

hand, whether a servant, a woman, an animal, or anything else, except when he was engaged in *jihād* for the cause of God. Nor did he take revenge on anybody for the harm he caused him. Only when someone indulged in things which God had forbidden would he get furious and would not rest until he had avenged him for the sake of God.”<sup>754</sup> This shows that the Prophet never avenged any harm caused to his person, but he did so when God’s injunctions were violated, and no one could stop him from doing that.

[*Fatāwā* 15:157-69]

### **(13.9) Bidding the right and forbidding the wrong**

*Bidding the right and forbidding the wrong is a collective duty like jihād, which is its completion. If no one fulfills this duty, everyone who is competent will be guilty to the extent he was capable, for it is incumbent upon everyone according to his ability. This is true of all duties. They produce more good than evil, for if the evil consequences of a thing outweighed its good consequences God would not make it obligatory. The duty of bidding the right and forbidding the wrong is sometimes performed by hand, sometimes by tongue, and sometimes only by the heart, and that is the weakest form of faith one can have. Those who are to take up this duty should have a very good understanding of the things they enjoin and the things they forbid, they should be polite and lenient in performing it, and they should be prepared to suffer patiently the harms that might be inflicted on them by the people to whom they preach.*

God has introduced His Prophet in these words: “He commands them what is just, and forbids them what is unjust, allows them as lawful what is good and prohibits them from what is bad” (9:157). This is the description of his mission. It is through him that God bids every good and forbids everything evil. The Prophet himself has described his mission in this way: “I have

been sent to perfect all the noble virtues.”<sup>755</sup> In another *ḥadīth* reported in both *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections he has said, “I and other prophets form a house which was built by someone who completed the whole structure, but left just the place for a brick. Anyone who goes around the house is caught by its beauty, but wonders why one brick has not been placed. Know that I am that brick.”<sup>756</sup> With him God completed His religion which commands all that is right and forbids all that is wrong, allows all that is good and pure, and prohibits all that is bad and foul...

God has introduced the *ummah* in a manner similar to how He introduced the Prophet. He has said, “You are the best of the peoples, evolved for mankind. You bid the right and forbid the wrong, and believe in God” (3:110); and, “The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another; they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil.” (9:71). Abū Hurayrah<sup>757</sup> put it in his own way when he said, “You are the best of the peoples for mankind. You bind them up in chains and lead them into Paradise.” God has made it very clear that this *ummah* is the best *ummah* for mankind and their greatest benefactor because they tell them what is right and what is wrong for them, and ask them to act upon that. They also strive with all their power and resources to establish the rule of justice and virtue and do that for no purpose but to please their Lord. This is the best they can do for mankind...

When we say that the good should be enjoined and the evil should be forbidden, we do not mean that every individual in the world should be addressed. This was not the part of the duty of the Prophet; how could it be the duty of his followers! What is required is that conditions should be created that people receive the message. If they themselves do not try to know the message while those responsible to preach it have done their duty, it is the people who are guilty...

Furthermore, the duty to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong is not an individual duty, it is a collective duty, as the Qur’ān has said, and since *jihād* is the completion of that duty, it is also a

collective duty. Hence, if those who have the power and ability to perform that duty fail to render it, every individual who has the ability will be guilty to the extent of his ability, for it is a duty on every person according to his or her ability. The Prophet said, "Whoever sees an evil should remove it with his hand. If he cannot do that he should speak against it; if he cannot do that, he should hate it in his heart, and that is the lowest degree of faith."<sup>758</sup>

So this duty is sometimes performed with the heart and sometimes with the tongue, and sometimes with the hands. As for the heart, it must render that duty in every situation, since it involves no harm at all. Hence, if anyone fails in that, too, he is not a Believer. The Prophet has said, "That is the lowest or the weakest degree of faith," or "Beyond that there is not a particle of faith there." Ibn Mas'ūd<sup>759</sup> was asked, "Who are the dead among the people who are living?" He answered, "Those who neither approve of the right nor condemn the wrong."

Two groups of people have gone wrong in this regard. One group abstains from enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. They try to find justification for their action in the verse, "You who believe! Guard your own souls. If you follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray" (5:08). In his time, Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq<sup>760</sup> found some people behaving in the same wrong manner. He addressed them and said, "You read this verse and interpret it in the wrong way. I have heard the Prophet saying, 'When people see wrong being done and do not try to remove it God is likely to inflict punishment on them all.'<sup>761</sup> The second group wants to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong but they do not know how to do it, nor do they have the patience and forbearance required, or the understanding of what should be done and what should not, or what is feasible and what is not. Abū Tha'labah says that he asked the Prophet concerning this, and he said, "You should work together and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, till you see people turning greedy, running after their desires, self-conceited, each defending his own whims, knowing

nothing about the truth. At that time you should mind yourself, leave the people to themselves. You will be seeing days when to hold on to the right will be as difficult as to hold fire in the hand. Whoever does a right thing in those days shall have the reward of fifty people doing the same (in our days).<sup>762</sup> This means that some people will be engaged in bidding the right and forbidding the wrong, believing all the while that they are serving God and obeying His Prophet but they will only be transgressing the limits He has set. A number of heretical sects like the Khawārij, the Mu'tazilah, the Rāfiḍah and others do a lot of things wrong while performing the duty of bidding the right and forbidding the wrong; they do more evil than good. That is why the Prophet has advised the Believers to bear patiently the injustices which their rulers commit, and refrain from fighting them so long as they establish the *ṣalāh*. His words are, "Give them their due, and ask God for what is your due."<sup>763</sup>

