

IN DEFENCE OF THE SUNNĪ CREED AND MANHAJ

كشف الشبهات عن منهج الامام اهل السنة

احمد ابن حنبل

في مسائل التكفير والتبديع والسياسة

Clarifying the Doubts about the  
Methodology of The Imam of Ahlus-  
Sunnah

**Ahmad ibn Hanbal**

In Declaring Takfeer, Tabdee' and in  
Politics

Written by the one in need of his Lord's mercy

**Arshan Ibn Umar Ibn Ibraheem Ansari**

(May Allah forgive him, his parents, teachers and all Muslims)



# SALAFI RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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## CLARIFYING THE DOUBTS ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY OF THE IMAM OF AHLUS-SUNNAH AHMAD IBN HANBAL IN DECLARING TAKFEER, 'TABDEE' AND IN POLITICS

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All praise be to Allah who send men of guidance for every generation and did not leave them misguided, and peace and mercy be upon our noble prophet ﷺ – the leader of all guided men, and on all those who followed him in his guidance.

So indeed, we are living in a time of confusion, where people attribute allegations on scholars and misinterpret it. Among them is the great Imam of whose sacrifice and knowledge needs no introduction, yes, he is Abu Abdullah Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal ash-Shaybani al-Marwarudhi (164- 241 AH; may Allah have mercy on him), who all acknowledge as an Imam in Aqeedah, Fiqh and Hadith.

I wrote this seeing wide spread confusion on this topic, yet nothing much available in the English language. So, I went through several books which discuss this topic and also asked scholars before coming with this work. A lot of credits goes to our Shaikh Muhammad ibn Salih al Munajjid's series named "Dawrah Himaayah Manhaj as-Salaf" which inspired me to come up with this, and also the brothers who encouraged me, may Allah give them the best of this world and the Hereafter.

So, what follows in this book is:

- The political era he lived in; to make people understand the background and scenario.
- His methodology in Takfeer (declaring a person to be a disbeliever); a refutation of those who misinterpret it.
- His methodology in Tabdee' (declaring a person to be an innovator); a refutation of those who misinterpret it.
- His care for enjoining good and forbidding evil; a refutation of those who claim that he was a puppet of the rulers.
- His methodology in Siyaasah (politics); to teach people wisdom in politics that shar'eeah teaches.

We ask Allah to accept it from me, and forgive everyone who reads and share it for others benefit.

Arshan Ibn Umar Ansari

(Completed on Sunday; 24<sup>th</sup> Rabi al Akhir, 1438)

(Corresponding to 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2017)



**A glimpse of Imam Ahmad's political era:**

Imam Ahmad lived the era of seven Abbasid caliphs, namely: Al Haadi, Ar-Rasheed, Al Ameen, Al Ma'moon, Al Mu'tasem, Al Wathiq, and Al Mutawakkil.

But in reality, he was young in the era of the first three, so his political stance can only be understood by studying his relations with the later four: Al Ma'moon, Al Mu'tasem, Al Wathiq, and Al Mutawakkil.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (rahimahullah), as the most famous scholar of Baghdad of his time, was brought before the rulers and ordered to abandon his Aqeedah that Qur'an is the speech of Allah. When he refused, he was tortured and persecuted. His treatment at the hands of the political authority was extremely severe. People who witnessed the torture commented that even an elephant could not have handled the treatment that Imam Ahmad was subject to. Those who say that discussions on matters of Aqeedah are a waste of time have a great reminder in this.

But before stating his political stances, let's study briefly from his life to understand it in the context.

***Reasons for Imam Ahmad's persecution:***

It is well known that Imam Ahmad was severely persecuted. The main people behind it were those who popularized the belief that Qur'an is created. The two sects who promoted this at his time were:

***Jahmiyyah:***

They were one of the deviant sects, named after their founder Jahm ibn Safwaan, whose few deviant beliefs are summarised below:

1. That human has no choice or free will.
2. That Jannah and Jahannam will end and perish.
3. Imaan is just acknowledgement of Allah, and similar kufr is ignorance about Allah.
4. Rejection of speech of Allah, and that Qur'an is created.

