

CONDITION OF THE UMMAH

PART 4

WHY ARE WE IN THIS CONDITION?

SOCIAL PRACTICES THAT INVITE TRIBULATIONS FROM ALLAH SWT

October 10th 2001

Human beings are constantly surrounded by trials and tribulations and they are ever increasing. Every knowledgeable person can confirm the fact that we are in the end of time and these trials will only escalate. The most essential goal at this time is to learn about what these trials are, and what we can do to save ourselves from falling into them.

In the previous article titled “Tribulations are brewing; are you prepared to deal with them” we explored the concept of fitna—trials—from multiple angles. Here we will look into the social practices that invite the anger of Allah SWT in the form of tribulations as a punishment for our actions—for individuals, communities and societies. These actions are oppression, stinginess and negligence from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

Let’s start with the most important and dangerous of these practices which is oppression or dhulm.

OPPRESSION

Dictionaries define oppression to be the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner. Islamic definition of the word dhulm or oppression is significantly deeper and consists of many levels.

Simply speaking, Islam teaches us that oppression is the absence of justice. Anytime we fail to carry out justice—knowingly or unknowingly—we oppress someone. This oppression could be against one’s self, against other people, animals, or even environment. There is a very strong emphasis in both the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW on upholding the scale of justice.

Allah SWT says in the Qur’an in Surah Rahman:

And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance that you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance. (Rahman 55:1—9)

Allah SWT Himself set the balance for us and forbade us from transgressing it; which is really a command to establish justice. The justice here means to try to be in a state that Allah SWT likes. In reality we might never be able to achieve absolute justice but Allah SWT wants us to try our best. The best is to go beyond justice and be generous (level of ihsaan)

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. (An Nahl 16:90)

So how do we learn this justice?

The answer is, through Qur'an, hadeeth and the sunnah of the Prophet SAW. The more we are aware of the book of Allah SWT and the life of His Prophet SAW, the more we can be just to ourselves and others.

Allah SWT says in a Hadeeth Qudsi:

"O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another." (Muslim)

OPPRESSION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Today Muslim societies are bereft of justice and thus, by default, full of oppression and cruelty. Every facet of society has been twisted and instead of serving humanity, persecutes and subjugates them; and tragically—mostly in the name of Islam. Take example of zina or fornication in the Muslim world. When a young man commits the crime, almost everyone tries to find an excuse for his behavior claiming 'he is a man', and even tries to cover it up. However, if the same crime is committed by a woman, she is beaten, burned, mutilated or even killed—all in the name of honor and Islam!

Where is the justice in that?

Men want to marry untouched virgins despite of what they might have done in their lives. Whereas any mistake of a girl, regardless of how repentant she might be, is inexcusable.

Practice of dowry is another example of oppression in Muslim societies where ludicrous amount of money is expected of a man in order to marry the girl, or in some cultures from the parents of the girl as a gift for the man. How oppressive is it to deprive people of their youth and the joy of being in a pure relationship? Look at the amount of unmarried people well into their thirties and forties due to these ridiculous customs and what damaging effects these forms of oppression have caused in our societies!

OPPRESSION IS DARKNESS

Islam came to dispel the darkness of oppression from the world and to elevate the call of justice and nobility. Justice lights the road to success, whereas oppression darkens the path and hinders any advancement.

Rasul Allah SAW has said:

"Oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari)

Another hadeeth narrates:

"Be on your guard against committing oppression, for oppression is a darkness on the Day of Resurrection..." (Muslim)

Cheating, lying, stealing, backbiting, bribery, prevalent custom of intercession instead of merit based achievements are just some of the many kinds of oppressions that are

consuming our societies. They are not only hindering our worldly progress, they are eating away the moral fabric of our societies and lifting the mercy of Allah SWT from us.

Why would Allah SWT send mercy over us when we don't have mercy even for the weakest among us?

