

*Selected chapters from*

# بصائر في الفتن

## The Way Out of Tribulations

*By Shaykh Muhammad Isma'il al-Muqaddam*

*Translated by Farhia Yahya*

*"I fear for you a Fitnah that is like thick smoke, wherein a man's heart will die just as his body dies."*

- Ibn Mas'ud (radhiallahu `anhu)

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## Translator's Foreword

Indeed, all Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, seek His Help and Forgiveness and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and the evil consequences of our own actions. Whomsoever Allah guides, no-one can lead him astray and whomsoever He leaves astray, no-one can guide him. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Most High and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and final Messenger – sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam.

وَأَتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*"And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in particular those of you who do wrong, and know that Allah is Severe in punishment."*

[Al-Anfal: 25]

This Ummah is certainly one bestowed with mercy, but it is also one that will be tested again and again with trials and tribulations. The hidden nature of *Fitan* and the way it develops is indeed intriguing and captivating to the ignorant mind, but its evils and the confusion it causes is clear to every wise one. Tribulations when they come seize the minds of the masses such that there hardly remains an intelligent, clear-minded person amidst the chaos, and hardly is it the case that a person plunges into a *Fitnah* and is saved - hardly ever is such a person saved.

'*Basa'ir fil Fitan*' is a recent publication by Shaykh Muhammad Isma'il al-Muqaddam dealing with this topic, and despite its size, I found it to be a profound book filled with numerous points of benefit, wisdom and advice, historical incidents and statements from the Salaf regarding this phenomenon of *Fitnah* in the Ummah of Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). The best a person can do for him/herself in our current times is become well-acquainted with this subject in order to safeguard themselves and protect their souls from becoming involved with such a delicate yet disastrous matter which has been known to spark from a single word uttered and yet at the same time, bring about the shedding of innocent blood.

But what is a *Fitnah* (tribulation) and what is not? Trials and tribulations can affect a person, his soul, his family, community or the Ummah at large. How do we recognise it and how should we act or react when faced with the troubles of *Fitan*?

In his introduction to this book, Shaykh al-Muqaddam states:

*"... Indeed tribulations are like accumulated clouds, coming one after another engulfing people in total blindness and deafness, just like the dark pieces of the night or the clashes of the deep waves. In it, the minds of the people are seized and their hearts die, except the one whom Allah protects."*

*It is from the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), which is the best of guidance that there should be preparation for tribulations before they fall by arming ourselves with knowledge and insight (basirah), with good deeds, Ijtihad (struggling to distinguish the truth) and preparation for the Day of Reckoning – so that we can be aware of sins, soften our hearts, wake up from our heedlessness and take advantage of the occasion before the sudden arrival of Fitān and its terrors.”*

It is therefore upon us to know what tribulations are, how they appear, their nature and consequences. This Ummah has been subject to its horrors in the past, where even the best of generations were affected by it, and surely, present and future generations shall also be subjected to it.

*Basa'ir fil Fitān* in its entirety has not been translated here but rather only selected chapters, which I deemed crucial and beneficial. May Allah grant us salvation from the Fitān of this world and endow us with knowledge, wisdom and correct action which aids us and keeps us steadfast when trials, tribulations and calamities befall. Amin

Farhia Yahya  
Ramadhan 1430

## No doubt, Fitnah will take place

Usamah ibn Zayd: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Do you see what I can see? I see the places of tribulation amidst your homes just like the places of raindrops as they fall (on the earth).'*'<sup>1</sup>

Imam al-Nawawi said, "The analogy to raindrops is due to it (the fitan) being in large amounts and widespread, i.e. it's numerous and it'll engulf the masses; it is not particular to a group of people. And this is an indication of long-standing wars between them such as the incident of the Camel, *Siffin*, and *al-Harrah*, the killing of 'Uthman and the killing of al-Husayn (radhiallahu anhuma) as well as other incidents. In it also is a clear miracle for him (the Messenger) – sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam."<sup>2</sup>

Tribulations will surely take place in the Ummah of Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and whatever he said will take place, must surely take place. Therefore, it is incumbent to observe patience in it, prepare for it and be cautious of it. In fact, we must take extra caution in our current times today because we have drawn closer to the Coming of the Hour compared to those of the Muslims who came before us fourteen centuries ago.

Miqdad ibn al-Aswad: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'The joyful one is he who is protected from tribulations and he who when afflicted, bears patience.'*<sup>3</sup>

Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, *'Nothing remains of this world except trials and tribulations.'*<sup>4</sup>

'Abdur-Rahman ibn 'Abd Rabb al-Ka'bah narrates: I went to 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas while he was sitting under the shade of the Ka'bah with the people surrounding him. I heard him say '... The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) rose to give us a sermon. He said, *'There has not been a Prophet before me except that it was mandatory upon him to guide his nation to that which was good for them and warn them from that which was bad for them. Indeed this nation of yours, its good times have been made to come at its beginning and indeed the last of them will be afflicted with a trial and matters which they dislike. Then there will come a Fitnah, parts of it refining the other and a believer will say, 'In this is my destruction.' Then it will depart and another Fitnah will come where the believer will say, 'In this is my destruction.' Then it will depart. So whoever wishes that he be saved from the Fire and entered into Paradise, let him die as a believer in Allah and the Last Day, and let him go to a people who love to come to him...'*

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1 Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim

2 Sharh al-Nawawi (18/7, 8)

3 Reported by Abu Dawud, declared Sahih by al-Albani

4 Sahih Ibn Majah

'Abdur-Rahman said: 'I then thrust my head through the people and said, 'I swear to you, did you really hear this from the Messenger of Allah?' He (Ibn al-'Aas) pointed to his ears and said, '*My ears heard it and my heart understood it.*'<sup>5</sup>

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari: The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '***My Ummah is one bestowed with Mercy; there is no punishment for it in the Hereafter. Its punishment is in this world: Tribulations, earthquakes and killings.***'<sup>6</sup>

Abu Burdah said, 'As I was standing in the Emirate of Ziyad, I clapped my hands together out of astonishment. A man from the Ansar whose father was a *Sahabi* (companion) said to me, '*What has surprised you, O Abu Burdah?*' I said, '*I am surprised at a nation whose religion is one, whose Prophet is one, whose Da'wah (call) is one, whose proof (Qur'an) is one, and whose battles are one, but yet they permit the killing of each other!*' He said, '*Do not be surprised for my father told me that he heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, 'My Ummah is one bestowed with Mercy...'*' and he mentioned the above Hadith.<sup>7</sup>

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5 Sahih Ibn Majah, al-Silsilah al-Sahihah by al-Albani

6 Reported by Abu Dawud, al-Hakim, Imam Ahmad. Declared Sahih by al-Albani

7 Reported by al-Hakim, Sahih.

## The Nature of Fitan

Tribulations have a certain nature and characteristics which aid in gaining insight to it, allowing a person to protect and save themselves from it – and how many *fitan* have occurred due to not knowing these characteristics!

From the characteristics of Fitan is that:

- **It is attractive to people during its onset such that it deceives them with its illusions**

Khalaf ibn Hushib said, 'The people used to be fond of reciting these lines of poetry whenever tribulations approached. Imru' al-Qays (pre-Islamic poet) said:

الحرب أول ما تكون فتية \*\*\* تسعى بزيتها لكل جهول  
*War when it first appears, is like a young woman  
Who hastens with her beauty to every ignorant one*

حتى إذا اشتعلت وشب ضرامها \*\*\* ولت عجوزا غير ذات حليل  
*Until when it (war) becomes fierce and is prolonged  
It turns into an old woman without a husband*

شمطاء ينكرونها وتغيرت \*\*\* مكروهة للشم والتقبيل  
*Grey-haired, so altered and different  
An unpleasant one to smell and kiss!*

Khalaf used to say, 'The people should learn these lines during times of Fitnah.'<sup>8</sup>

- **Tribulations usurp the minds of men**

Ibn Mas'ud: 'I fear for you a *Fitnah* that is like thick smoke, wherein a man's heart will die just like his body dies.'<sup>9</sup>

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman: The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '*There will be a tribulation wherein the minds of men will be seized such that a sound-minded man will hardly be seen.*'<sup>10</sup>

He (radhiallahu `anhu) also said, 'Alcohol doesn't take away the minds of men as much as Fitnah does.'<sup>11</sup>

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8 Al-Sunan al-Ma'thurah by Imam al-Shafi'i, Al-Bukhari

9 Reported by Nu'aym ibn Hammad in 'Al-Fitnah'

10 See above source, declared Sahih by al-Hindi in 'Kanz al-'Ummal'

11 Reported by Abu Nu'aym in 'al-Hilyah'



Abu Musa: The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Before the Coming of the Hour, there will be al-Harj.'* They said, 'And what is al-Harj?' He said, *'Killings. It won't be your killing of the polytheists but rather it's when you kill each other such that a man will kill his neighbour, his brother, his uncle and his cousin.'* They said, *'Whilst we are sound-minded then?'* He said, *'The minds of the people in that era will be seized and there will remain from the people those who are lowly and unintelligent, most of them will think they have a basis but they have no basis.'*

Abu Musa: 'By him in Whose Hand is my soul, if it takes hold of me, I don't see a way out of it neither for me nor for you except that we should exit from it just like we entered into it, without spilling any blood or seizing any wealth.' <sup>12</sup>

Hudhyafah (radhiallahu `anhu) put forth a test which allows a person to see how much he has been affected by a Fitnah. He said, *'Verily, the hearts are exposed to Fitan so any heart that takes it, is marked with a black spot and if it turns away from it, it's marked with a white spot. Whoever amongst you wishes to know if a tribulation has afflicted him or not should take a look: If he sees something to be Haram (impermissible) which he previously saw as Halal (permissible) or he sees something to be Halal which he previously saw as Haram,, then indeed the Fitnah has afflicted him.'* <sup>13</sup>

- **And from the nature of a Fitnah is that when it takes place, it spins out of control very quickly to the extent that even those who set it off first cannot calm it down**

Some scholars from al-Sham (Greater Syria) used to say: 'Whoever exposes his soul to the causes of Fitnah at first, will not be saved in the end even if he struggled.'

Nu'man ibn Bashir used to say, 'O people! Take the foolish amongst you by their hands. Take the foolish by their hands before they destroy you.'

Ibn al-Taymiyyah said, 'When a Fitnah takes place, the wise ones cannot push back the foolish (who set off the tribulation) and this is the nature of afflictions as Allah Ta'ala said:

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَأُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*"And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in particular those of you who do wrong, and know that Allah is Severe in punishment."*

[Al-Anfal: 25]

... And if a Fitnah occurs, no-one can get away from its fumes except the one protected by Allah.' <sup>14</sup>

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12 Reported by Imam Ahmad, al-Sahihah

13 Hilyat al-Awliya'

14 Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah. Above statement of Nu'man recorded in Ibn al-Mubarak's 'al-Zuhd'

Hudhayfah: 'Tribulations will not harm you so long as you are knowledgeable of your religion, indeed a tribulation will only harm you if Truth and Falsehood become obscure to you.'

Allah Ta'ala named His Noble Book 'al-Nur' (Light), and said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا

"O Mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord, and We sent down to you a manifest Nur (Light – i.e. this Qur'an)."

[al-Nisa: 174]

And He `azza wa jall called it 'Basa'ir' (*insight or a way out*):

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن عَمِيَٰ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

"Verily, Basa'ir (proofs and insight) have come to you from your Lord, so whosoever sees, will do so for (the good of) his own soul, and whosoever blinds himself, will do so to his own harm, and I (Muhammad SAW) am not a watcher over you."

[al-An'am: 104]

It is authentically narrated from 'Abdur-Rahman ibn Abzi that he said, 'I said to Ubay ibn Ka'ab when the people fell into the Fitnah of 'Uthman's killing, 'O Abul Mundhir, what is the way out (of the tribulation)?' He said, '**The Book of Allah**. Whatever is clear to you, act upon it and whatever is obscure to you, leave it to its scholar.'<sup>15</sup>

Abu Mas'ud said to Hudhayfah, 'Verily, tribulation has befallen, so narrate to me what you have heard.' He said, 'Has not clear certainty already come to you? **The Book of Allah `azza wa jall**.'<sup>16</sup>

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15 Al-Tarikh al-Awsat, by al-Bukhari

16 Hilyat al-Awliya'

## **This world is enveloped with oppression except for the gatherings of knowledge\***

Imam Abu Bakr al-Aajuri (rahimahullah) said –

"What do you think of a road that has been covered with many vices and evil, which the people need to traverse on a dark night? If there is light, they walk aright but if not, they become confused and perplexed. But then Allah placed lamps for them which lit their way and so they walked upon it in safety and security. After them came large groups of people who also needed to take that path and so they took it. But whilst on their way, these lamps were blown out and they were plunged into darkness – what then are your thoughts of them?