However, the Jamhiyyah did not become popular in the time of the Umayyads, nor in the era of Al Mahdi, Al Rasheed or Al Ameen. But when Ma'moon became the ruler, they gained popularity and support. [Siyar A'laam (11/236)]

Similarly, Mu'tazilah sect was also behind his persecution, as they as well believed that Qur'an is created.

***Persecution in the time of Al Ma'moon:***

Ma'moon was the seventh Abbasid caliph. He was inspired by the Mu'tazilah, and was firm in his deviant belief of creation of the Qur'an. He believed that the one who believes that the Qur'an is not created has nothing to do with Islam. He wrote a long letter warning others from " the dangers of believing that Qur'an is not created." [Al Madhab Al Hanbali, Dr. Abdullah ibn Abdul Muhsin at-Turki (1/72)]

He called several scholars for test, and appointed a man named Ishaq the judge. Many came and this is what happened in Imam Ahmad's turn:

Ishaq: What's your say about the creation of the Qur'an?

Ahmad: It is the speech of Allah.

Ishaq: Is it his creation?

Ahmad: It is the speech of Allah. Nothing more.

Most of the scholars opposed Ma'moon's creed, so he that those who do not clearly testify to the creation of the Qur'an will be brought together and executed. Now, all spoke in accordance to what Ma'moon wanted except for two: Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Imam Muhammad ibn Nooh. But there is no doubt that all the other scholars who retracted and spoke in accordance to the Ma'moon were not 'scholars for dollars', rather they themselves hated it and did so only to avoid the trial. This is what is stated by Allah: "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith." (16:106)

They were being taken to Ma'moon in iron chains, but the news of his death reached before they even met each other. Thus, Ma'moon's persecution ended with his death. Both were freed to return back, but Muhammad ibn Nooh passed away in the return journey. [Bidaayah wan- Nihaayah, Ibn Kathir (14/213)]

***Persecution in the time of Al Mu'tasem:***

People thought that the persecution ended, but it had just began. A new persecution began when his brother Mu'tasem came to rule after him. Mu'tasem imprisoned Imam Ahmad and he remained their for 28 months. It was from righteousness the people that they would always visit the prison to meet Imam Ahmad. Unlike today, that when our scholars get arrested, no one even attempts to meet them. Indeed, those people knew the value of

scholars.

Later on, Imam Ahmad had a debate in which he won. After this debate, Mu'tasem's anger increased and he decided to punish him physically. He commanded to lash him approx. 30 lashes. He would be given a break in between after few lashes and questioned if he retracted from his position, but he was firm as ever.

He became frustrated, and this prompted Mu'tasem to execute Imam Ahmad. But his advisor Ibn Abi Dawood said: "If Ahmad died in the prison, people would take Ahmad as an Imam, and become firm in their Aqeedah (creed)."

So, they released Ahmad looking at weakness in his health, and assumed that he would die soon.

Ibn Kathir mentioned (in Bidaayah wan- Nihaayah 14/412) that when he was house arrested, he was not permitted to attend Jum'ah or any congregation Salah, nor for hadith narration. But there are narrations from Ishaq ibn Hanbal, the son of Imam Ahmad's brother, proving that he would attend the congregations. [Cross check: Al Madhab Al Hanbali (1/79) and Siyar A'laam (11/263)]

Mu'tasem as well passed away, leaving his son Al Wathiq as the ruler.

#### ***Persecution in the time of Al Wathiq:***

It is true that it was at Al Wathiq's rule that Imam Ahmad would not even leave his home for even obligatory Salah, because Al Wathiq banished him from Baghdad. He was most severe against his foes, compared the previous two caliphs.

Wathiq was the one who wrote on the gates of several Masajid:

لا اله الا الله رب القران وخالقه

"There is no one worthy of worship except Allah, the Lord of Qur'an and it's creator."

He as well appointed a judge to test people and he would imprison all those who opposed his view. However, in the end of his life, Wathiq realised the weakness of his belief, and that how evil it was to attribute such to the book of Allah. Then, he even stopped testing people. After Al Wathiq passed, Al Mutawakkil came to rule.

