

**The Balance of the Salaf in the Affairs of Dīn and Dunyā [Part 1]**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

There is no doubt that Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) has established the ummah of Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and made it the best of the umam (nations) that have been raised among mankind. And indeed, He has given this ummah a characteristic and praised it because of it,

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

**“Thus, We have made you a Waṣaṭ (just) (and the best) nation, that you be witnesses over mankind.” [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2: 143]**

There is no doubt that this āyah praises this ummah. Allāh has made this ummah one that is waṣaṭ. With the Arab, the best of affairs is the awṣaṭ. So Allāh has praised this ummah because of this waṣaṭiyyah (being balanced) between extremism and negligence.

Thus, we find that when we examine the examples of the Salaf of this ummah, we see nothing but this balance in every affair. In the affairs of ‘Aqīdah, Manhaj, that which is related to acts of worship, dealings and transactions, what is connected to the aḥkam of the Sharīah in relation to transgressions against the person, the ḥudūd—balanced. When we look at their actualization of what Allāh (عز وجل) has commanded them, from seeking the dunyā—balanced.

All of their affairs by the Faḍl of Allāh—balanced. And so, one looks at the example of the Salaf of this ummah in every single issue and you see nothing but balance.

There are many statements of the Salaf and the ‘Ulamā’ of the Khalaf establishing this reality. Mukhallad bin Ḥussayn (رحمه الله) mentioned, “Indeed, Allāh (عز وجل) has not commanded the worshipers with anything except that Iblīs confronts them with two things, and he doesn’t

care which of them he is able to overpower him with. Either extremism in relation to it, or he is negligent in regards to it.”

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رحمه الله) mentioned, “Indeed, the Dīn of Allāh (عز وجل) has been established in that which is between negligence and extremism.”

Wahb bin Munabbih (رحمه الله) mentioned, “Indeed, to every single thing there are two extremes and a middle balance. If you hold on to one side of that scale, then the other one is tipped. But if you hold on to the middle, then those two ends become balanced. And so, you should cling to the balanced affair in every single issue.”

‘Umar bin Ishāq (رحمه الله) mentioned, “Those who I caught from the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were greater in number than those who passed me (i.e. those I missed and did not meet). And I did not meet a people that were easier in their manner of existing/being, neither freer of going beyond bounds than them.”

No doubt, it is clear that anyone who studies the sound ‘Aqīdah would know that Ahlus-Sunnah are between extremism and negligence in every single affair (such as that which is related to) the belief in Allāh, the angels, Qadar, the Ṣaḥābah—in every single affair Ahlus-Sunnah are upon the balance. And likewise in their dunyā, they are balanced.

Thus, we see numerous examples from the life of the Salaf of this ummah, and at the head of them, the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها) informs us in relation to an affair connected to how the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was with her, in a narration that was collected by Imām Muslim, “The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was an easygoing man. If I desired something, then he would agree with me upon it.”

The people of knowledge mentioned that this is if she desired something that was good in relation to the dīn or dunyā that had no deficiency in it, then the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

would agree with her upon it. As occurred in the affair of her making Ḥajj, which this narration is connected to. She (رضى الله عنها) completed the Ḥajj and because she was not able to make ‘Umrah at the beginning of Ḥajj, she said, “Why is it that the people leave with Ḥajj and ‘Umrah and I only leave with Ḥajj?” And so, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) allowed her to go with her brother ‘Abdur-Raḥmān and make ‘Umrah after the completion of her Ḥajj. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) could have said, I am looking after the people; you see how busy I am; this is difficult now, or other than that. But the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) permitted for her to go with her brother ‘Abdur-Raḥmān to make Ḥajj.

The statement of ‘Ā’ishah regarding the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “He was an easygoing man”, has to be understood in its context. It was not her intent that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was an easygoing man on the battlefield, for example. He was from the most courageous of the men on the battlefield and displayed firmness/harshness when it was required.

