority of Ubaidullah on the authority of Ibn Abbaas who said...”

² Recorded by Abdul Razaq in *al-Musannaf* (vol. 3, p. 160). Al-Zuhri also narrated from Abu Bakr ibn Abdul Rahman ibn al-Haarith ibn Hishaam on the authority of Abu Masood al-Ansaari a similar hadith that was recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Ausat*. Ibn Hajar said in *Talkhees al-Habeer* (vol. 2, p. 60), “In its chain is Saalih ibn Abi al-Akhdhar and he is weak.” Cf., al-Albaani, *Irwaa al-Ghaleel*, vol. 3, p. 68.

³ Recorded by Abdul Razaq in *al-Musannaf* (vol. 3, p. 60). Ibn Hajar (*Fath*, vol. 3, p. 255) stated, “Although it is *mursal* [missing the name of the Companion in the chain] it has supporting evidence with a *hasan* chain.”

The second opinion is that it was made obligatory [while the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was already] in Madinah. This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars. Ibn Hajar said, "The majority say that it was made obligatory in Madinah."¹ They prove this by quoting Allah's words,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ﴾

"O believers, when the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business" (*al-Jumu'ah* 9). About this opinion, Ibn Hajar stated, "It is the necessary conclusion of what was stated before that it was made obligatory by this quoted verse and it is a Madinan [verse]."²

The proponents of the first view refute the use of this verse as evidence here. In *Laami al-Daraari*, the author states, "You are well aware that using this verse as a premise to prove the obligation [of the Friday Prayer] is problematic. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered Madinah on a Friday and he prayed it [that is, the Friday Prayer] the day that he entered, in the mosque of the Tribe of Saalim."³ The verse was revealed a long time after that as the call to prayer was not something sanctioned [at that time]. There is no dispute on this point."⁴

He was referring to the previously mentioned hadith of Kaab ibn Maalik and the ninth verse of *soorah al-Jumu'ah*. Note: Here there seems to be a problem. Some of the hadith state that Musaab ibn Umair led them in the Friday Prayer while others mention Asad ibn Zuraarah. The scholars have reconciled these differing hadith. Al-Baihaqi said, "It is possible that Musaab led them in the Friday Prayer with the support of Asad ibn Zuraarah, so Kaab ascribed it to him." (Quoted from al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaami al-Quraan*, vol. 18, p. 98. Ibn Hajar said in *Talkhees al-Habeer* (vol. 2, p. 60), "This hadith and the first are reconciled by saying that Asad was the one in charge while Musaab was the Imam." Al-Bahooti said something similar (*Kishaaf al-Qinaa*, vol. 1, p. 21). Al-Albaani said in *Irwaa al-Ghaleel* (vol. 3, p. 69), "It is possible to say that Musaab was the first to perform the Friday Prayer in Madinah itself while Asad was the first to perform the Friday Prayer in [the land of] the Tribe of Biyaadhah."

¹ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 2, p. 354.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 2, p. 354.

³ They were the clan of Saalim ibn Auf ibn Amr ibn al-Khazraj, a grandfather in the Days of Ignorance. Cf., al-Samaani, *al-Ansaab*, vol. 7, p. 12; *Jamharah Ansaab al-Arab*, p. 353; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 72.

⁴ Shaikh Abu Masood Rasheed al-Kankoohi, vol. 4, p. 2.

The strongest opinion in my view is that the Friday Prayer was performed in the Makkan era as a permissible act and not as an obligatory act. Afterwards, the verse was revealed during the Madinan era affirming its obligation. Imam al-Hujjaawi¹ stated, "The Shaikh [meaning ibn Taimiyyah²] said, 'It was performed in Makkah³ in a permissible fashion and then made obligatory in Madinah.'"⁴

This is indicated by the following:

(1) It is confirmed from Urwah ibn al-Zubair⁵ that after preceding to Madinah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stayed some ten odd nights or so among the tribe of Amr ibn Auf.⁶ Anas ibn Maalik gave even more precise information. He said, "When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) preceded to Madinah, he stayed at the outskirts of Madinah in a district called the neighborhood of the Tribe of Amr ibn Auf. He stayed with them fourteen nights."⁷ During that time period, Fridays occurred. However, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not order them to perform the Friday Prayer until he left the Tribe of Amr ibn Auf heading towards Madinah. He performed the Friday Prayer along the journey when the time for prayer came in the mosque of the Tribe of Saalim ibn Auf in the valley of Raanoona. That was the first Friday Prayer that he prayed in Madinah.⁸ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah

¹ He was Moosa ibn Ahmad ibn Moosa al-Hujjaawi al-Maqdisi al-Saalihi, a Hanbali jurist from the people of Damascus. He was the *mufti* of the Hanbalis. He produced a number of works, the most famous being *Zaad al-Mustaqna* and *al-Iqnaa*. He died in 968 A.H. Cf., ibn al-Imaad, *Shadharaat al-Dhahab*, vol. 8, p. 327; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 320.

² See the introduction to *al-Kishaaf*, vol. 1, p. 20.

³ What he means by, "in Makkah," is during the Makkan era. This is because it is agreed upon that it was not performed in the land of Makkah.

⁴ *Al-Iqnaa*, with its commentary *Kishaaf al-Qinaa*, vol. 2, p. 21.

⁵ He was Abu Abdullah Urwah ibn al-Zubair ibn al-Awwaam, one of "the seven jurists of Madinah." He was a noble, pious scholar. He moved to Basrah, then to Egypt and then returned to Madinah. He died in 93 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 421; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 226.

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁷ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁸ For the details of the Prophet's journey to Madinah and his first Friday Prayer there, see ibn Hishaam, *al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 121; ibn al-Qayyim, *Zaad al-Maad*, vol. 3, p. 59; ibn Katheer, *al-Bidaayah wa al-Nihaayah*, vol. 3, p. 198; Abdul Razaq al-Munaawi, *Sharh Alfiiyyah al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 81; Ali ibn Burhaan al-Deen al-Halabi, *al-Seerah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 242; al-Saalihi, *Subul al-Hudaa wa al-Rashaad*, vol. 3, p. 387; Muhammad Saadiq Arjoon, *Muhammad Rasoolullaah*, vol. 2, p. 581; Abu Turaab al-Dhaahiri, *Al-Athar al-Muqtafi fi Hijrah al-Mustafa*, pp. 42ff.

be upon him) remaining during that period is proof that their performing it beforehand was in a permissible fashion and not an obligatory fashion.

(2) This is further indicated by the fact that the Companions performing the Friday Prayer was a result of their own request upon seeing the Jews gathering on Saturday and the Christians on Sunday. This point was made clear in the *mursal* report from ibn Seereen presented above.¹

(3) The hadith [mentioned above] from ibn Abbaas recorded by al-Daaraqutni also gives the feeling that its ruling was something permissible. It states, "It was made permissible for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to pray the Friday Prayer before he migrated." Permission indicates that its meaning was that of permissibility and not of obligation. This is also indicated by the narration from al-Zuhri that states that Musaab ibn Umair sought permission from the Prophet to gather the people and he gave him that permission. This makes clear the refutation of those who today say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not pray it in Makkah because it was an era of oppression and weakness. In fact, it was not obligatory during that time and it would have been difficult to gather all of the people together, which is the case for the Friday Prayer.²

Secondly, if it is said that the Friday Prayer was made obligatory in Makkah, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not perform it because he did not have the ability to have a public assembly in which there is a speech, like that of the Friday Prayer. Yes, it is true that the Companions would gather in the house of Al-Arqam ibn Abi Arqam. However, they would gather while they were hiding from the Quraish. The Muslim community in Makkah was very small in number and was being oppressed with the greatest forms of harm. Furthermore, they were not given the permission to defend themselves. Instead, they were ordered to forgive, pardon, bear with patience, overlook the ignorance of the fools and forgive their evils while responding with kindness and refraining from force. [As Allah said about that era,]

¹ Cf., Khaleel Ahmad al-Sahaarnfoori, *Badhil al-Majhood*, vol. 6, p. 50.

² I must state here that those scholars who say that the Friday Prayer was made obligatory in Madinah do not deny that it was performed during the Makkan era. In fact, ibn Hajar's words give the impression that he was of the opinion that it was done in a permissible fashion, although he did not explicitly state that. Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 2, p. 356.

﴿ كَفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ﴾

“Refrain your hands [from fighting] and establish the prayers...”
(*al-Nisaa* 77).¹

Thirdly, making an analogy between contemporary Muslim society and the *jaahili* society, equating between the two on the basis of *kufr*, *shirk* and *jaahiliyyah*, is a false analogy as it is built upon the premise of declaring today’s Muslims disbelievers. The statement that the Friday Prayers are to be halted is built upon this. What is built upon a false premise is also, therefore, false.

Fourthly, equating their leader Shukri Mustafa with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), based on the claim that both of them are the leaders of the Muslims, is a false equalization. This is because their leader was not the leader of the Muslims. In fact, he was the leader of a group only. Even if we argue that the Imam being weak and oppressed implies that the Friday Prayer is to be dropped, that is not to be applied to what they applied it to as their leader was not the leader of the Muslims.

Fifthly, being in a state of weakness and oppression does not mean that the leader is not established in the earth, as they claim. Instead, it means that the disbelievers have control and power over the necks of the Muslims. If that is the case, such oppression and weakness does not exist in contemporary times as the mosques have their doors wide open and the Friday Prayers are established in all of the mosques of the Muslims.

Allah knows best.

Extremism with Respect to Isolating Themselves and

Separating Themselves from the Society

The principles of the Shareeah and its general evidences indicate the existence of a society and its importance, as well as the prohibition of separating from it. However, some texts have been quoted that indicate the excellence of *uzlah* (seclusion, isolation and “retirement” from society) and the excellence of the recluse. For that reason, the scholars differ as to which is preferred: *uzlah* or

¹ Cf., ibn Hajar al-Haitami, *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj*, vol. 2, p. 405; Ali ibn Burhaan al-Deen al-Halabi, *al-Seerah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 243; Muhammad Saadiq Arjoon, *Muhammad Rasoolullaah*, vol. 2, p. 578.

mixing with the society. In the following, I shall present their opinions and evidence.

The Statements of the Scholars

The scholars of the early generations differed on this issue, holding two opinions.

The first opinion is that mixing with the people and being part of society is preferred. Those of this opinion included Saeed ibn al-Musayyab,¹ al-Shabi, Hishaam ibn Urwah,² ibn Uyainah, ibn al-Mubaarak, al-Shafi'ee, Ahmad and others.

The second opinion is that seclusion is preferred. This was the opinion of Sufyaan al-Thauri, Ibraheem ibn al-Adham³ and a number of the early scholars.⁴

The Evidence

The Evidence for the First Opinion:

Those who say that mixing with society is preferred present a number of proofs. They may be summarized as follows:

¹ He was Saeed ibn al-Musayyab ibn Hazn al-Makhzoomi al-Qurashi, one of the scholars and leaders of the Followers. He was one of "the seven jurists of Madinah." He was extremely pious and ascetic. He lived through trading and did not take a stipend. He is called "the narrator of Umar" with respect to Umar's rulings. He died in Madinah in 94 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 4, p. 217; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 84; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 102.

² He was Hishaam ibn Urwah ibn al-Zubair ibn al-Awwaam al-Qurashi, from the scholars of Madinah. He was born and lived in Madinah. He visited Kufah and studied with their scholars. He also entered Baghdad with a delegation to al-Mansoor. He died in 146 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 6, p. 34; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 11, p. 48; *al-Alaam*, vol. 8, p. 87.

³ He was Abu Ishaq Ibraheem ibn Adham ibn Mansoor al-Taimi, well known for renouncing the unneeded bounties of this world. He learned the religion and then traveled to Baghdad. He also roamed throughout Iraq, al-Shaam and al-Hijaaz. He died in Soofinin, on the border with Europe, in 161 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 7, p. 387; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 102; *al-Alaam*, vol. 1, p. 31.

⁴ For a presentation of their views on this issue, see ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, pp. 42-43; al-Ghazaali, *Ihya' Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, pp. 223-224; al-Qastalaani, *Irshaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 187; al-Kirmaani, *Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, vol. 23, p. 17.

(1) There is evidence prohibiting division and encouraging unity and coming together. These proofs include the following:

(a) Allah has said [for example],

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا ﴾

“Be not like those who are divided among themselves and fall into disputations” (*ali-Imraan* 105).

(b) Allah has also said,

﴿ وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ ﴾

“And (moreover) He has brought their hearts together” (*al-Anfaal* 63).

(c) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

الْمُؤْمِنُ مَأَلَفٌ وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي مَنْ لَا يَأْلَفُ وَلَا يُؤْلَفُ

“The believer is friendly and congenial. There is no good in one who is neither friendly nor treated in a friendly manner.”¹

(2) There are also the hadith prohibiting the dividing from and leaving the community. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شَيْبٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

“Whoever separates from the community the amount of a handspan has verily taken off the tie of Islam from his neck.”²

(3) There are also the hadith that prohibit boycotting a Muslim brother for more than three days. For example, Anas ibn Maalik

¹ Recorded by Ahmad and al-Khateeb in *Tareekh Baghdad*. Al-Haithami mentions it in two places in *Majma* (vol. 8, p. 87 and vol. 10, p. 273). In the first instance, he says, “Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tabaraani. In its chain is MUSAAB ibn Thaabit. Ibn Hibbaan and others declared him trustworthy. Ibn Maeen and others declared him weak. The rest of the narrators are trustworthy.” In the latter location, he said, “Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tabaraani. Its chain is good.” It has supporting evidence recorded by Ahmad and narrated from Abu Hurairah. Al-Haithami (*Majma*, vol. 8, p. 87 and vol. 10, p. 273) said, “Recorded by Ahmad and al-Bazaar. Its narrators are narrators found in the *Sahih*.” Al-Albaani presented the hadith in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah* (vol. 1, p. 711) and studied the hadith, its chains and supporting evidence, in a detailed, beneficial study.

² Discussed earlier. Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Haakim and ibn Hibbaan from the hadith of al-Haarith al-Ashari. It is *sahih* or *hasan*.

narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا يَحِلُّ لِرَجُلٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثِ لَيَالٍ

“It is not allowed for a man to boycott his brother for more than three nights.”¹

(4) There are also hadith that indicate the prohibition of seclusion. For example, it is narrated that Abu Hurairah said, “We were in a military expedition with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We passed by a ravine containing a spring of sweet water. One of the people said, ‘If only we would seclude ourselves from the people in this ravine. But I will not do that until I mention it to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him,

لَا تَفْعَلْ فَإِنَّ مَقَامَ أَحَدِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ فِي بَيْتِهِ
سَبْعِينَ عَامًا أَلَّا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمُ الْجَنَّةَ اغْزَوْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ قَاتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ نَاقَةٍ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ

‘Don’t do it. The place of any of you in the path of Allah is better than his prayer in his house for seventy years. Do you not love to have Allah forgive you and enter you into Paradise? Fight for the sake of Allah. Whoever fights in the path of Allah the [amount of time it takes] to milk a sheep once, Paradise is obligatory for him.’”²

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood. Abu Dawood also has the additional wording, “Whoever boycotts for more than three days and dies shall enter the Fire.” Al-Nawawi said about this narration, “Its chain meets the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim.”

² Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, al-Baihaqi and by al-Haakim who said that it is *sahih* according to Muslim’s criteria and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan*. [Ahmad Shaakir states that its chain is *hasan*. Al-Albaani has also declared it *hasan*. Cf., Ahmad Shaakir, footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 9, p. 303; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 2, p. 129.—JZ]

The Evidence for the Second Opinion:

(1) There is evidence indicating that some of the prophets and righteous people secluded themselves from their people. For example:

(a) While quoting Abraham, Allah says,

﴿ وَأَعْتَزِلُّكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي ﴾

“And I will turn away from you (all) and from those whom you invoke besides Allah: I will call [only] on my Lord” (*Maryam* 48). In the following verse, Allah then says,

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَعْتَزَلْتَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ

إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴾

“When he had turned away from them and from those whom they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each one of them We made a prophet” (*Maryam* 49).

(b) Allah also says while quoting Moses,

﴿ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَزِلُونِ ﴾

“If you believe me not, at least keep yourselves away from me” (*al-Dukhaan* 21).

(c) Allah also says while quoting the Companions of the Cave,

﴿ وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأْوَدُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ

يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ ﴾

“When you turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah, betake yourselves to the Cave: your Lord will shower His mercies on you” (*al-Kahf* 16).

(d) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) isolated himself from the Quraish when they were harming him and being rough with him. He entered the ravine [of the clan of Abu

Taalib¹] and ordered his Companions to avoid them and to migrate to Abbysinia.²

(2) It is also recorded that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered some of his Companions to seclude themselves. For example, once the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked, "What is the salvation?" He replied,

أَمْلِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ وَلَيْسَعَكَ بَيْتَكَ وَأَبَاكَ عَلَى خَطِيئَتِكَ

"Have control over your tongue, let your house suffice you [so that you do not have to leave it] and cry over your sins."³

(3) It is also recorded that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) praised those who secluded themselves. For example, Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that a man said, "O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is the best of people?" He answered,

مُؤْمِنٌ مُجَاهِدٌ بِمَالِهِ وَنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

"A believer who strives with his wealth and his soul for the sake of Allah." He then said, "Then who?" He replied,

ثُمَّ رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شِعْبٍ مِنَ الشَّعَابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهُ عَزًّا وَجَلًّا وَيَدَّعُ
النَّاسَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ

¹ [This occurred before the emigration to Madinah when the other tribes of Makkah banded together to boycott the clans of Haashim and Abdul Muttalib. The Muslims were forced to seek refuge in the ravine of Abi Taalib. They faced harsh circumstances, including scarcity of food, during that time. May Allah reward them with the greatest of rewards.—JZ]

² Cf., al-Khataabi, *al-Uzlah*, p. 13; al-Ghazaali, *Ihya' Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 224.

