

Advice to Salafees in Nigeria in Times of Fitnah

– Shaykh ‘Abdullaah adh-Dhafeeree حفظه الله

All the praises and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists) and may the Salaah and Salaam of Allah be upon the Prophet, his household and all of his companions.

As for what follows: I direct this speech to our salafee brothers in the southern part of Nigeria. So, I say, after praising and extolling Allah عز وجل and seeking Salaah and Salaam of Allah upon His Prophet Muhammad may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, as well as his household and all his companions:

Verily, I advise myself and you to fear Allah سبحانه وتعالى and to hold firmly to the Book of Allah عز وجل and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), and to hold tenaciously to what the Salaf (righteous predecessors) of this Ummah (Muslim nation) were upon, for indeed therein (in holding on firmly to these three) lies protection from fitnah (tribulations, trials and afflictions) and a protection against falling into deviation, shortcomings and deficiencies, after the permission and mercy of Allah.

For indeed the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists) has admonished us with this in His Book, and so also has His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) admonished us (with the same), and similarly, what has been narrated from the Salaf (righteous predecessors) also (admonishes us with the same).

Allah سبحانه وتعالى said in His Great Book:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا)

{O you who believe! Fear Allah (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allah. And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Quran), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith).} [Q3 vs. 102-103]

Allah سبحانه وتعالى commanded that He should be obeyed and that His Prophet be obeyed in His statement عز وجل:

(وَمَا ءَاتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ)

{And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.} [Q59 vs. 7].

Also, Allah warned against Fitan (tribulations, trials and afflictions) and its causes and clarifies the (evil) consequence (of Fitan) by His statement:

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

{And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial, etc.) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people), and know that Allah is Severe in punishment.} [Q8 vs. 25].

He عز وجل commanded with having at-Taqwa (having the fear of Allah, loving and obeying Him سبحانه وتعالى) and clarified its (lofty) outcomes and fruits. Indeed from the greatest of advice (in seeking protection) in the times of Fitan specifically, is the command to have Taqwa of Him. So, He عز وجل said:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ)

{O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you Furqan a criterion [(to judge between right and wrong), or (Makhraj, i.e. making a way for you to get out from every difficulty)], and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you, and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty.} [Q8 vs. 29]

So, at-Taqwa benefits the servant in that Allah grants him “Furqan” (guidance in distinguishing between things) so he is able to distinguish (by way of this furqan) between the truth and the falsehood, and between the people of truth and the people of falsehood.

From (the manifestations of) at-Taqwa is completely leaving off desires and following strictly the command of Allah عز وجل as well as the command of His Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace). And from what is included in this obedience, is returning to the well-grounded and steadfast people of knowledge that are “ar-Rabbaaniyyoon”¹ during times of Fitan (tribulations, trials and afflictions) and sticking firmly to the ‘Ulamaa, as He عز وجل said:

(وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَدَّعَوْا بِهٖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا) .

{When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah upon you, you would have followed Shaitan (Satan), save a few of you.} [Q4 vs. 83].

Likewise, Allah عز وجل forbids division, dispute and differing. And from the manifestations of division is keeping away (and distancing) from the scholars. Allah عز وجل said:

(وَلَا تَنَزَعُوا فِتْفَشَلُوا وَتَذَهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ)

¹ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon: Wise, well-grounded, learned Scholars who gradually cultivate and educate their students beginning with simpler aspects of Islamic knowledge before proceeding to more detailed aspects.

{And do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs} [Q8 vs. 46].

So the rank of the people of truth weakens when they dispute and differ, thus, the enemies of Allah and Islam from the Jews and the Christians become happy because of this weakness. Likewise, the People of Bid'ah (innovation and heresies) from the grave worshipers and the people of mysticism and sufism become happy with the weakness of Ahlus-Sunnah (the People of as-Sunnah) because this aids the spread of their false da'wah, and results in weakening the da'wah of the people of the truth.

Similarly, when the Messenger Muhammad (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) mentioned the division that will occur within the Ummah (Muslim nation), he commanded the Ummah with holding firm unto the Book of Allah and to the Sunnah of His Prophet and to hold firm to what the Salaf (righteous predecessors) of this Ummah were upon from the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali رضي الله عنهم), the Companions and those who follow them as it comes from the hadeeth of 'Irbaad ibn Saariyah رضي الله عنه reported by Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, and an-Nisaai and other than them: that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) admonished us such that the hearts trembled and the eyes shed tears. Due to that, we (the companions) said: O Messenger of Allah, it (the sermon) is like a farewell exhortation, so advice us. The Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said "I advise you servants of Allah with the fear of Allah, even if a slave is made your leader, for anyone among you who lives long will surely witness a lot of division and differing. So, upon you (is to hold firmly) to my Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me. Hold firmly to it with your molar teeth and beware of newly invented matters."

And whoever ponders over the history of the Ummah (Muslim Nation) realizes that there is no safety for the Ummah – after holding tightly to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) – except by returning to the Scholars.