That is why one of the principles of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah is that one should adhere to the body of Muslims (*jamā'ah*) and refrain from fighting the rulers. Heretical sects such as the Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, believe that people should fight the rulers; they consider it one of their basic principles... I have discussed in detail elsewhere the issue of fighting against rulers. The guiding principle in this regard, as in other similar cases, is this: whenever there is a conflict between the good and the bad consequences or between the right and the wrong aspects of a course of action, one must choose the course which is the better of the two. Even though the right we enjoin or the wrong we forbid is only meant to secure some good or ward off some evil, we have to see what consequences follow otherwise. If the good one loses or the loss one incurs is greater, then such a course of action will not be desirable. In fact, if the evils of an action outweigh its good, it will be forbidden. However, both good and the evil consequences have to be measured by the standards of the Shari'ah. The best policy in the matter is: Follow the texts, and do

not go beyond them; when you do not have texts, exercise your mind, and take help from instructions in similar cases. It rarely happens that texts fail a person if he is aware of them and is versed in inferring from them.

Hence, if a person or a group of people faces a situation that has both aspects, good and evil, and are not able to isolate one from the other, and have either to accept them together or leave them together, they will not be asked to do the good alone or avoid the evil alone; they will have to study the case thoroughly. If the good outweighs the evil they will be required to do it, even though it involves some evil; they will not be asked to refrain from it, for that would involve the loss of greater good. To ask them to refrain from it would be blocking the way to God, obstructing the fulfillment of His will or the will of His Prophet, and undermining the realization of so much good. But if the evil outweighs the good they must refrain from it, even though it will mean the loss of some good, for to ask one to accomplish a good that involves greater evil is to ask him to sin against God and His Prophet. If the good and the evil balance each other one will not be asked to do either. This means that situations differ. One time it may be better to bid an action, another time to forbid it, and a third time to refrain from both, that is to say in case the good and the evil balance each other...

It was a situation of the last kind in which the Prophet abstained from doing anything with ‘Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and other hypocrites who had a large number of supporters. Had he done anything to remove the evil they were causing he would have risked a greater good. Their peoples would have come out in their support and would have shouted that Muḥammad (pbuh) was killing his own friends and supporters. That was why when he addressed people at the occasion of the slander (against his wife ‘Ā’ishah) he excused ‘Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, and Sa’d Ibn Mu‘ādh<sup>761a</sup> spoke to him the good words that he said, and Sa’d Ibn ‘Ubaydah<sup>761b</sup> defended him even though Sa’d was a good Muslim.

The important thing here is that one's love for the good and hatred for the evil and one's willingness to do the former and eschew the latter should be subject to God's likes and dislikes, love and aversion, which He has expressed in His revelations, and that he should work for the good and against the evil as much as he can. God does not require from a soul more than it can do. He has said, "Fear God as much as you can" (64:16). As for love or hate, desire or aversion, it should be perfect, and deficiency in it will mean deficiency in fait; but as for action, it should be according to one's ability and power. If your love for the good or your hatred for the evil is perfect and you act as much as your powers allow, you will have the reward of a perfect worker.

Often the like or dislike, love or aversion of the people for a particular thing is determined by their natural love and aversion for the thing rather than by the love and aversion which God and His Prophet have for it. This may amount to self-indulgence, and if they proceed on that road they will only be pursuing their own desires. God has said, "And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from God?" (28:50). For lust in its essence is love of the self and aversion is only dependent upon it. Neither desire as such, which is the basis for love, nor aversion as such, which we have in ourselves, is something objectionable; people often do not have control over either. What may be objectionable is their translation into action. It is against them that God cautioned David when He said, "David! We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth; so judge between men in truth (and justice) and never follow the lusts (of your heart) for they will mislead you from the Path of God" (38:26)...

Man's duty, therefore, is to see whether his love and aversion are subject to God's commands and the commands of His Prophet, and in the same measure as they would like. For it is these commands which constitute God's guidance, commands which He has revealed to His Prophet, and to which one should subject one's likes and dislikes, and never ever exceed... Hence, one must

acquire knowledge of the good and the bad, must be able to distinguish between them, and must know what things have been commanded and what have been forbidden... One must also be polite and considerate in calling men to them, and mind what the Prophet has said: “Politeness only adds to the beauty of a thing you do, and rudeness only adds to its ugliness.”<sup>764</sup> He has also said, “God is lenient and loves leniency in everything, and gives to the lenient what He does not give to the harsh.”<sup>765</sup>

One must also be patient and forgiving of the wrongs one suffers; you just cannot escape them. If you cannot forbear and forgive, you will do more harm than good. Luqmān taught that truth to his son when he said, “Enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patience whatever befalls you” (31:17). This is also the reason why God instructed His messengers, who were masters in this art to be patient and forgiving. To the Seal of the Prophets, for example, He has said, “Have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble (dignity)” (73:10), and “Patiently persevere, as did (all) messengers of inflexible purpose” (46:35).