Rasul Allah SAW advised us regarding this in clear words saying:

“The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.” (Abu Dawud)

YOU WILL FOLLOW THEM DOWN TO THE LIZARD'S HOLE

In Qur'an Allah SWT mentions oppression multiple times and interestingly enough, it always refers to the disbelievers. There is no mention of believers being oppressors because it is inconsistent with the very nature of being a believer. An oppressive believer is a paradoxical concept! This goes to show how detached we have become from our religion!

From birth of children to access to education, from jobs to marriages and divorces, we refuse to follow Qur'an and sunnah of the Prophet SAW and insist on following cultures and customs that have no standing in Islam. And just look where this has brought us?!

Islamic scholars have said that any person or nation which follows the practices of those whom Allah SWT mentioned in the Qur'an, will receive similar fate—good or bad. So if we follow the qualities of the disbelievers as mentioned in the Qur'an, we will not only taste the same punishments that they tasted, we will also receive the same title from Allah SWT.

The saddest of all matter is that now disbelievers carry out more justice than us so called Muslims. We have now become the barbaric, backward people who are mocked and ridiculed by the world. Rasul Allah SAW had predicted us following the footsteps of the disbelievers saying:

“You will most certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, arm's length by arm's length, forearm's length by forearm's length, hand span by hand span, until even if they entered a hole of a mastigure (lizard) you will enter it too.” (Ibn Majah)

WHO ARE YOU?

Abu Hurayrah (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah SAW asked, “Do you know who the bankrupt are?”

They said, “The one without money or goods is bankrupt.”

So the Prophet SAW said, “The bankrupt are those from my nation who come on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting, and charity, but comes also insulting, slandering, consuming wealth, shedding blood, and beating others. They will each be given from his good deeds; if his good deeds run out before the score is settled, their bad deeds will be cast upon him, then he will be thrown into the Hellfire.” (Muslim)

Every action that Prophet Muhammad SAW mentioned in the above narration is a form of oppression. How common are these acts today and how lightly they are taken! While the reality is that they can cause our destruction!

This is what should scare any Muslim. Not only are we negligent of oppressing others, those of us who are more aware of our actions have no concern for the rest of the ummah! Even if we are not carrying out oppression ourselves, it is our religious and moral obligation to eradicate dhulm from the ummah. Our heedlessness is such that neither are we wary of committing oppression, nor about stopping it in our societies.

If we are not busy rectifying the condition of the ummah and eradicating the oppression, we are just as guilty and are considered dhalim in front of Allah SWT!

In this time and age, we are all dhalim at different levels and stages. May Allah SWT have mercy on us!

NO RESPITE FOR THE OPPRESSORS

Prophet SAW said:

"Verily, Allah gives respite to the oppressor. But when He seizes him, He does not let him escape." Then he SAW recited, "Such is the Seizure of your Rabb when He seizes the (population of) towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful (and) severe." (11:102). (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah SWT is just and He will never allow oppressors to go free without bringing them to account, even after some time. Allah SWT says:

And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror]. Racing ahead, their heads raised up, their glance does not come back to them, and their hearts are void. (Ibrahim 14:42)

And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens.' We will [then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward]."

But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying. (Al-Baqara 2:58—59)

Indeed, those who disbelieve - never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allah at all, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

The example of what they spend in this worldly life is like that of a wind containing frost which strikes the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves and destroys it. And Allah has not wronged them, but they wrong themselves. (Al-Imran 3: 116—117)

In a Hadeeth Qudsi, Allah Almighty says:

"I shall take revenge on the oppressor in this life and the next. I shall take revenge on someone who saw a person being oppressed and was able to help him but did not help him." (Tabarani)

WARNING FOR ALL NATIONS

And We have already sent [messengers] to nations before you, [O Muhammad]; then We seized them with poverty and hardship that perhaps they might humble themselves [to Us].

Then why, when Our punishment came to them, did they not humble themselves? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan made attractive to them that which they were doing.

So when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every [good] thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were [then] in despair.