So ponder over one of the initial occurrences in this Ummah in terms of division and the appearance of Bid'ah: the Bid'ah of the Qadariyyah which appeared in Basrah. The Students of Knowledge in that land did nothing but return to the Scholars. Thus, they went to those Companions (who were available) during their time after they had completed their Hajj – as has come in the Hadeeth of Yahya ibn Ya'mar in Saheeh Muslim – and they were granted success to meet 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) while he was leaving the Masjid in Madinah.

They said to him: "Verily, some people have appeared amongst us from those who seek knowledge;" and they mentioned some of the characteristics of these people and then said: "and they claim that actions come about by themselves (i.e. that Allah did not decree the occurrence of actions nor did He know about them; and that He only knows about them after they occur)."

So 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar ruled upon those people and said: "I free and disassociate myself from them and they are free and disassociated from me." So Yahyaa ibn Ya'mar and those with him narrated this fatwa of the 'Ulamaa' ('Abdullaah ibn 'Umar) and their warning to the people of Basrah. Thus, by so doing, it became a means by which they, their families and their people were saved from the Bid'ah of the Qadariyyah.

And so it is in every time period – when people return to the Scholars. They are the ones that give the people insight. So with them – after the Mercy of Allah and His Success – lies safety. There is no Student of Knowledge or Muslim that holds on firmly (to the ‘Ulamaa’) and this path (of returning to the ‘Ulamaa’), except that it will be a reason and a means for his safety from Fitan (trials and tribulations) that the Ummah experiences every now and then.

Many Fitan have occurred and Allah saved from those Fitan those people He willed to save due to their sticking and connecting themselves to the ‘Ulamaa’ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon. In these current times, many Fitan have occurred and Allah predestined ‘Ulamaa’ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon (to quench) these trials.

Among those (Fitan) is the fitnah of the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimoon) which spread over the Muslim World. So Allah saved those He willed to be saved by means of the ‘Ulamaa’ who warned against this group (the Muslim Brotherhood) whose history and Manhaj (methodology) they knew. For example, (from those ‘Ulamaa’ is) our Shaykh, Shaykh Rabe’ ibn Haadee al-Madkhalee (may Allah preserve him).

Then the fitnah of the Haddaadiyyah occurred; and again, our Shaykh Rabe’ was there for it. And various other trials and callers to fitnah and desires came one after the other.

And in these days, a new fitnah has appeared which has become prevalent and widespread all over the world. Behind this fitnah are a group of people who oppose the ‘Ulamaa’ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon: a group in Kuwait, a group here with us in Saudi, a group in Egypt, another in Algeria and another in Morocco. And the one driving the fitnah is Muhammad ibn Haadee al-Madkhalee – may Allah guide him. He opposed Shaykh ‘Ubayd and he opposed Shaykh Rabe’ and he opposed the Students of Knowledge. Thus, the people were put to trial and became split up and divided – the students of knowledge – due to this fitnah.

So, the Scholars – and at the head of them, Shaykh Rabe’ and Shaykh ‘Ubayd – realized the danger of this fitnah, and thus began to warn against it, when those people who are intended did not accept their advice – at the heads of them (those who did not accept the advice of the Scholars) is Muhammad ibn Haadee. The Scholars clarified that these people are arousing fitnah, splitting the ranks of the salafees and criticizing the ‘Ulamaa’ and the Students of Knowledge without proof or evidence. Rather, (they do so) simply to promote themselves.

These people are being pushed by some people from behind them, people with an evil intent who wish to split the rank of the Salafees and wish to overthrow the ‘Ulamaa’ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon such as Shaykh Rabe’ and Shaykh ‘Ubayd. Perhaps, these people (those who are being pushed by others) are victims: people such as Ahmad Baazmool, Usaamah ‘Ataayaa, and Muhammad ibn Haadee. In reality, they spread the fitnah while they are victims (at the hands) of other people who push them and encourage them to split the rank of the Salafees and to keep the Salafees away from the ‘Ulamaa’ ar-Rabbaaniyyoon.

These ‘Ulamaa’ did not speak except after giving advice (to these people) and after they didn’t accept the advice, the ‘Ulamaa’ realized their danger upon the Muslim Ummah and upon the Salafees in particular. So, it became obligatory upon them – as a means of fulfilling their religious obligation to Allah – to warn from these people and from their danger.

So, it is obligatory upon the Student of Knowledge to understand this and to know the gravity and severity of this issue; and that he sticks firmly to the Scholars and that he listens and takes the advice of the 'Ulamaa' ar-Rabbaaniyyoon. And he should not give any attention to those who split the Islamic World and divided the Students of Knowledge and the Salafees.

So, take note of this – may Allah bless you all. For verily, I direct to you this advice which our scholars had previously directed to the Students in the Islamic World and the Salafees.

I ask Allah عز وجل that He grants me and you success to do what pleases Him; and that He makes us steadfast upon the Sunnah and upon what the Salaf of this Ummah were upon.

And Allah knows best. May Allah raise the rank and grant peace to our Prophet Muhammad.

والله أعلم

وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد

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