

## The Parable of the One who Establishes the Limits (Hudood) Prescribed by Allah (swt) and that of the One who Transgresses them...

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(Translation from Arabic)

Nu'man bin Bashir (may Allah (swt) be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ فِي حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَأَقِ فِيهَا ، كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ ، فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا ، فَكَانَ الَّذِي فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ ، فَقَالُوا لَوْ أَنَا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِيبِنَا خَرْقًا وَلَمْ نُؤَدِّ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا ؟ فَإِنْ تَرَكَوهُمْ وَمَا «The parable of the one who establishes the limits (Hudud) prescribed by Allah and that of the one who transgresses them is that of the people who board a ship after casting lots. Some of them are upon its upper deck and some of them are upon its lower 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 desire, then they all will be drowned. However, if they prevent them, then all of them will be saved.»

This Hadith has great meaning, opening the extensive subject of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil ('*amr bil ma'roof wa nahee anil munkar*). The hadith characterizes a society in which disobedience (*ma'siyah*) could be committed. It clarifies that the ship of society will be safe only by being upright upon the commands of Allah (swt). The society is saved by uprightness (*istiqaamah*) and will be drowned by disobedience through violation of the commands of Allah (swt). The Hadith indicates that the Islamic society must have an authority (*sultaan*) based on the commands of Allah (swt) and His limits (Hudood) to preserve the society.

As for the Prophet (saw)'s saying, (الْقَائِمِ فِي حُدُودِ اللَّهِ) **“The one who establishes the Limits of Allah.”** According to the Hadith, it is the one who steers the ship, preserving and defending the limits (Hudood) of Allah (swt). It is the one who preserves the life of people in the society, both their good and their bad individuals, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, preventing any wicked person from making a hole to sink the ship, the Deen of Allah (swt). This can only be possible through the Khalifah, whom the Prophet (saw) characterized by saying, (الإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ) **“The Imam is a shield.”** [Muslim]

As for the Prophet's (saw) saying: (الْوَأَقِ فِيهَا) **“The one who transgresses them,”** it is the one who violates the limits of Allah (swt), indulging in what Allah (swt) has prohibited them, following their whims and daring to transgress.

As for the Prophet's (saw) saying: (بَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا) **“like the people who get on board a ship after casting lots. Some of them are in its upper deck and some of them in its lower deck.”** It is a vividly perceived depiction of the composition of society, approximating its reality in the manner that the Prophet (saw) wants to portray, with clear visualization. It is amongst the parables that are best perceived by those who work for Islam. The word استهَم (istiham) means drawing lots (polling) amongst the people who want to board the ship (i.e. the ship of society). The ship is of two tiers and so they draw lots to choose their places. Some of them are in the upper deck, whilst the others are in lower deck. Some deserve the right to be in the upper deck, whilst the others deserve to be in the lower deck.

As for the Prophet's (saw) saying, (فَقَالُوا لَوْ ، أَنَا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِيبِنَا خَرْقًا وَلَمْ نُؤَدِّ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا ؟) **“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.’”** That is, those who are in the lower deck, when they want to take water from the sea, they need to climb up to the upper deck. So it is as if they said, ‘We preoccupy the people of the upper deck, harm them and impose

hardships upon them with our repeated ascension to them.’ As a solution to this problem, they suggest making a hole in their portion to draw water directly from the sea. So, should the people of the upper deck leave them to do what they want, on the pretext that the people of the lower deck are exercising their rights to draw water, with their freedom to take appropriate means and methods? Should they?

As for the Prophet (saw)’s saying, **فَإِنْ تَرَكَوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا وَهَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا ، وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَىٰ أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَّوْا ، وَنَجَّوْا جَمِيعًا** **“If the people of the upper deck leave them to carry out their desire they all will be drowned. However, if the people of the upper deck prevent them, then all of them will be saved.”** If the people of the upper deck ignore those who wrong them, then water will flood over them, drowning them all. However, if the people of the upper deck prevent them, then all of them will be saved. Thus, if a disobedient one, who transgresses the limits (Hudood) of Allah (swt), reveals his disobedience and evil to the people, openly declaring, how must the people deal with him? Will they leave him be, on the pretext that he has rights and freedom to act as he wishes, in such a way that it drowns the entire society? Of course, the answer of every sane person in this regard is obvious. Thus, every oppressor must be prevented.