So the people that committed wrong were eliminated. And praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds. (An'am 6:42—45)

So those are their houses, desolate because of the wrong they had done. Indeed in that is a sign for people who know. (Naml 27:52)

And We had already destroyed generations before you when they wronged, and their messengers had come to them with clear proofs, but they were not to believe. Thus do We recompense the criminal people. (Yunus 10:13)

And it was revealed to Noah that, "No one will believe from your people except those who have already believed, so do not be distressed by what they have been doing.

And construct the ship under Our observation and Our inspiration and do not address Me concerning those who have wronged; indeed, they are [to be] drowned." (Hud 11: 36—37)

And the shriek seized those who had wronged, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone. (Hud 11:67)

And you lived among the dwellings of those who wronged themselves, and it had become clear to you how We dealt with them. And We presented for you [many] examples." (Ibrahim 14:45)

And those cities - We destroyed them when they wronged, and We made for their destruction an appointed time. (Kahf 18:59)

And if each soul that wronged had everything on earth, it would offer it in ransom. And they will confide regret when they see the punishment; and they will be judged in justice, and they will not be wronged... (Yunus 10:54)

Except those who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend [the Muslims] after they were wronged. And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned. (Shu'ara 26:227)

So they will deny you, [disbelievers], in what you say, and you cannot avert [punishment] or [find] help. And whoever commits injustice among you - We will make him taste a great punishment. (Furqan 25:19)

And the people of Noah - when they denied the messengers, We drowned them, and We made them for mankind a sign. And We have prepared for the wrongdoers a painful punishment. (Furqan 25:37)

So remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress. Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do.

And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors; then you would not be helped.

And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember.

And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.

So why were there not among the generations before you those of enduring discrimination forbidding corruption on earth - except a few of those We saved from among them? But those who wronged pursued what luxury they were given therein, and they were criminals.

And your Lord would not have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were reformers. (Hud 11:112—117)

Just look at the severity of warnings in these verses! Continue till the end of Surah Hud to get the complete message.

STEPS TOWARDS AMENDING OUR SITUATION

1. Make tawba (repent).

2. Make sincere effort to become a true ambassador of Islam. Beseech Allah SWT in the following words:

“O Allah, don’t allow me to be a dhalim to myself, my family, my society, the ummah, or to the Non-Muslims, and don’t make me a source of support for any oppressor.”

If we don’t represent the correct teachings of Islam—whether through our actions or words—we become dhalim and fitna for Non-Muslims. Ill manners, indecent actions, our neglect of inviting people to Islam are all forms of oppression against both Islam and Non-Muslims.

One of the taba’ee (generation following the companions of the Prophet SAW) was imprisoned by the unjust ruler of his time. A pious lady from the locality brought him some food while he was in prison, which she sent with the guard. The taba’ee refused to eat from it and returned it as is. The lady was distraught thinking that he rejected her food assuming it was not halal. When he was released she complained to him about his behavior and he answered her saying that he refused the food not because he doubted her integrity or the purity of her food, but because it was carried by someone who worked for a dhalim and thus a dhalim himself!

Just look at how far we have fallen from the teachings of the Prophet SAW and the practices of our pious predecessors. Our current situation is a testimonial to the following words of Rasul Allah SAW:

"When people see an oppressor but do not prevent him from (doing evil), it is likely that Allah will punish them all." (Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi)

3. We must embrace pure Islam!

We follow culture and customs rather than the teachings of Allah and His Prophet SAW. We must make our utmost efforts to learn what Allah and His Prophet SAW want us to do in all aspects of our lives and then struggle to live accordingly.