Such is the analogy of the scholars amongst Mankind. Many people do not know how to offer the obligatory deeds, how to keep away from the impermissible or how to worship Allah except with the presence of scholars. If they pass away, the masses fall into confusion, knowledge becomes worn out and ignorance becomes widespread." <sup>17</sup>

The importance of having knowledgeable people (in society) is due to their insight and understanding, especially in times of tribulation when the scholars endowed with knowledge become the supervisors and leaders looking out for the consequences of Fitan as it approaches.

The poet said in his praise of the one endowed with beneficial insight (*basirah*):

بصير بأعقاب الأمور برأيه \*\*\* كأن له في اليوم عينا في الغد  
*He is insightful of the consequence, by his knowledge  
As if today, he is looking over the events of tomorrow*

For this reason, al-Hasan al-Basri said, 'When a Fitnah first approaches, every scholar recognises it, and only when it dies away does every ignorant one come to know of it.'

Allah `azza wa jall said,

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ  
"Say: "This is my way; I invite unto Allah with *basirah* (insight and sure knowledge), I and whosoever follows me. And Glorified and Exalted be Allah, and I am not of the polytheists."  
[Yusuf: 108]

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17 Akhlaq al-'Ulama, Imam al-Aajurri

\* Taken from the statement of al-Hasan al-Basri, rahimahullah

Adhering to the scholars and going by their guidance is one of the most important ways of protecting against Fitan and guarding against misguidance and error. Truly, Allah aided his Religion by the great *al-Siddiq* (Abu Bakr) *radhiallahu `anhu* during the days of the Apostasy and by Ahmad ibn Hanbal during the days of the Trial. And also by Ibn Taymiyyah during the battles with the animalistic Tartars when he encouraged the leaders and the masses to oppose them. But then the people fell into confusion over whether to kill them or not until Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyyah) said, 'If you see me in the ranks of the Tartars fighting alongside them with a Mushaf (Qur'an) over my head, kill me.' And thus he encouraged the people to fight the Tartars and he strengthened their hearts.

### Patience during times of Fitan

Allah `azza wa jall will reward a believer for his patience as He says,

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ  
فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّىٰ أَنْسَوْكُم ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ تَضَحِكُونَ  
إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

*"Verily! There was a party of My slaves, who used to say: "Our Lord! We believe, so forgive us, and have mercy on us, for You are the Best of all who show mercy!"*

*But you took them for a laughingstock, so much so that they made you forget My Remembrance while you used to laugh at them!*

*Verily! I have rewarded them this Day for their patience; they are indeed the ones that are successful."*

[al-Mu'minun: 109-111]

He also said,

وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا

*"And We have made some of you as a trial for others: will you have patience? And your Lord is Ever All-Seer."*

[al-Furqan: 20]

Usayd ibn Hudhayr: 'A man came to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! You have placed so-and-so in charge and you did not put me in charge.' So the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '*You will surely come to see much severity after I am gone, so be patient until you meet me at the Hawdh (in the Hereafter).*'<sup>18</sup>

In the hadith of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said: '*No-one has been given a gift as ample as patience.*'<sup>19</sup> – and that is because nothing follows patience except ease and vastness.

18 Reported by al-Bukhari

19 Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim

Allah Ta'ala said,

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا  
إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

*"So verily, with the hardship, there is relief  
Verily, with the hardship, there is relief"*

[al-Sharh: 5-6]

For this reason, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (radhiallahu `anhu) used to say, 'We attained the best of our lives through having patience.'

Miqdad ibn al-Aswad: 'By Allah, I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, *'The joyful one is he who is safeguarded from tribulations, the joyful one is he who is safeguarded from tribulations and he who when afflicted, bears patience – and what patience that is!'*<sup>20</sup>

Abu Dharr: The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said to me, 'O Abu Dharr!' I said, 'Here I am O Messenger of Allah,' He said, *'What will you do when death afflicts the people such that their homes become graves?'*

I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best (or I said, 'Whatever Allah and His Messenger choose for me').' He said, *'It is upon you to observe patience.'*<sup>21</sup>

In another narration, Abu Dharr said, 'The Messenger of Allah rode a donkey and sat me behind him. He said, 'O Abu Dharr! *If severe hunger afflicts the people such that you cannot even get up from your bed to go to the mosque, what will you do?'* I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, *'Abstain and be modest.'* Then he said, 'O Abu Dharr! *If severe killings take place such that a slave's home becomes his grave, what will you do?'* I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, *'Be patient.'*<sup>22</sup>

Anas ibn Malik: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'There will come a time when the one who holds onto his religion will be like one holding onto hot coal.'*<sup>23</sup>

Al-Tayyibi said, 'This (above narration) means that just like a person cannot bear to hold onto coals which burn his hands, he won't be able to bear holding onto his religion due to the overwhelming presence of sin and disobedience and the widespread motion of corruption and weakness of faith.'<sup>24</sup>

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20 Reported by Abu Dawud

21 Reported by Abu Dawud, al-Sahihah by al-Albani

22 Reported by Ahmad, Sahih al-Jami'

23 Reported by al-Tirmidhi, al-Sahihah by al-Albani

24 Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi

## Adhering to Forbearance and Kindness & Abandoning Haste and Recklessness

Umm al-Mu'minin 'Aisha: 'The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Kindness is not found in anything except that it beautifies it and it is not taken away from anything except that it defaces it.'*<sup>25</sup>

Jarir: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say to Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays *'Verily, you possess two qualities that are beloved to Allah: forbearance and perseverance.'*<sup>26</sup>

Anas ibn Malik: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Patience is from Allah and hastiness is from the Satan. There is no-one who excuses as much as Allah does and there is nothing more beloved to Allah than forbearance.'*<sup>28</sup>

**Hastiness:** It means to do something before its occasion and the Arabs used to call hastiness 'the mother of all regrets.'<sup>29</sup>

'Ata ibn Abi Rabah used to say, 'Nothing beautifies another as much as *hilm* (forbearance) beautifies *'ilm* (knowledge).'<sup>30</sup>

The leader of the faithful 'Ali ibn Abi Talib said, 'The first thing that a forbearing person is given due to his forbearance is that the people become his supporters against the ignorant and foolish ones.'<sup>31</sup>

Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan: 'A slave doesn't attain his portion of correct judgement until his forbearance overcomes his ignorance and until his patience overcomes his desires. And he can't achieve all that except with ground knowledge.'<sup>32</sup>

He (rahimahullah) once asked Amr ibn al-Ahtam, 'Who is the most courageous man?' He said, 'The one who deflects his ignorance with forbearance.' He said, 'And who is the most generous?' He said, 'The one who sacrifices his *Dunya* (worldly life) to rectify his *Deen* (religion).'<sup>33</sup>

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25 Sahih Muslim

26 The Arabic word '*Hilm*' refers to keeping away from hastiness and abstaining from recklessness. Al-Raghib in his book 'al-Mufradat' said that: '*It means to take control of the soul and keep it in check when anger sets in.*'

27 Sahih Muslim

28 Al-Haythami attributed it to Abu Ya'la and said, 'The narrators are all sahih.' Majma' al-Zawa'id

29 Rawdhat al-'Uqala by Ibn Hibban

30 Al-Darimi

31 Al-Isabah, see also Al-A'lam by al-Zarkali

32 See above

33 See above

Al-Awza'i: 'If 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz wanted to punish a person, he would (first) imprison him for three days then he'd punish him, out of fear of hastening at the first sign of his anger.'<sup>34</sup>

Mutarrif: 'There came upon the people a time when the best of them in their religion was the one who hastened (to do deeds), but there shall come upon the people a time when the best of them in their religion will be those who take their time.'<sup>35</sup>

'Ali ibn 'Atham said in his tafsir, 'They were with the Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and his companions – if they were ordered to do something, they hastened to do it. As for today, the believer has to clarify matters and he should not go forth except in matters that he is knowledgeable of.'

Muhammad ibn Bashir said:

قدر لرجلك قبل الخطو موضعها \*\*\* فمن علا زلقا عن غرة زلجا

*Appoint a spot for your feet before taking a step*

*For whoever slips due to ignorance will surely take a fall*

- In other words, do not approach a matter until you have thought of its consequences and end-results. If it's in your best interests, go for it, otherwise abstain from it.

Hafs ibn Ghayyath: 'I said to Sufyan al-Thawri, 'O Abu 'Abdillah! The people are repeatedly speaking of the Mahdi, so what do you have to say about him?' He said, 'If he were to walk past your door, do not get involved with him until the masses fall in agreement with regards to him.'<sup>36</sup>

Hudhayfah said when mentioning Fitan: 'It is obscure when it first appears but it becomes clear after it leaves.'<sup>37</sup>

Shamr said (regarding Hudhayfah's statement): 'When a tribulation first appears, it is confusing to the people and it makes them feel like they are in the right, until they enter into it and carry out deeds which are not permissible. Then, when it (the tribulation) comes to an end and leaves, its true reality becomes clear and all those who entered into it realise that they were wrong.'<sup>38</sup>

فلا تخذع بأول ما تراه \*\*\* فأول طالع فجر كذوب

*So do not be fooled by the first thing that you see*

*Indeed the first dawn to arise is the False Dawn*

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34 Rawdhat al-'Uqala

35 Hilyat al-Awliya

36 Hilyat al-Awliya

37 Al-Musannaf by Ibn Abi Shaybah

38 Lisan al-'Arab

يشك عليك الأمر ما دام مقبلا \*\*\* وتعرف ما فيه إذا هو أدبر  
*Issues will put you in doubt when they first appear*  
*But you shall know their reality when they pass by & disappear*

And another poet said in his criticism of a people:

ولا يتقون الشر حتى يصيبهم \*\*\* ولا يعرفون الأمر إلا تدبرا  
*And they do not protect against evil until it afflicts them*  
*And they do not know about matters until it pass them by*

Abu Hatim, Muhammad ibn Hibban al-Busti said, 'The hasty one does not reach his goal just as the kind and gentle one is never superseded. The silent one is hardly ever blameworthy and the one who speaks frequently is hardly ever safe. The hasty one speaks before he knows anything and he answers before understanding anything. He praises another before gaining familiarity and he criticises after he has praised! He takes to resolve before giving thought and he moves onward without any resolve. Hastiness is always followed by regret and safety is not something that comes with it, and the Arabs used to call hastiness 'the mother of all regrets.'<sup>39</sup>

لا تعجلن فر بما \*\*\* عجل الفتى فيما يضره  
*Do not be hasty for perhaps it may be*  
*That a youth hastens in a matter which will harm him*

ولربما كره الفتى \*\*\* أمرا عواقبه تسره  
*And perhaps a youth has dislike for something*  
*But its end-result will make him happy*<sup>40</sup>

And al-Qutami recited:

قد يدرك المتأني بعض حاجاته \*\*\* وقد يكون مع المستعجل الزلل  
*The patient one will achieve some of his needs*  
*Whilst the hasty one will fall and slip*

وربما فات بعض القوم أمرهم \*\*\* مع التأني وكان الرأي لو عجلوا  
*And perhaps some people lose out due to their slowness*  
*When it would have been correct had they hastened*<sup>41</sup>

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, 'It is only a hopeful believer or a studious ignorant that is worthy of being spoken to. As for the one who strikes with his sword or whip and says 'Fear me! Fear me!' what do you have to do with him?'<sup>42</sup>

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39 Rawdhat al-'Uqala

40 Basa'ir Dhawi al-Tamyiz

41 Al-'Aqd al-Farid

42 Hilyat al-Awliya, al-Tamhid by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jami' 'Ulum wal-Hikam by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali



Al-Sha'bi: 'A man was once stern towards Mu'awiyah saying, 'I caution you against the Ruler for his anger is like that of a child and his grasp is like that of a lion!' <sup>43</sup>

Al-Mustawrid al-Qurashi said whilst in the presence of 'Amr ibn al-'Aas, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, *'The Hour will come when the Romans are the largest in number.'* 'Amr said to him, 'Look to what you are saying!' He said, 'I only say what I heard from the Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam).' So he said, 'If that's the case, then they (the Romans) have four characteristics <sup>44</sup>: They are the most patient of people during times of tribulation, they are the quickest to recover after a calamity, they are the most likely to return after fleeing and they are the best towards the poor, orphans and the weak. The fifth is a beautiful deed: They prevent the oppression of Rulers the most.' <sup>45</sup>