³ Recorded by ibn al-Mubaarak in *al-Zuhd*, Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Nuaim in *Hilyah*, al-Tabaraani and ibn Abi Aasim in *al-Zuhd*. Al-Tirmidhi graded it *hasan* due to it coming via another chain from Uqbah ibn Amr. Otherwise, in the chain of this hadith is Ubaidullah ibn Zakhar and Ali ibn Yazeed al-Alhaani, and they are both weak. [Al-Albaani has declared this hadith *sahih* while al-Arnaaoot, et al., declared it *hasan*. Cf., Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 2, p. 287; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1999), vol. 28, p. 570.—JZ]

“Then a man in seclusion in one of the mountain passes who fears Allah; he worships his Lord and saves the people from his evil.”¹

Discussion and Determination of the Strongest Opinion:

Studying the evidences of the two sides makes it clear that neither side can dispense with the other. The most that they indicate is that the ruling concerning seclusion is that it is a relative matter depending on the conditions, people and time involved. After presenting a number of texts that seem contradictory, some stressing the obligation of ordering good and eradicating evil while others stressing the taking care of oneself and leaving the affairs of others, al-Tahaawi stated, “All of them affirm one another. It is possible for situations to be different and non-compatible. Then, every such era will have its own ruling, which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained and taught for his Nation. He taught them what they should do in each era. People must, then, adhere to and follow that. They must place every circumstance in the manner that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered them to do so. And they cannot leave what he said for any other view. We ask Allah alone for guidance and help.”²

Imam al-Ghazaali stated, “Be aware of giving one general ruling for seclusion or mixing with people by saying that one of them is absolutely better. It depends on the case. If one were to simply say no or yes, it would be a purely arbitrary statement. Since the issue is one of different cases, then the different cases must be given [in the response].”³ On this question, al-Kirmaani said, “The correct position is that the response differs depending on the people involved and depending on the time. Allah knows best.”⁴

This differentiating between the cases is supported by the hadith [mentioned above] from Abu Saeed al-Khudri: A man said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is the best of people?” He answered,

مُؤْمِنٌ مُّجَاهِدٌ بِمَالِهِ وَنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan saheeh*. [It should be noted that the exact wording above is from Ahmad.—JZ]

² Al-Tahaawi, *Mushkil al-Athaar*, vol. 2, p. 70.

³ Al-Ghazaali, *Ihya' Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 232.

⁴ Al-Kirmaani, *Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, vol. 23, p. 17; also see ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 43; al-Qastalaani, *Irshaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 187.

“A believer who strives with his wealth and his soul for the sake of Allah.” He then said, “Then who?” He replied,

ثُمَّ رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شِعْبٍ مِنَ الشَّعَابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهُ عَزًّا وَجَلًّا وَيَدْعُو
النَّاسَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ

“Then a man in seclusion in one of the mountain passes who fears Allah; he worships his Lord and saves the people from his evil.”¹ This differentiation is felt since the ruling differs depending on the circumstances. In some people’s cases, jihad will be better for them. In other people’s cases, seclusion will be better for them. The hadith alludes to the preference of seclusion sometimes being due to the presence of evil. For someone who has some evil in him and harms others due to it, it would be preferable for him to seclude himself from others.²

In order to clarify the reason why this is the strongest conclusion, I shall present a summary of the evidence of the two groups with an explanation of the weakness of the argument of what they follow.

The proofs for the first opinion may be critiqued as follows:

(a) The proofs indicating the prohibition of division and the encouragement to be united and together:

This proof that they use to demonstrate the superiority of mixing with the people is weak. This is because the meaning of the forbidden division is with respect to opinions in the religion and the sources of the Shareeah. That is blameworthy under all circumstances. As for the coming together and unity, it is in reference to the removal of hatred from the hearts. The one who refuses to mix with the people is not necessarily considered unfriendly or anti-social. Indeed, he could have the best behavior when it comes to being social and friendly. However, he avoids mixing with the people in order to tend to himself and try to protect himself from the others.³

(b) Next comes the proof related to separating from the community. The proof that is used is simply not relevant here. This

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan saheeh*. [It should be noted that the exact wording above is from Ahmad.—JZ]

² Cf., al-Ghazaali, *Ihya Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 226. This will be explained in more detail in the coming pages.

³ Cf., al-Ghazaali, *Ihya Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 223.

is because the community that is meant in those hadith is the community whose voices have agreed upon a specific leader and they have made the pledge to him. Revolting against him is a type of rebellion. Hence, these hadith are not touching upon the question of secluding and isolating oneself.¹

(c) They also quote the hadith prohibiting boycotting a Muslim. Using these hadith as evidence is also weak. They refer to being upset with people and being obstinate towards them by not speaking to them or greeting them. Not associating with people without being upset with them does not fall under this prohibition.²

(d) There are some hadith quoted indicating the prohibition of secluding from the people, including the hadith mentioned earlier from Abu Hurairah. However, these hadith are about leaving the jihad while it is greatly obligatory and binding. Similarly, they are related to the case where the seclusion would be a cause for failing to perform some obligatory deeds.³

The proofs for the second group may also be critiqued as follows:

(a) They provide evidence showing that some prophets and righteous people secluded themselves and left their peoples. Using these incidents as proofs is also weak. This was because the seclusion was only from the disbelievers and their objects of worship. Abraham only secluded himself from his people when he despaired of them responding to him. He left them and everything they worshipped besides Allah. The same was true for Moses. The Companions of the Cave also left the disbelievers. Similarly, our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never secluded himself from the Muslims nor from those disbelievers whom he thought may embrace Islam. In fact, it was the disbelievers themselves who avoided him.

(b) They also quote the command from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to one of his Companions to leave the people. That incident is a specific occasion and no general rule can be devised from it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying [in the previously mentioned hadith],

وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَقْرَبُوا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولُوا
لَكُمْ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةِ
رَبِّكُمْ سَلَامًا

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 224.

“Let your house suffice you [so that you do not have to leave it],” is understood to have been known by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), via some means of prophetic light, about the questioner that him remaining in his house would be more appropriate and safer for him than mixing with the people. This is indicated by the fact that he never ordered all of his Companions to seclude themselves.¹

(c) They also quote the Prophet’s praise for seclusion. Again, there is no evidence in that for their view. In the hadith of Abu Saeed al-Khudri, it shows that the virtuous person is the one who secludes himself from the people in order to protect them from his evil. In other words, there is an indication that it is the person who was going into seclusion who had evil in him, by his evil nature he harmed the people when he mixed with them.²

Now that it has been clarified that no one ruling can be given for *uzlah* or seclusion from the people, it is a must to explain some of the instances in which it is sanctioned or permissible in the light of Shareeah texts to seclude oneself. These are:

First: During Times of Trials and Tribulations (*Fitnah*)

The meaning of “trials and tribulations” (*fitnah*³) here is, as Ibn Hajar explained, what springs forth when there is such a dispute over the authority and power that one cannot distinguish who is in the right from who is in the wrong.⁴ The truth becomes confusing and one cannot tell with whom it resides. Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan said, “The *fitnah* is when the truth and falsehood become confusing to you. Then you do not know which one you are following.”⁵ Seclusion and isolation during times of *fitnah* is something sanctioned and ordered by the Shareeah. Al-Khataabi stated, “Seclusion (*uzlah*) during *fitnah* is the sunnah of the Prophets, the protection of the devoted servants and the path of the wise and elect. I do not know of anyone who discounts it as a valid excuse, especially during this era in which goodness is little and they are many reasons to cry. In Allah alone do we seek refuge from its evil and misfortunes.”⁶

¹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 226.

² Ibid.

³ [*Fitnah* can be used to refer to all types of commotion, civil strife, unjustified bloodshed, trials and tribulations.—JZ]

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 31; for more details, see vol. 13, p. 47.

⁵ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shaibah. Cf., Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 49.

⁶ Al-Khataabi, *al-Uzlah*, p. 13.

The hadith indicating the permissibility of seclusion during days of *fitnah* include:

(1) Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرَ مَالِ الْمُسْلِمِ غَنَمٌ يَتَّبَعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ
الْقَطْرِ يَفِرُّ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ

“A time will soon come when the best property of a Muslim is goats that he will take to the top of a mountain and the places of rain so as to flee from the afflictions (*fitnahs*).”¹ In two places in his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari recorded this hadith, once under the chapter title, “Chapter: It is part of the religion to flee from trials and afflictions.” On the second occurrence, he stated, “Chapter: *Al-Taarrub* (التعرب or living in the desert and becoming like a Bedouin) during times of affliction and trials.” Al-Aini² stated, “That is, this chapter explains *al-taarrub* which means living out in the desert and exerting oneself to become a Bedouin. It is also said that *al-taarrub* means to live with the Bedouins. It is when an emigrant leaves the land he emigrated to and lives in the desert. He returns, after his emigration, to being a Bedouin. That was forbidden, unless the Lawgiver allowed it. Restricting it to the times of *fitnah* is an indication that what is mentioned is allowed only during times of *fitnah*.”³ Ibn Hajar said, “If the *fitnah* occurs, seclusion is given preference due to what usually springs from the *fitnah* in terms of falling into what is forbidden.”⁴

(2) Abdullah ibn Masood narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and Malik.

² He was Badr al-Deen Mahmood ibn Ahmad al-Aini, one of the leading Hanafi scholars of hadith. He held the post of judge for the Hanafis and was in charge of the prison in Cairo. He left those posts and dedicated himself to teaching and writing. He produced a number of beneficial works, including *Umdah al-Qaari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* and *al-Binaayah Sharh al-Hidaayah*. Cf., *Al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 163.

³ *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 24, p. 197. Also see ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 41; al-Qastalaani, *Irshaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 186.

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 43.

تَكُونُ فِتْنَةٌ النَّائِمُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمُضْطَجِعِ وَالْمُضْطَجِعُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ
 الْقَاعِدِ وَالْقَاعِدُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْقَائِمِ وَالْقَائِمُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَاشِي
 وَالْمَاشِي خَيْرٌ مِنَ الرَّكَّابِ وَالرَّكَّابُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمُجْرِي قَتَلَهَا كُلُّهَا فِي
 النَّارِ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَتَى ذَلِكَ قَالَ ذَلِكَ أَيَّامَ الْهَرَجِ قُلْتُ
 وَمَتَى أَيَّامَ الْهَرَجِ قَالَ حِينَ لَا يَأْمَنُ الرَّجُلُ جَلِيسَهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ فَمَا
 تَأْمُرُنِي إِنْ أَدْرَكْتُ ذَلِكَ قَالَ أَكْفِفْ نَفْسَكَ وَيَدَكَ وَادْخُلْ دَارَكَ

“There will be a *finah*. The one who is sleeping will be better off than the one who is lying down. And the one who is lying down will be better off than the one who is sitting. And the one who is sitting will be better off than the one who is standing. And the one who is standing will be better off than the one who is walking. The one who is walking will be better off than the one who is riding. The one who is riding will be better off than the one who is making his horse run. All their slain will be in the Hell-fire.” I [Abdullah ibn Masood] said, “When will that be?” He said, “That will be in the days of *harj* [turmoil, commotion, killings].” I said, “And when are the days of *harj*?” He said, “When a person cannot trust his associates.” “What do you order me to do if I encounter that time?” He said, “Restrain yourself and your hand and enter your house.”¹

On this issue, there are a large number of hadith. A number of the Companions put them into practice by secluding themselves from the civil strife during their times. They include Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Saad ibn Abi Waqaas, Abdullah ibn Umar, Usaamah ibn Zaid, Abu Bakrah Nufai ibn al-Haarith, Abu Masood al-Ansaari,

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood, Ahmad, al-Haakim, Abdul Razzaaq and ibn Abi Shaibah. Al-Haakim said that its chain is *sahih* although neither al-Bukhari nor Muslim recorded it. Al-Dhahabi agreed with him. In its chain is al-Qasim ibn Ghazwaan who is not considered trustworthy save by ibn Hibbaan. The rest of its narrators are trustworthy. [The chain of this hadith definitely has some weakness to it, as Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., and al-Albaani have noted. However, there are authentic hadith that have very similar meanings, such as the hadith recorded by Abu Dawood from Abu Bakrah just preceding the above hadith from ibn Masood. Allah knows best. Cf., Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad*, vol. 7, pp. 316-318; al-Albaani, *Dhaeef Sunan Abi Dawood*, p. 421; Al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, p. 802.—JZ]

Salamah ibn al-Akwa¹, Abu Moosa al-Ashari and others.² As a basis for their actions, they relied upon what had been narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning secluding oneself during times of *fitnah*.

Second: When Evil Predominates and the Times Have Become Bad

In a number of hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that in times when evil predominates and the times have become bad, it is sanctioned for a person to seclude himself from the people and reject that which he does not know. These hadith include the following:

(1) Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas narrated,

شَبَّكَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَصَابِعَهُ وَقَالَ كَيْفَ أَنْتَ يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ
بْنِ عَمْرٍو إِذَا بَقِيَتْ فِي حُنَّالَةٍ قَدْ مَرَجَتْ عَهْدُهُمْ وَأَمَانَاتُهُمْ وَكَانُوا
هَكَذَا وَشَبَّكَ بَيْنَ أَصَابِعِهِ قَالَ فَكَيْفَ أَصْنَعُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ تَأْخُذُ مَا
تَعْرِفُ وَتَدَعُ مَا تَتَكْرَهُ وَتَقْبَلُ عَلَى خَاصَّتِكَ وَتَدَعُهُمْ وَعَوَامَهُمْ

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) intertwined his fingers and said, ‘How will you be, O Abdullah ibn Amr, when you are left with the worst dregs [of mankind]? Their pacts and trusts will be confused and impaired, and they will be like that,’ and he intertwined his fingers. ‘What shall I do, O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?’ He said, ‘Take what you know of and leave what you disapprove of. Take care of those closest to you and leave them and their masses.’”³ In another narration, it states,

¹ He was Salamah ibn Umar ibn al-Akwa, a Companion. He took part in seven of the Prophet’s battles, the first being after al-Hudabiyyah. He made the famous oath of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the tree. He took part in the battles in North Africa during the time of Uthmaan. 77 hadith have been narrated on his authority. He died in 74 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 326; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 150; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 113.

² Cf., *Sahih al-Bukhari* with its commentary *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, pp. 26, 40, 41 and 47; al-Khataabi, *al-Uzlah*, pp. 13-15; ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa wa al-Nihal*, vol. 5, p. 19.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari without its complete chain. Ibraheem al-Harbi mentioned its complete chain in *Ghareeb al-Hadeeth*, as ibn Hajar noted in

الزَّمْ بَيْتَكَ وَامْلِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ وَخُذْ بِمَا تَعْرِفُ وَدَعْ مَا تُتَكْرَهُ وَعَلَيْكَ
بِأَمْرِ خَاصَّةٍ نَفْسِكَ وَدَعْ عَنكَ أَمْرَ الْعَامَّةِ

“Keep to your house, control your tongue, accept what you know [and approve] of, leave what you disapprove of, take care of your own affairs and leave the matter of the masses.”¹

(2) Abu Umayyah al-Shabaani² said, “I asked Abu Thalabah al-Khushani³ about what he thought about the verse, ‘Guard your own souls’ (*al-Maaidah* 105). He said, ‘By Allah, I asked about it one who knows. I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He said,

بَلِ انْتَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنَاهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ حَتَّى إِذَا رَأَيْتَ شَخْصًا
مُطَاعًا وَهَوَى مُتَّبَعًا وَدُنْيَا مُؤَثَّرَةً وَإِعْجَابَ كُلِّ ذِي رَأْيٍ بِرَأْيِهِ فَعَلَيْكَ
بِخَاصَّةِ نَفْسِكَ وَدَعْ الْعَوَامَّ فَإِنَّ مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ أَيَّامًا الصَّبْرُ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ
الْقَبْضِ عَلَى الْجَمْرِ لِلْعَامِلِ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ خَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا يَعْمَلُونَ مِثْلَ
عَمَلِكُمْ

Fath (vol. 1, p. 468 and p. 566. [Abdul Qadir] al-Arnaaoot stated that the hadith is *sahih* (*Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 10, p. 5). [Actually, al-Bukhari only quoted the first portion of his hadith. Al-Humaidi in *al-Jama bain al-Saheehain* is the one who reproduced the entire hadith and ibn al-Atheer in *Jaami al-Usool* ascribed it all to al-Bukhari. Allah knows best.—JZ]

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood, Ahmad and ibn Maajah. [Abdul Qadir] al-Arnaaoot said that it is a *sahih* hadith. Cf., *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 10, p. 6.

² He was Abu Umayyah Yahmid—and some say Abdullah—ibn Akhaamir. He narrated from a number of the Companions. Ibn Hibbaan mentions him in his work on trustworthy narrators. Abu Haatim said, “He was alive in the Days of Ignorance.” Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 15.

³ He was Abu Thalabah al-Khushani, a well-known Companion. He was known by his *kunya* [Abu Thalabah] and there is a great difference of opinion concerning his name, with sixteen different opinions. The most famous opinion is that his name was Jurham. There is also a difference of opinion concerning his father’s name. His grandfather was not named. He narrated a number of hadith from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He died in 75 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 11, p. 55; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 2, p. 267; *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 12, p. 49.

“In fact, you order the good and eradicate evil until you see greed submitted to, desires followed, this world influencing [the people] and everyone with an opinion is pleased with his opinion. Then, take care of your self and leave the masses. Verily, there are days coming to you which are like clinging onto a burning coal. For the worker in those [days] is the reward like fifty men who do the deeds like your deeds.”¹

In these two and other hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that when these conditions occur, wherein evil has spread among the people, then it is sanctioned for a Muslim to seclude himself from the people. That occurs when he feels that there is no benefit in him ordering the good and eradicating the evil. However, the exact determination of that time differs depending on the one viewing it. The correct view, and Allah knows best, is that the point of these hadith is not the mere existence of these attributes. Instead, it is the dominance or strength of these attributes. While commenting on the hadith of Abu Hurairah wherein the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يَتَقَارَبُ الزَّمَانُ وَيَنْقُصُ الْعَمَلُ وَيَلْقَى الشُّحُّ وَتَظْهَرُ الْفِتْنُ وَيَكْتَثُرُ
الْهَرَجُ

“Time will pass rapidly, [good] deeds will decrease, greed will be cast [into the hearts of people], trials and afflictions will appear and there will be much killing,”² ibn Bataal noted, “All of these signs that this hadith mentions we have seen with our eyes.”³ Ibn Hajar added, “What is apparent is that the one who witnessed them saw what seemed to him to be a lot. But the meaning of the hadith is that these things take root and intensify such that there are countered very little. The same is true for the indication in the expression that the knowledge will be taken and only ignorant people will be left. This does not deny the existence of a group of scholars; however, at that time they will be drowning in the deluge of those [ignorant people].”⁴ That will not be the general case

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah. Al-Tirmidhi said it is *hasan ghareeb*. It has supporting evidence that strengthens it. Cf., *Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 7, p. 282.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

³ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 16.