4. Stand with the truth!

It is reported that Prophet Dawud, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "O Allah, You know that I love You and I love all those who love You, but how may I endear You to Your servants? Allah said: Remind them of My Favors, My trials and My anger. O Dawud, any of My servants who helped an oppressed person and stood by him in his oppressed state, I'll keep his feet firm on the Day when all feet will be shaken." (Reported by Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Ahadith Al-Qudsiyyah)

Al-Bara' bin 'Azib said:

"The Messenger of Allah *commanded* us to do seven things:

- He commanded us to attend funerals,
- visit the sick,
- to reply (say: *Yarhamuk Allah* [may Allah have mercy on you]) to one who sneezes,
- to accept invitations,
- **to support the oppressed,**
- to fulfill oaths (when adjured by another) and
- to return greetings of Salaam." (An Nasai)

WE HAVE BROUGHT DISGRACE UPON OURSELVES

We have mentioned the hadeeth of Rasul Allah SAW where he said:

"Verily, Allah gives respite to the oppressor. But when He seizes him, He does not let him escape." Then he SAW recited, "Such is the Seizure of your Rabb when He seizes the (population of) towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful (and) severe". (11:102). (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

A scholar explained this hadeeth to mean that if Muslims do not take this warning seriously and allow the oppression to continue in the society, then Allah will disgrace them. They will make du'a and Allah will not answer them. They will ask for rain but Allah will not send it; they will have drought. They will ask Allah for victory but He will not give it to them.

Just look around at our condition today! Do we need any further explanation for why we are where we are today?

Ibn 'Abbas (RA) narrated: "

"The Messenger of Allah sent Mu'adh [bin Jabal] (RA) to Yemen, and said: 'Beware of the supplication of the oppressed; for indeed there is no barrier between it and Allah.'" (Tirmidhi)

He SAW further warned against oppression by saying:

"Three supplications are answered without doubt: The supplication of the oppressed, the supplication of the traveler, and the supplication of the parent for his son." (Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud)

In other variation of this hadeeth, he SAW says:

“There are three whose supplication is not rejected: The fasting person when he breaks his fast, the just leader, and the supplication of the oppressed person; Allah raises it up above the clouds and opens the gates of heaven to it. And the Lord says: ‘By My might, I shall surely aid you, even if it should be after a while.’” (Tirmidhi)

Oppression is not only limited to withholding other’s rights, rather foul looks, negative talk such as backbiting or slandering, and evil thoughts are all forms of oppression against others. They cause the mercy of Allah SWT to be lifted and cause His wrath to descend. If Allah SWT didn’t even subject his enemy Fir’awn to this treatment and didn’t insult him in the Qur’an, then what gives us the right to behave the way we do?

SITUATION WILL ONLY GET ROUGHER

We are in the end of times and it is an era when people are distant from their own faith and the social ills are plenty; and this situation will get progressively worse. The more the oppression in our societies increases, the more the trials and tribulations from Allah SWT will increase. What we can do to save ourselves in front of Allah SWT is not to oppress others, try to stand with the truth and help the oppressed to the best of our abilities—even if just with the du’a.



Stinginess is the second major social disease that incurs the wrath of Allah in the form of increased fitan (tribulations).

STINGINESS

The deen of Islam is complete. Allah SWT, with His ultimate mercy and wisdom, has informed us through the Qur’an and the sunnah of His Prophet SAW of the situations that we will encounter in this world, and how to deal with them. Stinginess is one of the diseases—personal and social—that we have been warned against by Allah SWT and His Prophet SAW.

The Prophet SAW said:

"Beware of injustice, for oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection; and beware of stinginess because it doomed those who were before you. It incited them to shed blood and treat the unlawful as lawful." (Muslim)

It is not a quality of the believer to be stingy—whether in his manners, actions or spending. Rasul Allah SAW has said:

“Stinginess and faith can never be combined in a slave's heart.” (An-Nasai)

Scholars said that two traits are not combined in a believer: Stinginess and bad manners.

EASE OF THE HEART

Ease of the hand (spending) is directly related to the ease of the heart! When the heart is softened with the constant remembrance of Allah SWT and the awareness of the transient nature of this world, spending in the way of Allah comes naturally and with ease.

Stinginess is one of the diseases of the heart that not only constrain the life of the stingy person but spread corruption, injustice and discord in the society. This wrong in the society becomes a cause of inviting trials and tribulations from Allah SWT.