What is important here is his statement: **'They are the most patient of people during times of tribulation...'** – i.e. If a change of condition appears and Fitna (tribulations) appear, they forbear and they are not hasty nor do they become angry, so that they may ward off killings and save their Christian brethren and save them from tribulations because they know that when a Fitnah appears, it shall descend upon them. So because of this one characteristic in them, they remain as the largest number of people until the Coming of the Hour. How surprising that we do not take up this commendable characteristic which 'Amr ibn al-'Aas praised the Romans for when we have the most right to every good than everyone else.' <sup>46</sup>

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43 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

44 i.e. these characteristics are what will aid them in being so large in number

45 Sahih Muslim

46 Al-Dhawabit al-Shar'iyah li-Mawqif al-Muslim min al-Fitan, by Shaykh Salih ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Aal-Shaykh

## Verification during Times of Fitan

Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas said to his son 'Umar when he came to him, 'O my son! Is it in times of tribulation that you command me to become a leader?! No, by Allah I will never do so until I'm given a sword which if I strike a Muslim with it, it misses target and if I strike a disbeliever with it, it kills him.' I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, '*Verily, Allah loves the rich one who is subtle and pious.*'<sup>47</sup>

Muhammad: 'I was told that Sa'ad (radhiallahu `anhu) said, 'I don't claim that I have any right to the Khilafah (Caliphate) any more than this garment of mine has. I strove in Jihad and I know best what Jihad is. I will not die in rage if there is another man who is better than me, and I will never fight until they give me a sword with two eyes and a tongue proclaiming: 'This is a believer and this is a disbeliever.'<sup>48</sup>

'Amir al-Sha'bi said: 'When Marwan fought with al-Dhahhak ibn Qays, he sent for Ayman ibn Khurayyim al-Asadi saying, 'We would like you to fight along with us.' He said, 'Indeed my father and uncle witnessed Badr and they vowed that I should never fight anyone who bears witness to 'la ilaha illa'Allah (testimony of faith). So if you can grant me security and salvation from the Hellfire, I will fight alongside you!' So (Marwan) said to him, 'Go away' and he began to ridicule and abuse him, so Ayman recited;

ولست مقاتلا رجلا يصلي \*\*\* على سلطان آخر من قريش  
*I am not one to fight a man who offers prayers  
To fight him with another leader from Quraysh*

له سلطانه وعلي أثمى \*\*\* معاذ الله من جهل وطيش  
*He has his authority and I bear my own sins  
May Allah save us from ignorance and recklessness!*

أقاتل مسلما في غير شيء \*\*\* فليس ينفعني ما عشت عيشي  
*Shall I fight a Muslim over nothing at all?  
Then as long as I live, my life will not benefit me*<sup>49</sup>

Humayd ibn Hilal said, 'The Hururiyyah (group from the Khawarij) came to Mutarrif ibn 'Abdillah, calling him to their way and opinion. He said, 'O you people! If I had two souls, I would make one pledge to you and keep away the other, so that if what you call to is correct guidance, I would send the other and if it is misguidance, then only soul would perish and the other would remain. But indeed, it is only one soul that I have and so I will not allow it to be misguided.'<sup>50</sup>

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47 Reported by Imam Ahmad and Muslim

48 Reported by Ibn Sa'ad and al-Tabarani

49 Abu Ya'la in his Musnad

50 Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Hilyat al-Awliya

Mutarrif ibn 'Abdillah said, 'It is more beloved to me that I sit and remain behind upon a clear certainty (of affairs) than to seek the virtues of Jihad with illusion and uncertainty.' <sup>51</sup>

He also said, 'Truly, Fitnah doesn't come in order to guide the people but it comes in order to fight a Muslim and knock him from his Deen (religion). I would rather that Allah says to me 'Why didn't you kill so-and-so' than have Him say to me 'Why did you kill so-and-so?' <sup>52</sup>

'Uqbah ibn Ishaq said, 'Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir used to come to Zubayd ibn al-Harith and mention Ahl al-Bayt (the people of the Prophet's household) in order to encourage him to go forth in the days of Zayd ibn 'Ali. So Zubayd said to him, 'I will not go forth except with a Prophet and I do not find him.' <sup>53</sup>

### **Hastiness is the Mother of all Regrets**

Qatada ibn Di'amah said, 'By Allah, we have indeed seen a people who rush into Fitan and get involved and we have also seen a people who abstain from it out of their regard for Allah and fear of Him. So when it (the tribulation) cleared away, those who held off were in the best of states, had the tranquildest of hearts and possessed lesser burden than those who rushed into it and got involved. The deeds of those people (who got involved) became wretched and full of hate in their hearts whenever they remembered it. By Allah! If those people knew of tribulations when they first come what they know after it has disappeared, then many generations of Mankind would be intelligent and astute.' <sup>54</sup>

Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid said once, 'I witnessed the conquest of al-Qadisiyyah among three thousand of my people and there was no-one from among them except that he feared tribulations except me and there was none except that he envied me for it.' <sup>55</sup>

Hammad ibn Zayd said, 'Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani mentioned the Qurraa (reciters) who went out with Ibn al-Ash'ath (during the times of Fitnah). He said, 'I do not know of anyone amongst them who was killed except that he was the one who rushed to his place of death and I do not know of anyone amongst them who was saved except that he praised Allah Who saved him and regretted what he had done.' <sup>56</sup>

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51 Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah

52 Hilyat al-Awliya

53 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

54 Hilyat al-Awliya

55 Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah (check incident of Ibn al-Ash'ath)

56 Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Ma'rifat al-Tarikh

Malik ibn Dinar: 'I met Ma'bad al-Johani in Makkah after Ibn Al-Ash'ath and he was injured for he had fought al-Hajjaj in all places. He said, 'I have met (many) jurists and many people but I have not seen the like of al-Hasan (who abstained from the Fitnah). If only we had listened to him!' – he said this as if he regretted fighting al-Hajjaj.'<sup>57</sup>

Abu Qilabah said, 'When the Fitnah of Ibn al-Ash'ath died away, we sat in a gathering with Muslim ibn Yasar with us. Muslim said, 'All praise is due to Allah who saved me from this tribulation. By Allah I never threw an arrow therein, nor did I stab with a spear nor did I strike with a sword.' So Abu Qilabah said to him, 'What do you then think of an ignorant person who saw you (in the ranks)<sup>58</sup> and said, 'By Allah, it can't be that Muslim ibn Yasar, the leader of the Qurraa', could take such a position except that he sees it to be correct!' And he fought until he was killed!' By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, he (Muslim) wept until I wished that I had not said anything.'<sup>59</sup>

'Abdullah ibn 'Awn said, 'There was no-one ranking higher than Muslim ibn Yasar in those times until he did that single deed (of going out in the battle during the Fitnah)\*. Abu Qilabah met him and he (Muslim) said, 'By Allah, I will never do that again.' So Abu Qilabah said, 'Insha'Allah' and he recited:

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِئْتَنُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَنْ تَشَاءُ

"... It is only Your Trial by which You lead astray whom You will..."

[al-A'raf: 155]

- Upon this, Muslim began to weep.<sup>60</sup>

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57 Tarikh Madinat Dimashq

58 This incident refers to the Fitnah of Ibn al-Ash'ath when it was said to him 'If you wish for people to be killed around you just like they were killed on the day of the Camel around the camel of 'Aisha (radhiallahu `anha), then bring out Muslim ibn Yasar with you.' So he forcefully brought him out.

59 Reported by al-Bukhari in 'al-Tarikh al-Kabir', also Ibn 'Asakir's 'Tarikh Dimashq' where Abu Qilabah said to Muslim, 'So what about the one who saw you between the ranks and said 'This is Muslim ibn Yasar! He does not fight except upon the truth.' And because of that he fought until he was killed?'

60 Al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tarikh.

\* Although Muslim ibn Yasar was coerced into going out, he was still held for it by the people and this is because during times of tribulations, the masses all look to one another, especially to those of knowledge and piety in order to see what he/she does. This is the scale of confusion caused by Fitnah such that everyone wishes to see what someone else is doing so they may follow or at least gain some guidance - Translator.

## Verifying News

Verifying news before believing in it instead of spreading it, is an unique Qur'anic methodology in which hearsay is avoided...

Allah Ta'ala said,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ  
*O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful over what you have done."*

[al-Hujurat: 6]

He `azza wa jall, also said,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَابِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا  
*"O you who believe! When you go (to fight) in the Cause of Allah, verify (the truth), and say not to anyone who greets you (by embracing Islam): "You are not a believer"; seeking the perishable goods of the worldly life. There are much more profits and booties with Allah. Even as he is now, so were you yourselves before till Allah conferred on you His Favours (i.e. guided you to Islam), therefore, be cautious in discrimination.*

*Allah is Ever Well-Aware of what you do."*

[al-Nisa: 94]

Indeed, tribulations are set off by rumours and false-news and they become widespread with hearsay. There is little regard for comprehension while the news is relayed, the people have little firmness in religion and this prevents them from obeying the command of Allah Ta'ala in verifying news and abandoning hastiness. You shall find the harshest of people in their nature and the ones who become amazed at themselves the easiest ('ujb) and who are the most stubborn to their opinions, you shall find them to be from those who do not verify or clarify news. Hence arrogance and pride overcomes them and they abandon following the masses because to them everyone is ignorant and they are the knowledgeable ones who act rightly!

The most preventative measure against Fitan is to verify and clarify news, especially if the issue involves the Ummah at large or if it concerns a leader from among the rulers.

If the news is found to be certain, then one should look to the benefit of spreading it or not because not everything that is known should be told. And there are matters that should only be told to specific people who rectify them in the land and not corrupt them.

The true methodology here is one of sincere advice and counsel, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil whilst having concern for the one who is being advised as this pushes one towards sincerely rectifying matters for him (i.e. the one being counselled), even if he were a stubborn tyrant. Indeed, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) made the one who is killed due to speaking a word of truth to be from the greatest of martyrs but he did not make him who merely exposes people to be anything but humiliated in this life. <sup>61</sup>

It is reported that a man came to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz and mentioned another man in his presence so 'Umar said to him, 'If you wish, we can look into this statement of yours. If you are lying, then you will be from these people:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ

*If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news...*

And if you are truthful, then you will be from these people:

هَمَّازٌ مَّشَاءَ بِنَمِيمٍ

*"... A slanderer, going about with calumnies,"*

[al-Qalam: 11]

But if you wish, we can forgive you and overlook? So he (the man) said, 'Forgive me O leader of the faithful, I will never return to it again.' <sup>62</sup>

Allah Ta'ala said:

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَدَّعَوْا بِهِ

*"When there comes to them some matter pertaining to (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people)..."*

[al-Nisa: 83]

Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathir said in the tafsir of this verse, 'And this statement of His *"When there comes to them some matter pertaining to (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people)..."* is a reprimand of those who rush into matters without first verifying them and so they spread it and tell others even though it may not be authentic. Muslim said in his introduction to the Sahih collection: '... And it's narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'It is enough of a lie that a person should pass on everything he hears.'* <sup>63</sup>

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61 In reference to the hadith: The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, 'O you who have believed with their tongues, but whom faith has not yet entered their hearts! Do not backbite the Muslims and do not expose them for whoever exposes his Muslim brother, Allah will expose him and whoever is exposed by Allah, will be humiliated by Him even if he were to be in the depths of his own home.' [Reported by al-Haythami in al-Majma', declared Hasan by al-Mundhuri in al-Targhib]

62 Ihya 'Ulum al-Din

63 Reported by Muslim in the Muqaddimah

And it's reported in the Sahihayn in the hadith of al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) '*prohibited hearsay*'<sup>64</sup> i.e. prohibited from the one who frequently indulges in rumours and what the people say, without verifying or contemplating or clarifying (the news).; And it's narrated in the Sahih: '*Whoever narrates from me a report which is seen to be a lie, is indeed one of the liars.*'<sup>65</sup>

Let us mention here the agreed upon hadith of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab when news reached him that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) had divorced his wives. He ('Umar) went from his home until he entered the mosque and found the people discussing the matter. He didn't wait around but instead sought permission and went in to see the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), seeking clarification, 'Have you divorced your wives?' He said, 'No.' I ('Umar) said, 'Allah is the Greatest...' and he narrated the hadith in its entirety. In the narration of Muslim: 'I said, 'Have you divorced them?' He said, 'No.' So I stood at the door of the mosque and called out at the top of my voice, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) has not divorced his wives!' And so this verse was revealed:

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَدَّعَوْا بِهٖ  
وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ

*"When there comes to them some matter pertaining to (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people). If only they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in command, it would have been known by its proper investigators..."*

[al-Nisa: 83]

Umar said, 'Hence I was of those proper investigators.' The meaning of يستنبطونه is to extract something from its core. It is said, استنبط الرجل العين (The man extracted the well) if he dug it and extracted it from its depths.

