

Purification of the soul at the level of the individual

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

The purification of the soul at the level of the individual is the basis of the community's reform

All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Nowadays, our community has the most urgent need that every individual who composes it be under its banner so that each one will represent a useful and strong brick, serving its edification, reinforcing its foundations and raising its rank, because the community becomes corrupt by the corruption of its individuals. Moreover, the rightness of this community depends on the rightness of its individuals. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ has praised the virtues of the best community of men ever raised for the humanity and which carried unparalleled qualities that we do find only in a Muslim nation. It is the community that understood the right meaning, wanted by Allaah, of the profession of faith "Laa Ilaaha Illa Allaah, Muhammad Rassool Allaah" (none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, and Muhammad is His Messenger). This profession was not for them an ephemeral word far from its meaning and its applications in all domains of life, or a business of weak importance which they spoke about with their hearts being away and with behaviours in opposition to what they said, but they had perfectly understood and respected it. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

[You [true believers in Islaamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Sunnah (legal ways, etc.)] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islaam has forbidden), and you believe in Allaah. And had the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are Al-Faasiqoon (disobedient to Allaah - and rebellious against Allaah's Command).]¹

They were homogeneous people, around the same belief and taking the same trajectory without the least defect, as Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ ordered them:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السَّبِيلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

¹ Soorah al-`Imraan [3:110]

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[And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)]²

They formed a believing society which had a personality of a rare strength, united around the pure monotheism, fully adhering to Allaah's عَزَّ وَجَلَّ doctrine and putting into practice His teachings sincerely and faithfully. By the doctrine of monotheism, it was achieved for the first time in the history of humanity a union based on Allaah's exclusive worship under all its shapes, and on an unfailing following of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ considered as the unique guide and example, and on the attachment to his conduct, calling the others to stick to it and to move away from all religious innovations. These qualities raised this community from the lowest level in which it was to the merit to reach ranks of the sovereignty. By them, Allaah gave birth to conquests which history had never known neither before nor after: Islaam, in a half century ran away an active empire from the Atlantic Ocean to beyond India.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ
كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

[Allaah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion, that which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islaam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieved after this, they are the Faasiqoon (rebellious, disobedient to Allaah).]³

It is through the features of this generation and its original constants that developed the attention of Islaam to the soul of the individual. Because the reform of the individual's soul constitutes the fundamental basis of his reform and that of his community. It is the cornerstone to his uprightness and his happiness in this world and in the hereafter. The soul is composed – as regards strength and predominance - of the two following aspects:

1- An innate, original positive aspect which consists of the love of truth and good and which allows one to be happy and to appreciate things in their true side and to be repugnant to contradict these truths. Without the influence of extrinsic elements, this innate character stays in an intact state by its uprightness and its peace. It generates, then, the religion of Islaam and implies its corollary which is the belief in the Creator, the love of this Creator and the vocation of an exclusive cult to Him. Ibn Taymeeyah رحمه الله says in this meaning: "Allaah puts innate knowledge in the heart of every human being that enables him to discern between the good and the evil, and which allows him to discern things and to understand them. Without this innate faculty; any reasoning, contemplation or explanation would have been vain. It is similar to the fact that Allaah made innate the faculty of bodies to feed and

² Soorah al-An'aam [6:153]

³ Soorah an-Noor [24:55]

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to water themselves, without this faculty; it would not have been possible to feed and develop themselves. As bodies are able to discern between the good foods from those which are not, hearts are also endowed with a bigger faculty to make the difference between what is truth and what is only delusion"⁴.