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 16.

except at the end of time. In commenting on the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

يَذْهَبُ الصَّالِحُونَ الْأَوَّلُ فَالْأَوَّلُ وَيَبْقَى حُقْفَالَةَ كَحُقْفَالَةِ الشَّعِيرِ أَوْ التَّمْرِ
لَا يُبَالِيهِمُ اللَّهُ بَالَةً

“The pious people will depart one after another and there will remain useless people like the useless husk of barley seeds or bad dates. Allah will not care the least for them,”¹ ibn Hajar stated, “This shows the possibility of all of the good people leaving at the end of time until only the people of evil are left. This is used as a proof for the possibility of the earth being free of any scholar such that only purely ignorant people are left.”² However, one could find those attributes in one particular land or place at a specific period of time. At that time, it would be sanctioned to seclude oneself. But the judgment concerning a time [as to whether or not it meets those conditions] is not left to the masses. The principle of giving rulings is that they are for the people of knowledge of the law and an understanding of contemporary situations. Otherwise, if the matter were left open for anyone to judge, the rulings would differ and that would lead to widespread evil.

Third: When a Person’s Own Evil is Predominant

This was made clear by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the hadith of Abu Saeed al-Khudri: A man said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is the best of people?” He answered,

مُؤْمِنٌ مُجَاهِدٌ بِمَالِهِ وَنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“A believer who strives with his wealth and his soul for the sake of Allah.” He then said, “Then who?” He replied,

ثُمَّ رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شِعْبٍ مِنَ الشَّعَابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهُ عَزًّا وَجَلًّا وَيَدْعُ
النَّاسَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari and Ahmad.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 11, p. 252.

“Then a man in seclusion in one of the mountain passes who fears Allah; he worships his Lord and saves the people from his evil.”¹ Imam al-Ghazaali stated, “This is an indication of the evil of his nature such that he harms the people by mixing with them.”² In his case, it is sanctioned that he secludes himself from the people so that he does not harm them and accumulate sins by his harming them.

How Is the Seclusion to Be Done

In the previously mentioned hadith that explain the concept of seclusion, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also explained how that seclusion is to be done. In the light of those texts, one may explain the seclusion in the following:

(1) Al-Taarrub (التعرّب):

The meaning of *al-taarrub* is to live in the desert and live with the Bedouins. That was forbidden but then the Lawgiver allowed it but on the condition of there being *fitnah*.³ For that reason, the scholars would place their chapters containing hadith about seclusion in the book on *fitnah*, even when such hadith did not specifically mention *fitnah*.⁴ Ibn Hajar was of the opinion that all of the hadith mentioning *uzlah* (seclusion) in an unrestricted manner are, in fact, restricted by the existence of *fitnah*. Such is the view of the majority.⁵ The hadith permitting *al-taarrub* during times of *fitnah* include the following:

(a) Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرَ مَالِ الْمُسْلِمِ غَنَمٌ يَتَّبَعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ
الْقَطْرِ يَقْرُ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan saheeh*. [It should be noted that the exact wording above is from Ahmad.—JZ]

² Al-Ghazaali, *Ihya Uloom al-Deen*, vol. 2, p. 226.

³ Cf., *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 24, p. 197; al-Qastalaani, *Ishaad al-Saari*, vol. 10, p. 186; ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 41.

⁴ Cf., *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, the chapters on *fitnah*, vol. 9, p. 66; *Sunan Abi Dawood*, chapters on *fitnah*, vol. 17, p. 272.

⁵ Cf., *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, pp. 6-7.

“A time will soon come when the best property of a Muslim is goats that he will take to the top of a mountain and the places of rain so as to flee from the afflictions (*fitnahs*).”¹

(b) Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that a man said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is the best of people?” He answered,

مُؤْمِنٌ مُجَاهِدٌ بِمَالِهِ وَنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“A believer who strives with his wealth and his soul for the sake of Allah.” He then said, “Then who?” He replied,

ثُمَّ رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شِعْبٍ مِنَ الشَّعَابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهُ عَزًّا وَجَلًّا وَيَدْعُ
النَّاسَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ

“Then a man in seclusion in one of the mountain passes who fears Allah; he worships his Lord and saves the people from his evil.”²

The mention of mountain passes or valleys does not mean those specific places. Instead, the hadith mean any place that is free of people. [In other words,] any place that is distant from the people falls under the meaning of these hadith.³

(2) Remaining Alone in One's House:

This directive is found in a number of hadith, including:

(a) Abdullah ibn Masood narrated the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned the *fitnah*, saying,

ذَلِكَ أَيَّامُ الْهَرَجِ قُلْتُ وَمَتَى أَيَّامُ الْهَرَجِ قَالَ حِينَ لَا يَأْمَنُ الرَّجُلُ
جَلِيسَهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ فَمَا تَأْمُرُنِي إِنْ أُدْرِكْتُ ذَلِكَ قَالَ أَكْفُفْ نَفْسَكَ وَيَدَكَ
وَادْخُلْ دَارَكَ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa`ee and Malik.

² Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan saheeh*. [It should be noted that the exact wording above is from Ahmad.—JZ]

³ See what ibn Hajar has quoted from ibn Abdul Barr, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 7. For evidence on the permissibility of *al-taarrub* during times of *fitnah*, see the hadith of Salamah ibn al-Akwa that is recorded by al-Bukhari, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 13, p. 40.

“That will be in the days of *harj* [turmoil, commotion, killings].” I said, “And when are the days of *harj*?” He said, “When a person cannot trust his associates.” “What do you order me to do if I encounter that time?” He said, “Restrain yourself and your hand and enter your house.”¹

(b) Abu Moosa al-Ashari narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ فِتْنًا كَقَطْعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ يُصْبِحُ الرَّجُلُ فِيهَا مُؤْمِنًا
وَيُمْسِي كَافِرًا الْقَاعِدُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْقَائِمِ وَالْقَائِمُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَاشِي
وَالْمَاشِي فِيهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ السَّاعِي قَالُوا فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا قَالَ كُونُوا أَحْلَاسَ
بُيُوتِكُمْ

“Before you are days of *fitnahs* like the harshness of a dark night. A person therein is a believer in the morning and a disbeliever by evening. The one sitting is better than the one standing. The one standing is better than the one walking. And the one walking is better than the one running.” They said, “What do you order us to do?” He said, “Stick to your homes and remain there.”²

(c) When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked, “What is the salvation?” he replied,

أَمْلِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ وَلْيَسَعَكَ بَيْتُكَ وَأَبِكْ عَلَى خَطِيئَتِكَ

“Have control over your tongue, let your house suffice you [so that you do not have to leave it] and cry over your sins.”³

In other hadith, there are commands to tend to one’s own affairs and avoid the matters of the masses. In the hadith of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas, it states,

¹ [Discussed earlier. The chain of this hadith definitely has some weakness to it, as Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., and al-Albaani have noted. However, there are authentic hadith that have very similar meanings.—JZ]

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood. [Al-Albaani has declared this hadith *sahih*. Cf., al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, p. 803.—JZ]

³ [Discussed earlier. Al-Albaani has declared this hadith *sahih* while al-Arnaaoot, et al., declared it *hasan*. Cf., Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 2, p. 287; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1999), vol. 28, p. 570.—JZ]

الزَّمَّ بَيْتَكَ وَأَمْلِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ وَخُذْ بِمَا تَعْرِفُ وَدَعْ مَا تَتَكْرَهُ وَعَلَيْكَ
بِأَمْرِ خَاصَّةٍ نَفْسِكَ وَدَعْ عَنْكَ أَمْرَ الْعَامَّةِ

“Keep to your house, control your tongue, accept what you know [and approve] of, leave what you disapprove of, take care of your own affairs and leave the matter of the masses.”¹ In the hadith of Abu Thalabah al-Khushani, it states,

فَعَلَيْكَ بِخَاصَّةِ نَفْسِكَ وَدَعْ أَمْرَ الْعَوَامِّ

“Then, take care of your self and leave the matter of masses.”²

Imam al-Khataabi stated about the meaning of *al-khaasah*, “It is everything that is particular to him and of immediate concern to him. For every individual ‘what is particular to him’ includes himself, those he supports of his family and the affairs of his relatives, supporting them and working for their benefit. He forbade him from getting involved in the affair of the masses, from getting engaged in their interactions, taking any position of authority over them or meddling into any of their matters, for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Leave from you the affair of the masses.’”³

What is apparent to me is that tending to oneself is at different levels depending on the degree of seclusion. This impression is given by the wording of the different hadith:

(a) “Tend to the people closest to you and leave from you the matter of the masses.”

(b) “Tend to the matters that are of particular concern to you and leave the matter of the masses.”

(c) “Tend to yourself and leave the matter of the masses.”

These are three different levels of one tending to the particular matters. These three differ depending on the circumstances:

First, the person clings to those closest to him, those who stand upon the same things he stands upon of matters of worship, propagating the religion, ordering good and eradicating evil.

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood, Ahmad and ibn Maajah. [Abdul Qadir] al-Arnaaoot said that it is a *sahih* hadith. Cf., *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 10, p. 6.

² Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah. Al-Tirmidhi said it is *hasan ghareeb*. It has supporting evidence that strengthens it. Cf., *Majma al-Zawaaid*, vol. 7, p. 282.

³ Al-Khattaabi, *al-Uzlah*, p. 15.

Second, the person clings to those who are of immediate concern to him, meaning his children and family. He takes care of their affairs, watches over them, raises them and orders them to do what is good.

Third, the person tends to himself alone. This is the furthest level. This is when the era has become rotten and evil is great. They will not accept the one who orders good or eradicates evil.

(3) Seclusion by One's Heart:

This is where the person physically mixes with the people but his heart is upon something different from what they are upon. Ali ibn Abi Taalib stated, "Mix with the people by your tongues and body and separate from them with your hearts and deeds. Every individual shall have what he earned. And on the Day of Resurrection, he will be with the one he loves."¹

A form of seclusion by one's heart is what is known as *al-tuqiyyah* [a precautionary means of deception], which is mentioned as an exception after the command not to take the disbelievers as friends and patrons instead of the believers. Allah says,

﴿لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ
تُقْلَةً وَيُحَذِّرْكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَكُمْ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

"Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers. If any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah: except by way of precaution, that you may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself; for the final goal is to Allah" (*ali-Imraan* 28).

However, two aspects must be met for [the acceptable] *tuqiyyah*:

First, it must be done with respect to the disbelievers and not with anyone else. Al-Tabari stated, "The *tuqiyyah* that is mentioned by Allah in this verse is a *tuqiyyah* from the disbelievers and not with anyone else."²

Second, it must be justified on the basis of the power and enmity of the disbelievers. In explaining the sanctioned *tuqiyyah*, al-Tabari noted, "It must be while you are [living] under their

¹ Recorded by al-Daarimi.

² Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 3, p. 229.

authority and you fear for yourself. Then you openly show them loyalty while hiding your enmity. You do not encourage them to do what they are following of disbelief nor do you help them against any Muslim.”¹

The sanctioned *tuqiyyah* is a form of concealing one’s religion. However, concealing one’s religion is one thing while openly displaying a false religion is something else. To openly display a false religion and utter its words is not allowed by the Shareeah except under extreme coercion, [as Allah says,]

﴿ مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ ﴾

﴿ بِالْإِيمَانِ ﴾

“Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in faith” (*al-Nahl* 106). This must be done in accord with the Shareeah conditions that must be met.²

This demonstrates that the well-known *tuqiyyah* of the Raafidhah [Shiah] and similar other deviant groups, concerning which it is narrated that Jafar al-Sadiq³ said, “*Al-tuqiyyah* is my religion and the religion of my father. There is no faith for the one who has no *tuqiyyah*,”⁴ is not from the sanctioned *tuqiyyah*. Indeed, it is nothing but a form of hypocrisy and lying. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, “*Tuqiyyah* is not for me to lie or say with my tongue what is not in my heart. That is hypocrisy. Instead, I do what I am able to do, as in the *Sahih* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), ‘Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart. And that is the slightest [effect of] faith.’

¹ Al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 3, p. 228. Also see ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 6, p. 424.

² Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 12, p. 311.

³ He was Abu Abdillah Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Baaqir ibn Ali Zain al-Abideen, from the Hashimi clan of the Quraish tribe. He was nicknamed al-Sadiq. He was one of the twelve Imams and one of the most prominent of the Followers. He has a prominent place with respect to knowledge and he was brave and outspoken for the truth. He learned from a number of scholars, including Malik and Abu Haneefah. He died in 148 A.H. Cf., Abu Nuaim, *Hilyah al-Auliyya*, vol. 3, p. 192; *al-Alaam*, vol. 2, p. 126.

⁴ This was recorded by al-Kulaini in *al-Kaafi* (vol. 2, p. 219) on the authority of Jafar al-Sadiq. *Al-Kaafi* is a Shiah book of reports that has no weight or merit to it.

The believer, if he is among the disbelievers and evilfolk, is not required to struggle by his hand if he is not capable. However, if he can, he does so with his tongue. Otherwise, he does so with his heart. All along though, he does not lie nor does he say what is not in his heart. He either displays his religion or he conceals it. At the same time, though, he is not always in accord with their religion. In fact, his goal is to be like the believer from the people of the Pharaoh [who concealed his faith]... He was not in agreement with them concerning all of their religion while he was not lying nor saying with his tongue what was not in his heart. Instead, he simply concealed his faith.”¹

Shareeah Parameters That Must Be Satisfied for Seclusion:

The seclusion whose legality has been affirmed in what preceded has certain parameters and conditions that must be satisfied. To the best of my knowledge, they are as follows:

(1) The seclusion cannot be a cause for failing to perform any Shareeah obligation. This condition is indicated in the following hadith:

(a) The hadith of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As [indicates this] wherein the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

خُذْ بِمَا تَعْرِفُ وَدَعْ مَا تُنْكِرُ

“Accept what you know [and approve] of, leave what you do not know [and disapprove of].”² Here, he divided the matters of the religion into two categories. He said, “Accept what you know,” this is an allusion to something that they both [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and who he was speaking to] know about. What they knew that he was referring to is the rights of the rulers and what is related to them of the matters of the faith, such as establishing the prayer behind them, giving the zakat and so on of their other rights. Then he said, “and leave what you do not know of,” and this is a reference to what occurred afterwards of *fitnahs* [that were unknown to them at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)].³ Hence, even while in seclusion

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaaj al-Sunnah*, vol. 6, p. 424.

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, Ahmad and ibn Maajah. [Abdul Qadir] al-Arnaaoot said that it is a *sahih* hadith. Cf., *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 10, p. 6.

³ Cf., al-Khattaabi, *al-Uzlah*, pp. 14-15.

and remaining in one's home, one still has to tend the obligatory deeds and cannot abandon them due to the seclusion.

(b) Abu Hurairah said, "We were in a military expedition with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We passed by a ravine containing a spring of sweet water. One of the people said, 'If only we would seclude ourselves from the people in this ravine. But I will not do that until I mention it to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).'

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him,

لَا تَفْعَلْ فَإِنَّ مَقَامَ أَحَدِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ فِي بَيْتِهِ
 سَبْعِينَ عَامًا أَوْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمُ الْجَنَّةَ اغْرَوْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ قَاتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَوْاقَ نَاقَةٍ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ

"Don't do it. The place of any of you in the path of Allah is better than his prayer in his house for seventy years. Do you not love to have Allah forgive you and enter you into Paradise? Fight for the sake of Allah. Whoever fights in the path of Allah the [amount of time it takes] to milk a sheep once, Paradise is obligatory for him."¹ In this hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited that Companion from secluding himself from the people and leaving the jihad. The seclusion is sanctioned only when one is not able to perform the jihad. Its ruling differs depending on the different circumstances of different times. If the era has become bad and there is no jihad, then seclusion is sanctioned.²

(c) In the hadith from Abu Saeed al-Khudri, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

ثُمَّ رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شُعْبٍ مِنَ الشُّعَابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَيَدْعُ
 النَّاسَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ

¹ [Discussed earlier. Ahmad Shaakir states that its chain is *hasan*. Al-Albaani has also declared it *hasan*. Cf., Ahmad Shaakir, footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 9, p. 303; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 2, p. 129.—JZ]

² Cf., ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 11, p. 232; Rasheed Ahmad al-Kankoohi, *al-Kawakub al-Duri ala Jami al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 233.

“Then a man in seclusion in one of the mountain passes who fears Allah; he worships his Lord and saves the people from his evil.”¹ This hadith makes it clear that he is fulfilling his obligations. However, his seclusion is only due to a specific reason.

(d) Abu al-Dardaa narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

مَا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ فِي قَرْيَةٍ وَلَا بَدْوٍ لَا تَقَامُ فِيهِمُ الصَّلَاةُ إِلَّا قَدِ اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَعَلَيْكَ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ الذَّنْبُ الْقَاصِيَةَ

“There are no three in a village or desert and they do not establish the prayer except that Satan has gotten mastery over them. Adhere to the congregational [prayer] for the wolf eats the straggling animal.”² This hadith warns about not establishing the prayer for a group that is in the village or the desert.

The Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) understood this. Although some of them avoided the *fitnah* and civil strife, they fulfilled the obligatory acts in the most complete and best manners. “Ibn Umar was the most stringent among the Companions in avoiding the *fitnah* and he warned the people the most about entering into it. He lived until the *fitnah* of ibn al-Zubair and he did not fight with them or defend them. However, he would attend the prayers with them. If he missed a prayer, he would perform it with al-Hajaaj. He would say, ‘If they call us to Allah, we respond to their call. If they call us to Satan, we leave them.’”³

The scholars who gave preference to seclusion pointed out that that what they meant by seclusion did not mean leaving the congregational prayers or the Friday Prayers and not fulfilling the rights of worship and other rights. This is not within any Muslim’s right to leave.⁴

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa’ee, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan saheeh*. [It should be noted that the exact wording above is from Ahmad.—JZ]

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Nasaa’ee, Ahmad and al-Haakim, who said that its chain is *sahih* although al-Bukhari and Muslim did not record it and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. Al-Nawawi declared it *sahih* in *al-Majmoo* (vol. 4, p. 183).