To sum up: One must have knowledge and understanding, must be polite and lenient, and must be patient and persevering. Knowledge must be acquired before bidding the good and forbidding the evil, leniency must go along with it, and patience must follow it. All three must go together. This is stated in a tradition which has come down from the Elders, even believed to have emerged from the Prophet: “No one really bids the right and forbids the wrong except one who knows very well what he bids and what he forbids, who is polite and lenient in bidding as well as in forbidding, and who is forbearing and forgiving on both occasions.” Qādī Abū Ya‘lā has noted this tradition in his book, *Al-Mu‘tamad*.

[*Fatāwā* 28:121-37]

**(13.10) Jihād**

*Whoever receives the message of Islam and refuses to accept it we are to fight, so that the obstruction (in the way of truth) is removed and the religion of God prevails. Similarly, if any group of Muslims refuses to comply with any ruling of the Islamic Shari'ah which is definite, categorical and firmly established (az-zāhirah wa al-mutawātirah) our duty is to fight them till they submit completely to God. The texts that describe the merits of jihād are too many to be counted. Scholars of Islam are agreed that jihād is better than ḥajj and 'umrah, and better than non-obligatory ṣalāh and fasting. The reason that jihād is so meritorious an act is that its benefits reach the doer as well as other people, in this life and the next, and because it comprehends all kinds of devotion, manifest and hidden, such as love, sincerity, trust, sacrifice of life and property, patience, renunciation, and remembering God, which are not comprehended by any other act.*

Whoever gets the message of the Prophet to believe and practice the religion of God which He has revealed to him, but does not respond to it, we are to fight him "till obstruction is removed and the religion of God prevails" (2:193). When God sent His Messenger and commanded him to call people to His religion, He did not allow him to fight or kill anybody for it or wage war against him, until he migrated to Madinah. At that time He allowed it to him and to the Muslim community saying, "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; verily God has all the powers for their aid. They are those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, (for no cause) except that they say, 'Our Lord is God.' Had not God checked one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which the name of God is commemorated in abundant measure. God will certainly aid those



who aid (His) cause. For verily God is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might. They are those who if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. With God rests the end (and decision) of all affairs” (22:39-41).

Sometime later God made fighting incumbent on them in these words: “Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it, for it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But God knows, and you know not” (2:216). In other Madinan *sūrahs* He underlined its imperative character, emphasized its importance, and condemned those who did not participate in it, dubbing them hypocrites and sick in the heart, for example, “Say (Prophet): If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, or your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, or the dwellings in which you delight, are dearer to you than God or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause, then wait until God brings about His decision; and God guides not the rebellious” (9:24). Or, “Only they are Believers who have believed in God and His Messenger, have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of God. Such are the sincere ones” (49:15). Or, “When a *sūrah* of basic and categorical meaning is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein, you will see those in whose hearts is a disease looking at you with a look of one in a swoon at the approach of death. But more fitting for them were it to obey and say what is just, and when a matter is resolved upon, it were best for them if they were true to God. Then is it to be expected of you, if you were put in authority that you will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin” (47:20-22). And so on and so on.

God has also applauded those who engage in *jihād* and he has honored them. In Sūrat Aṣ-Ṣaff, for example, He says, “You who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty? That you believe in God and His Messenger, and

that you strive (your utmost) in the cause of God, with your property and your persons. That would be best for you if you but knew. He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity; that is indeed the supreme achievement. And another (favor will He bestow) which you do love - help from God and speedy victory. So give the glad tidings to the Believers” (61:10-3). Or, “Do you make the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque equal (to the pious service of) those who believe in God and the Last Day, and strive with might and main in the cause of God. And God guides not those who do wrong. Those who believe and suffer exile and strive with might and main in God’s cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of God. They are the people who will achieve (salvation). Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure, and of gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure. They will live therein forever. Verily in God’s presence is a reward, the greatest (of all)” (9:19-22). Or, “If any from among you turn back from his faith, soon will God produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, lowly with the Believers, mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of God and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the grace of God which He will bestow on whom He pleases, and God encompasses all, and He knows all things” (5:57)...

Verses and *aḥādīth* that speak of *jihād* and its merits are too many to be counted. This is the reason why *jihād* is the best of all the supererogatory works. Scholars are agreed that it is better than *ḥajj* and *‘umrah*, and better than supererogatory *ṣalāh* and fasting, as you find in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. The Prophet, to quote a few *aḥādīth*, said, “The important thing is *islām*, (submission); its pillar is *ṣalāh* on which it stands, and *jihād* is its pinnacle.”<sup>763a</sup> Or, “Paradise has an hundred stories, and the distance between one story and the next is like the distance between earth and sky. God