### **Not everything that is known should be told**

The leader of the faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib said, 'Talk to people in matters that they are acquainted with. Do you wish that Allah and His Messenger should be belied?!'<sup>66</sup>

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, 'You do not speak to people about matters that they cannot comprehend except that it places some of them in a Fitnah.'<sup>67</sup>

Hammad ibn Zayd: Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani was asked a question and he remained silent. So the man said to him, 'O Abu Bakr! Didn't you understand? Shall I repeat it?' Ayyub said, 'I understood, but I am thinking about how to best answer you.'<sup>68</sup>

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64 Reported by Muslim

65 Reported by Muslim in the Muqaddimah

66 Al-Bukhari

67 Reported by Muslim in the Muqaddimah

68 Al-Ma'rifah wal-Tarikh

Al-Hakim relates in his *'Tarikh'* that Abu Qudamah narrated from al-Nadhr ibn Isma'il that he said, 'Al-Khalil was asked about a matter but he delayed in answering it. So I said, 'This issue doesn't need all this thought.' He said, 'I am done with the question and its answer but I wish to answer you with an answer that will reach your understanding the fastest.' Abu Qudamah said, 'I mentioned this to Abu 'Ubayd and he was delighted with it.'<sup>69</sup>

And on this topic is the statement of Abu Hurayrah: *'I preserved two collections of knowledge from the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). As for one of them, I have spread it. And as for the other, were I spread it, this oesophagus of mine would be severed.'*<sup>70</sup> – A metaphor alluding to 'killing.'

And in another narration he said, *'... (were I to spread it), this would be cut off'* – i.e. his head. The scholars interpreted this type of knowledge to be the narrations that mention the names of the tyrannical and evil rulers & their state and times (which they'll rule in). Abu Hurayrah used to at times allude to some of it but he would not clearly say it out of fear for his own self, for example his saying 'I seek refuge in Allah from the 60<sup>th</sup> year and the Rule of the youths.' – alluding to the Caliphate of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah because it was in the year 60 AH. He also used to say, 'O Allah do not allow me to reach the 60<sup>th</sup> year, nor allow me to reach the Rule of the youths.'<sup>71</sup> So Allah answered his supplication and he died before it by a year.<sup>72</sup>

So Abu Hurayrah did not mention the narrations that mentioned specific tribulations and the narrations that mentioned Banu Umayyah as well as other similar narrations, just like he did not mention the names of the reckless youth upon whose hands the Ummah will perish – he (radhiallahu `anhu) said, 'I heard the trustworthy and truthful one (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) saying, *'My Nation will perish at the hands of youth from Quraysh...'* Then Abu Hurayrah said, 'If you wish that I say it's the tribe of so-and-so, I will.'<sup>73</sup> In another narration, he said 'If you wish, I can name them and say Banu so-and-so.'<sup>74</sup>

Hence Abu Hurayrah left off mentioning this type of information which he preserved from the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and he did not spread it. Rather he preserved his tongue and held off from spreading it in order to avert corruption and evil from taking place and out of fear of Fitan being sparked...

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69 Al-Aadab al-Shar'iyyah by Ibn Muflih

70 Reported by al-Bukhari

71 'Rule of the youths' – A lot of times Yazid used to dismiss the elders from positions of power in various lands and give it to youth from his kindred.

72 Fath al-Bari

73 Reported by al-Bukhari

74 Reported by al-Bukhari



He also held off from speaking about other narrations which did not involve the *Ahkam al-Shar'iyah* (pertaining to Islamic Law), in order that Fitnah did not take place between the masses. He (radhiallahu `anhu) didn't say 'Narrating hadith is a truth (which must be told) and that it's impermissible to conceal knowledge' etc, because concealing knowledge in the times of Fitnah which Abu Hurayrah spoke of was necessary in order to promote good and ward off evil, so that the masses do not scatter in all direction after having gained unity during the era of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. This act of Abu Hurayrah points out his wisdom, intelligence and sound judgement when he preserved his tongue during the times of Fitnah, in order for there to be unity in the Ummah and not disunity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Mawqif al-Muslim min al-Fitan, by al-Hazimi

## Guarding the Tongue

It is a must for every responsible one to safeguard his tongue and protect it from uttering falsehood at all times and in all places, particularly during times of trials and tribulations where rumours increase and the desire to spread and exaggerate in unfounded reports also increases. In these times, ears are fully ready to hear everything that is said and hence danger is imminent, for perhaps a single word said is more severe than a sword strike during the times of tribulations.

For this reason, it is a must upon the Muslim masses to refrain their tongues from speaking in anything that may intensify the Fitnah. Let it be known that the tongue is the most dangerous organ that Allah has created in the human body and for that reason He says, drawing the attention of the believers:

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا

*"And say to My slaves that they should say only those words that are the best.*

*Verily, Shaitan (Satan), seeks to sow disagreements among them.*

*Surely, Shaitan (Satan) is to man a plain enemy."*

[al-Isra: 53]

He Ta'ala also said,

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

*"Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)."*

[Qaf: 18]

Also,

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لِحَافِظِينَ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

*"But verily, over you are appointed angels to watch you.*

*Honourable ones, writing down your deeds.*

*They know all that you do.*

[al-Infitar: 10-12]

Also His saying,

أَمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّا لَأَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

*"Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel?*

*Yes We do, and Our Messengers are by them, to record."*

[al-Zukhruf: 80]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah said,

'What is surprising is that a person finds it easy keeping away from things like consuming the haram, oppression, adultery, theft, drinking alcohol and looking at the impermissible, but yet he finds it difficult to guard his tongue! It's such that you'll see a man who is viewed to be knowledgeable and is an ascetic worshipper but he

speaks with words that bring the Wrath of Allah, without giving them a second thought... how often do you see a man who steers clear of evil sins and oppression but you see his tongue sever the honour of everyone – dead or alive, and he doesn't even care about what he says!' <sup>76</sup>

It should be known that the easiest of movements is the movement of the tongue but it brings the most harm upon a slave. How many Prophetic narrations and reports are there warning about the errors and slips of this dangerous organ, at all times in general and during times of Fitan specifically.

A man of status once walked past 'Alqamah ibn Abi Waqqas and so 'Alqamah said to him, 'You have ties and you have rights but I see you go to those Rulers and speak to them whatever you wish to speak about! Indeed, I have heard Bilal ibn al-Harith al-Muzani, the companion of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah say, *'Verily, one of you speaks a word bringing the Pleasure of Allah, which he does not think will reach such heights and so Allah writes for him His Pleasure until the Day of Judgment. And verily, one of you speaks a word which brings the Wrath of Allah, which he does not think will reach such heights and so Allah writes upon him His Anger until the Day he meets Him.'*

'Alqamah then said, 'Woe to you, look then! What is it that you say?! How many times has this statement which I heard from Bilal ibn al-Harith prevented me from speaking!' <sup>77</sup>

Umm Habibah, the wife of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) narrated from him that he said, *'Every speech of the Son of Adam is against him and not for him except for speech which enjoins the good and forbids the wrong and words said in the Remembrance of Allah `azza wa jall.'* <sup>78</sup>

Shaqiq reported that 'Abdullah proclaimed the talbiyah (saying *Labbayk Allahumma labbayk*) whilst on the mount of al-Safa, then he said, 'O tongue of mine! Speak good and you shall benefit. Be silent and you shall be saved before you regret.' The people said to him, 'O Abu Abdur-Rahman, is this something you say out of your own accord or did you hear it (i.e. is it a hadith)?' He said, 'No. But I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, *'Most of the sins procured by the Son of Adam are due to his tongue.'* <sup>79</sup>

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76 Al-Daa' wal-Dawa'

77 Reported by Imam Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi; declared Sahih by al-Albani

78 Reported by al-Tirmidhi, Sahih

79 Reported by al-Tabarani, Sound chain.

## In Silence is Salvation

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Whoever keeps silent is saved.'*<sup>80</sup>

Mu'adh ibn Jabal: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'You remain in safety so long as you remain silent. Then if you speak, it is written either for you or against you.'*<sup>81</sup>

The leader of the faithful, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said, 'Whosever's speech increases, his errors increase and if his errors increase, his sins will increase and if his sins increase, then Hellfire is more deserving of him.'<sup>82</sup>

And the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) was described as being 'lengthy in silence & speaking little.'<sup>83</sup>

Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali asked his father about the Messenger and what he used to do when he went out. So he said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to avert his tongue (and not speak) except in matters which concerned him.'<sup>84</sup>

He (radhiallahu `anhu) also said, 'He (the Prophet) never used to criticize anyone nor did he backbite them. He never sought to expose anyone and he did not speak in matters except where he hoped for reward.'<sup>85</sup>

Yazid ibn Abi Habib said, 'The one who speaks (much) only waits for Fitnah to occur whilst the one who is silent waits for Mercy to descend.'<sup>86</sup>

As it is said, 'The patient one and the silent one never face regret.'

Al-Fudhayl said, 'There are two characteristics which harden the heart: Speaking much and eating much.'<sup>87</sup>

Sufyan used to say, 'Long periods of silence are the keys to 'Ibadah (worship).'

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80 Reported by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad; declared Sahih by al-Albani

81 al-Tabarani

82 Jami' 'Ulum wal-Hikam

83 Reported by Ahmad, Hasan narration

84 Mukhtasar al-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyah by al-Tirmidhi

85 See above source

86 Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm wa Fadhlilihi

87 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

Abu al-Dhayyal said, 'Learn the art of silence just as you learn to speak for if speech is a guiding matter, then silence is a protective measure. In silence you have two characteristics: Attaining knowledge from those more knowledgeable than you and guarding yourself from those who are more argumentative than you.' <sup>88</sup>

Ibrahim ibn al-Ash'ath: 'I heard al-Fudhayl say, 'Whoever feels loneliness in solitude and instead delights in the company of people will not be safe from Riya' (pretentiousness). Neither Hajj nor Jihad is more difficult than imprisoning the tongue...' <sup>89</sup>

Ibrahim ibn Adham said, 'If you feel grieved by being silent then remember your salvation from the slips of the tongue.' <sup>90</sup>

It was said to Ibrahim ibn Adham once, 'So-and-so is learning grammar.' So he said, 'He is in more need of learning how to remain silent.' <sup>91</sup>

Al-Mu'alla: Muwarriq said, 'There is a matter which I've been seeking for such-and-such number of years. I haven't been able to attain it but I will not stop seeking it.' They said, 'And what is that O Abu Mu'tamir?' He said, 'Abstaining from that which doesn't concern me.' <sup>92</sup>

Tawus: 'My tongue is a predator; if I let it go it will consume me.' <sup>93</sup>

Ibn al-Qayyim said, 'Speech remains as a slave to you, but the moment it leaves your mouth, you become its slave.' <sup>94</sup>

One of the Salaf said, 'I saw Malik silent without speaking. He wouldn't turn left or right unless he was listening to someone and then he'd give a brief answer to him. He was asked about this and he said, 'Is there anything which will throw people into the Hellfire other than this?' – pointing to his tongue.' <sup>95</sup>

Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash: The smallest benefit derived from silence is salvation and that is sufficient as safety. The smallest harm that comes from speaking (too much) is fame and that is enough of a tribulation.' <sup>96</sup>

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88 Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm wa Fadhlihi

89 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

90 Hilyat al-Awliya

91 See above source

92 Al-Samt by Ibn Abi Dunya

93 Ihya 'Ulum al-Din

94 al-Jawab al-Kafi

95 Tartib al-Madarik

96 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

ما إن ندمت على سكوتي مرة \*\*\* ولقد ندمت على الكلام مرارا

*If I have ever regretted my silence just once*

*Than I have regretted my speech much more*

Ibrahim: 'They (the Sahabah) used to sit together and the one who observed silence the longest was the best of them to himself.' <sup>97</sup>

Muharib said, 'We accompanied al-Qasim ibn Abdur-Rahman and he was better than us in 3 matters: Abundance of prayers, long periods of silence and generosity.' <sup>98</sup>

'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak once came to Sufyan al-Thawri but he didn't utter a single word until he got up. When he left, al-Thawri said to his companions, 'I would love to be like him.' <sup>99</sup>

### **Balancing between speech and silence**

Let the ground foundation be that of silence. It is sufficient that the virtues of silence are a stronger means to protecting against backbiting and other evils of the tongue. Nothing compares to salvation except when one is certain that there'll be benefit in his speech.