³ Al-Khattaabi, *al-Uzlah*, p. 21. He gives the chain for ibn Umar’s statement on p. 21.

⁴ Cf., al-Khattaabi, *al-Uzlah*, pp. 11-12.

(2) The cause for the seclusion must be a legally sanctioned cause. For example, one cannot seclude himself from the Muslims based on his own declaring of them to be disbelievers. Such would be the case only if the declaration of disbelief had met all of the conditions and parameters that were discussed earlier.

(3) The one who decides the situation and declares the legality of seclusion in a particular instance must possess both:

(a) A knowledge of the Shareeah evidences and their principles;

(b) An insight into the contemporary reality.

One who combines both of these aspects is able to estimate the need and clarify the ruling.

(4) Secluding oneself is not obligatory. Instead, it is something that the Shareeah allows during times of *fitnah* in which truth and falsehood become confused. However, it could reach the status of obligatory depending on the circumstances of the case. This is indicated by the hadith from ibn Umar in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

المُسْلِمُ إِذَا كَانَ مَخَالِطًا النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ أَذَاهُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِ
الَّذِي لَا يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ أَذَاهُمْ

“The Muslim who mixes with the people and bears patiently their harm is better than the Muslim who does not mix with the people and bear patiently their harm.”¹ This hadith proves that the one who is patient with the harm from the people while still mixing with them is better than the one who secludes himself due to being overcome by the harm of the people and not being able to bear it patiently. Therefore, it is not proper to force people to go into seclusion and to make that something obligatory upon them.²

In the light of the [aforementioned] texts, we may now explain the limit of extremism when it comes to secluding oneself. It is summarized in the following points:

(1) Secluding oneself from society without a Shareeah justification—as when some people seclude themselves after

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* and Ahmad. Ibn Hajar said that its chain is *hasan*. Cf., Shuaib al-Arnaaoot and al-Shaaweesh, footnotes to *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 13, p. 163.

² In presenting the evidences on this issue, I benefited from what Salmaan al-Audah wrote in his thesis, *Ghurbah al-Islam wa Ahkaamuhaa*.

declaring the others unbelievers although they have no Shareeah proof for that—is a type of extremism in the religion and is going beyond the limits set by Allah.

(2) Exaggerating the causes behind seclusion is also a form of extremism in the religion. This is, for example, when people seclude themselves from evildoers and sinners like one would seclude himself from the disbelievers or like the seclusion during the days of *fitnah*.

(3) Secluding oneself not in the manner described in the Shareeah or in a manner that contradicts the Law is a type of extremism in the religion. An example of that nature is the seclusion with the heart or what is called *tuqiyyah*.

(4) If the seclusion leads one to disregard the Shareeah obligations, it is then a type of extremism, like when one secludes himself from the people in their congregational and Friday Prayers.

(5) Making seclusion obligatory upon the people and affirming it as a general principle for all is also a form of extremism.

Upon studying the contemporary situation, we find that some of the contemporaries followed the principle of declaring others disbelievers without looking into its relevant Shareeah ramifications and results. When those who declared others as disbelievers were presented with that information and those ramifications, it was requested of them to clarify their stance on these matters, as these are natural results of the principle of declaring others disbelievers. At this point, those people differed and broke into two camps. Both of them agreed that they now had to seclude themselves and separate themselves [from the rest of society]. However, they differed concerning how that seclusion and separation was to be done. They fell into two groups:

(1) The first group opted for what they called an emotional/psychological separation.

(2) The second group opted for a complete separation.¹

In the following, I shall explain those two approaches:

First: The Emotional Separation

The meaning of “an emotional separation” is wherein they would remain next to the Muslims in their worship and social interactions while all along believing that those Muslims are disbelievers, but without making that belief known.²

¹ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, pp. 34-35.

² Ibid, p. 16.

They explain that by saying that we are in a period of oppression and weakness. It is, as they claim, a characteristic that applies to the Makkan period, wherein it was allowed to marry polytheistic women. They claim that this period is like that Makkan period, a period of weakness and oppression.¹

One of the proponents² of the principle of emotional separation stated, explaining the reasoning behind this view, "There is a necessity for the [Islamic] movement that requires the consideration of the feelings of the one among the populace who prays. Stating that he is a disbeliever would shock him [and we cannot do that at this stage]. Therefore, we apply the principle of an emotional separation."³

One can summarize some of the heretical ideas of the people of emotional seclusion in the following:

(1) One prays behind the Imam with the outward form while inwardly having the intention of praying individually. One of the proponents of this view stated, "We pray behind them on an outward level only. This is by each of us having the intention to pray by himself while behind the congregation. He follows the Imam in his outward actions and he stands and sits [with the Imam]. However, in his mind, he is not following him as he did not have the intention of praying behind him. We must separate from him and his congregation in our souls by an emotional/psychological separation."⁴

(2) It is permissible to lie and show something that contradicts their beliefs. They may continue with a marriage contract although they believe that those wives are disbelievers. They may also eat the meat slaughtered by those they believe to be disbelievers.⁵

(3) They avoided announcing a judgment of disbelief upon the people. They said, "What is important to us is not to declare a fiqh judgment upon the people. It is a must to avoid that at the present time in order not to incite the people against us. This is because they use as proof the statements of jurists which are not sound or they use them in wrong ways."⁶

¹ Ibid., p. 16. This view shall be refuted shortly.

² He was Shaikh Ali Abduh Ismaaeel, a graduate of Azhar. He recanted from this position after he was its leading advocate. Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, pp. 42 and 178.

³ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 35.

⁴ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 35.

⁵ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *Al-Hukum wa Qadhiyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 178.

⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

(4) Part of this separation was what they called “the movement according to the understanding.” The movement according to the understanding hypothesizes that every individual should be dealt with according to what he is prepared for. Hence, the disbelief of the masses is only explained to a select few.¹

In sum, the driving force behind the emotional separation approach is “to deal with a [member of] society on an outward level as if he were Muslim while separating from him in an internal [psychological] level. This is a necessity of the belief that he is a disbeliever and it is obligatory to oppose him and to bring him harm.”²

Second: The Complete Separation (or the Explicit One)

The second approach implied a complete separation from society. At the end of his book *al-Hijrah*, Maahir Baakri stated,

That is the *hijrah*. However, what is the state of the Muslims before it? What should they do in the period before the *hijrah*? During this period, the Muslims have important tasks that they shall work to fulfill. These include separating from the disbelievers to the best of one’s ability and according to whatever efforts they can perform in every matter.

In matters of worship, the Muslims will not attend the places of worship of the people of *Jaahiliyyah* in which they lie about Allah, conceal what Allah has revealed, call upon other gods with Allah, confuse the truth with falsehood and they falsely claim that they are the bearers of Islam. Similarly, one shall not pray with them even outside of those places of worship. The Muslims shall never follow any of the people of *Jaahiliyyah* in prayer, those who falsely claim that they are affiliated with Islam.

With respect to thought, the conceptions and thinking of the Muslims must not be derived from sources other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They isolate themselves in that way from the conceptions of the evil *jaahiliyyah* and false beliefs.

In behavior, they are completely different from the ways of the disbelievers of the people of *jaahiliyyah* with

¹ Ibid., p. 178.

² Ibid., p. 179.

respect to how they eat, drink, stand, sit, what they do when they are busy or when they are free, in their sleep or waking time, in their manners and behavior. In everything, the Muslims try, while they are still in the *jaahili* society, to differ from the polytheists to the maximum possible.¹

Shukri Mustafa emphasized that he and his group do not believe [simply] in an emotional separation. He stated, "We do not follow the view of what is called emotional separation and then a behavioral separation. We do not believe in those steps. In fact, we strongly reject it. We know of no time span between the two. What we believe in is the obligation to follow both an emotional and behavioral separation from the first day one has the ability and to strive in a way that is not harmful for our final goal and our final stage."²

In order to escape the mess they found themselves in due to their statement that the people are disbelievers and it is obligatory to separate from them and given that they did not have the ability to separate from the people and not live with them, they stated that it is obligatory to separate from the people in steps. Shukri Mustafa said, "Although we accept the obligation of separation and independence, we know that at this time we are still not separate nor independent... It is a must upon us to accept³ Allah's decree and our decree by remaining with the disbelievers, in their land or in the land with them, buying and selling with them, preaching and calling to them... In fact, we should be the best of them in character, the best in keeping the familial ties and the greatest of them in carrying responsibilities and bearing misfortunes."⁴ They support their position by a number of incidences from the Prophet's life, including his close relationship and ties to his Uncle Abu Taalib⁵ and the story of the young boy when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to Taif and other incidents.¹

¹ *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 97.

² Shukri Mustafa, *Kitaab al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 20.

³ [Here the original writing by Mustafa, as the author himself pointed out, seems to have a mistake to it. The above is an interpretation of what he must have meant. Allah knows best.—JZ]

⁴ *Kitaab al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 21.

⁵ He was Abd Manaf ibn Abdulmutalib ibn Haashim from the Quraish. He was the uncle of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the one who raised him and supported him. He was an eloquent and intelligent speaker. He had a business trade and would sometimes travel with his caravans. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Shukri said, "Although we believe in the obligation of distinguishing ourselves and separating from the disbelievers on some day, we do not permit heading toward that distinction before the decree that Allah decrees for us and the responsibilities that He has put upon our shoulders of conveying the message and advising [the people]." ² Shukri also stressed that their view of treating all the people in the best way—the disbelievers in their view—does not mean equating a Muslim with a disbeliever. He stated, "We believe in all of that and more with respect to dealing with the people while we are among them. However, we do not believe that that good dealing towards people means that there is some equality between the believer and the disbeliever in the final say." ³

Based on their view of an explicit separation, they also believe in:

(1) Remaining away from the mosques and not praying in them since, they claim, they are *jaahiliyyah* places of worship.

(2) Some of the people who believe in this explicit separation married off their mothers and sisters who were already married [to new husbands], without going through a process of divorce, because they claimed that their [old] husbands were disbelievers. ⁴

(3) Migration to the mountains and open plains. ⁵

Third: The Evidence for the Separation

The foundation for the view that it is obligatory to separate oneself from the societies of today is the belief that they are disbelieving and *jaahiliyyah* societies. Therefore, they then use as evidence what is mentioned in the Quran about the stories of the Prophets and their separating themselves from their people, such as the stories of Abraham and Moses and what is mentioned concerning the seclusion of the People of the Cave. They also use as evidence some hadith, such as the hadith of Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamaan in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

called him to Islam but he feared the ridicule of his people and he died in a state of *kufr* three years before the *hijrah*. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 15, p. 68; *al-Alaam*, vol. 4, p. 166.

¹ Cf., *al-Khilaafah*, vol. 3, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 26.

⁴ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 113.

⁵ This shall be discussed in more detail shortly.

فَاعْتَرِزْ تِلْكَ الْفِرْقَ كُلَّهَا

“Withdraw and remain away from all of those sects.”¹

Fourth: Discussion and Critique of Their Evidence

(1) The statement that the people are all disbelievers and that the society is completely *jaahili* is false [as was clarified earlier]. Hence, what was built upon it, that it is obligatory to leave the people and seclude oneself, is also false. This is because what is built upon a false premise is also false.

(2) Secluding oneself from the people has specific causes for it, as were explained earlier. Permitting the seclusion from society today because it is disbelieving is wrong. However, it may be permissible for some people to seclude themselves whenever mixing with the people becomes, in their particular cases, a cause for their religion to be harmed. This, though, is a relative matter and one cannot declare a general ruling for all of the people.

(3) The sanctioned seclusion has a certain form to it, as was explained earlier. However, the emotional/psychological separation is a type of esoteric separation. It is no more than the *tuqiyyah* that the Shiah call to. All of it is hypocrisy and lying.

(4) The permitting of the emotional separation on the basis of the claim that we are living in a weakened state or in the Makkan era is also a false argument. This shall be discussed in more detail later.

(5) Their corollary, based on their concept of emotional separation, that one prays in the mosques with the Imam with the intention of praying alone as an individual is also wrong. Indeed, such a prayer is void due to the following reasons:

(a) Such an act is a form of ridiculing the prayer and belittling its status.

(b) In reality, that person in prayer is neither praying as an individual or as a follower of the Imam. His following the Imam in the bows, prostrations and salutations excludes him from one who is praying the prayer individually. However, his intention of praying alone excludes him from one who is following that Imam. In the rules related to the prayer, there is no such thing as an intermediate position between praying behind an Imam in a congregation or praying individually by oneself.²

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 43.

(c) The person who is praying as an individual behind the Imam is actually following the Imam in some of the actions of the prayer while he believes that the Imam is a disbeliever. It is not allowed to obey a disbeliever in any Shareeah matter such as the prayer.

Most importantly, the prayer that is performed in that matter is done so based on the claim of disbelief for one whom they have not established any Shareeah proofs that he is a disbeliever.

(6) The disbelief [of apostasy] by a spouse under no circumstances allows one to live with her, as Allah has said,

﴿ وَلَا تُمْكُوا بِعَصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ ﴾

“Hold not the disbelieving women as wives” (*al-Mumtahinah* 10). Similarly, the disbelief of the one who slaughters an animal does not permit its consumption, save in the case of the People of the Book. There is nothing in the Shareeah that is evidence for an emotional separation that allows what Allah has forbidden.

(7) Marrying off one’s married mother or sister without a divorce due to their claim of the [old] husband being a disbeliever is indeed a grave crime. This is true because:

(a) This is based on their claim that the husband is a disbeliever but they did not establish the Shareeah proof against him.

(b) The ruling concerning apostasy and the nullity of a marriage contract is not left to individuals among the people. Instead, it is for the ruler and his representatives in the Shareeah court system. If this matter were left free and open, it would lead to great mischief and evil.

(c) Marriage in that fashion leads to evils, accusation of adultery, blood-ties being mixed and confusion in society.¹

(8) The statement that it is forbidden to pray in the mosques because they are *jaahiliyyah* places of worship is false, as was explained earlier.

(9) One of the telltale signs of the people of extremism and heresies is that their views are self-contradicting and therefore they often have to resort to exceptions. For example, those who declared the society a disbelieving society needed to resort to the [newly invented and exceptional] concept of an emotional separation or a separation in stages. They did that to flee from the mess that they found themselves in, as a necessary consequence of their

¹ Cf., al-Bahinsaari, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, pp. 113-115.

declaration of disbelief for the others is that the marriages would become null and void, the blood relations would be cut and so forth.

(10) The hadith of Hudhaifah,

فَاعْتَزِلْ بِئِكَ الْفِرَقَ كُلَّهَا

“Withdraw and remain away from all of those sects,”¹ is in reference to a time when the truth becomes unclear and one cannot discern it. Furthermore, that isolation that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) advised Hudhaifah with is not in the same manner that they [the extremists] advocate. That was also made clear earlier.

Extremism with Respect to *Hijrah* (Emigrating from) the Societies

The Meaning of *Hijrah* (هجرة)

The Arabic letters *ha*, *jeem* and *ra* form two sound roots. Ibn Faaris said, “One of them indicates ‘breaking apart, estrangement,’ while the other indicates ‘fortifying something, binding.’”²

From the first comes *hajr*, meaning the opposite of connecting, keeping ties, and [with the same meaning] *hijraan*.

When a people *haajir* a land for another land it means that they leave the first for the second³ [as in the English word, “emigrate”]. Ibn Hajar said, “To make *hijrah* to something means to move to it from something else.”⁴

While giving the Shareeah definition of *hijrah*, ibn Hajar stated, “It is to leave what Allah has forbidden. In Islam, it has come in two forms. The first is leaving from a land of fear to a land of safety and security, as in the two *hijrahs* to Abyssinia and the beginning of the *hijrah* from Makkah to Madinah. The second is from the land of *kufir* to the land of Islam. That was after the Prophet (peace and

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood.

² *Mujam Maqaayees al-Lughah*, topic هجر.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 16.

blessings of Allah be upon him) was settled in Madinah and those Muslims who were able to emigrated there.”¹

A number of scholars give an even more specific definition than that. Ibn al-Arabi said, “*Hijrah* is leaving the *daar al-harb* for the *daar* of Islam.”² Ibn Qudaamah gave a similar definition.³

The Ruling Concerning the *Hijrah*

At the beginning of Islam⁴, the *hijrah* was obligatory upon anyone who embraced Islam. That was due to the small number of Muslims and their need to gather together, as well as the presence of being put to trials due to their new faith. Allah stressed the obligation of the *hijrah* to such an extent that He cut off the ties between those who emigrated and those who did not emigrate. Allah says,

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ
يُهَاجِرُوا ﴾

“As for those who believed but did not emigrate, you owe no duty of protection to them until they emigrate” (*al-Anfaal* 72). Allah called those who avoided emigrating, “those who wronged their own souls.” Allah says,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُهُم مَّا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً
فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا ﴾

“When angels take the souls of those who die wronging their souls, they say, ‘In what (plight) were you?’ They reply, ‘Weak and oppressed were we in the earth.’ They say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you emigrate away (from evil)?’” (*al-Nisaa* 97).

¹ Ibid.

² Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 39.

³ *Al-Mughni*, vol. 10, p. 513. Also see the definition by ibn al-Atheer, *Jaami al-Usool*, vol. 2, p. 565.