has prepared it for those who carry on *jihād* for His sake.”<sup>766</sup> This *ḥadīth* is recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The former has also recorded the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet has said, “One whose feet are covered with dust from traveling in the cause of God, God will not allow the Fire to touch them.”<sup>767</sup> He has also said, “To spend one day and night in *jihād* for the cause of God is better than fasting one whole month and praying all its nights. If the *mujāhid* dies on *jihād* the acts that he used to perform (daily) will continue to be credited to his account. He will also be receiving his sustenance and will be secure from the guiles of Satan.”<sup>768</sup> This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Muslim. In the *Sunan* collections we have, “To spend a day in the way of God is better than a thousand days at home;”<sup>769</sup> and, “The Fire will not touch two eyes: one that weeps fearing God, and the other that wakes up guarding (a post) in a war for the cause of God.”<sup>770</sup> This is recorded by At-Tirmidhī with the remark that it is fairly authentic (*ḥasan*). Aḥmad in his *Musnad* has noted the words of the Prophet: “To watch a post for a night (in war) for the sake of God is better than fasting one whole month and praying all its nights.”<sup>771</sup> The *Ṣaḥīḥayn* have recorded that a person once asked the Prophet if there was anything equal to *jihād* in the way of God. The Prophet said, “Is it possible that, from the time the *mujāhid* goes out on *jihād*, you fast without break and engage in *ṣalāh* without taking a rest? The man said, “One cannot.” “That would be equal,” the Prophet said, “to *jihād*.”<sup>772</sup> The *Sunan* collections have these words of the Prophet: “Every community has its form of *siyāḥah* or pious traveling; the *siyāḥah* of my community is *jihād* in the way of God.”<sup>773</sup>

There are numerous *aḥādīth* on the merits of *jihād*. On no other subject will you find so many *aḥādīth* as on *jihād*. This is nothing to wonder about for the benefits of *jihād* are not limited to its doer; they reach others also, in this life as well as in the next. *Jihād* comprehends all kinds of devotion, manifest and hidden, such as love, sincerity, trust, sacrifice of life and property, patience,

renunciation, remembering God, and many more which other works do not comprehend...

War has been instituted only in the form of *jihād*, for it seeks to put the entire life in control of God's religion and make His word prevail over all other words. That is why those who refrain from Islam expose themselves to war; this is completely agreed upon among the Muslims. However, those who are not belligerents and do not participate in war, such as women, children, hermits, old men, the blind, the chronically ill, and the like, shall not be killed, except when they participate in war with their words or actions... God has allowed the taking of lives only to the extent necessary for the well-being of people. He has said, "Insult and oppression are worse than slaughter" (2:191), that is to say, killing people is certainly evil, but the mischief that the unbelievers create is far worse. Those who do not create obstructions for the Muslims in practicing their religion, their evil is limited to themselves. That is why the jurists say that those who propagate heretical ideas opposed to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah shall have the punishment which ordinary men will not. A *ḥadīth* says, "The sin which is done in secret harms only the sinner, but that which is done in open and is not condemned harms also the general public."<sup>774</sup> This is the reason why the Sharī'ah has proscribed those who openly deny Islam (and fight), but not those who are caught from among them... However, war will be carried out against the People of the Book and the Zoroastrians till they either accept Islam or pay the *jizyah*, submitting (to the Islamic authority). As for others, jurists differ whether *jizyah* should be levied on them or not; the Arabs, however, are exempted by the majority.

If from among the Muslims any group defies any rules of the Sharī'ah which are categorical and well established (*az-ẓāhirah wa al-mutawātirah*) they are to be fought till the whole religion of God comes into force. Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq and with him all other Companions fought those who refused to pay *zakāh*. To be sure, some Companions did waver about it at first, but they soon agreed

with Abū Bakr. ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, for example, first argued with him: “How will you fight a Muslim? Has the Prophet not said that he has been commanded to fight people till they confess that God is one and Muḥammad is the Messenger, and that the moment they confess it they will save their lives and property from him except when it is required by the law and God alone will call them to account for their deeds?”<sup>775</sup> Abū Bakr said that *zakāh* is one of those things which are required by the law. He further said, “By God if they refuse to pay even for the rope by which they tie their camels and which they used to pay for in *zakāh* at the time of the Prophet I will fight them for it.” When ‘Umar heard that he said, “God has made the mind of Abū Bakr very clear about war; I see that Abū Bakr is perfectly right.”

There are many authentic *ahādīth* which say that the Prophet commanded war against the Khawārij. The *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, for example, record that ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib heard the Prophet say, “At the end of times there will emerge a people young in age and weak of intellect. In talk they will surpass the best of mankind, but their faith will not go down deeper than their throats; they will shoot out of the religion just as an arrow passes through the animal it kills. Kill them whenever you find them; you shall be rewarded for it on the Day of Judgment.” In the *ḥadīth* as Muslim has recorded it the words are, “A group of people will emerge from my community who will devote themselves to the Qur’ān. Your reading of the Qur’ān will not stand comparison to their reading, nor will your *ṣalāh* bear comparison with theirs. They will be reading the Qur’ān for their own benefit but it will go against them. It will hardly pass down their throat. They will move out of Islam just as an arrow passes out of the prey it kills. If the army that would attack them knew what reward is promised to them by their Prophet they would leave all other tasks.” Abū Sa‘īd, who has narrated this *ḥadīth*, adds the words, “They will fight the Muslims and leave the heathens. If I were to find them I would kill them just like the

people of ‘Ād.”<sup>776</sup> This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Muslim and Al-Bukhārī. In another version of the *ḥadīth*, which we have in Muslim, the words are, “My community will divide into two factions, and in between them a group will arise who will leave Islam. They will be killed by the faction which will be on the right”<sup>777</sup>

The people who have been referred in the *ḥadīth* are those whom *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* ‘Alī killed when the people of Shām had separated from the people of ‘Irāq. They are called Ḥarūrīyyah. The *ḥadīth* also makes it clear that both factions (the ‘Irāqīs and the Shāmīs) are part of the *ummah*, that those (‘Irāqīs) who were with ‘Alī were on the right, and that ‘Alī fought the renegades because they went out of Islam, left the party of the Muslims, and had no scruples in killing Muslims or plundering their property.