Rasul Allah SAW has already informed us that as we get closer to the Day of Judgment, stinginess will spread in the society. Along with warning us of this social ill, He SAW has also given us advice on what to do when we see it spreading around us:

It was narrated that Abu Umayyah Sha'bani said:

“I came to Abu Tha’labah Al-Khushani and said: ‘How do you understand this Verse?’ He said: ‘Which verse?’ I said: “O you who believe! Take care of your own selves. If you follow the (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who are in error.”?[5:105] He said: ‘You have asked one who knows about it. I asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) about it and he said: “Enjoin good upon one another and forbid one another to do evil, but if you see overwhelming stinginess, desires being followed, this world being preferred (to the Hereafter), every person with an opinion feeling proud of it, and you realize that you have no power to deal with it, then you have to mind your own business and leave the common folk to their own devices. After you will come days of patience, during which patience will be like grasping a burning ember, and one who does good deeds will have a reward like that of fifty men doing the same deed.” (Ibn Majah)

WE ARE STINGY TO OURSELVES

Today, we are not only stingy to others; we are stingy to our own selves. We are stingy to our souls by not spending time and money in the way of Allah SWT, which in the end is for our own benefit. If we are generous to ourselves and spend what it takes to develop a strong relationship with Allah SWT, He will be for us and change conditions in our favor.

The power of reliance in Allah SWT is evident in the following narration:

There was once an oppressive king who while looking out of his palace window noticed a small house which was an eyesore among the beautiful scenery. He ordered for it to be demolished. This house belonged to an old widow who was away when the king’s men confiscated her property. When she found out what had happened, she raised her hands to the sky and said to Allah, “I left this house believing in you, give it back to me.” That night Allah SWT caused the earth to swallow the king’s palace and she heard a voice assuring her, “We didn’t forget your house.”

The old lady didn’t go anywhere seeking help. She turned to the Most Powerful One who is able to put all affairs in order. Her belief in Allah got her the help and victory she needed and saved her the humiliation of begging from others. This belief takes time and effort to develop which requires a person to be generous to himself.

Allah SWT says in the Qur’an:

And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful. (Taghabun 64:16)

Stinginess is a disease of the heart which destroys a person in this life and the hereafter. A stingy person is greedy, selfish, is only concerned with his own accumulation of wealth. He neglects the society and his moral and ethical duty towards others. Every wealthy person is

the custodian of his money and he is responsible to spend it for sabeillah, and take care of the needs and affairs of the society. When they deprive themselves of that, they become worthless people in front of Allah SWT who cause humiliation to themselves in this life and the next.

Their stinginess has far reaching consequences—for them and the society. They will be disgraced and tortured due to it in the next life; and in this life their stinginess contributes to spreading mischief, poverty, hardship and oppression. Thus, it is a disease that trickles down to all facets of society and distorts it to the point it can lead to massive bloodshed and wars.

May Allah SWT protect us from the stinginess of our own souls and count us among the successful ones. Ameen.



The third social practice that causes fitan to increase in the society is Muslims' negligence towards enjoining good and forbidding evil.

NEGLIGENCE FROM ENJOINING THE GOOD AND FORBIDDING THE EVIL

Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil—amr bil ma'roof wa nahi anil munkar— is the responsibility of every Muslim.

Allah SWT says in the Qur'an:

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful. (Al Imran 3:104)

A few verses later Allah SWT stresses this point again saying:

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient. (Al Imran 3:110)

Take what is given freely, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant. (Al-A'raf 7:199)

IT IS A DUTY!

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a duty of every Muslim and negligence from it brings severe consequences from Allah SWT. This can be clearly seen from the verses we just read as well the sayings of the Prophet SAW mentioned below.