⁴ [Meaning, in the early years after the Prophet’s own emigration to Madinah.—]Z]

The evidences related to the ruling of the *hijrah* during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are not few in number. However, as for its ruling after the conquering of Makkah, there are some evidences narrated that could give one the impression that they are contradictory. I shall present two such [sets of] hadith here:

(a) Ibn Abbaas narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated on the day of the Conquest of Makkah,

لَا هِجْرَةَ بَعْدَ الْفَتْحِ وَلَكِنْ جِهَادٌ وَنِيَّةٌ وَإِذَا اسْتَنْفَرْتُمْ فَاَنْفِرُوا

“There is no *hijrah* after the Conquest [of Makkah]. But there is jihad and intention. If you called to all go out [in jihad], then go out.”¹

(b) Muaawiyah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَنْقَطِعُ الْهِجْرَةُ حَتَّى تَنْقَطِعَ التَّوْبَةُ وَلَا تَنْقَطِعُ التَّوْبَةُ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا

“The *hijrah* will not be discontinued until repentance is discontinued. And repentance will not be discontinued until the sun rises from its West.”²

Abdullah ibn al-Saadi³ narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَنْقَطِعُ الْهِجْرَةُ مَا دَامَ الْعَدُوُّ يُقَاتِلُ

“*Hijrah* will not be discontinued as long as the enemy is being fought.”¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa`ee and al-Daarimi.

² Recorded by Abu Dawood, Al-Daarimi and Ahmad. [According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. Cf., al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 2, p. 1244.—JZ]

³ He was Abdullah al-Saadi, and al-Saadi's name was Waqdaan while some say it was Qudaamah. It is also said that he was called al-Saadi because he was breastfed among the Tribe of Saadi. He was part of a delegation from his people to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He lived in Madinah and then settled in “Jordan.” He died in 57 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 104.

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الْهِجْرَةَ خَصَلَتَانِ إِحْدَاهُمَا أَنْ تَهْجَرَ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَالْأُخْرَى أَنْ تَهَاجِرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَلَا تَنْقَطِعُ الْهِجْرَةُ مَا تَقُبِلَتِ التَّوْبَةُ وَلَا تَزَالُ التَّوْبَةُ مَقْبُولَةً حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَإِذَا طَلَعَتْ طُبِعَ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ بِمَا فِيهِ وَكَفِيَ النَّاسُ الْعَمَلَ

“The *hijrah* is of two characteristics. One of them is to avoid sins. The second is to migrate to Allah and His Messenger. *Hijrah* will not be discontinued as long as repentance is accepted. And repentance will continue to be accepted until the sun rises from the West. When it rises [in that fashion], Allah seals every heart with what it contains and the deeds will be sufficient for the people.”²

The first hadith (a) and those with similar meaning indicate that *hijrah* has been discontinued and that there is no *hijrah* after the Conquest of Makkah. One scholar stated while commenting upon the words of that hadith, “Except for jihad,” “This further comment must mean that its ruling is different from what precedes it. So its meaning is that the *hijrah* that refers to leaving one’s land, that was required from each individual to go to Madinah, is discontinued. However, the leaving of a land due to jihad remains. Similarly, leaving the land due to a sound intention also remains.”³

The latter three hadith and others that have the same meaning indicate that the *hijrah* has not been discontinued. Since the apparent meaning of those two sets of hadith seem to contradict one another, the scholars have differed, expressing two opinions, concerning the ruling of *hijrah* after the Conquest of Makkah and how this apparent contradiction is to be reconciled.

The first opinion reconciles these seemingly conflicting texts. This reconciliation, though, is done in a number of ways. They may be summarized in the following:

¹ Recorded by Ahmad and its chain is *hasan*. Cf., *Sharh al-Sunnah*, with the footnotes by al-Arnaaoot and al-Shaweesh as they said (vol. 10, p. 372), “Its chain is *hasan*.”

² Recorded by Ahmad. [According to Ahmad Shaakir, the chain of this hadith is *sahih*. See Ahmad Shaakir, footnotes to *al-Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 312—JZ]

³ Al-Teebi, quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 39.

(1) The ruling exists when its legal cause is present and not so otherwise. Imam al-Shafi'ee stated, "The sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indicates that the obligation of *hijrah* for the one who is capable to perform it falls upon the one who will be threatened and put to afflictions due to his remaining in the land in which he embraced Islam. This is indicated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) permitting some people to remain in Makkah after embracing Islam, like al-Abbaas ibn Abdul Muttalib and others, if they did not fear any *fitnah* (trial or affliction)."¹

Such is also indicated by what Ataa ibn Abi Ribaah stated: "I visited Aishah with Ubaid ibn Umair al-Laithi² and we asked her about the *hijrah*. She said, 'There is no *hijrah* now. The believers would flee with their religion to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fearing that they would face afflictions and torture. As for now, Islam has become dominant. Today, one worships his Lord wherever he is. But jihad and intent [still exist].'"³ Ibn Hajar said, "Aishah alluded to the reasoning for the Shareeah *hijrah*. Its reason was the fear of *fitnah* (affliction). This ruling still exists when its legal cause [of *fitnah*] exists. The result is that whenever someone has the means to worship Allah wherever he is, then it is not obligatory upon him to make the *hijrah*. Otherwise, it is obligatory."⁴ The meaning, then, of "There is no *hijrah* after the Conquest," is the Conquest of Makkah and any other similar conquests. This is because the legal reason behind the sanctioning of the *hijrah* is absent after the Muslims conquer a land. Hence, *hijrah* from that land is not obligatory.

This conclusion is also indicated by a number of other hadith, including:

(a) Samurah ibn Jundub⁵ narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

¹ Al-Shaafi'ee, *al-Umm*, vol. 4, p. 161.

² He was Ubaid ibn Umair ibn Qataadah al-Laithi, the executor of the prescribed punishments for the people of Makkah. He was trustworthy. He was one of the "major Followers". He died in 68 A.H. Cf., *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, vol. 7, p. 71.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhari.

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 7, p. 229.

⁵ He was Samurah ibn Jundub ibn Hilaal, a Companion. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him the nickname Abu Sulaimaan. He was raised in Madinah and then settled in Basrah. He died in Kufah, while some say it was Basrah. He died in 59 or 60 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 3, p. 183; *al-Isaabah*, vol. 4, p. 257; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 139.

مَنْ جَامَعَ الْمُشْرِكَ وَسَكَنَ مَعَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِثْلُهُ

“Whoever associates with a polytheist and lives with him, then he is similar to him.”¹

(b) Jareer ibn Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

أَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ يُقِيمُ بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ لَا تَتَرَايَ نَارُهُمَا

“I am free of every Muslim who resides amid the polytheists. They should not see each other’s fire.”²

These hadith indicate that it is forbidden to remain in the midst of the polytheists. This, thus, indicates that it is obligatory to make *hijrah* from them.³

(2) Another way of reconciling these hadith is by saying that the words, “There is no *hijrah*...” refer to the obligatory *hijrah*. What remains, though, is the recommended *hijrah*. Al-Khattaabi stated, “At the beginning of Islam, the *hijrah* was recommended and not obligatory. [But then] Allah said, ‘He who emigrates from his home in the cause of Allah finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious’ (*al-Nisaa* 100). This was revealed when the hardship from the polytheists towards the Muslims became greater after the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated to Madinah. They were then ordered to move to his presence to be with him, to support each other, to manifest his affair, to learn the matters of their religion from him and to understand the religion. At that time, the greatest fear was from the Quraish and the people of Makkah. When Makkah was conquered and they truly became obedient, that need was no longer present. Hence, the obligation of *hijrah* was lifted and its ruling returned to its original state of being recommended. Hence, there are two *hijrahs*. The one that was discontinued was the obligatory one and the one remaining is the recommended one. This is the best way to reconcile these two [seemingly contradictory] hadith.”⁴

¹ Recorded by Abu Dawood. [According to al-Albaani, this hadith is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, vol. 2, p. 1064.—JZ]

² Discussed earlier. It is *hasan*.

³ Cf., al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 10, p. 372; al-Muwafaq ibn Qudaamah, *al-Mughni*, vol. 10, p. 514.

⁴ Al-Khattaabi, *Mualim al-Sunan*, vol. 3, p. 352. Cf., al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 10, pp. 372-373.

(3) [Another way to reconcile them is by saying that] the meaning of the remaining *hijrah* is the *hijrah* from or fleeing from sins. In reconciling these hadith, al-Aini stated, "I say: In another hadith is an indication that the meaning of the remaining *hijrah* is the fleeing from sins. This is what was recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad* from Abdul Rahmaan ibn Auf¹ and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'The *hijrah* is of two characteristics. One of them is to avoid sins. The second is to migrate to Allah and His Messenger. *Hijrah* will not be discontinued as long as repentance is accepted. And repentance will continue to be accepted until the sun rises from the West. When it rises [in that fashion], Allah seals every heart with what it contains and the deeds will be sufficient for the people.'²"³

(4) [Another way of reconciling the hadith is by saying] that the discontinued *hijrah* refers to that in which the person moves to where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is. As for moving from *daar al-harb* to the *daar* of Islam, that remains and has not been discontinued. Ibn al-Arabi stated, "*Hijrah* is to go from *daar al-harb* to *daar* of Islam. It was obligatory during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And it continues after him for whoever fears for himself. The portion that has been discontinued is that of moving to wherever the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself may be."⁴ Ibn Hajar stated, "The *hijrah* was in particular reference to migrating to Madinah until Makkah was conquered. After that, its particular reference was discontinued. Afterwards, there remained the general moving from the land of *kufr* for whoever had the ability to do so."⁵

The second opinion [does not reconcile the differing hadith] but states that preference must be given to the texts that indicate that the *hijrah* has been discontinued. Al-Muwafiq ibn Qudaamah stated, "Some people say that the *hijrah* has been discontinued

¹ He was Abu Muhammad Abdul Rahmaan ibn Auf ibn Abd Auf, one of the prominent Companions. He was one of the ten who was given the glad tidings of Paradise. He was also one of the six in the consultation committee [after the death of Umar]. He was wealthy, generous and brave. He participated at Badr, Uhud and all of the battles. He died in Madinah in 32 A.H. Cf., *al-Isaabah*, vol. 6, p. 311; *al-Alaam*, vol. 3, p. 321.

² Recorded by Ahmad. Al-Arnaaoot and al-Shaaweesh said that the chain for this report is *hasan*. Cf., *Sharh al-Sunnah*, vol. 10, p. 372.

³ Al-Aini, *Umdah al-Qaari*, vol. 1, p. 30.

⁴ Quoted from ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 6, p. 39.

⁵ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Baari*, vol. 1, p. 16.

because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "There is no *hijrah* after the Conquest."¹

The Strongest View:

Allah knows best, but the stronger approach is to try to reconcile the hadith. This is because:

(1) It is an accepted principle in Islamic legal theory that one does not resort to stating that one evidence is stronger than the other in case of conflict unless one is not able to reconcile between the evidences. Reconciling, as was shown earlier, is easy in this case.

(2) There is explicit evidence that shows that the *hijrah* will not be discontinued. Some of this evidence we have already mentioned, such as the hadith from Abdullah ibn Saadi in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَا تَنْقَطِعُ الْهَجْرَةُ مَا دَامَ الْعَدُوُّ يُقَاتِلُ

"*Hijrah* will not be discontinued as long as the enemy is being fought."²

As for what the scholars have stated in their attempt to reconcile the hadith, it seems apparent to me that all of them are valid. However, it is not proper to restrict the reconciliation to just one of these views. Hence, the *hijrah* from sins remains and the *hijrah* from *daar al-kufr* for the one who fears for his religion also remains.

The Categories of People Who Live in *Daar al-Harb*

As for the people who live in *daar al-harb*, it is not obligatory upon all of them to emigrate. Instead, their ruling differs depending on their situation. Those people fall into one of three categories:

The first category are those upon whom it is obligatory to make *hijrah*. These are the people who have the ability to make *hijrah* while they do not have the ability to openly practice their religion and they are not able to perform the obligations of their faith while living among the disbelievers. It is obligatory upon them to make the *hijrah* based on Allah's words,

¹ *Al-Mughni*, vol. 10, p. 513.

² Recorded by Ahmad and its chain is *hasan*. Cf., *Sharh al-Sunnah*, with the footnotes by al-Arnaaoot and al-Shaweesh as they said (vol. 10, p. 372), "Its chain is *hasan*."

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتَهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
 قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً
 فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا ﴾

“When the angels take the souls of those who die wronging their souls, they say, ‘In what (plight) were you?’ They reply, ‘Weak and oppressed were we in the earth.’ They say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you emigrate away (from evil)?’” (*al-Nisaa* 97). Ibn Qudaamah said, “This is a strong threat proving obligation. This is because the fulfilling of the obligations of his religion is obligatory upon the one who has the ability. The *hijrah* is from the necessities and completeness of the obligatory acts. And if an obligatory act cannot be fulfilled save by [another act, then that other act] is also obligatory.”¹

The second category are those who do not perform the *hijrah* because they are incapable due to illness, coercion to stay, weakness in the case of women and children and so forth. *Hijrah* is not obligatory upon them, as Allah has said,

﴿ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
 حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ﴾

“Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed, men, women, and children who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to direct their way. For these there is hope that Allah will forgive them: for Allah does blot out (sins) and forgive again and again” (*al-Nisaa* 98-99). Ibn Qudaamah noted, “It is not even described as recommended for they have no means to perform it.”²

The third category are those for whom the *hijrah* is recommended but not obligatory. This is for the one who has the ability to make the *hijrah* yet he is also able to openly display and practice his religion in the *daar* of *kufr*. It is recommended for him to make the *hijrah* in order for him to take part in the *jihad* against

¹ *Al-Mughni*, vol. 10, p. 514.

² *Al-Mughni*, vol. 10, p. 514.

the disbelievers, increase the number of Muslims, help the Muslims. He will also be able to steer clear of increasing the ranks of the disbelievers, mixing with them and seeing the evil among them. It is not obligatory upon him because he is able to fulfill the obligations of his religion without migrating. It is well-known that the uncle of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), al-Abbaas, remained in Makkah after he had become Muslim.¹

From the above, the limits of extremism with regards to *hijrah* may be spelled out as follows:

(1) *Hijrah* based on declaring the people disbelievers, the societies *jaahili* or the land the land of *kufur* and so forth is *hijrah* based on a premise which is false. Anything built on something false will also be false.

(2) The *hijrah*, even if it is from the land of *kufur* or *jaahili* societies, does not have one absolute ruling to it. That is, it cannot be said to be obligatory in all cases. Instead, its ruling differs depending on the circumstances, as was explained earlier.

(3) The pivotal point concerning the permissibility of *hijrah* or its legal sanction is the existence of its legal cause. To allege that its legal cause exists is in itself not a justification for emigrating from the societies. One cannot say that a Muslim is not able to practice his religion in a particular place while in reality he is establishing his religion for himself in the proper manner.

These are the aspects of extremism that exist in contemporary times, to the point that the group of Shukri Mustafa opined that it is obligatory to make *hijrah* from the contemporary societies. In fact, the idea of *hijrah* was one of the main concepts that he called to. Shukri Mustafa discussed that concept in his books *al-Khilaafah* and *al-Tuwasimaat*. However, Maahir Bakri, the second in command of the group, dedicated a complete work to the topic of *hijrah*. In the following, I shall present a summary of his basic ideas in that book concerning *hijrah*.

Maahir Bakri affirms that *hijrah* is the means to reform society and that there is no path of reformation that is better than it. Therefore, reformation from within the society is not a sound means of propagating the message.² Hence, "the Muslims must race rapidly in order to make a complete separation from the *jaahili*

¹ For the different categories of people with respect to the *hijrah*, see ibn Qudaamah, *al-Mughni*, vol. 10, pp. 514-515.

² Cf., *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, p. 3.

society until the Muslims have a land in which there is no tyrant (*taaghoot*) having authority over them.”¹

He also says, “We want to save ourselves and convey the truth to the worlds... We want to display the word of Allah on the earth. None of that can be fulfilled while we are staying in the land of *kufr*. Let the point from which we start from—in the name of Allah and in the path of Allah—be the *hijrah* and moving from the land of *kufr* to the spacious land of Allah.”²

To prove that, he cites the *hijrah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to Madinah. Then he says, “If the historical evidence is not a Shareeah evidence, we may take the historical reports into account in order for them to be a lesson for us.”³

Maahir Bakri ties the issue of *hijrah* into the question of *al-walaa* and *al-baraa* (Islamic loyalty and disassociation). In fact, he has a large section in his book on that topic. He states, “I would like to, before speaking in detail about the issue of *hijrah*, make a quick reference to an introductory topic before our discussion of the *hijrah*. This is because it has a very strong connection to our topic. It is considered a striking feature in the life of a Muslim and of the Muslim groups. It is the issue of *al-walaa* (loyalty) and the general steps in the relationship with the disbelievers, with respect to enmity and hatred forever until they believe in Allah alone.”⁴

Then he presents the Quranic evidence regarding the obligation of disassociating oneself from the disbelievers.⁵ Then he says, “Whoever is sincere in his Islam and not a hypocrite must migrate from the land in which those who make loyalty to the disbelievers instead of the believers reside, as such is a deed of the actions of hypocrisy.”⁶

He also relates the issue of *hijrah* to what he calls the crisis of the Muslim in the *jaahili* society. The sum of his speech on that topic revolves around the weakness and oppressed state that the Muslim faces in the *jaahili* society. It also discusses the ramification of remaining in such a society, as the Muslims are not able to establish a mosque. They are also not able to remove the law of the *taaghoot* (tyrant ruler) and the ruling by other than what Allah revealed. Furthermore, they are required to be part of the *taghoot*

¹ Ibid., p. 6.

² Ibid., p. 7.

³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

army and give some of their wealth in the form of taxes to continue the support of the strength of the *jaahiliyyah*. Furthermore, they are forced to submit to the educational system and curriculum and what it contains of plots to take the people away from studying Islam.¹ After presenting what he calls the crisis of the Muslim in the *jaahili* society, he states, "The only escape, the path for which there is no second path and for which there is no substitute to escape from the state of weakness and oppression which befalls the Muslim in the *jaahili* society... is *hijrah* to a special land of Allah."²

He explains what that land is by saying, "It is the land in which it is possible to establish the religion of Allah, worship Allah in the way He ordered us to worship Him, apply His Shareeah and implement His penal laws. It is the land in which the signs of Allah are not disbelieved or ridiculed. The people of the religion are not fought against. It is the expansive land of Allah whether it be at the height of a mountain, in a cave or at the root of a tree."³

Maahir Bakri was of the opinion that the *hijrah* must be the first of the good deeds, preceding the jihad. He stated, "*Hijrah* is the transitory stage and a necessity for jihad. Jihad cannot be made truly complete and is not permitted until after the *hijrah*. This is because the *hijrah*, in its essence, is a separation between the devoted servants of Allah and His enemies... Faith precedes *hijrah* and *hijrah* precedes jihad. So the matter becomes faith then *hijrah* then jihad. This is the *sunnah* and law of Allah that we find in the Quran and Shareeah texts."⁴

After discussing the topic of *hijrah*, he stated, "The question that is posed to us now, after we have spoken about the theoretical foundation for the obligation of *hijrah* in general in any time and place, is: Is the *hijrah* from these societies today obligatory?"⁵ Then he stated, "Before we continue in our discussion, we would like to respond to these two questions: Are the Muslims spread out throughout the *jaahili* society now able to establish the religion of Allah upon the earth? Are the Muslims able to counter the power of the *jaahili* society and establish the law of Allah on the earth?"⁶

¹ All of these points can be found in Maahir Bakri's words and they are some of the views that were critiqued in this work. Cf., *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, pp. 22-28.