From the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the *ummah*, it is clear that we may fight those who go out of the Islamic Sharī‘ah, even though they may be confessing to the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad. Jurists have differed only with regard to the *sunnah rātibah* (the supererogatory works which the Prophet did very regularly and recommended to us in strong words, without, however making them obligatory) such as offering two *rak‘āt* before the dawn prayer, whether we should fight those who refuse to offer them. But as for duties which are obligatory or things which are clearly forbidden and known to all, everyone agrees that those who do not offer them should be fought till they submit, establish regular prayers, pay *zakāh*, fast during Ramaḍān, make *ḥajj*, and refrain from forbidden things like marrying two sisters, eating foul things, or taking the life and property of a Muslim, and so on.

War against such people is a duty and may be initiated after they are told why the Prophet has called for war against them. But if it is they who start a war against the Muslims, it becomes all the more necessary to fight them. I have already said that we should

fight against those who do not submit to Islamic authority, commit mischief and rob the wayfarers. *Jihād* against the infidels who reject Islam and those (Muslims) who refuse to comply with any part of the Islamic Sharī‘ah, like the refusers of *zakāh* or the Khawārij, is much more incumbent. We can go on the offensive in the war as well as repulse their attack. In the case of the former, *jihād* will be a collective duty (*fard al-kifāyah*), that is, if some people perform the task others will be exempted from the responsibility. The honor will, however, go to those who participate in *jihād*. God has said, “Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than those who sit at home). Unto all (in faith) has God promised good. But those who strive and fight have distinction above these who sit (at home) with a special reward” (4:95).

If an enemy attacks the Muslim community, fighting them is a duty on all those who are directly attacked, as it is a duty of others that are not attacked to aid them. God has said, “If they seek aid in the religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance” (8:72). The Prophet has also asked the Muslims to help a brother Muslim, whether or not they are part of a paid army. It is incumbent upon all Muslims according to their ability; they are to carry it out with their persons and properties, whether they are few or many, and whether they have to go on foot or take transportation. To give an example, at the Battle of the Ditch, when the enemy surrounded the Muslims, God did not allow anyone to take leave, though he had allowed people in the early years either to fight the enemy or to sit at home. This time He condemned those who asked for leave from the Prophet. He said, “A band of them ask for leave of the Prophet saying, ‘Truly our houses are bare and exposed,’ though they were not exposed. They intended nothing but to run away”

(33:13). This was a matter of defending the religion, honor, and life, a matter in which war was thrust upon the people. It was different from the war which is taken up voluntarily in order to promote the religion and make it prevail or to frighten the enemy with a view to forestalling his attack, as happened in the campaign of Tabūk.

As for the Muslims in Islamic lands who have no excuse, they should be compelled to observe the duties of Islam, the five basic ones as well as the others, such as returning deposits, fulfilling contracts, and so on. Hence, those who do not offer prayers (*ṣalāh*), whether men or women, should first be commanded to offer them. If they resist, they should be punished till they comply. There is perfect consensus on this point among the *ummah*. Many are of the view that first they will be asked to repent, and if they repent (and offer *ṣalāh*) they will be left alone, otherwise they will be killed. Should a rejecter (*kāfir*) or apostate (*murtadd*) or intransigent (*fāsiq*) be killed? Both views have been advanced in the school of Aḥmad. However, the majority of the Elders, it is said, are of the view that a persistent rejecter turns infidel, *kāfir*; this is if he admits that the act is an obligatory duty. But if he denies that it is at all an obligatory duty, he is definitely a *kāfir*; everyone agrees on this point. Guardians must ask their children to offer *ṣalāh* when they are seven, and spank them for it when they are ten. The Prophet has said, “Ask them to pray when they are seven, and spank them for it when they are ten, and put them in separate beds.”<sup>778</sup> They should likewise be asked to do what is required for offering such as ablution and bath.

[*Fatāwā* 28:349-60]

**(13.11) The *ummah* will divide into various sects, of which only one will be saved.**

*The ummah will divide into seventy-three sects, of which only one, the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah will be saved. They will*



*constitute the great majority of the ummah. Other sects will have their own strange views, will indulge in heresies and follow vain desires. The common element between them will be their deviance from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus (of the ummah). However, they will be a small minority.*

Ibn Taymīyyah was asked about the Prophet's *ḥadīth*, "My *ummah* will divide into seventy-three sects..." In reply he wrote:

Praise be to God. This is an authentic and well-known (*ṣaḥīḥ wa mashhūr*) *ḥadīth*, recorded in *Sunan* and *Masānid* collections, such as the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, An-Nasā'ī and others. It runs like this: "The Jews divided into seventy-one sects (*firqah*), all of which will go to Hell except one; the Christians divided into seventy-two sects, all of which will go to Hell except one; this *ummah* will divide into seventy-three sects, all of which will go to Hell except one."<sup>779</sup> In another version of the *ḥadīth* the words are, "seventy-three *millah*, communities."<sup>780</sup> In a third version we also have this addition, "Some people asked the Prophet about the sect which will be saved. He said, "The one which will follow the way I and my companions follow today."<sup>781</sup> In a fourth version the last part is like this: "It will be the *jamā'ah*, and the hand of God will be on the *jamā'ah*."<sup>782</sup> This is the reason why the people that will be saved are called Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, the People of the Sunnah and the Community. They will constitute the overwhelming majority and the common masses.