2- A negative aspect that weakens the natural instinct and dims its light. Thus, by this negative factor, the instinct can distort itself so much that it puts the individual in the ranks of infidels and pagans. This factor can be a bad character or an unhealthy environment in which evolves the individual. In this meaning, a hadeeth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ says: **"Every child is born with a true faith of Islaam (i.e. to worship none but Allaah alone). It is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian, just as beasts produce their young with their limbs perfect. Do you see anything deficient in them?"**⁵. Also, it may be due to demonic impulses going in all senses and which can divert him from the right path. In this other meaning, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ narrates the words of his Lord عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: **"I have created all my servants in a state of a natural inclination to the worship of Allaah but they are demons who turn them away from the right religion. He makes unlawful what has been declared lawful for them and he commands them to ascribe partnership to Me"**⁶. So, the man's destiny in this world and in the hereafter depends on which of the two factors carries him away: the factor of good piety or the factor of evil and profanity. Whoever works to purify his soul by the obedience to Allaah and by moving away from the vile characters and the awful acts wins. However, whoever neglects his soul and debases it by transgressing the commands of Allaah and abandons obeying Him, this one will surely be a loser and will be deceived, according to these verses:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

[**And by Nafs (Adam or a person or a soul, etc.), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him; Indeed he succeeds who purifies his own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allaah ordered, by following the true Faith of Islaamic Monotheism and by doing righteous good deeds). And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self (i.e. disobeys what Allaah has ordered by rejecting the true Faith of Islaamic Monotheism or by following polytheism, etc. or by doing every kind of evil wicked deeds).**]⁷

It is for this reason that Allaah sent his messengers to recall souls about their duties to look after their innate purity by Allaah's knowledge with detail and clarity, his love, his worship and his exclusive obedience, the knowledge of the reasons that divert him from the innate way and prevent him to follow it. Their mission was also to warn against the submissiveness

⁴ See: "Dar` Ta`aarudh Al-`Aql Wa An-Naql" by Ibn Taymeeyah (5/62).

⁵ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Funerals" (3/319), concerning the fact that if the boy had embraced Islaam and then died, would be possible to offer the funeral prayer for him; and what about offering Islaam to boys? It is also reported by Muslim (16/207), chapter of "The Divine decree", concerning the fact that everyone is born according to his true nature. Also, it is reported by Aboo Daawood, chapter of "The Sunnah" (5/86), concerning the children of the polytheists, on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

⁶ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Paradise" (17/196), concerning the qualities by which the inhabitants of paradise and those of hell can be recognised in this world and Ahmad (hadeeth 1794) on the authority of `Iyaadh Ibn Himaar Al-Mujaashi`i رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

⁷ Soorah ash-Shams [91:7-10]

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to the demonic impulses and the hideous characters that seize the soul and decrease its strength, throwing it in confines of misplacement and in circles of the wantonness, moving him away from Allaah's path. Messengers worked to purify souls from all vices and all turpitudes that divert them of their vocation.

Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

[So set you (O Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) your face towards the religion of pure Islaamic Monotheism Haneefah (worship none but Allaah Alone) Allaah's Fitrah (i.e. Allaah's Islaamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illaah (i.e. the Religion of Allaah Islaamic Monotheism), that is the straight religion, but most of men know not.]⁸

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله says: "Such is the vocation of the religions that the messengers preached. They order the good, forbid the evil, and make licit what is good and illicit what is bad, order justice and proscribe iniquity. And all these virtues are, originally, innate in the soul of each individual. The mission of prophets was to unveil them and to put them in evidence"⁹.

It is on the basis of the way preached by Allaah's messengers that is based the preaching of reformers who call to the belief in Allaah's oneness, Lord of the universe, to His worship, to His love and to the vocation of an exclusive cult. Such is the religion's foundation and the preaching's theme of all prophets and messengers. It is the basis of deeds, the prerequisite for sovereignty in this world and salvation in the hereafter. It is by this way that the community will be united around its leader and example Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. There is no union without an absolute belief in the oneness of Allaah and no united ranks except by having for unique guide Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The domain of the religious reform invites those who are enrolled in it to purify the innate characters of impulses that are tied to it, that are in contradiction with the pure monotheism, to warn against the impious ideologies, the manifestations of polytheism, popular forms of treacherous beliefs, the categories of religious innovations and the struggle against the reasons of deviance according to the innate religion, all this by making truth prevail, ordering the good and fighting against the evil with the authentic religious knowledge that forms the theme of Islaam and its substance; by leaning on the method of the Qur'aan, of the Sunnah and on the tradition of the pious Predecessors.

