9. Exit from Trials Lies in Returning to the Earliest Affair

Abu Wāqid al-Laythī (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ وَنَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ عَلَى بِسَاطٍ: إِنَّهُ سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَة. قَالوا: فَكَيْفَ نَفْعَلُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. فَرَدَّ يَدَهُ إِلَى الْبِسَاطِ فَأَمْسَكَ بِهِ فَقَالَ: تَفْعَلُونَ هَكَذَا.

وَذَكَرَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَوْمًا: إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَة. فَلَمْ يَسْمَعْهُ كَثِيْرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ. فَقَالَ مُعَاذ بن جَبَل أَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ مَا يَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ. قالوا: مَا قَالَ. قال: إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةٌ. فَقَالُوا: فَكَيْفَ لَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ نَصْنَعُ. قَالَ: تُرْجَعُونَ إِلى أَمرِكُمْ الْأَوَّل

"Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, while we were all sitting on a rug: **'Indeed there will be trials.'** They asked: **'So, how are we to behave, O Messenger of Allah?' So, he returned his hand to the rug and took hold of it tightly and said: 'This is how you shall behave!'**

Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to them one day: **'Indeed, there will be trials.'** But many of the people had not heard him. So Muʿādh Ibn Jabal (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: **'Did you not hear what Allah's Messenger has said?'** They replied: **'What did he say?'** He repeated: **'Indeed, there will be trials.'** They asked: **'How should we behave, O Messenger of Allah? And what should we**

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do?' He replied: **'You shall return to your affair as it was in the beginning.'"**[69]

Explanation:

When differing, controversy and trials occur, and the Muslim is confronted with desires, misguidance, and doubts, he must return to the understanding of the religion as it was in the beginning, and this is what is referred to by the Prophet (ﷺ) in this *hadīth* as *al-Amr al-Awwal*. In the early generations, and especially in the time of the Sahābah, they were united upon the Rope of Allah, and likewise those who followed them from the *Tābiʿeen* and the *Atbā at-Tābiʿeen*. It was their holding fast to the Book and Sunnah that protected them from *fitan* and misguidance. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ), stated:

وَٱعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۚ وَٱذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً
فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ
فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves. And remember Allah's favour on you, when you were enemies one to another, and then He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brothers one to another—and you were on the edge of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allah makes His verses and signs clear to you, that you may be guided."[70]

Furthermore, when differing occurs, Muslims are obligated to return to the Book and Sunnah to resolve their differences, just as Allah stated:

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[69] Reported by at-Tabarānī in *al-Kabeer*, no. 3307, and in *al-Awsat*, no. 8679, Al-Haythamī in *Majmaʿ az-Zawāʾid*, no. 12337—declared *saheeh* by al-Imām al-Albānī in *as-Saheehah*, no. 3165.

[70] Āli ʿImrān: 103.

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ᶜAbdullāh Ibn Masᶜood (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

اتبعوا ولا تبتدعوا فقد كفيتم وكل بدعة ضلالة

"Follow and do not innovate, for you have been sufficed—and every innovation is misguidance."[71]

Abul-ᶜĀliyah (d. 90 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

عليكم بالأمر الأول الذى كانوا عليه قبل أن يتفرقوا

"Upon you is the affair as it was in the beginning—what the people were upon before they divided."[72] So, the safety from trials lies in returning return back to the Book and Sunnah in all our affairs just as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدِى فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلاَفًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِى وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ الرَّاشِدِينَ تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحْدَثَاتِ الأُمُورِ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلاَلَةٌ

"Whoever among you lives after me will see much differing and controversy, so upon you is to cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me—hold on to it tightly, and bite onto it with your molar teeth—and beware of the newly introduced matters for verily every introduced matter is an innovation."

Allah, the Most High, stated:

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[71] Reported by Ad-Dārimī, no. 205, Ibn Waddāh. No. 17, Ibn Nasr in *As-Sunnah*, no. 28.

[72] *Talbees Iblees* of Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 11.

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يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ ۖ فَإِن تَنَـٰزَعْتُمْ فِى شَىْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those who are in authority among you—and if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination."[73]

This is the methodology of the Salaf: to cling to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم)—in that, there is safety from differing and splitting of the Ummah.

[73] An-Nisāʾ: 59.

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