Likewise, we have the statement of Anas bin Mālik (رضى الله عنه) who served the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) from a young age, and he mentioned as occurs in a ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Indeed, I served the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) for ten years and he never said to me uff (a statement of disagreement, disappointment or upset) once. Neither did he say to me about something, why did you carry out such and such or why have you not carried out such and such.” This no doubt affirms what ‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها) said concerning him, that he was an easygoing man. He was an agreeable, likeable man; one that anyone who would have met him would have found a beautiful character, pleasant and good to deal with.

Similarly, al-Imām al-Baghawī (رحمه الله) mentions in discussion of the ḥadīth wherein ‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها) lost her bracelet on a journey and due to that all of the riding party had to remain and could not proceed upon the journey, that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not get upset

with her. Rather, it was Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (رضى الله عنه) who admonished her and showed his upset to her, which again is an example of how they were in terms of being balanced. (Imām al-Baghawī) said that in this ḥadīth is evidence that even though he does not have the authority the leader has over his family members, Abū Bakr was the one who poked ‘Ā’ishah in her side. That was the only discipline he did. ‘Ā’ishah mentioned, “Abū Bakr came and poked me in my side and said, ‘You made the people have to stop now because of your bracelet?’” This is an example of how the Salaf disciplined their family. He did not take her aside and bruised and battered her with beating. Rather, the only thing he did was poke her in her side. The Salaf of this ummah were balanced in every affair.

Similarly, we have the statement of Muḥammad bin Ḥasan (رحمه الله) who said, “It was said to Yaḥyá bin Khālid, ‘You do not discipline your child or beat him.’ He said, ‘They are the ones who we will find security in them over ourselves (i.e. when we get elderly they are the ones who will look after us). If we instill fear in them, then how can we feel security after what we have done to them?’”

They understood that the affair revolves around balance. When they interacted with the people, the origin with them was Ḥusnul-Dhann (good suspicion) for the person who was upon uprightness. We see this Ḥusnul-Dhann present in many of the statements of the Salaf, even in relation to how they would discipline or correct a person because of what he said.

In that regard, we have the statement of ar-Rabī bin Sulaymān (رحمه الله) who mentioned, “I entered upon ash-Shāfi’ī one day and I said to him, ‘How are you this morning?’ Imām ash-Shāfi’ī responded, ‘I have woken this morning weak.’ So I said to him, ‘May Allāh (عز وجل) strengthen your weakness.’ So Imām ash-Shāfi’ī (رحمه الله) said, ‘Yā Rabī, may Allāh (عز وجل) respond to your heart and not to your statement. If Allāh (عز وجل) strengthens my weakness, He will kill me. Rather, you should say, may Allāh (عز وجل) strengthen you over your

weakness.” He understood what he meant and had good suspicions regarding the statement he uttered, but he corrected him, even during times of weakness.

Likewise, we have the statement of al-Imām Ibn al-Ambārī (رحمه الله). He was called to bear witness against an individual who had acknowledged his transgression in a particular affair. They approached Imām Ibn al-Ambārī saying, “Should we not bear witness in relation to such and such, and you should come with us?” He said that some of them said to the individual, “Should we not bear witness against you?” And the man said, “Yes.” So they all bore witness against him except for Ibn al-Ambārī. He was asked concerning that and he said, “This shahādah (testimony) is not sound linguistically because you have agreed *not* to bear witness against him. It is as though he has said, ‘Yes, you should not bear witness against me.’” What they intended was understood, but the wording was incorrect.

So the correction of the Salaf revolved around them having Ḥusnul-Dhann for that which was uttered, while correcting the mistake.

Al-Imām aṣ-Ṣanʿānī (رحمه الله) mentioned, “The bad suspicion that Allāh (عز وجل) has prohibited us to have about particular individuals is to have evil suspicion about Ahlul-Khayr (the people of good), but as far as the evil doers, then there is no problem with that.”