The remaining sects will expound strange views and heresies and will indulge in vain desires. But even taken together they will neither be equal to nor nearing the number of the people who will be saved. In fact, they will be very few; the common element between them that will distinguish them will be their deviation from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the Consensus, for had they adhered to the Sunnah and Consensus, they would have been part of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

As for the identification of these sects, a number of people have written on the subject and mentioned their names in their works on views and doctrines (*maqālāt*). But the point that a particular sect named by them is one of those seventy two deviant sects has to be proved. Let us recall that God has forbidden saying anything without knowledge, particularly in matters like this. He has said, “Say: The things that my Lord has instead forbidden are shameful deeds, whether open or secret, sins and trespasses against truth or reason, assigning of partners to God, for which he has given no authority, and saying things about God of which you have no knowledge” (7:33). And, “You people! Eat of what is on earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is to you an avowed enemy. He commands you what is evil and shameful, and that you should say of God that of which you have no knowledge” (2:168). Pursue not that of which you have no knowledge” (17:306).

Many people talk about these sects merely on the basis of conjectures and predilections. The sect they belong to or the people that follow their leaders, they call Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah, and those who oppose them, they call heretics. This is plainly wrong. For the people of Truth and Sunnah will have no leader other than the Prophet (pbuh), of whom God says, “He does not say anything of (his own) desire, (and) what he says is inspiration (*wahī*) which is sent down to him- (53:3). What he says is to be believed and what he commands is to be obeyed. No one else enjoys this position, and no one else is to be followed in all that he says. The Prophet (pbuh) is the only exception...

It is clear from this that the people who will be saved are the people of *ḥadīth* and Sunnah, who do not have any leader other than the Prophet. Of all the people they are those who know his life and words best, who are aware which reports about him are authentic and which are not. Their scholars have a better knowledge and understanding of these things and follow them best. More than anyone else they believe in the Sunnah of the Prophet

and act upon it, love those who love him, and oppose those who oppose him. They think over the issues in the light of the Qur'ān and the wisdom (*ḥikmah* of the Prophet) and do not raise anything to the status of a principle or advocate it unless it is derived from what has come down from the Prophet. In fact they base their ideas and doctrines on the Qur'ān and the wisdom that the Prophet has given. They refer the issues which people have debated, such as Divine attributes, fore-ordainment (*qadr*), reward and punishment, the interpretation of terms, the duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong... to God and His Prophet. The words that are ambiguous and have been interpreted in different ways by different people, they interpret in the sense which is closest to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and reject all the other senses which are opposed to them. They neither run after conjectures nor follow vain desires, for they believe that indulgence into conjecture is ignorance and pursuance of desires without any clear guidance from God is folly...

It may be noted, however, that those who follow one scholar or the other in matters regarding the principles of religion and theology (*kalām*) fall into different categories. Some oppose the Sunnah on major principles, others oppose the Sunnah on minor issues. Furthermore, it is possible that those who refute the views of others which are far more removed from the Sunnah than their own views may be right in what they say in refuting wrong doctrines or supporting the right ones, but they may have gone too far in their refutation and rejected some part of the truth and defended some untruth. That is to say, they may have a great heresy (*bid'ah*) through a lesser heresy and demolished a greater untruth through a lesser untruth. This is the condition of most of the theologians (*ahl al-kalām*) within the fold of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

If people like these do not sever their relations from the Muslim community (*jamā'at al-Muslimīn*) on the basis of the heresies they expound, taking them as the criterion for friendship

or enmity, they are only guilty of saying something wrong. We hope that God will forgive mistakes like this and pardon those who commit them... But if they take as friends those who agree with them and as enemies those who disagree with them, and divide the Muslim community into their supporters and opponents, and call the latter *kāfir* or *fāsiq* even though they differ from them in matters in which opinions may differ, and think that they should fight them, they will then be called schismatic and secessionist.

That is why the first group of people who seceded from the Muslim community were the Khawārij; they went out of the boundaries of Islam... The *ḥadīth* which we have about them has come down to us through ten different channels all of which have been noted by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Some of them have also been noted by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The Companions of the Prophet fought them under the command of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, and were one with regard to them... When they seceded from the Muslim community and regarded its members as *kāfir* and justified taking up the sword against them, the Prophet's word about them proved true. He said, "You will look down upon your *ṣalāh* in comparison to their *ṣalāh*, your fasting in comparison to their fasting, and you reading the Qur'ān in comparison to their reading. But they will read the Qur'ān and their reading will not go down their throat. They will move out of Islam as an arrow moves out of the prey it kills. Kill them whenever you get them, you will be rewarded for killing them on the Day of judgment."<sup>783</sup>

As for identifying those sects condemned to Hell, the first man who discussed the issue was Yūsuf Ibn Aṣbāt,<sup>784</sup> then 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak.<sup>809</sup> Both are outstanding scholars and imāms. They have said that all heresies have proceeded from four sects: Rawāfiḍ, Khawārij, Qadariyyah, and Murji'ah. "What about the Jahmīyyah?" Ibn Al-Mubārak was asked. He said, "They are not part of the *ummah*." He used to say, "We do not quote the words of the Jews and the Christians, nor do we quote the words of the

Jahmīyyah.” A number of scholars from the school of Aḥmad agree with this assessment. They say that the Jahmīyyah are infidel; they cannot, therefore, be included in the seventy-two sects, just as the hypocrites who have no faith in their hearts, who only pay lip service to Islam and are nothing but *zindīqs*, are not included in them. Other Ḥanbalī scholars, however, include them in the list; consequently they count the sources of heresy to be five.