Imam al-Nawawi said, 'Know that it's mandatory upon everyone to protect their tongue from all types of speech except where benefit is evident. Whenever there comes to be an equilibrium between speech and remaining silent, the Sunnah is to abstain from it because at times the permissible speech can lead to the impermissible or disliked and this happens a lot. Nothing can compare to salvation.

Abu Hurayra said, 'The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, ***'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.'*** <sup>100</sup>

This hadith is clear-cut in that a person shouldn't speak unless it is good and that means: it is beneficial. Whenever there appears to be doubt, a person should not speak. <sup>101</sup>

A man said to Salman al-Farisi, 'Advice me.' He said, 'Do not speak.' He said, 'The one who lives among people has to speak!' He said, 'If you speak then let it be a word of truth, otherwise remain silent.' <sup>102</sup>

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97 Hilyat al-Awliya

98 Al-Zuhd by Ibn Abi 'Asim

99 Taqaddumat al-Jarh wal-Ta'dil

100 Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim

101 Riyadh al-Salihin and Dalil alFalihin

102 Jami' 'Ulum wal-Hikam

Al-Shafi'i said,

قالوا سكت وقد خصمت قلت لهم \*\*\* إن الجواب لباب الشر مفتاح

*They said, 'You've been disputed but yet you keep silent?'*

*I said, 'Indeed a response will only be a key to the doors of evil.'*

A man once commented, 'Oh! How cold it is today!' So al-Mu'afa ibn 'Imran turned to him and said, 'Have you found any benefit now? (i.e. what did that statement do for you?). Had you remained silent, it would have been much better for you.' <sup>103</sup>

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Qasim: 'Whenever a person made a mistake in front of our scholar Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi, he would say 'Which moment of silence passed you by?!' <sup>104</sup>

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103 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

104 See above source

## Guarding the Tongue during Times of Fitan

Allah Ta'ala said,

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ

*"And strive hard in Allah's Cause as you ought to strive..."*

[al-Hajj: 78]

He, `azza wa jall also said,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً

*"O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you..."*

[al-Tawbah: 123]

Hence the Sunnah in Jihad is to begin with the closest enemy and the soul which commands a person with evil is the closest of enemies to him, so let a person begin by striving against it and repressing it especially since it is what commands the tongue to backbite, slander, dispute, argue, lie and engage in Fitnah.

Fadhala ibn 'Ubayd said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'The Mujahid is the one who strives against his soul in the Way of Allah `azza wa jall.'*<sup>105</sup>

Abu Dharr: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'The best of Jihad is to strive against your soul and your desires in the Way of Allah `azza wa jall.'*<sup>106</sup>

Abu Hazim said, 'Fight your soul more severely than you would fight your enemy.'<sup>107</sup>

The obligation of guarding the tongue during times of Fitan is further advocated because of the tongue's effects in additionally spreading the fitan. A deluded person may think that if he physically abstains from Fitan, he has avoided it but he doesn't know that his tongue also needs to abstain from it. How many people plunge into Fitan and further spark it with their tongues? They think they are safe from it whilst they are the foremost in it, kindling its fire. For this reason, Wuhayb ibn al-Ward said 'I found (true) seclusion to be in the solitude of the tongue.'<sup>108</sup>

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105 Reported by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi. Good chain; al-Albani

106 Abu Nu'aym in Hilyat al-Awliya, al-Silsilah al-Sahihah by al-Albani

107 Hilyat al-Awliya

108 Al-Samt by Ibn Abi Dunya



'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak: 'Some of the people interpreted 'al-'Azla' (seclusion) to mean that he (a person) is in the company of people so if they remember Allah, he does so with them and if they speak in other than that, he keeps silent.' <sup>109</sup>

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr: 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'There will be a Fitnah which will overcome the Arabs; its dead therein will be in the Hellfire. The tongue (in that time) will be more severe than the strikes of a sword.'* <sup>110</sup>

He (radhiallahu `anhu) also said, 'We were around the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) when tribulations were mentioned. He said, *'When you see the oaths of a people become murky and their trusts weaken and they become like this'* – and he netted his fingers together. I stood up and went to him saying, 'May I be sacrificed for you, what shall I do in those times?' He said, *'Stick to your home and take hold of your tongue. Hold fast to what you know and abandon whatever you do not know. Adhere to matters concerning yourself only and leave the matters of the masses.'* <sup>111</sup>

Shaqiq al-Balkhi said, 'Be with the people just like you'd be with Fire: Take from its benefits but watch that it doesn't burn you.' <sup>112</sup>

'Abdullah ibn Dawud: 'Whoever lets people have everything they wish for from him, they will harm his *Deen* (religion) and *Dunya* (worldly life).' <sup>113</sup>

Ziyad ibn Hadir said, 'I wish that I was in the confines of steel with my provision; not speaking to anyone and not having anyone speak to me until I meet Allah Tabaraka wa Ta'ala.' <sup>114</sup>

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109 Al-Samt

110 Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah. Declared Sahih by Ahmad Shakir but al-Albani weakened the report in Ibn Majah

111 Ahmad, Abu Dawud; Sahih narration.

112 Sifat al-Safwah

113 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

114 Hilyat al-Awliya

## How the Salaf Guarded Against the Slips of the Tongue in Times of Fitan

Iyas ibn Mu'awiya ibn Qurra said, 'The best of them (i.e. the Sahabah) were those whose hearts possessed no malice and who didn't backbite.' <sup>115</sup>

Tariq ibn Shihab said, 'An argument ensued between Khalid and Sa'ad so a man went to Sa'ad and began to say things about Khalid. So he (Sa'ad) said, 'Stop this! Whatever took place between us has not reached such heights that it should affect our religion.' <sup>116</sup>

'Ammar ibn Yasir once heard a man abusing Umm al-Mu'minin 'Aisha (radhiallahu `anha) so he said to him, 'Be quiet, O' hideous barking one! I bear witness that she is the wife of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) in Paradise.' And in another narration he said, 'Go away, O hideous one! Are you abusing the beloved one of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam)?' <sup>117</sup>

Abu Rashid said, 'A man from Basra came to 'Ubaydallah ibn 'Umar and said 'I come as a messenger from your brothers in Basra. They give you their greetings and are asking you about these two men: 'Ali and 'Uthman (radhiallahu `anhuma) and what your opinion is of them.' He asked, 'Anyone else other than them?' He said, 'No.' So he said, 'Prepare the man for departure.' When they were done with preparing him, he ('Ubaydallah) said, 'Return my greetings to them and tell them that I said,

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*"That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do."*

[al-Baqarah: 134] <sup>118</sup>

It is narrated that Sharik said, 'I asked Ibrahim ibn Adham about what took place between 'Ali and Mu'awiya. He began to weep and I began to regret my asking him. Then he lifted his head and said, 'Truly, whoever knows his soul is kept busy by it and whoever knows his Lord is kept busy in Him from everything else.' <sup>119</sup>

Imam al-Shafi'i: It was said to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, 'What do you say about the people of *Siffin*?' He replied, 'That is blood which Allah kept my hands purified of, so I do not wish to taint my tongue with it.' <sup>120</sup>

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115 Hilyat al-Awliya

116 See above source

117 Reported by Ibn 'Asakir and Ibn Sa'ad

118 Al-'Azla by al-Khattabi

119 Hilyat al-Awliya

120 Al-'Azla

Al-Rayyash recited:

لعمرك إن في ذنبي لشغلا \*\*\* لنفسي عن ذنوب بني أمية  
*I swear that indeed my sins occupy me  
From engaging in the sins of Bani Umayyah*

على ربي حسابهم إليه \*\*\* تناهي علم ذلك لا إليه  
*Their judgment is up to Allah  
With Him is the knowledge of that, and not me*

وليس بضائري ما قد أتوه \*\*\* إذا ما الله أصلح ما لديه  
*What they have committed will not harm me  
So long as Allah rectifies what is with me* <sup>121</sup>

Al-Haytham ibn 'Ubayd al-Saydalani said: 'Ibn Sirin heard a man curse al-Hajjaj so he said to him, 'Stop this! Indeed, were you to be shown the scenes of the Hereafter, the smallest of sin which you yourself committed will seem bigger to you than the biggest sin committed by al-Hajjaj. You should know that Allah `azza wa jall is Wise and Just, if he takes from al-Hajjaj because of the oppression he did, He will also take from others due to their oppression of al-Hajjaj. So do not busy your soul in cursing others.' <sup>122</sup>

And 'Abdullah ibn al-Khayyar used to be found in gatherings saying, 'O Allah, save us and save others from us.' <sup>123</sup>

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121 Al-Adhkar al-Nawawiyah

122 Shu'b al-Iman by al-Bayhaqi

123 Tadhkirat al-Huffadh

## How often has Blood resulted from a Single Word Uttered

The reality of many tribulations is that its seeds are first planted in gatherings of slander and backbiting where the people do not expect it to reach the pinnacle that it does. Then it leads onto private talk which results in complaints (between people). Then it ignites and sets ablaze such that its flames cannot be put out even by those who first initiated its evils. Those who backbite, who consume the flesh of others, they are the ones described by the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) when he said, *'Verily, from amongst Mankind are those who are the keys to goodness and they close the door to evil. And verily, from amongst Mankind are those who are the keys to evil and they close the door to goodness. So glad-tidings to the one whom Allah places the key to goodness at his hands and woe be to him whom Allah places the key to evil at his hands.'* <sup>124</sup>

Here are some historical proofs of the statement: رُبُّ قَوْلٍ يَسِيلُ مِنْهُ دَمٌ ('how often has blood resulted from a single word uttered') <sup>125</sup>:

Abu Ma'bad 'Abdullah ibn 'Akim al-Johani, a great Tabi'i said in a sermon of his, 'I will never aid in the killing of another *Khalif* after 'Uthman.' A man surprised by this statement said, 'O Abu Ma'bad, did you take part in his killing?!' He said, '(No,) but I consider the mentioning of a man's faults to be aiding in his killing (so I will not do that).' <sup>126</sup>

And indeed the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Verily a slave utters a word which earns (him) the Anger of Allah. He doesn't give mind to it but it casts him into Jahannam (Hell).'* <sup>127</sup>

So those who hastened in spreading slander kept count of the judgments of 'Uthman (radhiallahu `anhu), the leader of the believers and they displayed it (to others) according to how their weak minds and ill hearts interpreted it, and hence they took this as a way towards igniting Fitnah. <sup>128</sup>

When Hudhayfah came to learn of the killing of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, he said, 'O Allah, curse his killers and abusers. O Allah, we used to scold him and he would scold us (i.e. enjoin good, forbid wrong) but they took this as a justification for Fitnah. O Allah, do not let them die except by the sword.' <sup>129</sup>

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said regarding the Khawarij: *'They shall kill the people of Islam whilst leaving alone the idol-worshippers.'* <sup>130</sup>

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124 Ibn Majah, declared Hasan by al-Albani

125 Refer to: 'al-Manhaj al-Masluk fi Siyasat al-Muluk'

126 Or aiding in his imprisonment, exile or hampering his efforts of Da'wah etc. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad

127 Al-Bukhari

128 More on this collected by Ibn al-'Arabi in his book 'Al-'Awasim min al-Qawasim.'

129 Al-Kamil by Ibn al-Athir

130 al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad

This particular sign (of the Khawarij) was what caused one of the scholars to say, when he fell into their hands and they asked him who he was, he said: 'I am a Mushrik (polytheist) seeking protection who wishes to hear the Words of Allah.' Thereupon they said 'It's incumbent upon us to grant you protection and escort you to your place of safety.' Then they recited the following verse:

وَأِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ

*"And if anyone of the Mushrikun seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah, and then escort him to where he can be secure..."*

[al-Tawbah: 6]

It was with these words ('a Mushrik seeking protection') that he managed to be saved for had he said 'Muslim' they would have cut off his head. <sup>131</sup>

### **Declaring Muslims to be Disbelievers is a key to permitting the spilling of their blood**

Al-Qadhi 'Iyadh was accused of being a Jew because he used to stay at home on Saturdays in order to author books\*.

Shaykh 'Ala al-Deen, the student of Imam al-Nawawi - despite being the Shaykh of his time - used to walk with a document under his arm from one of the Judges which testified to his beliefs and that he was free from anything which would make him a disbeliever, out of fear that a liar or a slanderer would unexpectedly come into his circle (and accuse him with regards to his beliefs).