We find this good suspicion being present in the kalām of the aʿimmah for other aʿimmah. From that, we have an example from Imām adh-Dhahabī when he mentioned the statement of Yaʿqūb bin Layth as-Saffār, who accused Yaʿqūb al-Fasawī of speaking ill of ʿUthmān. Imām Dhahabī (رحمه الله) said, “This statement of al-Imām Yaʿqūb bin Layth about Imām al-Fasawī is munqaṭiʿah (the chain of narration going back to him is broken) and Allāh (عز وجل) knows best, for indeed, we do not know Yaʿqūb al-Fasawī except being Salafī.”

And then they claim that referring to an individual as being Salafī is something new that these new youth have brought about. Here, Imām adh-Dhahabī said, “We do not know Ya‘qūb al-Fasawī except being *Salafī*.”

As far as this example of Ḥusnul-Dhann being present in the statements and actions of the Salaf, then there is no better than that which manifested with the Messenger of Allāh himself (صلى الله عليه وسلم). As you know, there was an attempt to poison the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) by a Yahūdī. Al-Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) discusses the actions of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) thereon after. He mentions as occurs in *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, narrating from Imām Ibn ‘Asākir, that after there was an attempt to poison the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم), he did not eat when food was presented to him except after the person who presented the food ate first. This of course is in regards to those who there was something of suspicion in relation to them. As for those who are upright, then there is no need for this evil suspicion. So, we do not enter the home of the Muslim who is upright and ask him if the meat is ḥalāl and how it was slaughtered or cooked etc. We do not interrogate the host; rather, we eat with the Name of Allāh.

Similarly, from the examples of how they were balanced in all of their affairs, we have that which is related to the issue of accepting or rejecting statements based on having Ḥusnul-Dhann for the individual or understanding/knowing that this is a person of dīn and Sunnah and uprightness, or that this is a person that the aṣl (foundation) may well be having bad suspicion. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) mentions in a narration found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that on an occasion she approached the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and said, “Indeed, one of the elderly women from the women of Banī Isrā’īl claimed that the dead will be punished in their graves, and I was not happy enough to accept it from her.” This was due

to the aṣl of the abundant lies and deception that has come from them. When she said that, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Yes, O ‘Ā’ishah (i.e. the affair is correct).”

Thus, examples of the Salaf of this ummah regarding the balance they had are plentiful, and it almost became like something that was manifest with them as though it was a sixth sense. No doubt, their proceeding was upon knowledge, which gave them nūr (light) in relation to those things that may not possibly be categorically clear. It gave them baṣīrah (clear sightedness) and balance in all affairs, and that which is referred to by the people of knowledge as Firāsah (foresight), which was based upon the knowledge, balance and good hearts they had.

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) mentions in *Kitāb ar-Rūḥ* that indeed, Allāh has informed that when the servant draws close to Allāh, then the benefit of that is they receive the Love of Allāh (عز وجل). And when Allāh loves the servant, He draws close to him and he (the servant) hears by way of Allāh (i.e. his hearing is inspired), his seeing is inspired, the movements of his hands and legs are inspired, and Allāh blesses him with correctness in all of his affairs. So his heart becomes like a pure mirror that reflects the realities of affairs and nothing is presented to him except that his firāsah (intuition/foresight) is nearly never wrong because of this balance and nūr he is upon.

An example of a fatwā that was based upon this extrapolation they had, though they may not necessarily have had clear evidence for a particular affair, but the nūr that Allāh gave them guided their tongues, is found with Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله). He mentioned, “Indeed, the one who gathers ḥarām wealth, then you would see that he nearly never spends it except in ḥarām.”

This statement was not based on a text that necessarily indicates that, but it is the nūr Allāh (عز وجل) gives to Ahlul-Khayr who are upon the Sunnah. He guides them to understand and

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perceive by way of years of experience upon this balance that ordinarily when this occurs, such and such occurs. Thus, we see this manifesting throughout the statements and actions of the Salaf. And we will, bi'idhnillāh, observe numerous examples of how the Salaf of this ummah were balanced between extremism and negligence in all of the affairs of the dīn and dunyā.

والحمد لله رب العالمين