Rasul Allah SAW said:

"Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith." (Muslim)

"Never a Prophet had been sent before me by Allah to his people but he had, among his people, (his) disciples and companions, who followed his ways and obeyed his command. Then there came after them their successors who proclaimed what they did not practice, and practiced what they were not commanded to do. And (he) who strove against them with his hand is a believer; he who strove against them with his heart is a believer; and he who strove against them with his tongue is a believer; and beyond that there is no grain of Faith." (Muslim)

'Ubadah bin As-Samit RA reported: We swore allegiance to Messenger of Allah SAW to hear and obey; in time of difficulty and in prosperity, in hardship and in ease, to endure being discriminated against and not to dispute about rule with those in power, except in case of evident infidelity regarding which there is a proof from Allah. We swore allegiance to Messenger of Allah SAW to say what was right wherever we were, and not to fear from anyone's reproach. (Bukhari and Muslim)

"By Him in Whose Hand my life is, you either enjoin good and forbid evil, or Allah will certainly soon send His punishment to you. Then you will make supplication and it will not be accepted." (Tirmidhi)

Another similar warning from Rasul Allah SAW is mentioned in the following words:

"Enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, before you call and you are not answered." (Ibn Majah)

Abu Bakr RA reported:

"O you people! You recite this Verse: 'O you who believe! Take care of your own selves. If you follow the (right) guidance [and enjoin what is right (Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid what is wrong (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden)] no hurt can come to you from those who are in error.' (5:105)

But I have heard Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: "When people see an oppressor but do not prevent him from (doing evil), it is likely that Allah will punish them all." (Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi)

"The first defect (in religion) which affected the Children of Israel in the way that man would meet another and say to him: 'Fear Allah and abstain from what you are doing, for this is not lawful for you.' Then he would meet him the next day and find no change in him, but this would not prevent him from eating with him, drinking with him and sitting in his assemblies. When it came to this, Allah led their hearts into evil ways on account of their association with others."

Then he SAW recited, "Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawud (David) and 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. They used not to forbid one another from the Munkar (wrong, evil-doing, sins, polytheism, disbelief) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do.

You see many of them taking the disbelievers as their Auliya' (protectors and helpers). Evil indeed is that which their own selves have sent forward before them; for that (reason) Allah's wrath fell upon them and in torment will they abide. And had they believed in Allah and in the

Prophet (Muhammad (SAW)) and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them (the disbelievers) as Auliya' (protectors and helpers); but many of them are the Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah)." (5:78-81)

Then he SAW continued: "Nay, by Allah, you either enjoin good and forbid evil and catch hold of the hand of the oppressor and persuade him to act justly and stick to the truth, or, Allah will involve the hearts of some of you with the hearts of others and will curse you as He had cursed them." (Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi)

Look at the amount of warnings in these ahadeeth!

Allah SWT cursed Bani Israel because they were sinners and didn't engage in advising each other. Allah SWT cursed them! Do we even realize the severity of this word?

Reminder: Scholars have said that any nation that repeats the actions that brought the punishment or curse of Allah, will receive the same.

This places an immense responsibility on the shoulders of every Muslim and becomes a duty for every one of us to be an ambassador of Islam to humanity. As long as we uphold this responsibility with seriousness, Allah SWT will be on our side but the moment we forget it, the support of Allah SWT will be lifted.

WE WILL ALL GO DOWN TOGETHER

The first step is to embody the teachings of Islam in our lives. Only then can we receive the blessings from Allah SWT and be able to effectively spread them.

Rasul Allah SAW said:

"A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and will be cast into Hell, and his intestines will pour forth and he will go round them as a donkey goes round a millstone. The inmates of Hell will gather round him and say: 'What has happened to you, O so-and-so? Were you not enjoining us to do good and forbidding us to do evil?' He will reply: 'I was enjoining you to do good, but was not doing it myself; and I was forbidding you to do evil, but was doing it myself.'" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

"The likeness of the man who observes the limits prescribed by Allah and that of the man who transgresses them is like the people who get on board a ship after casting lots. Some of them are in its lower deck and some of them in its upper (deck). Those who are in its lower (deck), when they require water, go to the occupants of the upper deck, and say to them: 'If we make a hole in the bottom of the ship, we shall not harm you.' If they (the occupants of the upper deck) leave them to carry out their design they all will be drowned. But if they do not let them go ahead (with their plan), all of them will remain safe". (Bukhari)

This hadeeth should be taken as an eye-opener and a warning. If we do not worry about what is going on in the ummah sooner or later we will all suffer the consequences. We are all in the same boat as an ummah, regardless of where we may be.