² Ibid., p. 31.

³ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

After that, he stresses that these societies are indeed *jaahili*. He states, "We do not differ about the fact that the societies today which falsely and lyingly claim to be related to Islam do not rule by what Allah revealed, even if they apply a part of Islam and take on some outward manifestations of Islam, but we also find that at the same time they take on the manifestations of *kufr* sufficiently that they can be ruled to be *jaahili* and their rulers are declared disbelievers."¹ He also wrote, "All of the societies today which claim an attachment to Islam are *jaahili* societies without any exception."²

Then he posits an answer for the previous two questions, saying that the Muslims are not able to establish the religion of Allah as is obligatory upon them. Furthermore, they are also weak and oppressed and cannot oppose the power of *jaahiliyyah*.³

Then he affirms, therefore, the obligation of *hijrah*. He states, "We can say, based on what we have just concluded and established an evidence for, that the *hijrah* is now obligatory upon everyone who has the ability to do it... It is now obligatory upon the Muslims to leave from the land of *jaahiliyyah* and flee with their religion to a land in which they are not oppressed and weak. It is where they can establish the law of Allah, worship Him and not ascribe any partner to Him."⁴

He wrote, "We challenge whoever says opposite to what we have confirmed concerning the obligation of *hijrah* now. We call upon him to establish the proof. And we shall mention the words of Allah, 'When the angels take the souls of those who die wronging their souls, they say, "In what (plight) were you?" They reply, "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you emigrate away (from evil)?"' (*al-Nisaa* 97).' And Allah also says, 'To those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression, We will assuredly give a goodly home in this world: but truly the reward of the Hereafter will be greater. If they only realized (this)' (*al-Nahl* 41)."⁵

As for where the *hijrah* should be to, Maahir Bakri states that it should be to the mountain peaks and places of rainwater and to the valleys and deserts and to the caves.⁶ He proves that by quoting the evidences mentioned earlier concerning seclusion and isolation.

¹ Ibid., p. 62.

² Ibid., p. 62.

³ See *Kitaab al-Hijrah*, pp. 62-64.

⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

This is a summary presentation of what Maahir Bakri stated in his book *al-Hijrah*, including some of the evidences he presented. It should be noted that he also used all of the verses concerning *hijrah* as evidence.

Critique and Refutation:

A refutation of what he presented concerning this topic would be quite lengthy. However, I refer the reader to what has already been presented on this topic, while making the following additional points:

(1) Making a general ruling concerning the obligation of *hijrah* is not correct. This is because the circumstances and the places differ and, thus, the ruling of the *hijrah* will also differ. Obligating the *hijrah* upon everyone in these times neglects all of the considerations for which the ruling differs. Some of the evidence related to this point has already been presented.

(2) The path of reform does not begin with *hijrah*. Instead, the reformation must spring from within the society. For the sake of argument with them, I shall give the example of a disbelieving society. For a disbelieving society, the reform efforts must flow from within. For that reason, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained in Makkah for thirteen years without migrating. In fact, he worked to reform the society and called them to his message.

The migration to Abyssinia by some of his Companions was only in search of a land in which they could be safe and not be put to trials. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not able to reform the society and the Quraish were not responding to his call, he then worked to find a land that would support him. That land would be the base for his call. It turned out to be Madinah.

Therefore, the path of reforming society is to call that society [to what is right and good]. That is with respect to a disbelieving society. That must, then, even more so be the case with respect to a Muslim society. This is because in a Muslim society, the deviations should be relative [and not complete]. It is possible to correct those deviations from within without any need to emigrate from that society.

(3) The issue of *al-walaa* and *al-baraa* (loyalty and disassociation) is a central issue to Islamic beliefs. However, *hijrah* from a sinful or disbelieving society is not always a necessary ramification of *al-walaa* and *al-baraa*. In fact, a person could fulfill

his loyalty to the believers and his disassociation from the disbelievers while actually living in the midst of the disbelievers.

(4) What they call the crisis of the Muslim in a *jaahili* society is correct in general. The history of the call of the messengers shows that they and their followers suffered from oppression and trials with respect to their faith. However, Shukri Mustafa's group included in their discussion of the crisis some issues that do not lead to the permission of *hijrah*, such as giving up some of one's wealth in the form of taxes. This, in reality, is not a justification for *hijrah*. This is because the one who pays that wealth does so as a type of necessity, warding off a greater evil that would occur if he does not pay it. It is not obligatory upon him to migrate to escape paying that tax.

(5) The statement that there is no jihad except after *hijrah* is false. Although the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not make jihad until after the *hijrah*, that was because he was not able to do so before. Therefore, it was not sanctioned except after he was in Madinah.

(6) This is the most important point in this refutation. It is related to the question of whether the contemporary societies are such that it is obligatory to migrate from them. I shall offer more detail on this point, as follows:

(a) The societies are not, as they claim, *jaahili*. And they are not *daar* of *kufir* inhabited by disbelievers. That is a false statement. This statement has been critiqued earlier in detail and there is no need to repeat that discussion.

(b) For the sake of argument [if we accept the above argument], we still do not accept the fact that the Muslims who live in the *jaahili* society are not able to establish the religion of Allah on the earth. Nothing prevents them from that. Although the government is not Islamic, that has to do with the actions of the ruler and not with the actions of the individuals; and they are the topic of discussion here. The rulers, by their not ruling in accord with what Allah revealed, are sinful, deviating from the law of Allah with various degrees of deviation.

(c) The Muslims being weak and not able to repel the strength of the *jaahili* powers does not make the *hijrah* obligatory upon them. These tests and trials are simply part of "the way" or *sunnah* of Allah along the path of propagating the faith in this worldly existence. Allah says,

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴾

“Did you think that you would enter Paradise without Allah showing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained steadfast?” (*ali-Imraan* 142). Allah also says,

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ أَلاَ إِنَّا نَصُرُ اللَّهَ قَرِيبٌ ﴾

“Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried, ‘When (will come) the help of Allah.’ Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near” (*al-Baqarah* 214). The state of oppression and weakness that permits the *hijrah* is where a Muslim is in a land wherein he cannot establish the religion of Allah. Otherwise, there have been many virtuous and just leaders of this religion who were oppressed. They did not leave their lands nor did they migrate. Instead, they remained to advise the nation and call unto goodness until Allah took their souls. Saeed ibn Jubair and Ahmad ibn Hanbal are two such figures of two different eras who were patient in the face of the trials they faced.

In the end of this critique of their views, I believe that the Shareeah answers to three questions will destroy all of the foundations of their thought concerning the *hijrah* and how they represent the societies of today. These questions are as follows:

- (a) Is the society *jaahili*?
- (b) Is the land a land of *kufir*?
- (c) Is the society a society of disbelievers?

The Belief that the Rulings Have Stages to Them or the Heresy That We Are Now Living in the Makkan Era

One of the beautiful aspects of the religion of Islam is that its laws came in steps, not all at one time. The laws came piece by piece in varying ways according to the varying times. The stronger rulings came after the lighter rulings. For example, the prohibition of alcohol was not revealed at all once. Instead, it came in stages, taking into consideration the circumstances of the people. The student of the history of the Shareeah finds that the Shareeah went through two major stages, the Makkan stage and the Madinan stage, with a clear difference between them.

The factor behind these different degrees in the law was the different environments in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions lived in the two stages. The Makkan stage was characterized by weakness, lack of [political] power and being dominated by the disbelievers. The Madinan stage was an era of power, political statehood and ability.

The scholars discuss the verses that were revealed during each respective stage under the title, "the Makkan" and "the Madinan" verses. This is under the subject of the sciences of the Quran and the principles of Quranic exegesis. The study of that topic, which is part of the knowledge of the chronology of Islamic law, produces a number of benefits, including:

(1) Distinguishing the abrogating from the abrogated verses: If two conflicting rulings on the same topic are revealed, one Makkan and one Madinan, by knowing the chronology one can say that the latter abrogated the former. This, of course, must be done according to the legal principles that the scholars have discussed for cases of conflicting rulings.

(2) Knowing the methodology of calling people to Allah: For every situation, there is a means of approach that takes into consideration the needs of the circumstances. By knowing the Makkan and Madinan revelations, the person is given a Shareeah methodology for the ways of communication in calling people to Allah and the means of reformation and refinement of morals.

(3) Knowing the stages the laws went through: This leads to the complete conviction in the loftiness of Islam and its perfection

due to its tending to the different steps in developing and raising the nations and people.¹

However, applying the laws on the people in stages and degrees is not one of the benefits of the knowledge of the Makkan and Madinan verses. One cannot say, "We are living in an era that resembles the Makkan era, an era of being oppressed and weak. Therefore, it is a must upon us to follow the laws of the Makkan era." This approach is not valid for the following reasons:

(1) The derivation of the Shareeah laws is accomplished from their evidences in accord with the legal principles that the scholars have explained in the books on Islamic legal theory. Evaluating a [contemporary] era and comparing it with either the Makkan or Madinan stage and then making an analogy based on that is not one of the Shareeah evidences nor one of the principles of deriving laws.

(2) During the Makkan era, the whole world was filled with misguidance and all the Muslims were in a state of weakness and oppression, not being able to publicly declare their religion. As for the state of weakness that the [contemporary] revival has been facing, it is restricted by time and place. In other words, it is not possible for all of mankind to [once again] live in complete misguidance, due to the promise made that there will always be a group of this Nation of Muhammad upon the truth, victorious [as mentioned in a hadith previously quoted].

(3) The Prophet's years in Makkah and Madina were both during the time of the revelation of the law, in which the Shareeah had yet to be completed and finalized. Indeed, every new circumstance or event could be a cause for the revelation of a verse or the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in which a new law would be affirmed. However, after the religion has been completed [by Allah], there is no room for any new legislating.

Furthermore, the exceptional circumstances that the Islamic movement passes through or the masses of Muslims experience at any time are covered by relevant laws in the [existing] Shareeah. It has rulings under what is known as the *rukhas* or exemptions. Or, a ruling may be an exception from the general ruling due to the absence of a condition or the presence of a preventive factor. Perhaps the following example may make this point clear.

Jihad is one of the most important obligations in Islam. In fact, it is its apex. However, due to the weakness of the Muslims and

¹ Cf., al-Zarqaani, *Manaahil al-Urfaan fi Uloom al-Quraan*, vol. 1, p. 188; al-Qataan, *Mabaahith fi Uloom al-Quraan*, pp. 59-60.

their inability to establish themselves during the Makkan era, jihad was not sanctioned until the Madinan era. Instead, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions were ordered to refrain themselves and not respond to any act of animosity.

Time to time and in one place or another, Muslims passed through eras of weakness and inability to make jihad. Sometimes the Muslims were small in number vis-à-vis the disbelievers or they had no political leader and hence they were temporarily excused from jihad, while being commanded to prepare and take the necessary means to be able to have that needed ability. The basis for this conclusion is Allah's words,

﴿ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ ﴾

“So fear Allah as much as you can” (*al-Taghaabun* 16). Allah also says,

﴿ لَا يَكْفِيُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

“On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear” (*al-Baqarah* 286). And there are other similar verses that affirm that there is no obligation beyond what one can bear. This ruling [that they are excused from jihad] is based on these types of verses and not on the fact that the era is similar to the Makkan era.

If one were to follow the idea of stages in the implementation of the law and made that one of the foundations for the laws, it would lead to great and widespread evil. Only one who has left the religion would make such a statement. That evil can be explained in two aspects:

(1) Some of the obligations of the religion, whose abandonment is considered *kufir*, would not be performed. Prayer was not made obligatory except at the end of the Makkan era. Fasting was not made obligatory save in the second year after the *Hijrah*. Pilgrimage, zakat and other obligatory deeds were not revealed except in the Madinan era. If we followed the concept of the laws applying to each era and made that one of the foundations for laws, the first requirement of such a view would be to dispense with these obligatory deeds and to declare them non-obligatory.

(2) Many of the clearly forbidden acts would be performed. They would be considered permissible due to this view of taking the era as a standard. This would, obviously, be something very dangerous for the religion. Alcohol, for example, was not completely prohibited except in Madinah. If one follows this view of

taking the era into consideration, alcohol would then be permissible.

In sum, it is not correct to make these stages as means and a source of laws. The sources of the laws are not the product of human opinion. Instead, every source has numerous evidences to support it. This is clearly found in the writings of the scholars on Islamic legal theory.

Some contemporary Muslims followed this premise of the laws being related to the Makkan or Madinan era. They stated, "It is part of the belief that one takes the religion in the form that it was revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). One takes the laws in stages as they were followed in the beginning of Islam. One begins with what was revealed in Makkah with respect to the period of weakness and oppression in which we are currently living. If the group is able to reach the power and rule by Islam, then we will follow what was revealed in Madinah as such is for an era in which [the religion] is [politically and powerfully] established. As for the period in which we are now living, it is an era of weakness and oppression."¹

That view is based on the premise that the members of society are disbelievers. When they declared the members of the society disbelievers, they had then to respond to the problem of how to interact with the society. They resorted to the premise of taking the laws in stages and they made that the refuge for the mess that they found themselves in. Therefore, based on this concept of taking the laws in stages, they stated the following:

(1) It is permissible to marry—those whom they claim to be—disbelieving women.

(2) It is permissible to eat the meat slaughtered by—those whom they claim to be—disbelievers.

(3) The Friday Prayers and Eid Prayers are not obligatory.

(4) One must refrain from the use of force and suspend jihad.²

The refutation of these views has been given in their respective places in this research. However, the view that the laws must go through their respective stages can be refuted by noting that such is not one of the sources of the Shareeah, as was noted, nor is it one of the ways of deriving laws from their evidences. Even if one were to accept the proposition that we must apply the laws according to their stages and that such is a principle for the deriving of laws during times of weakness as what occurred in the Makkan era, it

¹ Cf., al-Bahinsaawi, *al-Hukum wa Qadhiyyah Takfeer al-Muslim*, p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

would not apply to the current era because the two eras are different in the following two ways:

(1) The Makkan society was a *jaahili*, disbelieving society. However, the societies in which they applied this principle of taking the laws according to their stages were Muslim societies, not disbelieving societies.

(2) The weakness that existed during the Makkan era prevented the Muslims from fulfilling the individual acts of obedience and worship, even the public recital of the Quran was difficult and would lead to injury and punishment. Those types of situations do not exist in the societies wherein the contemporary extremists applied the principle of taking the laws in stages.

Extremism by Forbidding Employment in Government

Positions

A necessary aspect of any government or rule is that the ruler has to have supporters who fill some of his roles, needs and responsibilities. It is not possible for the overall leader to directly take care of all concerns. He cannot judge between the people in all of their disputes and he cannot fulfill all of their needs. This is something well known and admitted.

The question, then, is: What is the ruling concerning taking a government position for a ruler who is an evildoer, a wrongdoing oppressor or a disbeliever?

As for the ruler who is an evildoer, the scholars and judges of the Muslims, from the time of the early scholars and afterwards, continue to take judicial posts under those who are not acting righteously. If they were not to take such posts, the laws of the Shareeah would be voided in practice.¹

As for the disbelieving ruler or one who is openly committing wrong and oppression, the scholars have differed concerning taking a post or job with someone of that nature. There are two opinions on this question. The first opinion says that it is allowed to take such a position as long as the deeds the person is performing in following that ruler are just and correct. The second opinion states

¹ Cf., al-Zamakhshari, *Kashaaf*, vol. 2, p. 263; ibn Hayyaan, *al-Bahr al-Muheet*, vol. 5, p. 319; al-Qaasimi, *Mahaasin al-Taweel*, vol. 9, p. 3559.

that it is not allowed to take any position from a blatantly oppressing wrongdoer.¹

The Evidence:

The proponents of the first opinion offer a number of proofs, including:

(1) Allah said in the words of Yoosuf,

﴿ قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَىٰ خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْمُ ﴾

“(Yoosuf) said, ‘Set me over the store-houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance)’” (Yoosuf 55).

Ibn Attiyah stated, “Some of the interpreters stated that in this verse is [the indication of] permissibility for a virtuous person to work for an evil person, on the condition that he will be in charge of what he does and not be objected to. Hence, he will be able to reform and correct what he wills. However, if his deeds will be according to what the evildoer decides and wants, then it is not allowed for him to [take such a position].”² Al-Zamakhshari³ said, “Qataadah said that this is evidence that it is allowed for a person to take a position from an unjust ruler. The early Muslims would fill the positions and responsibilities of judges for the oppressors. If a prophet or a scholar knows that there is no way to rule by the command of Allah or repel wrongdoing except by the establishment of a disbelieving or impious king, he may support him.”⁴

(2) [Second, they invoke the issue of] taking into consideration or weighing the good and the evil of a deed. Al-Izz

¹ Cf., al-Maawardi, *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*, p. 75; al-Qurtubi, *Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 215; al-Wanshareesi, *al-Miyaar al-Marrib*, vol. 10, p. 109.

² *Al-Muharrar wa al-Wajeez*, vol. 8, pp. 5-6. Al-Qurtubi quoted from some scholars similar to what Ibn Attiyah quoted, except he said, “Some scholars say that this verse contains a permission for the righteous person to work for an evildoing person or a disbelieving ruler.” *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 215.