The reason for this difference lies in the answer that these two groups give to the question whether the people expounding heretical ideas (*ahl al-bid'ah*) may be excommunicated as *kāfirūn*. Those who exclude the Jahmīyyah from the list of seventy-two sects do excommunicate the expounders of heresies, for everyone who comes out with a heresy cannot be excommunicated. They rather categorize them with the people that deserve punishment in *'alā* (*ahl al-wa'id*) like the intransigent (*fussāq*) and the sinners (*'uṣāt*). The words of the Prophet that “they will go to Hell,” they point out, should be understood in the same sense in which it is said about other sinners, such as those who misappropriate the property of orphans. God has said, “Those who unjustly eat the property of orphans, eat up a fire into their own bodies” (4:10). Those, on the other hand, who include the Jahmīyyah in the list are of two kinds, those who call no one *kāfir* and those who call all of them *kāfir*. The latter group is comprised of some scholars of later periods from among the followers of the *a'immaḥ* or the theologians.

However, in case of the Murji'ah and the Shi'ah Mufaḍḍilah (i.e. those who simply assert that 'Alī was superior to the other three righteous caliphs) and others, the Elders and the *a'immaḥ* are one that they cannot be called *kāfir*. Aḥmad's statements with regard to them are quite clear that they cannot be called *kāfir*. However, there are within his school scholars who have indiscriminately dubbed all heretical sects including these as *kāfir*, some have also said that they are condemned to Hell forever. This

is wrong, and certainly opposed to the principles of Aḥmad as well as the Sharī'ah.

Those who do not excommunicate any heretical sect do so because they put the heretics (*ahl al-bid'ah*) with the sinners. They say that just as the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah do not call anyone *kāfir* because of his sin, they would not like to call anyone *kāfir* on account of his heresy (*bid'ah*)

The Elders and the *a'immaḥ* are reported to have excommunicated only the Jahmīyyah, who deny God's attributes, who say that God neither speaks nor sees, that He is not separate from the world, that He has no knowledge, no power, no hearing, no sight and no life, that the Qur'ān is a created object, that the people of Paradise like the people of Hell will not see God, and so on. With regard to the Khawārij and the Rawāfiḍ there is no clear word from Aḥmad and others that they are *kāfir*. As for the Qadarīyyah, who deny God's fore-knowledge of (human actions) as well as their fore-ordainment and writing, they have called them *kāfir*; however, with regard to those who affirm God's fore-knowledge but not His creation of human actions, they have abstained from this verdict.

I will state here two principles which, I hope, will clarify the issue. First, of those who offer *ṣalāh* no one would be *kāfir* unless he is a hypocrite, for since the time Muḥammad (pbuh) was sent as a messenger, given the Qur'ān, and compelled to migrate to Madinah, people were divided into three groups, those who believed in him, those who rejected him and did so openly, and those who were hypocrites and concealed their rejection of him. When this is the case we may have among the heretical sects (*ahl al-bid'ah*) those who are hypocrites and enemies of Islam (*zindīq*); they are *kāfir*. Such people are mostly found among the Rawāfiḍ and the Jahmīyyah. Their leaders were hypocrites and *zindīqs*, just as the man who invented *rafḍ* was a hypocrite. The school of the Jahmīyyah, too, was raised on the basis of hypocrisy and

*zandaqah*. This is the reason why *zindīqs* who come from the Karmathian esoterics and pose as philosophers incline towards the Rawāfiḍ and Jahmīyyah with whom they have great affinity.

Among the heretical sects we may also have people who have faith in their heart but are guilty of ignorance, wrongdoing, and mistakes with regard to the Sunnah. Such people are neither *kāfir* nor hypocrites. They may be doing things that render them transgressors (*fāsiq*) and sinners, (*‘āṣī*). Some of them may be doing so by mistake, erroneously interpreting the texts; such people will hopefully be forgiven. Some may also have faith and piety to a degree which earns for them a kind of God’s love and support (*walāyah*) commensurate with their faith and piety. This is the first principle.

The second principle is that the doctrine that one expounds may be in itself a faithlessness. For example, one may deny that *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, fasting or *ḥajj* is obligatory, or assert that adultery, drinking wine, gambling or marrying within the prohibited circle is lawful. However, it is possible that the expounder of these doctrines may not have knowledge about them or may not have gotten the words of the Prophet regarding them. Such a person will not be called *kāfir*. This may happen with a person who has embraced Islam new, or who is born and brought up in a place that Islam has not reached. He cannot, therefore, be called *kāfir* on the grounds that he denies something revealed to the Prophet, for he does not know that it was revealed to him.