We are beginning to see the effects of our negligence towards the ummah. Problems like bribery, oppression, crimes, alcohol and drugs, discrimination, racism are some of the issues that spread in the society when we—Muslims—forget our duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil.

When the educated people from Bani Israel turned a blind eye from the evils in their society and adopted the attitude of 'what is advice going to do', Allah SWT sent His torture. If we do the same, the torture of Allah SWT will come.

TORTURE OF ALLAH

Torture of Allah SWT takes many forms and shapes. It doesn't have to be in the form of earthquakes or tornadoes. Absence of iman, inability to be tranquil and happy, lack of contentment, being unaware of the purpose of our existence, blindness from seeing the truth and following it, disunity and lack of harmony among the families, inability to perform good deeds and spend in the way of Allah are all forms of torture from Allah SWT. They lead us to spend aimless lives until we become witness against our own souls on the Day of Judgment.

Our world is in turmoil with one tribulation following another. These tribulations are sorting believers from disbelievers and hypocrites; each becoming clear by the choices they make when faced with the trials. Many people lose their faith when faced with severe trials; isn't that a form of torture? If Allah gives this ummah a more severe test, many will leave Islam. This is how weak we are!

Note: Throughout last sixty or seventy years, many Muslim lands have been under oppression and aggression. A lot of Muslims from these lands migrated to the Western countries and settled there. When these people left their homelands they were in desperate need of basic necessities of life. Today, if we go back to these same people who migrated during the times of turmoil and see what happened to them, we will understand the concept of torture from a different dimension.

Allah SWT opened for them the duniya until they became content with it and got involved in the championship of accumulating material life. Now they are well established business people, very successful in life, some of them are millionaires or even billionaires. But if you look at their lives, majority of them have already lost their deen; either they left Islam or they live only with a Muslim name and there is no Islam in their lives.

When these people die, what will they take with them? Is this not a form of torture when Allah makes you heedless from the hereafter? This is actually the ultimate torture!

SUNNAH OF ALLAH NEVER CHANGES

Have you heard about someone who got a stroke or heart attack when he lost his business or savings? What about a parent becoming paralyzed upon losing a child?

Why does this happen?

It happens when the reality of life is muddled in our hearts. When instead of realizing that every blessing in this life is a trust from Allah and we don't own anything, we become obsessed with what we have been given. Allah is the One who gives and takes, at the time He wants and in the way He wants.

When we become occupied with petty mundane things in life instead of worrying about good deeds that can earn us the pleasure of Allah and victory from Him, the torture of Allah SWT has to come.

Allah SWT says in the Qur'an:

And you lived among the dwellings of those who wronged themselves, and it had become clear to you how We dealt with them. And We presented for you [many] examples." (Ibrahim 14:45)

So when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every [good] thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were [then] in despair.

So the people that committed wrong were eliminated. And praise to Allah , Lord of the worlds.

Say, "Have you considered: if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts, which deity other than Allah could bring them [back] to you?" Look how we diversify the verses; then they [still] turn away.

Say, "Have you considered: if the punishment of Allah should come to you unexpectedly or manifestly, will any be destroyed but the wrongdoing people?" (Al-An'am 6:44—47)

THE REAL STRUGGLE

Rasul Allah SAW said:

"You will have rulers some of whom you approve and some of whom you will disapprove. He who dislikes them will be safe, and he who expresses disapproval will be safe, but he who is pleased and follows them (will be indeed sinful)". His audience asked: "Shall we not fight them?" He replied, "No, as long as they establish Salah amongst you." (Muslim)

Some scholars deduce from this hadeeth that fighting oppressive rulers in Muslim countries is not allowed.