The domain of religious reform also invites its partisans to become attached body and soul to Allaah's comprehensive Sharee'ah in all fields of life on which is based their well-being in this world and in the hereafter and to preach the attachment to the good morals, to the

⁸ Soorah ar-Room [30:30]

⁹ See: "Shifaa' Al-'Aleel" by Ibn Al-Qayyim (2/821).

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concepts of good and beneficence, to help one another in truth and good by using the preaching method derived from the following verse:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

[Invite (mankind, O Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islaam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'aan) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.]¹⁰

The domain of reform requires from those who maintain it among the preachers well knowing the field of preaching, by knowing perfectly the Sharee'ah, its high objectives, its noble purposes and by having a strong relation with Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ.

Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

[Say (O Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم): "This is my way; I invite unto Allaah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allaah - Islaamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allaah i.e to the Oneness of Allaah - Islaamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge. And Glorified and Exalted be Allaah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikoon (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah; those who worship others along with Allaah or set up rivals or partners to Allaah).]"¹¹

These preachers have to be, in their way of da`wah, far from coarseness and bad manners, since the call to Allaah in a kind manner is a major characteristic of the true da`wah of Islaam. Preachers should avoid low intentions and letting themselves seduced by the charm of life, because being concerned with it and forgetting the hereafter is the first step to loss.

Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمُ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

[O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allaah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers.]¹²

Preachers must have an absolute confidence in Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ and be patient in their call to good, guidance and sovereignty. They must always learn from what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم met in his da`wah of all kinds of oppositions, immoralities, ingratitude and denials. He was enduring and patient more than others until Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ accomplished his religion and spread it in the horizons.

¹⁰ Soorah an-Nahl [16:125]

¹¹ Soorah Yoosuf [12:108]

¹² Soorah al-Munaafiqoon [63:9]

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The preachers withstanding afflictions is part of the important commandments ordered by Allaah, because it constitutes endurance as regarding the ungrateful persons' arrogance, the sinners' alienation and the distress of the people called to the way of Allaah. It is also the sign of people of righteousness who fear Allaah. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

وَمَا لَنَا إِلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا وَلَنْصَبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا آذَيْتُمُونَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

[And why should we not put our trust in Allaah while He indeed has guided us our ways? And we shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us, and in Allaah (Alone) let those who trust, put their trust]¹³

It is also the sign of the Imaams which are taken as examples. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

[And We made from among them (Children of Israa'eel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.)]¹⁴

That being said, if the first pillar of the individual's reform is built, which consists of reforming himself, then a brick is made for the Islaamic society, alongside with other strong bricks by which the edifice of the Islaamic nation will be established, such as a solid structure whose parts are tied to each other. Thanks to this solid structure, the nation will be, through its coherence, might, influence and hegemony, a source of rejoice for the monotheists and it will rank first before all societies during all times and in all cases. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

[Truly! This, your Ummah [Sharee'ah or religion (Islaamic Monotheism)] is one religion, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone). [Tafseer Ibn Katheer]¹⁵

The eminent Shaykh, `Abd Al-Hameed Ibn Baadees رحمه الله said: "The soul reform leads to the reform of the individual, and the reform of the individual leads to the reform of the society. Accordingly, the Sharee'ah is directed entirely to reform the soul, whether directly or through the means. Indeed, there is nothing that Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ instituted for his slaves, such as truth, good, justice and good doing, except it procures righteousness as outcome. On another hand, there is nothing Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ forbade, such as falsehood, evil, injustice, and bad doing, except it brings corruption as outcome. So, perfecting the human soul is the highest aim behind revealing books, sending Prophets and instituting [religious] legislations"¹⁶.

¹³ Soorah Ibraaheem [14:12]

¹⁴ Soorah as-Sajdah [32:24]

¹⁵ Soorah al-Ambeeyaa' [21:92]

¹⁶ See: "Ibn Baadees: Hayaatuhu Wa Athaaruhu" (1/233).

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We ask Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ to reform this nation as He did with the first one. We ask Him also to help us sticking to his strong Habl (lit. rope), to unite our opinions on piety and on religion, to grant us from Him mercy, knowledge and guidance, to help reformers in their preaching and make their steps pertinent, to unite them by truth and steadfastness to help one another in good and piety. We intend by this the Face of Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. It is He who guides to the right way.

Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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