#### ***End of oppression:***

Al Mutawakkil opposed the creed of the three before him: Ma'moon, Mu'tasem and Wathiq. He even criticized them about their view of the creation of the Qur'an. He stopped the spread of that belief, and commanded the spread of narration of Hadith, so Allah made sunnah rise through him, and that bid'ah died, and through him oppression and anxiety of people ended. May Allah have mercy upon him.

He removed all those scholars who supported Ma'moon and his belief, and his love for Imam Ahmad increased for him. However, we notice that with all this support of the ruler, Imam Ahmad did not increase except in his Zuhd (asceticism), away from Dunya, and he would not accept gifts from Al Mutawakkil.

And Mutawakkil would always seek Imam Ahmad's advices in his personal and caliphate matters. [Many of these advices are in 23rd Baab of Al Manaqib of Ibn Al Jawzi]

May Allah have mercy upon them all.

### Takfeer:

These three caliphs ruled for more than 30 years altogether. They oppressed people, took their rights, imprisoned them if they rejected to believe that Qur'an is created, and other deviant beliefs. On the other hand, Imam Ahmad taught that believing that Qur'an is created is kufr, yet he never made takfeer of *any of the rulers*.

He said:

قال إمام أهل السنة أحمد بن حنبل رحمه الله تعالى: من قال القرآن مخلوق فهو عندنا كافر لأن القرآن من علم الله وفيه أسماء الله, وقال: إذا قال الرجل العلم مخلوق فهو كافر لأنه يزعم أنه لم يكن لله علم حتى خلقه

"The one who says that Qur'an is created is a kafir according to us, because Qur'an is from the knowledge of Allah, and in it are the names of Allah..... and when a man says: "Knowledge is a creation" then he is a disbeliever, because it leads to mean that Allah will not have knowledge of something until he creates it." [As-Sunnah, Abdullah ibn Imam Ahmad, page 9]



He ruled that a particular belief constitutes kufr in itself, but they do not apply the ruling of kufr to any specific individual who believes in that view, unless the conditions are met and the impediments are absent. In-fact, those who do not know this are the ones who misunderstand the narrations of takfeer declarations of Imam Ahmad such as the following:

قال ابن عبد الهادي في بحر الدم : " 1290 - الكرابيسي، قال المروذي: قلت لابي عبد الله: إن الكرابيسي يقول: من لم يقل: لفظه بالقرآن مخلوق فهو كافر، فقال: بل هو كافر، وقال: مات بشر المريسي وخلفه "حسين الكرابيسي، وقال لي: هذا قد تجهم وأظهر الجهمية، ينبغي أن يحذر عنه وعن كل من ابتعد

And Ibn Abdul Hadi said in 'Bahr ad-Dam' that al Marwadhi said: "Karabisi says: The one who does say, 'Qur'an is created' then he is a kafir. So he said: "Rather he is kafir!" And said: Bishr Al Marisi died and Husain Al Karabisi came behind. And he told me: He has become a Jahmiyyah and showed it clearly, everyone must warn him and from everyone who innovated.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said explaining this ruling of Imam Ahmad:

قال شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية - رحمه الله - : " ولكن المقصود هنا أن مذاهب الأئمة مبنية على هذا التفصيل بين النوع والعين ، ولهذا حكى طائفة عنهم الخلاف في ذلك ، ولم يفهموا غور قولهم ، فطائفة تحكي عن أحمد في تكفير أهل البدع روايتين مطلقا ، حتى تجعل الخلاف في تكفير المرجئة والشيعية المفضلة لعلي ، وربما رجحت التكفير والتخليد في النار ، وليس هذا مذهب أحمد ولا غيره من أئمة الإسلام ، بل لا يختلف قوله أنه لا يكفر المرجئة الذين يقولون الإيمان قول بلا عمل ، ولا يكفر من يفضل علياً على عثمان ، بل نصوصه صريحة بالامتناع من تكفير الخوارج والقدرية وغيرهم ، وإنما كان يكفر الجهمية المنكرين لأسماء الله وصفاته ؛ لأن مناقضة أقوالهم لما جاء به الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم ظاهرة بيّنة ، ولأن حقيقة قولهم تعطيل الخالق ، وكان قد ابتلي بهم حتى عرف حقيقة أمرهم وأنه يدور على التعطيل ، وتكفير الجهمية مشهور عن السلف والأئمة ، لكن ما كان يكفر أعيانهم ، فإن الذي يدعو إلى القول أعظم من الذي يقول به ، والذي يعاقب مخالفه أعظم من الذي يدعو فقط ، والذي يكفر مخالفه أعظم من الذي يعاقبه ، ومع هذا : فالذين كانوا من ولاة الأمور يقولون بقول الجهمية : أن القرآن مخلوق ، وأن الله لا يرى في الآخرة وغير ذلك ، ويدعون الناس إلى ذلك ويمتحنونهم ويعاقبونهم إذا لم يجيبوهم ، ويكفرون من لم يجبههم حتى إنهم كانوا إذا أمسكوا الأسير لم يطلقوه حتى يقر بقول الجهمية أن القرآن مخلوق وغير ذلك ، ولا يولون متولياً ، ولا يعطون رزقا من بيت المال إلا لمن يقول ذلك ، ومع هذا فالإمام أحمد رحمه الله تعالى ترحم عليهم ، واستغفر لهم ، لعلمه بأنهم لم يتبين لهم أنهم مكذبون . للرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم ، ولا جاحدون لما جاء به ، ولكن تأولوا فأخطأوا وقلدوا من قال لهم ذلك وكذلك الشافعي لما قال لحفص الفرد حين قال القرآن مخلوق : كفرت بالله العظيم ، بيّن له أن هذا القول كُفر ، ولم يحكم بردة حفص بمجرد ذلك ، لأنه لم يتبين له الحجة التي يكفر بها ، ولو اعتقد أنه مرتد

لسعى في قتله ، وقد صرح في كتبه بقبول شهادة أهل الأهواء والصلاة خلفهم " انتهى من " مجموع الفتاوى " ( 23 / 348 ، 349 ) .

But what we are trying to say here is that the leading scholars' views on takfeer (judging someone to be a kaafir) are based on their differentiation between the idea and the individual who holds this view. Hence some of them narrated that there was some dispute concerning this matter, but these people did not properly understand what they said. Some narrated two reports from Ahmad concerning the issue of regarding the people of bid'ah as kuffaar in all cases, to the point that it seems that there was a conflict between these reports as to whether the Murji'ah and the Shi'ah who give precedence to 'Ali are to be regarded as kuffaar. Perhaps this group (who narrated the two reports) thought that that they should be regarded as kuffaar who will abide forever in Hell, but this is not the view of Ahmad or any of the other leading scholars of Islam. Rather his view is definitely that he did not regard as kuffaar the Murji'ah who say that faith is words to be uttered and is not connected to deeds, and he did not regard as kuffaar those who gave precedence to 'Ali over 'Uthmaan. Rather his statements clearly indicate that we should refrain from regarding the Khaarijis, Qadaris and others as kuffaar; and he only regarded as kuffaar the Jahamis who denied the names and attributes of Allah, because their views are clearly and obviously contrary to that which was brought by the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and because the reality of their view is that it leads to denying the Creator. He had dealt with them and he knew about their reality and that their views boiled down to denial of the Creator.