This Hadith is constituted of a collection of words whose pearls are many and precious:

The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not classify the passengers of the ship according to the levels of poverty, richness, wealth and lineage. Instead, the differentiation in the hadith is related to **القَائِمِ فِي حُدُودِ اللَّهِ** **“The one who establish the limits of Allah,”** the one who implements the Shari’ah of Allah (swt), guided by the guidance of Allah on the one hand and on the other hand, **الْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا** **“the one who transgresses them,”** the one who challenges the Deen of Allah (swt) by committing Haram. Real strength is neither derived from the vastness of the lands possessed, nor from the worldly values that are disconnected from Allah (swt). Instead, real strength is derived from Allah (swt), the belief (Imaan) in Allah (swt) and from the glory of such belief. This is like the saying of Allah (swt), **وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ** **“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are believers.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Imran: 139]. Imaan and establishing the commands of Allah (swt) are the source of elevation and guidance.

This hadith shows that the Islamic society must be based on implementing all the system of Ahkam Shari’ah entirely, in an exclusive manner leaving others, the Kufr systems, in order to preserve the society. This is the reality of the ship of the Muslims as it should be.

The ship must have a captain who is suitable for good leadership. It is an analogy to mean that the society must have someone to possess authority, in order to prevent those who transgress the limits (Hudood) of Allah (swt), that is, the society must have an Islamic State.

When the sin appears, it harms both the one who has committed the sin and the one who has not committed the sin. It harms both of them in their Hereafter and in their worldly life. Allah (swt) says, **وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ** **“And fear a trial which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty.”** [TMQ Surah Anfal: 25].

The Hadith of the ship conveys that a Muslim must not give into his desires or deviations. Instead, the Muslim must take account of every step he takes and every move he makes, diligently both for his own salvation and the salvation of others.

The whole society is like this ship, upon which the righteous, the sinner, the aware and the neglectful are all aboard. The ship carries them all to their destination. It is guided by those who exhibit uprightness (*istiqaamah*) in establishing the limits (Hudood) of Allah (swt) and it is disrupted by disobedience.

The Hadith conveys that the ship runs in the course of life, with a destination to reach. The ship must be docked on land, as the ship will not remain in the sea forever, taking it as an abode. This indicates that there must be an objective for society to achieve. The

consequence of turmoil will be a destruction both in this world and the hereafter, whilst the consequence of uprightness (istiqamah) will be salvation both in this world and the hereafter. Accordingly, the sinner imperils himself in the Hellfire, as he transgresses the limits of Allah. The upright one secures salvation in Paradise as he establishes the limits (Hudood) of Allah (swt).

This hadith has other support from other hadiths that agree with its meaning, emphasizing and confirming it. When Zainab bint Jahsh (ra) asked the Prophet (saw), "Shall we be destroyed while there are righteous people amongst us?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, (نَعَمْ إِذَا كَثَرَ الْخَبْثُ) **"Yes, if there is much wickedness."** [Muslim] That is, when there is much corruption and evil, this will allow destruction of the society. Then there is our leader Abu Bakr (ra), warning the Muslims by such meaning, when interpreting the sayings of Allah (swt), يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ, **"O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided"** [TMQ Surah Al-Maida: 105]. Abu Bakr (ra) said, "O people, you recite this verse: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَىٰ " **"If the people see an evildoer and do not stop him, soon Allah will send His punishment upon them all."** [Ahmad].

The Prophet (saw) also said, إِذَا لَمْ تَقُلْ أَمْتِي لِلظَّالِمِ يَا ظَالِمَ فَقَدْ تَوَدَّعَ مِنْهَا **"If my Ummah does not say to the oppressor 'O oppressor,' the Ummah will lose its goodness."** The Prophet (saw) said, لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَلَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، أَوْ لَيَسْلُطَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ شِرَارَكُمْ، ثُمَّ يَدْعُو خِيَارَكُمْ فَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَكُمْ **"You must enjoin the good and forbid the evil. Otherwise, the bad amongst you will be placed on the authority upon you. Then the best of you will make supplication and it will not be responded."** (al-Mu'ajam al-Kabeer of at-Tabaraani). The Prophet (saw) said (in a Hadith Qudsi), مَرُّوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَانْهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، قَبْلَ أَنْ تَدْعُونِي، فَلَا أُجِيبُكُمْ، وَتَسْأَلُونِي فَلَا أُعْطِيكُمْ، **"Enjoin the good and forbid the evil before you will make supplication to me (Allah) and I (Allah) will not respond you, and you will ask me and I will not give you, and you will seek support from me and I will not support you."**

This Hadith is completely contradictory to what the West is generating of public convention (norm) (*urf 'aam*) amongst Muslims. The West says that it must be based on personal freedom, accusing those who forbid the evil as backward, interfering in people's affairs, their privacy and the like. However, the evil must be forbidden by all those who are capable to do so as soon as it appears; otherwise, the ship will sink. Thus the society must have the characteristics of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. This is in contrast to what is prevalent today in terms of the concepts of personal freedom, freedom to express opinion, freedom of ownership, and freedom of assembly that allows a person to insult, commit sin and call to kufr. He is not held accountable as he considers these as his rights protected by the constitution.