The real fight today is to go back to Allah SWT, reject culture and customs, accept pure teachings of Islam and carry out amr bil ma'roof wa nahi anil munkar among each other until we change. Once we change, Allah SWT will change the condition around us in our favor.

Allah SWT says:

Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron. (R'ad 13:11)

Any Muslim group that tries to get into politics and control the government will never be successful! Just look around and see what happened every time an Islamic group went into government.

Who fought them? Their own people!

Why? Because of the following reasons which are actually interconnected with each other:

1. They tried to jump the sunnah of Allah SWT and tried to govern without spreading the d'awah first.
2. Since the d'awah didn't take place, people were not ready to accept religious looking leaders, let alone implement the laws of Allah SWT.

WE CAN NEVER GO TO MEDINA UNLESS WE LIVE MAKKAH

Islamic rule was established in Medina after an extensive amount of d'awah in both Makkah and Medina. Shari'ah is given to us from Allah if we deserve it. Therefore, instead of running after Shari'ah, we need to focus on fixing ourselves and our surroundings until we are deserving of Shari'ah.

Over the last two hundred years many Muslim groups have emerged on the world stage. Each of these groups claim to be firqa najia—the one! We have seen group after group trying to implement Shari'ah in Muslim countries and they have failed terribly. How many people are ready to implement Shari'ah in any Muslim country? The number is very little; and even those few who want it, do not know how to do it.

The founders of majority of these groups were neither scholar nor were they educated by scholars. Their sincerity cannot be doubted, but the fact that they learned among each other instead of from established scholars resulted in them taking Islam according to their understanding. Those who study Islam without a scholar develop four problems:

1. They do not have the purpose and wisdom of the message. (Proper comprehension of Islam.)
2. They do not understand the proper chain of knowledge. Chain of knowledge is what allows us to understand the sequence of knowledge so when a situation arises, we know how to interpret it and deal with it. Therefore, these groups will always make mistakes in implementation of Islam during a situation (called fiqh-al-haal—understanding the time, place and condition of society.)
3. They do not have proper adab (manners and character), humbleness and humility. They develop arrogance and tend to fall into arguments.
4. They will always have division among themselves. This is because they were never trained to control their hawa (desires) and when something against their will happens, instead of uniting with each other, they split. They divide instead of uniting because they lack proper learned leaders.

GOOD REPELS EVIL

A lot of Muslim groups take the following hadeeth of Rasul Allah SAW and claim that they must do something with their hands.

"Nay, by Allah, you either enjoin good and forbid evil and catch hold of the hand of the oppressor and persuade him to act justly and stick to the truth, or, Allah will involve the hearts of some of you with the hearts of others and will curse you as He had cursed them." (Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi)

They do not follow the correct sequence.

Just look at the term amr bil ma'roof wa nahi anil munkar. If we do ma'roof, it automatically gets rid of the munkar. When there is justice in the society, a lot of above mentioned social problems will automatically be eradicated. So instead of complaining about others' munkar, if we encourage them to do ma'roof, it will erase their munkar. When people are conscious of Allah SWT and aware of the accountability of their actions, they will refrain from committing evil. So the best way of enjoining good is to bring people nearer to Allah SWT and by planting the seed of iman in their hearts.

THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR TALKING

This is not the time of talking and labeling. We have to do whatever we can to establish the basic values of Islam in our lives and our surroundings. It is a time of fitna and the situation will only get worse. In times like these we need to go to Allah SWT, who will lead us and guide us to what will save us.

Some highly recommended things for us to do:

- Regularly put aside some money for the sake of Allah SWT and good deeds, even if we do not know what to do with it. This practice will bring the blessings of Allah and He will eventually guide us to where to use it.
- Designate regular time to do dhikr and cry to Allah to open for us and show us what to do.

Why will Allah SWT open and change condition unless we make an effort between us and Him? It is time to stop talking and start working! May Allah SWT guide us to what is beloved to Him SWT. Ameen.