11. **Leave the Misguided Groups and Callers, and Cling to the Sunnah Until Death**

Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

كَانَ النَّاسُ يَسْأَلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنِ الْخَيْرِ وَكُنْتُ أَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي

فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا كُنَّا فِي جَاهِلِيَّةٍ وَشَرٍّ فَجَاءَنَا اللَّهُ بِهَذَا الْخَيْرِ فَهَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ شَرٌّ

قَالَ نَعَمْ

فَقُلْتُ هَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الشَّرِّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَفِيهِ دَخَنٌ

قُلْتُ وَمَا دَخَنُهُ

قَالَ قَوْمٌ يَسْتَنُّونَ بِغَيْرِ سُنَّتِي وَيَهْدُونَ بِغَيْرِ هَدْيِي تَعْرِفُ مِنْهُمْ وَتُنْكِرُ

فَقُلْتُ هَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ

قَالَ نَعَمْ دُعَاةٌ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ جَهَنَّمَ مَنْ أَجَابَهُمْ إِلَيْهَا قَذَفُوهُ فِيهَا

فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صِفْهُمْ لَنَا

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قَالَ نَعَمْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ جِلْدَتِنَا وَيَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِنَا

قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَمَا تَرَى إِنْ أَدْرَكَنِي ذَلِكَ

قَالَ تَلْزَمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِمَامَهُمْ

فَقُلْتُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُمْ جَمَاعَةٌ وَلاَ إِمَامٌ

قَالَ فَاعْتَزِلْ تِلْكَ الْفِرَقَ كُلَّهَا وَلَوْ أَنْ تَعَضَّ عَلَى أَصْلِ شَجَرَةٍ حَتَّى يُدْرِكَكَ الْمَوْتُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ

"People used to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the good, but I used to ask him about evil, fearing it would overtake me.

So, I asked: **'O Messenger of Allah, we were living in times of ignorance and evil, and then Allāh brought to us this good; so is there any evil after this good?'**

He said: **'Yes.'**

I asked: **'And will there be a good after that evil?'**

He said: **'Yes, but it will be tainted.'**

I asked: **'What will be its taint?'**

He said: **'There will be people who will follow other than my Sunnah and follow other than my guidance. You will affirm what is correct and reject the evil.'**

I asked: **'Will there be evil after this good?'**

He said: **'Yes. Callers at the gates of Hell. Whoever responds to their call, they will throw them into it.'**

I said: **'O Messenger of Allah, describe them to us.'**

He said: **'They will be a people having the same skin as us (Muslims) and speaking with our language.'**

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I said: **'O Messenger of Allah, what do you advise if I reach that time?'**

He said: **'Cling to the Main Body of the Muslims (*al-Jamāʿah*) and their ruler.'**

I said: **'What if they have no Main Body and no ruler?'**

He said: **'Separate yourself from all of those sects, even if you have to bite the roots of a tree until death comes to you and you are in that state.'"**[88]

Explanation:

In this *hadīth* Hudhayfah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) asked the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) about evil so as to protect himself and others from it, just as the poet, Abu Firās al-Hamdānī wrote in some lines:

عَرَفتُ الشَرَّ لا لِلشَر

لَكِن لِتَوَقّيهِ

وَمَن لَم يَعرِفِ الشَرَّ

مِنَ الخَيرِ يَقَع فيهِ

"I learned about evil not for evil itself; rather so as to protect myself from it. And whoever does not know evil from good will fall into it."

So, it upon the Muslims to know the difference between *shirk* and *tawhīd*, between *kufr* and *īmān*, and between *Sunnah* and *bidʿah*. For this reason, the books of *ʿaqīdah* and *hadīth* of the early Salaf, and the scholars of later times are filled with descriptions of the deviated sects such as the Khawārij, the Shiʿah, the Muʿtazilah, the Murjiʾah, the Ashāʿirah, the Qadariyyah and so

[88] Muslim, no. 1847.

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on. When a person knows the paths of deviations, he will not fall into them *inshāʾ Allāh*, rather he will avoid them.

When Islam arrived bringing an end to Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance), the Muslims were upon goodness and Allah kept them upon goodness due to their *īmān* in Him and their righteous deeds. Allāh united their hearts and gave them honour:

هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصۡرِهِۦ وَبِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾
وَأَلَّفَ بَيۡنَ قُلُوبِهِمۡۚ لَوۡ أَنفَقۡتَ مَا فِى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ جَمِيعًا مَّآ أَلَّفۡتَ بَيۡنَ قُلُوبِهِمۡ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
أَلَّفَ بَيۡنَهُمۡۚ إِنَّهُۥ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

"It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers. And brought together their hearts. If you [O Prophet] had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allāh brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise." (al-Anfāl 8:63)

Thereafter, the Prophet (ﷺ) described a time that would come when the people will not follow his Sunnah nor his guidance—and this is due to the appearance of innovations and misguidance just as he has explained in other narrations such as the splitting of the Ummah in seventy-three sects. In all of these narrations, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded his Ummah to hold fast to the Truth, to the Book, the Sunnah and the way of the Sahābah.

In this *hadīth*, he explained that there will be callers standing at the gates of Hell, and that they are from our Ummah, they look like us, and they speak our language, however they will call to *bidʿah*, misguidance, to opposing the Sunnah and the Straight Path. Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنه) wanted to know how to save oneself from this trial—so, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded him to cling to the main body of the Muslims and their ruler.

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However, if there is no body of Muslims who are governed by a ruler, then he should separate himself from the factions, sects, groups and parties and cling to the Truth, even if he dies in that state.

So, the roots of the tree that the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded us to bite onto, is his Sunnah, and the Sunnah of his Caliphs, Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī (رضي الله عنهم). This is what he said in the *hadīth* of al-ʿIrbād: **'Upon you is to follow what you know of my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me—hold fast to that and bite onto to it with your molar teeth; and keep away from the newly introduced matters.'** And in the *hadīth* of Abu Wāqid al-Laythī (رضي الله عنه): **'You shall return back to your affair as it was in the beginning'**[89] and that is the path of *al-Firqat an-Nājiyah* (the Saved Sect) about whom he (ﷺ) said: **'That which I and my Companions are upon today.'** And not to turn away from that because he (ﷺ) said, **'Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.'** [90]

[89] 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.

[90] Muslim no. 1401.

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