The doctrines of the Jahmīyyah belong to this category, because they negate the attributes with which God is qualified and which He has revealed to the Prophet. There are three reasons why they have been condemned so strongly. First, the texts which contradict their doctrines are in abundance in the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth* and the Consensus, and are well known, and they just reject them by misinterpreting them. Second, their doctrines amount to negation of the Creator; however, it is possible that some of them may not have realized that their doctrines negate the Creator. Just

as the basis of faith is belief in God, the basis of unfaith (*kufr*) is the denial of God. Third, they contradict truths which are agreed upon in all religions and testified to by human nature.

In spite of this, many Muslims are not able to see the real import of their doctrines; some even think that the truth is with them since they put forth their objections quite forcefully. These Muslims do have faith in God and in His Messenger and sincerely believe in them in their hearts, but the argument which these heretics advance confuse them as they confuse themselves. Certainly these Muslims are not *kāfir* at all; some of them may be transgressors and wrongdoers; some may be mistaken and God may hopefully forgive them; and some may even have, along with their erroneous ideas, the faith and piety which earns them God's support, and love (*walāyah*) commensurate with their faith and piety.

[*Fatāwā* 3:345-55]

### (13.12) People of *bid'ah* are not to be excommunicated

*Those who excommunicate the exponents of heresy and fancy (ahl al-bid'ah wa al-ahwā'), like the Shi'ah, the Mu'tazilah and others, go against the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, the Consensus of the Companions and the Successors.*

The proof that the Companions did not declare the Khawārij *kāfir* is that they offered *ṣalāh* behind them. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar and other Companions, for example, offered *ṣalāh* behind Najdah Al-Ḥarūrī.<sup>785</sup> They discussed with them various issues, gave them their opinions on religious matters put to them, and addressed them as a Muslim addresses another Muslim. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās, for example, would answer the questions which Najdah Al-Ḥarūrī sent to him. Al-Bukhārī has recorded the *ḥadīth* which Najdah has related. Similarly, Nāfi' Ibn Al-Azraq<sup>786</sup> answered many of his



questions, and used to argue with him on different issues quoting from the Qur'ān just as he did with any other Muslim. This was the practice of Muslims throughout the ages; they did not consider them apostates like those against whom Abū Bakr declared war. They did this even though the Prophet had commanded to fight them, as is reported in authentic *aḥādīth*. The *ḥadīth* that they are the worst people under the sky to be killed and that the men whom they kill are the best men, which Abū Umāmah has reported and At-Tirmidhī has recorded,<sup>787</sup> only means that they are more harmful to the Muslims than others. And it is true that they have done greater harm to the Muslims than the Jews and the Christians. They were zealous to kill any Muslim who did not agree with them, since they believed that it was quite lawful for them to take his life and property or kill his children, for he was a *kāfir* in their view. They considered it to be an act of devotion, as they were immersed in ignorance and heresy. But in spite of that the Companions or their righteous Successors did not declare them *kāfir* or apostate (*murtadd*), nor did they cause them any wrong in word or deed. They feared God with regard to them and were never unfair to them.

This was their practice with all the other exponents of *bid'ah*, the Shi'ah, the Mu'tazilah, and others. Hence, if anyone declares *kāfir* any of the seventy-two sects, he goes against the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the Consensus of the Companions and their righteous Successors. It may also be noted that the *ḥadīth* which speaks of seventy-two sects does not occur in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. Ibn Ḥazm and others consider it to be a weak *ḥadīth*, others rate it as *ḥasan*, still others like Al-Ḥākim rate it as *ṣaḥīḥ*, though the compilers of the *Sunan* collections mention more than one channel through which it has been transmitted. Furthermore, the words of the Prophet, "seventy-two of them will go to Hell and only one will be saved" are not stronger than many words of God such as "Those who unjustly eat up the property of the orphans eat up a fire into their own bodies, they will soon be entering a blazing Fire" (4:10); or,

“If any do that in rancor and injustice soon shall We cast them into the Fire, and easy it is for God” (4:30). There are many such verses that threaten with Fire those who commit evil deeds, but they do not do so with regard to any particular person, for it is possible that he may repent or that his good deeds may outweigh his evil deeds, or that God may wash out his sin by subjecting him to one or another tribulation.

[*Minhāj as-Sunnah* 3:62]

**(13.10) *Ṣalāh* may be offered behind an proponent of *bid‘ah* when no one else is available.**

*One of the principles of the Ahl as-Sunnah is that ṣalāh may be offered behind any Muslim, pious or wicked. The Friday prayer and the ‘īd prayers may also be offered behind a heretic if no one else is available. Again, no Muslim should be denounced as kāfir on account of any sin he or she may commit or any mistake he or she may make in matters which the ummah has debated.*

One of the principles of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah is that they offer the Friday prayer, the ‘īd prayers, and the regular daily prayers, and never suspend them as do the proponents of *bid‘ah* like the Rawāfiḍ and others. If the conduct of the imām is not known or his *bid‘ah* or wickedness is not open, the Friday prayer and all daily prayers in assembly may be offered behind him. All the four imāms of the Muslims as well as others are agreed on this point. None of them has ever said that *ṣalāh* is not valid except behind an imām whose private life is known. In fact, Muslims have been praying behind persons whose lives have not been known.

However, if *ṣalāh* is offered behind a person who is known to be guilty of *bid‘ah* or an open sin (*fājir*) while an alternative imām is available, many scholars say that the *ṣalāh* of those who pray