And in the following incident is a lesson that indeed '*Death can result from backbiting*':

Rashid al-Khayyar said, 'I went out with my master to Makkah and we took residence there. One day, a man came to us and said to Sufyan, 'O Abu 'Abdillah, today the two sons of Salih have come, Hasan and 'Ali.' He said, 'And where are they?' He said, 'In Tawaf.' He said, 'When they pass, point them out to me.' So when one of them passed by, I said 'This is 'Ali' and when the other passed, I said 'This is Hasan.' He said, 'As for the first, he is a companion of the Hereafter (i.e. righteous), but as for the other one, he is a companion of the sword, nothing can fill his belly.' A man who was with us got up and informed 'Ali. My master went to 'Ali (the next day) and greeted him, then Sufyan also came to greet him. 'Ali said to him, 'O Abu 'Abdillah, what made you speak about my brother like that yesterday? Can you guarantee that these words won't reach Abu Ja'far and he in turn calls for his killing?' I looked to Sufyan who began to say 'Seek the Forgiveness of Allah' and tears flowed from his eyes. <sup>132</sup>

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131 For more incidents on the transgression of the Khawarij, see 'Talbis Iblis' by Ibn al-Jawzi

132 Siyar A'lam al-Nubala

\* i.e. This highlights that false assumptions along with ignorance, lack of verification and rumours can cause the (ignorant) one to declare another Muslim to be a disbeliever despite him engaging in something completely different to what the people may think (in this case, a scholar authoring books).

Another incident narrated from Abdur-Rahman ibn Yazid ibn Jabir:

'We were with Raja' ibn Haywah when we were talking about gratitude for blessings. He said, 'No-one truly gives thanks for the blessings (of Allah).' A man with a cloak over his head went past us and he said, 'Not even the Ruler?'

We said, 'And what does the mention of the Ruler have to do here?!' He is only a man from amongst the people.'

We were heedless of who he was, so Raja' turned to us and said, 'You are being approached by the one wearing a cloak so if you are called and made to take an oath, take the oath.' We didn't realise (what he was saying) until a guard came to him and it was said (when he was taken to the Ruler): 'Oh Raja', the leader of the faithful was mentioned in your presence and you didn't support him?' He said, 'And what was that about, O leader of the faithful?' He said, 'You said 'No-one truly gives thanks for the blessings.' It was said to you, 'Not even the Ruler?' And you replied, 'The Ruler is a man from amongst the people!'

I (Raja') said, 'It wasn't like that.' He said, 'By Allah?' I said, 'By Allah.' So the Ruler called for the guard who reported it to him and he was whipped seventy times until I left him covered in blood. He (the guard) said, 'You let this happen and you are Raja' ibn Haywah?!' I said to him, 'Seventy lashes on your back are better than the killing of a single Muslim.'

Ibn Jabir said, 'After that, whenever Raja' sat in a gathering, he would turn around and say 'Watch out for the cloaked one!' <sup>133</sup>

A poet said,

يموت الفتى من عثرة بلسانه \*\*\* وليس يموت المرء من عثرة الرجل  
*A youth may die due to a slip of his tongue  
Whilst he rarely dies due to a slip of his feet*

فعثرتة بلسانه تذهب رأسه \*\*\* وعثرتة برجله تيرا على مهل  
*The slips of his tongue can do away his head  
Whilst the slips of his feet only slow him down!*

## Keeping away from Fitan and Fleeing from it

The Sacred Laws (of Islam) encourage us to avoid getting involved with tribulations, to keep away from it and flee from it.

Bilal Ibn Sa'ad said regarding the verse:

يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

*"O My slaves who believe! Certainly, spacious is My earth. Therefore worship Me (Alone)."*

[al-'Ankabut: 56]

He said, 'When tribulations befall: 'My earth is spacious so flee therein.'<sup>134</sup>

It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Woe be to the Arabs for an evil which has drawn near, successful is he who keeps away from it.'*<sup>135</sup>

Khalid Ibn Walid said, 'The leader of the believers wrote to me when Al-Sham (Greater Syria) flourished like cream and honey (i.e. became wealthy under Islam) and he ordered me to go forth to India, and India to us in those times was Basra. I disliked the idea and so a man got up saying to me 'O Abu Sulayman! Fear Allah for indeed tribulations have appeared!' I said, 'While Ibn al-Khattab is alive?! No, it shall only be after he's gone when people become scattered (into groups without unity) or scattered in such and such place such that a man shall look and think 'Is there any place that hasn't been affected with what his current place has been affected with' – but he shall not find it. Those are the Days mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam): *'Before the Coming of the Hour, there shall be al-Harj (killings).'*'<sup>136</sup>

'Uthman al-Shahham said, 'Farqad al-Sabakhi and I went to Muslim ibn Abi Bakrah when he was in a plot of land of his and we said to him, 'Have you heard your father narrate anything from the narrations of Fitan?' He said, 'Yes. I heard Abu Bakrah say 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Verily, Fitan shall take place. Fitan wherein the one sitting is better than the one walking and the one walking is better than the one hastening forth. Truly, when it comes or befalls, let the one with camels remain with his camels and let the one with sheep remain with his sheep and let the one with land remain with his land.'* Then a man said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What about the one without camels, sheep or land?' He said, *'Let him take his sword and strike it against a rock, let him be saved if he can be saved. O Allah, have I conveyed. O Allah, have I conveyed. O Allah, have I conveyed.'*

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134 Hilyat al-Awliya

135 Reported by Abu Dawud, declared Sahih by al-Albani

136 Imam Ahmad, Hasan narration

So a man said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What if I am forced and taken to either one of the sides or groups and a man strikes me with his sword or an arrow hits me?' He said, *'Then he shall bear his sin and your sin and he shall be of the dwellers of Hellfire.'*<sup>137</sup>

Al-Hasan narrates from al-Ahnaf ibn Qays that he said, 'I went out in search of this man when Abu Bakrah met me. He said, 'O' Ahnaf where are you going?' I said, 'I want Nasr, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) – i.e. 'Ali radhiallahu `anhu. He said to me, 'O Ahnaf, go back! Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) say *'If two Muslims meet with their swords, the killer and the one killed are both in the Hellfire.'* It was said, 'O Messenger of Allah, this is the case for the killer but why also the one killed?' He said, *'He intended to kill his companion.'*<sup>138</sup>

Hudhayfah said, 'Beware of tribulations, no-one exposes himself to it except that it destroys him just like floods destroy fertilised land.'<sup>139</sup>

Abu Burdah: 'I went to Muhammad ibn Salamah and he said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Verily, there shall be tribulations, groups and disunity. When that happens, bring your sword to Uhud and strike it until it breaks, then sit in your home until the oppressive hand comes to you or decreed death comes to you.'*<sup>140</sup>

It is reported that a man said to Hudhayfah, 'If the Muslims fight each other, what do you command me to do?' He said, 'Look for the farthest place in your home and take refuge there. If you are approached (to be killed), say 'Here, take upon yourself my sins and your sins!'<sup>141</sup>

Ibn Mas'ud said, 'If the people fall into a Fitan and they say 'Go forth for indeed you have a good example amongst the people' then say to them: 'There is no good example for me when it comes to evil.'<sup>142</sup>

'Udsah bint Uhban said, "Ali ibn Abi Talib (radhiallahu `anhu) came to my father and asked him to go forth with him. My father said to him, 'Indeed my friend and your uncle vowed to me that if the people differ, I should take a wooden sword, and I have indeed taken it! So if you wish I will go out with you with it.' She ('Udsah) said, 'He then left him.'<sup>143</sup>

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137 Sahih Muslim

138 Sahih al-Bukhari

139 Al-Nihayah

140 Ibn Majah, al-Sahihah by al-Albani

141 Reported by al-Dani in 'Al-Sunan al-Waridah fil Fitan'

142 Al-Haythami in 'Majma' al-Zawa'id'

143 Reported by al-Tirmidhi; Hasan Gharib. Declared Hasan by al-Albani



Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani said: 'Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas, Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Umar and 'Ammar ibn Yasir (radhiallahu `anhum) came together and spoke about tribulations. Sa'ad said, 'As for me, I shall sit in my home and never enter into it.'<sup>144</sup>

Ibn Sirin reports: 'It was said to Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas 'Won't you fight? You are from Ahl al-Shura and you have the most right to this matter (leadership) than those besides you!' So he said, 'I will not fight until you bring me a sword with two eyes, a tongue and two lips who knows the Muslim from the disbeliever. Were I to strike a Muslim with it, it misses target and were I to strike a disbeliever with it, it kills him. I strove in Jihad and I know best what Jihad is.' He then gave them a parable and said: 'The example of us and you is like the example of a people who were upon a clear guidance. While they were in that state, a fierce wind came to them and they lost the path and became confused. Some of them said, 'The path is on the right,' they took it but they wandered and got lost. Some others said, 'The path is on the left,' they took it but they also wandered and got lost. Some others said, 'We are still on the path where the wind struck so we shall remain on it.' Morning came, the wind died out and the path became clear (for them). These are the Jama'ah (main community). They said, 'We shall adhere to whatever the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) left us upon until we meet him and we shall never enter into anything of Fitna.'<sup>145</sup>

Al-Hasan said, 'When the people fell into a Fitnah, they came to 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar and said to him, 'You are the master of the people and the son of their master. The people are pleased with you; come out so we may pledge to you.' He said, 'No, by Allah, no blood will be spilt for me or because of me for as long as I am alive.' He was then approached (by people) who tried to frighten him saying 'You will surely go out or you shall be killed on your bed!' But he only repeated words similar to his previous words. Al-Hasan said, 'By Allah, they weren't able to get anything from him until he met Allah Ta'ala.'<sup>146</sup>

Nafi' narrates from Ibn 'Umar that two men came to him regarding the Fitnah involving Ibn al-Zubayr. They said, 'The people have become lost! You are the son of 'Umar and the companion of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), so what prevents you from going out?!' He said, 'What prevents me is that Allah forbade the blood of my brother.' They said, 'But didn't Allah say:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِئْتَةً

*"And fight them until there is no more Fitnah..."*

[al-Baqarah: 193]

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144 Hilyat al-Awliya

145 Reported by Nu'aym in 'al-Fitan; Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad, al-Tabarani, al-Hakim (who declared it Sahih upon the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim).

146 Hilyat al-Awliya

He said, 'We fought until there was no more Fitnah and the Religion became complete for Allah. But you people want to fight until there is a Fitnah and the Religion becomes for other than Allah.' <sup>147</sup>

Nafi' also narrated that two men came to Ibn 'Umar and said, 'O Abu Abdur-Rahman, what made you perform Hajj one year and 'Umrah the next, but yet abandon Jihad in the Way of Allah `azza wa jall, while you know how much Allah encouraged it?' He said, 'O cousin, Islam has been built upon five matters: To believe in Allah and His Messenger, the five prayers, fasting the month of Ramadan, paying the Zakat and performing Pilgrimage to the House.' He said, 'O Abu Abdur-Rahman, won't you listen to what Allah said in His Book:

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتُ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرَىٰ فَقاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

*"And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah..."*

[al-Hujurat: 9]

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِئْتَةٌ

*"And fight them until there is no more Fitnah..."*

[al-Baqarah: 193]

He said, 'We did that in the time of the Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) when Islam was in the minority. It was such that a man would be tested in his religion, they either killed him or tortured him, until Islam increased and Fitnah was no more.' He said, 'So what is your opinion of 'Ali and 'Uthman?' He said, 'As for 'Uthman, Allah has already forgiven him but you people dislike that he should be forgiven. And as for 'Ali, he is the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and his son-in-law.' Then he pointed and said, 'This is his house which you can see here.' <sup>148</sup>

'Ali ibn Abi Talib (radhiallahu `anhu) used to say, 'May Allah be pleased with the position taken by Sa'ad ibn Malik and 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (who kept away from the Fitnah), if it was good and correct, then its reward is great. And if it were incorrect, then its offence is minor.' <sup>149</sup>

Abul-'Aliyah said, 'I was a young man when the encounter took place between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah. So I prepared myself, put on my armour and went out to the people. But behold, they were in two ranks and their ends could not be seen (i.e. it was not clear). So I recited this verse,

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147 Al-Bukhari

148 Al-Bukhari

149 Majmu' al-Fatawa

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا

"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein..."

[al-Nisa: 93]

And so I returned and abandoned them all.'