³ He was Jaarullaah Mahmood ibn Umar ibn Muhammad al-Khawaarizmi al-Zamakhshari. He was a Quranic commentator. His commentary is known as *al-Kashaaf*. It is filled with the views of the Mutazilah. He was also a linguist, compiling a work entitled *Asaas al-Balaaghah*. He died in 538 A.H. Cf., *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 20, p. 153; *al-Alaam*, vol. 7, p. 178.

⁴ *Al-Kashaaf*, vol. 2, p. 263. Cf., Abu Hayaan, *Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, vol. 5, pp. 319-320; Abu al-Saood, *Irshaad al-Aql al-Saleem*, vol. 3, p. 160; al-Suyooti, *al-Ikleeel fi Istinbaat al-Tanzeel*, p. 132; al-Qaasimi, *Mahaasin al-Taweel*, vol. 9, p. 3559.

ibn Abdul Salaam said, "If the disbelievers overtake a large country and the position of judge is given to one who can look after the needs of the Muslims masses, it seems apparent that he should fulfill that post in order to bring about general good and repel comprehensive evil. Given the mercy of the Lawgiver and His care for the needs of His servants, it is far-fetched to think that the general benefits would be given up and general evil would be allowed to prevail simply due to the capable person having to give up some aspect of the completeness of his character by not taking such a position. This is far-fetched indeed."¹

Based on this principle, ibn Taimiyyah ruled that it is permissible to take a position of authority or a fief by one who is put in responsibility by rulers who have some wrong to them, with his intention that he will fulfill what is just. Ibn Taimiyyah stated, "All praise be to Allah. Yes, if he is striving for justice and removing of wrong to the best of his ability [he may take such a position]. His being in charge is better and more beneficial than the authority of others. His being in control over a fief is better than others being in charge... It is permissible for him to remain in the position of authority or in a fiefdom and there is sin upon him for that. In fact, his remaining in that position is better than him leaving it, unless he preoccupies himself with something better than it."²

Ibn Taimiyyah considered Yoosuf's, the trustworthy, taking the position of treasurer for the king of Egypt to have been of this nature. He said, "Yoosuf was not able to do whatever he wanted to do, which was what he saw as the religion of Allah, for the people would not respond to him. However, he was able to do what he could of justice and beneficence and having the ruler honor the believers from his family. He was not able to do that before. This all fell under the meaning of His words, 'So fear Allah as much as you can' (*al-Taghaabun* 16)."³

(3) The point to consider for the Shareeah ruling and for the sinfulness of the one taking the post is what he himself does and not what the ruler does.⁴ The evil in a deed of that nature comes from one of two aspects:

- (a) the intention,
- (b) the deed.

¹ *Qawaaid al-Ahkaam*, vol. 1, p. 75.

² Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 30, p. 368. Cf., Abu Hayyaan, *al-Bahr al-Muheet*, vol. 5, pp. 319-320.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, p. 54.

⁴ Cf., al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 215.

As for the evil in the intention, it is where the person intends authority or wealth. As for the evil in the deed, it is where a forbidden deed is done or an obligatory deed is neglected.¹ Hence, the evilness of the ruler in himself is not a cause for evilness in the works of the one given a post or in a position of responsibility.

The proponents of the second opinion offer two points as evidence for their side.²

(1) Accepting a job from the wrongdoing oppressors is a form of showing loyalty and support for them.

(2) Also, in that act there is a type of attestation of their [that is, the rulers'] goodness by following their deeds.³

They respond to the story of Yoosuf in a number of ways, including:

(a) The Pharaoh at the time of Yoosuf was pious. In fact, it is narrated from Mujaahid that he had embraced Islam.⁴

(b) Yoosuf would tend to the government lands and not to the Pharaoh's deeds. Hence, the responsibility for the Pharaoh's deeds would be removed from him.⁵

(c) The king would accept Yoosuf's opinion and he would not object to anything Yoosuf opined. Hence, he was more the follower and Yoosuf the followed.⁶

Critique and Determining the Strongest View:

Allah knows best but the strongest opinion seems to be the first opinion. The reasons given by the proponents of the second opinion may be responded to in the following:

(1) Loyalty is something external to working under the authority of a disbelieving ruler. There is no necessary relationship between them. It is possible for someone to fulfill his work, which includes raising the word of Allah and fulfilling the truth, while not having love or loyalty for the ruler himself. Indeed, he may do those

¹ Cf., ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, p. 56.

² [The author here does not discuss one of the strongest evidences they present. Some have stated that the actions of Yoosuf, his requesting the position and his working for the Pharaoh, are related to a Shareeah or law that existed before the Shareeah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which abrogated and superseded all previous Shareeahs. There is a well known and lengthy debate within Islamic legal theory as to whether the Shareeahs of previous prophets also apply to the Muslims if there is no direct text to the contrary.—JZ]

³ Cf., al-Maawardi, *al-Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*, p. 75.

⁴ Cf., al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 13, p. 6.

⁵ Cf., al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 7, p. 215.

⁶ Cf., al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashaaf*, vol. 2, p. 263.

acts to circumvent the ruler and to guard against his evil. In that case, it falls under the words of Allah,

﴿إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاتُ﴾

“Except by way of precaution” (*ali-Imraan* 28).

(2) This taking of a position does not entail any form of attestation or sanctioning of the ruler. Indeed, it is simply taking some role that the ruler either left or concerning which he is compromising and applying it in the proper Shareeah manner. Ibn al-Arabi stated while commenting upon Yoosuf’s request to the king to be put over the storehouses of the land, “He was not asking for a position of authority. He was asking him to leave it so it would be then transferred to his authority. If Allah had willed, He could have established his authority via fighting, death, overpowering, power and control. However, Allah applies His laws with respect to the prophets and the different nations according to what He has mentioned. For some of them, the prophets were dealt with through power, authority and taking control [such as between Moses and the Pharaoh]. For some of them, the prophets were dealt with through strategies and trials [such as in the case of Yoosuf]. This is indicated by Allah’s words, ‘Thus did We give established power to Joseph in the land, to take possession therein as when or where he pleased. We bestow of Our mercy on whom We please, and We suffer not to be lost the reward of those who do good’ (*Yoosuf* 56).”¹

Their replies to the story of Yoosuf and his requesting from the King to be put over the storehouses of the land can in turn be replied to by the following:

(1) They state that the Pharaoh at the time of Yoosuf was pious and Mujaahid even narrated that he had embraced Islam. However, there is no Shareeah evidence for this claim. In fact, the texts of the Quran indicate otherwise. Ibn Taimiyyah noted about the Pharaoh at the time of Yoosuf, “He and his people were disbelievers. As Allah says [about them on the tongue of a man who lived during the time of Moses], ‘And to you there came Joseph in times gone by, with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt of the (mission) for which he had come...’ (*Ghaafir* 34). Allah also says, stating Yoosuf’s words, ‘O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): Are many lords differing among themselves better, or Allah, the One Supreme and Irresistible? If not Him, you

¹ *Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 3, p. 1092.

worship nothing but names which you have named, you and your fathers' (Yoosuf 39-40)."¹

It is understood that these verses indicate that the King was not of the same religion as Yoosuf. Even if we assume that he embraced Islam later, he was still a disbeliever when Yoosuf took the post.

(2) Their statement that he looked after the government lands not the actions [of the ruler] also has no evidence for it. The Quran makes clear that Yoosuf was established in the land. Allah says,

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

"Thus did We give established power to Joseph in the land, to take possession therein as when or where he pleased. We bestow of Our mercy on whom We please, and We suffer not to be lost the reward of those who do good" (Yoosuf 56). The Quranic commentators state that the Pharaoh put him in charge of Egypt and he was in charge of all affairs.²

Even if we assume that Pharaoh only put him over the governmental lands, that actually falls within the actions of the ruler. It is well known that Pharaoh and his people, in their *kufri*, must have had customary ways and practices to take possession of wealth and spend it on the king's entourage, family, soldiers and citizens. No doubt those practices were not in accord with the practices of the prophets and their just ways.³ Therefore, one does not escape by this argument the question of working for a disbelieving ruler. Indeed, this is included as part of that act.

(3) They argue that the King would promulgate Yoosuf's views and would not object to them at all in any matter. Hence, Yoosuf was like the one being followed. There is also no evidence for this. In fact, the clear meaning of the Quran contradicts it. Yoosuf was not able to take his brother except through tricky means. This shows that he did not have complete independence. Furthermore, the entire discussion is about the taking of a post and accepting a job from a disbeliever, regardless of how independent the opinion of the one taking the post would be.

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 20, p. 56.

² Cf., al-Tabari, quoting from al-Suddi, ibn Zaid and others, *Jaami al-Bayaan*, vol. 13, p. 6.

³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 21, p. 56.

This shows that the opinion that it is permissible to accept a job or post from a clearly oppressive ruler or a disbelieving ruler, as long as the work itself does not involve doing something forbidden. Furthermore, ibn Taimiyyah notes that one must consider the benefit and harm of accepting such a post. If the benefit outweighs the harm it is permissible, even if the one taking the post is engaged in some act of wrongdoing, as long as his intention is to fulfill what is correct and to establish justice.¹

By this presentation, it is clear that prohibiting the people from working in government posts is a form of extremism.²

Some of the modern groups fell into this form of extremism. Shukri Mustafa's group viewed engaging in any type of job in what they called the *jaahili* society was an act of worshiping the *taaghoot* (false gods), even if the work itself was of a permissible nature. Maahir Bakri stated, "Every work, permissible or forbidden, in this *jaahili* society, must, in the long run, flow to one end: the help and support of the foundation of this disbelieving society. Look at the extent of the sin the one who is pleased to live with the disbelievers and remain among their midst receives. He has taken it upon himself to work in the paltriest of jobs and the one least in value."³

After listing a number of acts that the people are involved in [in contemporary society], Shukri Mustafa stated, "All of that... is but the authority of the *taaghoot* (false god), his jurisdiction and the sources of his goodhood. Those who enter into his system are nothing but his slaves and custodians of his pulpit. There is nothing among the things we mentioned—not even a piece of trash that is removed by the order of the municipality—in the land of the *taaghoot* except that it falls under his godhood."⁴ That view of theirs is built upon [their view] that the land is a land of *kufr* and the society is a *jaahili* society. Hence, those who live there are

¹ Ibn Taimiyyah, *al-Fataawa*, vol. 30, pp. 356-360.

² [Perhaps this statement by the author is somewhat strong. He has noted that there is a difference of opinion on this issue among the scholars with each side presenting their evidence. Simply based on his own presentation of the issue—and especially given the fact that he did not discuss the question of the example given being of a Shareeah before that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—one cannot say that one opinion is definitely stronger than the other. Hence, as the author himself has concluded on other issues, this is an issue in which there is room for disagreement and neither view should be considered extreme. Allah knows best.—JZ]

³ *Al-Hijrah*, p. 10.

⁴ *Al-Khilaafah*, vol. 5, p. 13.

disbelievers, with the ruling class and the citizenry being the same in that matter.

All of these issues were discussed as part of this research. Their falsehood has been explained. And what is built upon a false premise is also false.

Chapter Five: Concluding Chapter

I now throw down my journey's staff. I have reached the end of this research for which I have been reading for more than three years. I have become fully acquainted with its different aspects after examining it closely; I have organized its ends after gathering them together. I will conclude by recording the most important conclusions I reached and what I see to be the most important recommendations.

Conclusions of the Research

First, Islam is a religion of justice and moderation. Hence, it prohibits both forms of deviation: extremism by going beyond the proper limits and negligence in not meeting the minimum limits.

Second, Islam is a religion of ease. This is one of its clearest features and one of its distinguishing signs. It is also a religion of facility and easiness. For that reason, it commands that people be treated in an easy way, with gentleness and softness, when being called to Islam.

Third, Islam is also the religion of forbearance. It calls for gentleness when conveying its message. In fact, forbearance is practiced in its preaching even with its enemies, with no aggression, mutilation or treachery permitted.

Fourth, lexically *al-ghulu* ("extremism") means, "going beyond the limit." The words *al-tatarruf*, *al-tashaddud*, *al-tanatta* and *al-unf* are all very close related to the word *al-ghulu*, in any one of the following ways:

- (a) it is synonymous,
- (b) or there is a general-more specific type of relationship between them,
- (c) or it represents a characteristic or phenomenon of *al-ghulu*.

Fifth, the Shareeah definition of *al-ghulu* is, "passing beyond the established limit by either praising or disparaging something more than it is deserving."

Sixth, extremism has historical roots to it. One finds extremist groups or sects in Muslim history. The contemporary extremists benefited from the extremists of the past by using the same arguments and proofs for their own views. However, there is no historical connection between the extremism of the Khawaarij, for example, and the contemporary extremists.

Seventh, extremism also has intellectual roots that are exemplified in two facets:

(a) The complexity of the views and opinions: This appears in the issue of *al-haakimiyyah* (the law and mode of government). Contemporary extremism may be traced back to the dispute that occurred over that issue and to a mistaken understand of that issue as well as the fact that ruling by other than what Allah revealed had become commonplace in the Muslim lands.

(b) The methodology that the extremists used to come to their conclusions [is another ideological root of extremism]. It was shown that their approach was confused and distorted, hence leading to distorted conclusions.

Eight, there are also psychological roots for extremism. These roots also have two aspects to them:

(a) A reaction occurred. The Muslim societies were filled with many laws, systems and interactions that were the antithesis of the religion and contradicted the values of society. This led to a reaction by some of the members of that society to counter what was occurring.

(b) Some also had a psychological make-up that made them conducive to extremism. This includes a lack of knowledge of the Shareeah and being greatly affected by the deeds that contradict the Shareeah that they witnessed in their societies.

Nine, understanding the nature of contemporary extremism is one of the greatest building blocks to finding a remedy for the problem. The most notable aspects of the nature of extremism in the lives of contemporary Muslims are as follows:

(a) The problem is a reaction to a situation that is not proper—regardless of whether it is wrong in reality or simply wrong in the conception of the extremist—while the extremist himself is to be held responsible because he is like a fertile piece of land ready for extremism.

(b) From a time aspect, the problem can be studied from two perspectives:

(i) The individual perspective: In general, this is a temporary state that ends up in either following the Sunnah and taking a moderate approach or in heresies and harshness.

(ii) The group or organization perspective—or the existence of extremism in the Nation: This is an ever-present problem as no era has been free of all forms of extremism. However, the problem becomes smaller or larger depending on the factors and causes that lead to it.

(3) The [extremism] problem is multi-dimensional. It is a religious, Shareeah problem. It is a political problem. It is a social problem. It is also a problem related to security and safety. Islam is a comprehensive religion. Therefore, to understand this problem as being one related to security alone will lead to a serious gap in one's understanding.

(4) The problem is a universal problem. Every Muslim country complains of it, leaving aside the question of how sincere or truthful is the complaint.

(5) It is a homegrown product in every country and it is not something imported. Indeed, it springs from within the [contemporary] Muslim society itself.

(6) If one is studying the partial, deed-related extremism, it is a problem on an individual level. However, if one is studying the comprehensive, belief-related extremism, it is a problem on a group level.

Ten, in comparison with the amount of terrorism in the world and the amount of extremism among the religions and other movements in various countries, it is clear that the amount of extremism among Muslims has been greatly exaggerated and—due to the goals of the Western media—has been given more than its appropriate share of attention and coverage.

Eleven, a review of the statements of contemporary scholars concerning extremism finds that their views are based on Shareeah texts. However, they make some mistakes when it comes to the practical application of those texts.

Twelve, studying and analyzing the research done by secularists on extremism shows that their conception springs from their secularist beliefs. They view every request to apply the law of Allah, every call to the comprehensiveness of Islam and its application to every aspect of life as a type of extremism and radicalism.

Thirteen, in their study of the problem of extremism among Muslims, the Westerners proceed from the concept of extremism among the Christians. They want to transplant that conception to the Muslim lands due to some need in their own souls. Their conception leads them to the statement that the literal belief in the Quran and the belief that it is the word and commands of Allah that must be applied is a form of extremism or fundamentalism, in the

same way that the literal belief in the Gospel and the belief that the Gospels are the word of God is extremism or fundamentalism.

Fourteen, there are numerous manifestations of extremism in the contemporary lives of Muslims. I have been able to come up with the following for which there is some evidence:

(1) Extremism with respect to the concept of the *jamaah* (Muslim group or organization),

(2) Extremism with respect to absolute obedience to the *jamaah*,

(3) Extremism by making the *jamaah* the standard for what is correct,

(4) Extremism with respect to the personality of the leader,

(5) Extremism in disassociating oneself from the Muslim societies,

(6) Extremism in declaring people disbelievers due to sins they committed,

(7) Extremism in the declaration as disbelievers all rulers, without exception, who rule not in accord with what Allah revealed,

(8) Extremism in the declaration as disbelievers all followers, without exception, of those rulers who rule not in accord with what Allah revealed,

(9) Extremism in declaring those outside of the *jamaah* to be disbelievers,

(10) Extremism in declaring all who live in the [claimed *jaahili*] society and do not make *hijrah* to be disbelievers,

(11) Extremism by declaring individuals to be disbelievers without taking into consideration the Shareeah conditions and parameters,

(12) Extremism by declaring as disbelievers those who do not declare the people they claim to be disbelievers as being disbelievers,

(13) Extremism by advocating the position of suspending judgment and clarification,

(14) Extremism by describing the contemporary societies with the attribute of *jaahiliyyah*,

(15) Extremism by describing the lands of the Muslims today as the lands of *kufr*,

(16) Extremism by devising new sources of the Shareeah,

(17) Extremism with respect to the concept of *taqleed* and the rejection of the consensus,

(18) Extremism in the censuring of those who make *taqleed*,

(19) Extremism by requiring all people to make *ijtihad*,

(20) Extremism by being harsh upon the people,

- (21) Extremism in the form of being harsh upon oneself,
- (22) Extremism in the form of forbidding what is good and pure,
- (23) Extremism by revolting against the ruler without taking into consideration the proper Shareeah conditions,
- (24) Extremism in the form of prohibiting education and in calling people to illiteracy,
- (25) Extremism by prohibiting prayers in the mosques,
- (26) Extremism by suspending the Friday Prayers,
- (27) Extremism in the form of separating and isolating oneself from society,
- (28) Extremism in the form of making *hijrah* from the societies,
- (29) Extremism via the view that the laws have certain stages to them or, in other words, the heretical view that we are currently living in the Makkan era,
- (30) Extremism by prohibiting employment in government jobs.