Thabit al-Bunani narrates from Mutarrif that he said, 'It is more beloved to me that my Lord `azza wa jall should ask me on the Day of Judgment 'O Mutarrif, why did you not do such-and-such' than for Him to say 'Why did you do such-and-such?'<sup>150</sup>

Mutarrif<sup>151</sup> also said, 'It is more beloved to me that I should remain in relief and be grateful for that than to be put to trial and be patient. I looked to the matter of ease & relief and found in it the goodness of both the *Dunya* and the *Akhirah* (Hereafter).'<sup>152</sup>

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150 Kitab al-Zuhd by al-Bayhaqi

151 Mutarrif ibn 'Abdillah ibn al-Shakhir lived through times of great tribulation and he was saved from it. Al-'Ijli said about him, 'He was from the best of the Tabi'in. None were saved from the Fitnah of Ibn al-Ash'ath in Basra except for two: Mutarrif ibn 'Abdillah and Muhammad ibn Sirin, and none were saved from it in Kufa except for two: Khaythamah ibn 'Abdirahman and Ibrahim al-Nakha'i.

152 Hilyat al-Awliya

Ibn Tawus related from his father that he said, 'When the Fitnah of 'Uthman took place, a man <sup>153</sup> said to his family: 'Tie me with steel chains for I am a madman.' Then when 'Uthman was killed, he said, 'Leave me alone. All praise is to Allah who cured me of madness and saved me from (being involved in) the killing of 'Uthman.' <sup>154</sup>

Marhum ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz said, 'I heard my father say: 'When the Fitnah of Yazid ibn al-Muhallab took place, I and another man went to Ibn Sirin saying, 'What is your opinion (i.e. what shall we do)?' He said, 'Look to the affair of the happiest man when 'Uthman was killed and follow him.' We said, 'That is Ibn 'Umar (radhiallahu `anhu) who abstained (from the Fitnah).' <sup>155</sup>

Qatada said, 'When tribulations came, Mutarrif would forbid the people from it and he would flee. Al-Hasan al-Basri would also forbid it and he wouldn't come out (of his house). Mutarrif said, 'I do not liken al-Hasan except to a man who stands on top of a mountain warning people of oncoming floods.' <sup>156</sup>

Malik ibn Dinar said, 'When tribulations took place, I went to al-Hasan and asked him, 'O Abu Sa'id! What do you I do?' But he did not answer me. I said, 'O Abu Sa'id! I came to you three times asking what I should do. You are my teacher but you're not answering me. By Allah, I wish to traverse the earth drinking from its rivers and eating of its plants until Allah judges between His slaves.' Then al-Hasan began to weep saying, 'O Malik, and who can endure what you can endure? As for us, we cannot bear that.' <sup>157</sup>

Abu al-Harith al-Sa'igh: 'I asked Abu 'Abdillah (Imam Ahmad) about an issue that happened in Baghdad wherein the people wanted to go out against the leader. I said, 'O Abu 'Abdillah! What do you think of going out with those people?' He rebuked them for it and said, 'Subhan'Allah! What about blood being spilt, what about blood being spilt?! I cannot bear that nor do I command it. Patience in the affairs that we are currently in is better than a Fitnah where blood is spilt, wealth of people is made halal (to be taken) and the sacred is violated. Don't you know how the people become – i.e. during the days of Fitnah?' I said, 'What about today? Are the people not in a Fitnah?' He said, 'If they are, then it is a Fitnah which is specific. But if swords are lifted, then it becomes widespread and unclear, and the correct path will be cut off. Patience over current affairs where your religion is safe is better for you.' – And I saw him censure (the people of) going out against the leaders saying, 'It is blood... I don't see that to be correct and I do not command it.' <sup>158</sup>

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153 Some sources named him as 'Amir ibn Rabi'ah

154 Hilyat al-Awliya

155 See above source

156 Tabaqat al-Kubra

157 Hilyat al-Awliya

158 Al-Sunnah by al-Khallal

Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah said, 'Rarely does a person go out against a leader (fighting etc), except that the evil consequences of his actions are greater than the good.'<sup>159</sup>

He also said, 'For this reason the people of the Sunnah warned against fighting during times of tribulation due to authentic narrations from the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) to the extent that they mentioned this in their writings of 'Aqidah and they commanded patience during the Rule of tyrants instead of fighting them (due to the consequences of innocent blood being spilt, wealth and honour being abused etc).'<sup>160</sup>

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159 Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawi

160 See above source

## The Benefits of 'Azla (secluding oneself) during Times of Tribulations

These are some of the benefits to keeping away and secluding oneself whenever a tribulation is sparked:

- **Protection** of one's religion from being abused, of one's soul being destroyed, of honour being violated and of wealth being lost. How rare is it that a person engages in Fitnah and is saved from it.

- **No ill-feelings against the Muslim masses.** It was for this reason that Sa'ad (radhiallahu `anhu) ordered his family not to tell him anything about the people's affairs when Fitnah took place, until they united under a main Imam.

- **The blaze of Fitnah is put out.** This is because whenever the people avoided Fitnah (by secluding themselves), the people that were involved decreased in number and so its evils also decreased. But whenever people exposed themselves to it, got involved and placed themselves in it, then its wicked people increased and its evils also increased.

### *Points to note:-*

1 – Seclusion has not been prescribed in the Shari'ah in an absolute sense, but rather it has exclusive times when it has been recommended. Whenever seclusion has been praised in Islamic text, it is possible that it was specific to certain individuals for whom intermingling with others would have harmed their religion. Or it was specific to the times of tribulations wherein the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) ordered seclusion to be observed.

2 – Seclusion during times of tribulation is of two types according to its need or benefit, ability and power:

- *Total seclusion in a place far from people*

- *Partial seclusion where a person stays away from Fitnah and its people and does not take part in it even though he may be residing amongst the masses.*

3 – If a group of transgressors go out against a just and (Islamically) accepted Imam, then it is proper to assist him against them without letting him down him under the pretence of 'azla. Imam al-Tabari said, 'The basis of Fitnah is *Ibtla* (test/tribulation) and forbidding the wrong is obligatory upon everyone who is able to do that. So whoever aids the one who is in the right, then he is also in the right, and whoever aids the one in the wrong, then he is also in the wrong. And if the matter is confusing, then that is the state which the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) forbade fighting in.'<sup>161</sup>

4 – As for what took place between the Sahabah (radhiallahu `anhum) regarding fighting, it's not permissible to attribute error to any one of them especially since they all carried out their own ijthihad. What happened was what Allah decreed and they are all leaders for us.

We must abstain from the differences that occurred between them and it is not for us to mention them except with the best of words due to them being *Sahabah* and due to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) forbidding from their abuse. Indeed Allah forgave them and told us that He is pleased with them.

### **Adhering to the Jama'ah: A cause for Salvation**

From the Kindness of Allah `azza wa jall for this Ummah is that He will never congregate it upon misguidance. Rather Truth will always remain so long as the Ummah remains, for He has guaranteed that there will always be a group from this Ummah steadfast upon the Truth, holding onto it until the Command of Allah comes whilst they are in that state.

Abu Mas'ud said, 'Fear Allah and be patient until you are relieved by a righteous one (leader) or relieved of an evil one (tyrant). Upon you is to adhere to the *Jama'ah* (Muslim community/Ummah) for Allah will not unite the Ummah of Muhammad upon misguidance.'<sup>162</sup>

Ibn 'Abbas reports that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '*Verily, Allah will not unite my Nation upon misguidance. The Hand of Allah is with the Jama'ah and whoever strays, strays towards the Hellfire.*'<sup>163</sup>

Ibn Mas'ud: 'O people! Adhere to obedience and to the Jama'ah for it is the Rope of Allah which He has commanded (to be held onto). Whatever you dislike to do in unity is better for you than what you like to do in a divided state.'<sup>164</sup>

In the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said to him, '*Adhere to the Muslim Jama'ah and to their Imam.*' He said, 'What if they have no Jama'ah or Imam?' He said, '*Then stay away from all those groups, even if you (end up) clinging to the roots of a tree until death comes to you and you are like that.*'<sup>165</sup>

Nu'man ibn Bashir reports that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '*Jama'ah is mercy and division is punishment.*'<sup>166</sup>

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162 Al-Musannaf by Ibn Abi Shaybah

163 Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi. Declared Sahih by al-Albani in 'Tarkhrij al-Mishkat'

164 Imam al-Ajurri in 'Al-Shari'ah' and al-Lalika'i in his 'Usul'

165 Al-Bukhari, Muslim

166 Reported by Imam Ahmad, declared Hasan by al-Albani

A powerful phenomenon that pulls people to the Rope of Allah and to His Straight Path lies in the encouragement of attending the congregational prayer – even in the darkest period of Fitnah. This is due to it being a reality of *'helping one another in piety and righteousness'* and if a Fitnah is not uprooted, it (the congregational prayer) restrains its harms and reminds the Muslims of their brotherhood, unity in 'Aqidah and the foundation of love and affection between them.

'Ubaydallah ibn 'Adi ibn Khiyar went to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan when he was confined and said, 'You are the leader of the masses and we know what has befallen you, but the head of the Fitnah is leading us in prayer and we find that difficult to bear!' He said, 'The prayer is the best thing that the people do, so if the people do good, then do good along with them. But if they do bad, keep away from their evil.'<sup>167</sup>

Ibn Hazm: 'And Ibn 'Umar used to pray behind al-Hajjaj and Najdah<sup>168</sup>, one was a Khariji whilst the other was the worst of Mankind<sup>169</sup>. Ibn 'Umar used to say, 'The prayer is all goodness, I do not care who participates with me in it.'

Nafi relates: 'It was said to Ibn 'Umar during the days of Ibn al-Zubair, the Khawarij and the Khashabiyah: 'Do you pray with those when they are killing each other?' He said, 'Whoever says, 'Hayya `ala-Salah (Come to prayer)', I shall respond to him and whoever says 'Hayya `alal Falah (Come to success)', I shall respond to him. But whoever says, 'Come and kill your Muslim brother and take his wealth, I shall say 'No.'<sup>170</sup>

Abu al-Ash'ath said, 'The Khawarij came upon us so I asked Yahya ibn Abi Kathir, 'O Abu Nasr, what do you think of prayer behind them? He said, 'Let the Qur'an be your Imam and pray with them so long as they pray.'

Al-Hasan said, 'The believer's prayer behind a hypocrite will never harm him and a hypocrite's prayer behind a believer will never benefit him.'

'Ali (ibn Hazm) said, 'We do not know of anyone from the Sahabah who prevented praying behind al-Mukhtar, 'Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad or al-Hajjaj even though there is no-one more evil than them. Indeed Allah `azza wa jall said,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*"Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression."*

[al-Ma'idah: 2]<sup>171</sup>

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167 Al-Bukhari

168 Najdah ibn 'Amir al-Hanafi al-Hururi, from the leaders of the Khawarij. Refer to: Lisan al-Mizan

169 Qatada said, 'I said to Sa'eed ibn Musayyib 'Shall we pray behind al-Hajjaj?' He said, 'We pray behind one who is worse than him.'

170 Hilyat al-Awliya

171 Al-Muhalla. See also قاعدة أهل السنة والجماعة في رحمة أهل البدعة والمعاصي ومشاركتهم في صلاة الجماعة by Ibn Taymiyyah



## Countering Tribulations with Righteous Deeds

In places of Fitan and disasters, many people become occupied in following events and become over-enthusiastic in it. In addition, gatherings become filled with talk of 'I heard, I saw, I think, if it was like this it would have been better, if this was put first or if that was delayed it would have been more appropriate' etc such that it takes away their concern for the recommended supererogatory acts and they perhaps fall short of the obligatory acts, or they delay the prayer from its set time due to them having spent the night in debates for example, or they abandon some of their livelihood or the rights of their wives and children.

Abu Hurayrah narrates that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'By (righteous) deeds, prepare for Fitan which is like a piece of the dark night wherein a man will wake up as a believer and pass the evening as a disbeliever, or wherein he will enter the evening as a believer and in the morning come as a disbeliever. He will sell his religion for a temporal gain of this World.'*<sup>172</sup>

Al-Hasan al-Basri said regarding this narration, 'A man will wake up prohibiting the blood, honour and wealth of his brother but he shall enter the evening making it permissible. And he will pass the evening prohibiting the blood, honour and wealth of his brother but he shall come in the morning making it permissible.'<sup>173</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrates that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Prepare for 6 things by doing (righteous) deeds: The Anti-Christ, the Smoke, the Beast of the Earth, the Rising of the Sun from the East, the matter of the masses and the personal issues of each of you.'*<sup>174</sup>

Umm Salamah said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) woke up one night in a frightened state saying, *'Subhanallah! What has Allah sent down from the Stores and what has come of Fitan? Who will wake up the people of the house – i.e. his wives – so that they may pray? Perhaps a clothed one in this world will be naked in the Hereafter.'*<sup>175</sup>

Righteous good deeds are a means of remaining steadfast upon the Truth. Allah Ta'ala said,

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا

"...But if they had done what they were told, it would have been better for them, and would have strengthened their (Faith)"

[al-Nisa: 66]

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172 Sahih Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad

173 Al-Tirmidhi

174 Sahih Muslim

175 Al-Bukhari

## The one who performs righteous deeds will never be humiliated by Allah

It is reported from the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) that he said, *'The doer of good is protected from evil destruction.'*<sup>176</sup>

When tribulation first occurred, Talq ibn Habib said, 'Guard against it by observing Taqwa (piety).'

And Ma'qil ibn Yasar said, 'The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, *'Worship in the time of al-Harj (killings) is like migration to me.'*<sup>177</sup>

Allah Ta'ala said,

لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مَنِ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَقَاتَلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

*"Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquering (of Makkah) (with those among you who did so later). Such are higher in degree than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all, Allah has promised the best (reward).*

*And Allah is All-Aware of what you do."*

[al-Hadid: 10]

This is because those who spent (wealth) and fought before the conquest did so at a time of fear and when they were few in number, as opposed to those who did so – even if they are promised reward - after the conquest as they spent and fought after there was clear honour for Islam and its people were strengthened.<sup>178</sup>

Allah Ta'ala also said,

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ

*"And seek help in patience and prayer..."*

[al-Baqarah: 45]

- And this is because the prayer acts as the greatest aid when it comes to remaining steadfast in matters.

Allah, jalla wa `ala, said

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

*"Indeed, We know that your breast is straitened at what they say. So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him). And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)."*

[al-Hijr: 97-99]

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176 Al-Silsilah al-Sahihah

177 Sahih Muslim

178 Refer to 'Masa'il fil Fitan' by Al-Subhan

So He ordered the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) to take refuge in *Salah* (prayer) and *Dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) if his chest became straightened at what his enemies utter, for in that (the prayer) is a phenomenon of one's chest feeling relief and alleviation of calamity. This was the Prophet's guidance; whenever a matter became serious or worrying, he would retreat to the *Salah*. Hudhayfah said, 'On the night of the Confederates, I went back to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and he was wrapped up praying. Whenever matters became serious, the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to offer prayers.' <sup>179</sup>

The leader of the faithful, 'Ali (ibn Abi Talib) said, 'On the night of al-Badr, all of us were asleep except for the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) for he was praying under a tree, supplicating until morning came.' <sup>180</sup>

Thabit: 'If the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) was afflicted he would call his family saying '*Offer prayers! Offer prayers!*' Thabit also said, 'If ever the Prophets were taken by a matter, they would seek protection in the prayer.' <sup>181</sup>

And likewise was the state of the Companions (radhiallahu `anhum) and their successors who followed them; the way they were with regards to the *Salah* was like the way a fighter is with regards to his sword, or a wealthy one with regards to his wealth or a child with regards to his cries and screams as he seeks a caring mother. Nay, rather they were more deeply connected with their *Salah* and relied upon it until it became second-nature and it never left them. If they felt fright or were invaded by an enemy, if victory was delayed or a matter confused them, they turned to *Salah* and sought safety therein.

At the end of the Battle of Yarmuk, the King of Rome began to ask his defeated army: 'Shame on you, tell me about those whom you fought. Are they not men like yourselves?' They said, 'Yes O' King.' He said, 'Who was greater in number, you or them?' They said, 'We are greater than them in every place.' He said, 'Then why have you been defeated?' An elder from their great heads said, 'They have defeated us because they stand to pray at night, they fast during the day, they fulfill their oaths and they are just amongst themselves.' <sup>182</sup>

'Ubaydallah ibn 'Adi ibn Khiyar went to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan when he was confined and said, 'You are the leader of the masses and we know what has befallen you, but the head of the Fitnah is leading us in prayer and we find that difficult to bear!' He said, 'The prayer is the best thing that the people do, so if the people do good, then do good along with them. But if they do bad, keep away from their evil.'

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179 Reported by Ahmad, Ibn Jarir and Abu Dawud. Hasan narration

180 Reported by Ahmad, al-Nasa'i, Abu Ya'la, Ibn Khuzaymah. Sahih narration

181 Reported by Ahmad in 'Al-Zuhd' and al-Bayhaqi ibn 'al-Shu'b'

182 Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah

Ibn Hajar said (regarding the above narration), 'In this report is encouragement to pray in congregation particularly in times of tribulation so that disunity is avoided, and that prayer behind a person whom its disliked to pray behind is better than abandoning the congregational prayer altogether.'<sup>183</sup>

## Du'a and Tadharru' (beseeching with humbleness) in Times of Fitan

Entreating and beseeching Allah Ta'ala (التضرع - الضراع) is a cause of relief from worry and an alleviation of calamities. Allah Ta'ala said,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبِئْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*"Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you.*

*And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health with calamities so that they might believe with humility (tadharru').*

*If only they had believed with humility when Our Torment came to them! But rather their hearts hardened, and Shaitan (Satan) made fair-seeming to them that which they used to do."*

[al-An'am: 42-43]

He also said,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبِئْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَرَّعُونَ

*"And We sent no Prophet unto any town (and they denied him), except that We seized its people with trials from extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss of health and calamities, so that they might humble themselves (tadharru')."*

[al-A'raf: 94]

Anas reports that the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) went past a people who had been afflicted and so he said, *'Are they not asking for salvation (and well-being)?!'*<sup>184</sup>

Al-Hasan al-Basri used to say, 'Indeed, al-Hajjaj (ibn Yusuf) is the punishment of Allah so do not push back the punishment of Allah with your hands but rather upon you is to have reliance and supplication for Allah Ta'ala has said,

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَاثُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

*"And indeed We seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves to their Lord, nor did they invoke (tadharru') with submission to Him."*

[al-Mu'minun: 76]

At times of Fitan, minds loose sense and souls become confused; they do not know what to do! And in these moments, many people become heedless of a great weapon which was a tool of preparation for the Prophets and the Righteous throughout time, indeed it is Du'a. Allah Ta'ala said about His Prophet Nuh (`alayhisalam):

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ فَفَتْحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُّهِمِرٍ

*"Then he invoked his Lord (saying): "I have been overcome, so help (me)!"*

*So We opened the gates of heaven with water pouring forth.*

[al-Qamar: 10-11]

<sup>184</sup> Reported by al-Bazzar in his Musnad, declared Sahih by al-Albani in his Silsilah

He `azza wa jall, said about His Prophet Dhun-Nun (Yunus - `alayhisalam):

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ  
الظَّالِمِينَ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْعَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And (remember) Dhan-Nun (Jonah), when he went off in anger, and thought that We would not punish him (i.e. the calamities which had befallen him)! But he cried through the darkness

(saying): *La ilaha illa Anta [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)],*

*Glorified (and Exalted) are You. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers.*

*So We answered his call, and delivered him from the distress.*

*And thus do We deliver the believers."*

[al-Anbiya: 87-88]

He also said,

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

"And your Lord said: "Call upon Me, I will respond to you.

Verily! Those who scorn at My worship will surely enter Hell in humiliation!"

[al-Ghafir: 60]

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, '*Du'a is worship.*'<sup>185</sup>

He also said, '*The most powerless person is the one incapable of making du'a.*'<sup>186</sup>

It is the nature of tribulations that matters become obscure in it, the face of truth becomes unclear and it confuses the masses, except the one whom Allah protects and has mercy on. So from the biggest causes of salvation is adhering to and remaining steadfast in one's belief of Allah, seeking refuge in Him, calling upon Him and seeking His Help; for He is the One who said in the Hadith al-Qudsi: '*O My Slaves, all of you are in misguidance except the one whom I guide. So seek guidance of Me, and I shall guide you.*'<sup>187</sup>

Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdir-Rahman ibn 'Awf: 'I asked 'Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin, 'What did the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to say when he began his prayer at night?' She said, 'If he got up to pray at night, he used to say at the beginning of his prayer: '*O Allah, Lord of Jibra'il, Mika'il and Israfil, Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, Knower of the Unseen and Apparent, You shall surely Judge between Your slaves over what which they differ. Guide me in the matters of Truth over which there is a conflict, by Your Permission. Indeed You guide whom You will to the Straight Path.*'<sup>188</sup>

So guidance to the Truth and seeing rightly by it in times of tribulation is a Divine grace and a gift from Allah.

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185 Reported by Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah, narration: Hasan Sahih

186 Reported by 'Abd al-Ghani al-Maqdisi in 'al-Du'a', declared Sahih by al-Albani

187 Sahih Muslim

188 Sahih Muslim

Allah Ta'ala said,

فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

*"Then Allah, by His Leave, guided those who believed to the truth of that wherein they differed. And Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path."*

[al-Baqarah: 213]

Ibrahim al-Taymi used to say, 'O Allah protect me with Your Religion and the Sunnah of Your Prophet from differing in the Truth, from following desires, from the paths of misguidance, from doubtful matters and from deviancy and arguments.'

Abu Hurayrah: 'A Fitnah will come wherein nothing will save you except supplication like the supplication of one drowning.'<sup>189</sup>

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman: 'A time will come upon the people where none will be saved except the one who calls (upon Allah) as if he were drowning.'<sup>190</sup>

Yahya ibn Sa'eed: 'I heard that 'Abdullah ibn 'Aamir ibn Rabi'ah prayed at night when the people were engrossed in the Fitnah, then he slept. In his dream, it was said to him, 'Get up and ask Allah to save you from the Fitnah just like His righteous slaves asked to be saved.' So he got up and prayed, beseeching Allah... and so he did not come out except in a coffin<sup>191</sup> (i.e. Allah took his soul and saved him from the Fitnah). In another narration, his son said: 'When the people became occupied in the news of 'Uthman's killing, my father got up to pray at night. He said, 'O Allah, save me from the Fitnah by whatever You have saved the righteous among Your slaves with.' And so he did not leave his place except in a coffin (i.e. he died).

'Awn ibn 'Abdillah ibn 'Utbah said, 'During the tribulation that appeared at Aal al-Zubayr's time, we went past a man in a garden in Egypt, who was sitting saddened, demoralized and weeping. He was making marks in the ground with something he had. He lifted his head and behold it was a workman who had been persecuted (i.e. mutilated). He (another man) said to him, 'Why do I see you so saddened and disheartened? He said, 'Nothing.' He said, 'Is it because of this world? If so, indeed, this world is only temporary and passing by, the good and evil ones both consume of it. Or are you concerned over the Hereafter? If so, then indeed the Hereafter is a true Promise wherein the Truth will be distinguished from Falsehood.' Awn said, 'He kept reminding him until he mentioned that it (the hereafter) has lines like those on a piece of meat, whoever misses them has missed the truth.'

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189 Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah

190 Hilyat al-Awliya

191 See above source

Then he (the depressed man) said, as if surprised by these words: 'I am concerned over the Muslims.' He said, 'Indeed, Allah will save you due to your concern over the Muslims. Ask Him, for who is it that asks Allah and He does not give him? Or calls Him and He does not respond? Or relies upon Him and He does not suffice him? Or trusts in Him and He does not deliver him?'

So I ('Awn) took to supplicating saying, 'O Allah, save me and save others from me.' Then he said, 'Then the Fitnah died out and he (the workman) was not affected by it at all.'<sup>192</sup>



## Seeking Refuge in Allah from Fitan

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) ordered his Companions to seek refuge in Allah from tribulations. He said, *'Seek refuge in Allah from Fitan, the apparent thereof and the hidden.'*<sup>193</sup>

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to seek refuge from many types of tribulations for example in his statements:

*'I seek refuge in You from the Fitnah of this world.'*<sup>194</sup>

*'And I seek refuge in You from the Fitnah of wealth.'*<sup>195</sup>

*'And I seek refuge in You from the evil of the Fitnah of wealth, and I seek refuge in You from the Fitnah of the grave, and I seek refuge in You from the Fitnah of the Anti-Christ.'*<sup>196</sup>

*'And I seek refuge in You from the Fitnah of Life and Death.'*<sup>197</sup>

Imam al-Bukhari reports in his Sahih collection that Ibn Abi Mulaykah said, *'O Allah, we seek refuge in You from turning back on our heels or being put to trial (Fitnah).'*<sup>198</sup>

This is the end of what I was able to put together of this book, with the Help of al-Malik al-Wahhab (Allah `azza wa jall, the King Who grants and bestows). I ask Allah to save us from the misguidance of tribulations, to protect us from trials and to forgive us for the sins which we have committed in the open and in secret.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

محمد إسماعيل المقدم  
عفا الله عنه

**Muhammad Isma'il al-Muqaddam**

*May Allah grant him forgiveness*

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193 A portion from a Hadith narrated in Sahih Muslim

194 Sahih al-Bukhari

195 See above source

196 See above source

197 See above source

198 Fath al-Bari