Recommendations

Solving the extremism problem is a commonly felt concern for all strata of society, starting from the rulers and ending with the extremists or those accused of extremism. In the following, I shall mention a number of recommendations that I believe need to be followed to solve the extremism problem. It should be noted, though, that the issue is in need of a lengthier discussion. I plan on, by the grace and help of Allah, dedicating an entire research to the cure as well as its cause. [As for now, here are the main means of solving this problem:]

First: The Spreading of the Beliefs of the Early Generations (*Salaf*)

Reflecting over the manifestations of extremism that exists in contemporary times shows that it is a phenomenon that falls outside of the beliefs of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* and the correct Shareeah beliefs. Therefore, the spreading and dissemination of the correct beliefs—the correct beliefs being taught in the schools, universities and mosques, being studied

carefully by the callers to Islam and made as part of their program—should provide a protection for society from extremism.

Second: The Dissemination of the Knowledge of the Shareeah

Those who have been afflicted by falling into extremism in the current era are distinguished by the fact that they are completely lacking or very lacking when it comes to the knowledge of the Shareeah. They are completely preoccupied with *dawah* (calling people to the path) and their only provisions for that are exuberance and zealotry, without Shareeah knowledge. Therefore, I recommend the disseminating of Shareeah knowledge and the establishment of appropriate institutes, such as what are called open universities as well as centers serving the society at the Islamic universities. These would be meant for the purpose of teaching the youth the Islamic sciences. Furthermore, Shareeah study programs should be set up—run by those who are qualified and trusted by the people, that is, the people of knowledge and sincerity.

Third: Reviving the Role of the Scholars

The absence, either completely or relatively, of the scholars in the public arena in many of the Islamic countries is one of the causes and roots of extremism. Therefore, I recommend that attention should be paid to reestablishing their role. In a major way, the responsibility for that lies with three groups of people:

The first group is the scholars themselves. They must make their actions purely for the sake of Allah and fulfill the obligations upon them: with respect to the rulers by advising them, with respect to the masses by teaching and directing them, and with respect to the youth by raising them and giving them attention. They must also distance themselves from everything that degrades their position and the honor of the scholars, such as seeking and rushing after the material things of this world or having a weak adherence to the commands of the religion.

The second group is the people of authority and power. They should support the scholars, seek their counsel, follow their opinions and put their trust in them to solve the major manifestations of deviation.

The third group is the members of society as a whole, but the youth in particular. They must listen to the scholars and implement their commands and Shareeah verdicts.

If the role of the scholars is fulfilled in society, it will act as a shield from the phenomena of deviations and a protection from the problem of extremism, as well as from other problems. Knowledge and wisdom are the two tools for correcting the path. Exuberance and zealotry are not sufficient without knowledge and wisdom. And those two, knowledge and wisdom, are not found save among the people of knowledge concerning the law of Allah.

Fourth: Dialogue and Debates with the Extremists

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established the method of dialogue with the extremists and the way in which their misconceptions and falsehood are to be rebutted. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refuted Dhu al-Khuwaisir by saying,

وَيْلَكَ وَمَنْ يَعْدِلُ إِنْ لَمْ أَعْدِلْ

“Woe to you. Who is there who is just if I am not just?”¹ The Companions also followed that practice. Ali ibn Abi Taalib debated with the Khawaarij, as did Abdullah ibn Abbaas.

Therefore, the method of debating or dialogue is very successful as a remedy for extremism. This is because the light of truth shines and its proofs are definitive. It will always be dominant and can never be dominated. However, I must point out a number of important points for such debates:

(1) The debate must be based upon trust. The scholar who is discussing and debating with them must be in a position of trust with respect to those accused of extremism.

(2) Those accused of extremism must be dealt with as people who have been accused of something and not like convicted criminals who are in front of a judge awaiting sentencing.

(3) Both sides must have complete freedom in the discussion. The scholar cannot dominate the discussion nor can the discussion by those accused of extremism be done under the shadow of strength and violence.

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

(4) The goal of the debate must be the seeking of the truth, not simply a compiling of evidence against those accused of extremism.

Five: Bridging the Gap Between the Scholars, Rulers and Youth

One of the greatest difficulties for the problem of extremism is that there is a wide gap between the scholars and rulers on one side and the youth on the other. Bridging this gap is a must in order for there to be mutual trust and in order to build up the needed love under whose shade all of the problems can be solved. When a youth trusts those in authority and power, be it a ruler or scholar, he will then listen to him and obey him. And when the one in authority, be it a ruler or scholar, trusts the youth, he will open his heart to him, solve his problems and rectify his complaints.

Six: Ruling In Accord with the Law of Allah

It has been made manifestly clear that ruling by other than what Allah revealed is one of the principle roots of extremism. Indeed, most of the manifestations of extremism are related to it. Therefore, it is a must upon the Muslim rulers to rule in accord with what Allah revealed throughout all aspects of life. The economic, political, social, security, media and other types of policies must all be laid out in the light of the Shareeah. Then, they must be followed up by their proper implementation and execution.

Seven: Clarifying the Realities

The exact nature of extremism from a Shareeah point of view is unknown to many people today. Many writers, members of the media and politicians deal with extremism without a correct understanding of its reality. In fact, many of them view adhering to the religion as a form of extremism. Therefore, I recommend that the one who deals with this problem must first have a true perception of the reality of extremism. Otherwise, the supposed remedy will lead to the opposite of what is desired and on the tongue of the extremist will be [like the words of the poet], "If

loving the family of the Prophet is to be rejected/then let humans and jinn witness that I am a Raafidhi.”¹

Eight: Dealing with the Problem from Its Roots

Many of the attempts to solve the problem of extremism deal only with some of its manifestations, such as violence. Those attempts neglect the most important aspect in solving the problem. The most important aspect is to concentrate on its roots, so that the remedy can be an effective one, cutting off the problem from its source so that its well becomes empty and its tributaries dry.

Nine: Starting from a Sound Ground

A large number of those who are involved in solving the problem of extremism are themselves extremists—however, extremists on the other end of the spectrum. These are the secularists who deal with the others from the vantage point of secularism. They do not see anything as being just except for their own opinions. Hence, any attempt at solving the problem of extremism must start from a sound ground, and that is the moderate, true religion. In this way, it will be possible to achieve a mutually acceptable solution that will end in good results.

Ten: Eliminating the [Sources of the] Grievances

Studying the problem of extremism makes it clear that this problem has certain psychological roots that are exemplified by a reaction to circumstances that are unjustifiable—such as ruling by other than what Allah revealed. Therefore, the extremist complains and demands that those conditions be corrected. However, he expresses those demands in way that is not sanctioned by the Shareeah. They are joined in these justified demands by all who desire good for their nation, their people and all of mankind.

¹ [That is, if a Sunni misunderstands the issue involved, he could make it seem like the Sunnis are against loving the Prophet’s family. Any Muslim definitely loves the Prophet’s family. So if a Muslim thinks that the Sunnis do not love the Prophet’s family while the Shiah/Raafidhah do, he will immediately declare himself to be a Raafidhi. In the same way, people could be driven to extremism if the problem is not understood and explained in the proper way. Allah knows best.—JZ]

However, they differ in the way that they state their grievances and make their demands. Therefore, I see that the greatest and closest means to put an end to the problem of extremism is by removing the sources of their grievances and striking at its root. This is particularly true since many of the circumstances that the extremists are demanding to be changed are, in fact, definitely wrong [and need to be changed].

Eleven: The Rebuilding of Society

The non-Islamic manifestations that have afflicted many of the Muslim nations are one of the greatest things leading to the support of extremism and are one of its roots. Indeed, they are a source of agitation for the one who is calm, not to speak of others. Therefore, it is obligatory upon the Muslims, citizenry and rulers, to rebuild their societies upon a sound foundation from the religion. All of the aspects of deviation must be studied and remedied in the light of the Shareeah.

Twelve: Refraining from Using Force in Dealing with Extremism

From past experience, it is clear that the use of force in dealing with the extremism of contemporary times does not bring about any remedy for extremism. Indeed, it was a reason for the appearance of the extremist movement. Therefore, I recommend that force and power not be used in dealing with extremism. That simply leads to greater harm and a very dangerous situation. If all other peaceful means are exhausted in dealing with extremism and punishment is the only means left, it must be done based on a judgment from the scholars and Shareeah judges. Furthermore, the punishment must be specific for the individuals involved and not on a wide scale, as has occurred in some Muslim lands.

Thirteen: Adhering to the Shareeah Methodology for Evidence and Derivation of Rulings

A review of the writings of the extremists makes it very clear that they have a deficiency with respect to their methodology of reasoning and deriving conclusions. This was found in the following:

(a) By their introducing new sources for the Shareeah from which rules are derived, and

(b) By their following of an incorrect methodology to derive laws from the specific pieces of evidence.

Therefore, I exhort everyone who embarks upon writing to be very keen in adhering to the proper Shareeah methodology, and to use as evidence what the early scholars of this nation used as the sources of the Shareeah: the Quran, the Sunnah, the consensus...

One must also follow the sound method of deriving laws. One must give preference to the specific texts over the general statements and apply the conditional clauses against the unconditional statements. One must also give preference to the explained and detailed texts over the ambiguous texts. Following the proper methodology is the means by which one arrives at correct conclusions and rulings.

Fourteen: Being Wary of Accusing the Extremists and Declaring Them to be Disbelievers

Most of what is written on the problem of extremism springs from the view that those accused of extremism are foreign agents, traitors, Khawaarij or even disbelievers. I would like to advise people to be very careful from falling into something similar to what the extremists are accused of: declaring the people disbelievers. The terms related to declaring others disbelievers or rebels are Shareeah terms and they must never be used haphazardly. Indeed, their use must be built upon the relevant Shareeah conditions and parameters.

I also recommend being very careful in accusing the extremists of being foreign agents or traitors. If the extremist himself knows that he is not a foreign agent or traitor calling him such will only make him more dedicated to the path he is following.

Fifteen: Being Wary of Duplicity and Contradictions

Avoiding duplicity and contradiction is of prime importance for the one who desires to deal with the extremism problem. Many contemporaries have fallen into a sort of double-faced approach. They raise their voices in the media and draw people's attention to the issue of the *niqaab* (face veil) and they consider it, according to their claims, a form of extremism. At the same time, we never see

any of them opening their mouths about the disgusting semi-nudity that one sees in the streets and at the beaches. The manifestations of disintegration in the Muslim society are brought about in the name of “individual freedom.” Isn’t the wearing of the *niqaab* also an issue of “individual freedom”? [Why do they not speak out in its defense also?] This duplicity enflames the fire in the hearts of those who are just and moderate, not to speak of the extremists. “If people would take a positive stance toward those who reject the tenets of the faith and disregard its rulings, and would change what they see of evil with their hands or their tongues, we would not find this religious extremism among us. And if we would find it, for one reason or another, it would be much less violent than how it is currently manifested.”¹

Sixteen: Being Wary of Confusing Revival with Extremism

It is obligatory upon the Muslims—leaders, scholars and masses—to be wary of confusing and mixing the Islamic revival with extremism. They also must be cautious about following the steps of animosity that justify striking out against the Islamic revival under the guise of striking out against extremism. In reality, extremism in the Muslim societies is of a small size. It is unjust to pronounce a ruling [of extremism] upon the majority who, in reality, represent a just and balanced movement.

At the end of this research, I once again praise Allah by whose blessings the righteous deeds are performed and completed, the One for whom is the praise in the beginning and the end. For Him also is the rule and judgment and all matters return unto Him. I must stress that in this research I have reduced the matters even though some may think that I have made them more. I have been brief although some may think that I have gone on at length. Certainly, the pages I have not written are more than what I have mentioned.

Anyone who comes across this research is deserving of filling any shortcoming that it may have and of covering any slips herein. The first and last of people know that no one is safe from error. This is especially true when the writing comes from a satchel that has little knowledge and a pen that is incapable.

¹ Al-Qardhaawi, *al-Sahwah al-Islamiyyah bain al-Juhood wa al-Tatarruf*, p. 140.

O Allah, do not punish a hand that has written intending to deny from Your religion the distortions of the extremists and the deceptions of the falsifiers, nor punish a tongue that has wanted to defend and guard Your Law. By Your Grace, do not keep from me the good that is with You due to the evil that is within me.

And all praise is to Allah alone.

Abdul Rahman ibn Mualaa al-Luwaihiq

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¹ [Note that only the essential bibliographical information has been presented in this translation. Some additional information, such as names of editors, edition numbers and so forth, have been deleted from the text due to its lack of relevance to most of the English reading audience.—JZ]

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¹ [That is, of course, foreign to the Arabic writing author. Unfortunately, this section, the only section in English in the entire dissertation, is filled with typographical errors, some of which this translator was not able to correct or determine the correct wording.]

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Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

Glossary

- Ahaad* (أحاد) hadith – this is any hadith that does not meet the conditions for *mutawaatir*. As long as a hadith meets the conditions for acceptability, it is acceptable as a proof in matters of law or faith, even though it is *ahaad*.
- Ahl al-Hall wa al-Aqd* (الحل والعقد) - the most respected and influential people in Islamic society; they have the most important role in determining who is to be the ruler and when should the ruler be removed.
- Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (أهل السنة والجماعة) - “The People of the Sunnah and the Congregation,” this refers to those people who follow the way of the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the way of his Companions with respect to beliefs and deeds or a general application of the religion of Islam.
- Daar* (دار) – “abode, land.”
- Daar al-Harb* (دار الحرب) – “the land of war,” that is, the non-Islamic state or the state at war with Islam.
- Daar al-Islaam* or *Daar of Islaam* (دار الإسلام) – “the land of Islam,” that is, the Islamic state in which the laws of Allah are dominant or manifest.
- Ghulu, al-* (الغلو) – extremism.
- Haakimiyyah, al-* (الحاكمية) – in this work, this is a reference to the concept that the only one who has the right to law down the laws for mankind is Allah. Hence, all laws and the system of government must be in accord with what Allah has revealed.
- Hasan* (حسن) - this is a verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) although it is not as strong as *sahih*.
- Hijrah* (هجرة) - lit., “emigration, migration.” In the early history of Islam, the Muslims were commanded to emigrate to Madinah to fortify the Muslim community there and to learn directly from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When used in the expression, “Year of the *hijrah*,” it is a reference to the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) migration from Makkah to Madinah that marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar; it also refers to boycotting or avoiding one another.
- IjtihAAD* (اجتهاد) - the use of personal reasoning to determine what is correct from the Shareeah’s point of view. This is to be done only by those who meet its qualifications.

- Jaahiliyyah, al-* (الجاهلية) - the period or time of ignorance; in particular, it refers to the time before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however it can be used in reference to any particular act or characteristics of an era that share the same essential characteristics of ignorance or negligence of God's laws.
- Jihad* (جهاد) - to exert oneself, strive, struggle; in particular in fiqh, it refers to fighting against the unbelievers in order to spread the word of Allah.
- Jizyah* (جزية) - this is the tax that non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state must pay in lieu of military service.
- Kaafir* (كافر) - a disbeliever.
- Khawaarij, al-* (الخواارج) - one of the first heretical groups in the history of Islam. Known for their extremist views, they even declared the caliphs Uthman and Ali disbelievers. They believed that anyone who commits a major sin falls out of the fold of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prophesied their coming and stated that they should be fought.
- Kufr* (كفر) - an act or belief tantamount to disbelief. However, not everyone who holds such a belief or performs such an act is automatically or directly a disbeliever.
- Kunya* (كنية) - this is a common name by which people are referred; it is of the form, "father of," or "mother of," such as, "father of Muhammad."
- Madhhab* (مذهب) - school of fiqh or school of thought.
- Mujtahid* (مجتهد) - one who exercises *ijtihaad* or personal, scholarly reasoning.
- Mutawaatir* (متواتر) - something narrated in such a way, such as by so many people in each generation, that there is no question about its correctness and authenticity.
- Raafidhah* (رافضة) - see Shiah
- Rukhsah* (رخصة) - exemption or permission from the *shareeah* to do something that is, under ordinary circumstances, not to be done.
- Sahih* (صحيح) - this is an authentic or verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).
- Shiah* (شيعة) - a sectarian group founded years after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him); they claim that Ali ibn Abu Taalib should have been the first caliph instead of Abu Bakr; and they claim to be the followers of the descendants of Ali
- Taaghoot* (طاغوت) - false god or false object of worship.
- Takfeer* (تكفير) - the act of declaring another person a *kaafir* or disbeliever.
- Taqleed* (تقليد) - the following of a scholar's or school's opinion without necessarily knowing their proofs or reasoning.

Ummah (أمة) - “nation, people,” it refers either to the Muslim nation or the people who have been addressed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which would be all of mankind from his time until the day of Judgment.

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Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims

In this work, the noted author Dr. Shaikh Abdul-Rahmaan al-Luwaihiq has concentrated on many of the manifestations of extremism found in the Arab world. However, upon closer inspection, one will readily note that many of the ideas which Dr. al-Luwaihiq critiques can be found in many Muslim communities. Indeed, Dr. al-Luwaihiq touches upon many topics of direct concern to Muslim minorities living in the West. For example, he addresses the following topics:

- The definition of extremism and its parameters from a Shareeah perspective.
- The place and importance of the hijrah.
- The ruling for the hijrah under different circumstances.
- The definition of taqeed and the limits of its acceptability.
- The concept of the jamaah and the question of making an oath of allegiance to a group's leader.
- The ruling of taking a governmental post under a tyrant Muslim ruler.
- The Shareeah conditions and parameters for declaring another Muslim a disbeliever.

These are the kinds of issues that Muslims are often confused about. Dr. al-Luwaihiq has also done an excellent job in the way that he handles these issues. He does not simply present the views of the extremists and critique them. Instead, he presents the issue from the point of view of the scholars of the ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah. If there is a difference of opinion on an issue, he presents the issue in detail, giving all of the relevant proofs for each viewpoint. Then he tries to determine the strongest view on the issue. It is only after presenting the correct view that he evaluates the extremists. He allows them, by quoting them at length, to present their own viewpoint. After that, he gives a critical analysis of their viewpoints and clearly shows where and how they have erred. This is indeed an excellent and very beneficial approach that he has followed.



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