Moreover, regarding the Jahamis as kuffaar was something that was well established and was narrated from the early generations and the leading scholars, but he did not regard specific individuals among them as kaafirs, because the one who promotes a view is worse than one who merely holds that view, and the innovator who persecutes the one who disagrees with him is worse than one who merely calls to it, and the one who describes anyone who disagrees with him as a kaafir is worse than the one who merely persecutes him. Furthermore, those who were in authority (at the time of Ahmad) held Jahami views, that the Qur'an was created, and that Allah would not be seen in the Hereafter, and so on, and they called people to that, and tried them and punished them if they did not agree with them, and they regarded as kaafirs all those who did not agree with them, to the extent that

if they arrested someone they would not let him go until he accepted the Jahami view that the Qur'an was created, and so on. They would not appoint anyone to a position of authority or give any stipend from the bayt al-maal to anyone, unless he held those views. Yet despite that, Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) would pray for mercy for them, and pray for forgiveness for them, because he knew that it was not clear to them that they were disbelieving in the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and rejecting what he had brought; rather they based their views on the interpretation of some text, but they got it wrong and followed those who taught them that.

Similarly, when Hafs al-Fard said that the Qur'an was created, ash-Shaafa'i said to him: You have disbelieved in Allah the Almighty, and he explained to him that this view constituted kufr. But he did not rule that Hafs had apostatised just because he held that view, because proof had not yet been established to him such that he might be regarded as a kaafir if he rejected it. If ash-Shaafa'i had believed that he was an apostate, he would have tried to get him executed. And he clearly stated in his books that testimony may be accepted from those who follow bid'ah, and prayers may be offered behind them.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (23/348, 349)

He also said: The one who bases his idea on a misinterpretation, if his intention is to follow the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he is not to be regarded as a kaafir or as an evildoer, if he tried to work it out but got it wrong. This is something that is well established among people with regard to practical matters. With regard to matters of belief, many people regard as a kaafir the one who has mistaken notions concerning them, but this view is not known from any of the Sahabah or those who followed them in truth, or from any of the leading scholars of the Muslims. Rather this was originally one of the views of the innovators.

End quote from Minhaaj as-Sunnah (5/239)

However, this does not mean that every misunderstanding is excusable. There are limits to everything, and the same goes here. And this has been

dealt in many other books. (Cross check: Shaikh Al - Munajjid's fatwa on: Guidelines regarding the kind of misinterpretation that does not constitute kufr on the part of the one who follows that misinterpretation, and some other comments on this issue: 192564)

However, Imam Ahmad made takfeer on few specific individuals after numerous one on one discussions and debates and establishing the proof on them. These were few countable people. Indeed, this was an example from the wideness of knowledge of Imam Ahmad. Imam Shafi'ee (rahimahullah) praised him saying:

قال الإمام الشافعي:  
خرجت من بغداد فما خلفت بها رجلا أفضل ، ولا أعلم ، ولا أروع ، ولا أفقه ، ولا أتقى من أحمد بن  
حنبل .

"I left Baghdad, but did not leave anyone better, or more knowledgeable, or more pious, or anyone more than him in comprehension, or more fearful of Allah than Ahmad bin Hanbal." [Siyar A'lam 11/195]

Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Saleh Al-Uthaimeen (rahimahullah) said as in Durratul Uthaimeeniyah, an explanation of Al Hamawiyyah:

“Shaikh-ul Islam said: ‘I do not think that Allah will forgive Ma’moon due to the harms he did to the Islamic nation. So this man – I seek refuge in Allah – through him the harms the Imams of Ahlus-Sunnah faced is well know, and the most who was harmed was the Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him).’

In the era the three hundreds, the Jahmiyyah spread due to Bishr ibn Giyas al Mareesi, and this man is from the scholars of kalaam and he was a man of philosophy and speech, although it is an invalid proof but he was a man of speech.

Shaikh-ul Islam said: ‘Those who scholars had consensus against them, and most of them they were declared kufr and deviants. So, people (of jahmiyyah creed) were either deviants or kuffar. And this is decided on the basis of the situation of the innovator, if he were a caller to it they would declare takfeer, and if he were ‘a blind follower they would declare him deviant.’ End quote.” (ad-Durratul Uthaimeeniyah, page 369 )

Tabdee':

When a Muslim crosses certain boundaries, or innovates in matters or worship, he goes out of the pale of the people of Sunnah, and becomes one of the people of Bid'ah. This is well established throughout the centuries, where well known scholars declared certain individuals to be one of the people of bid'ah. This is called tabdee'.

Few consider it an evil to declare tabdee on any specific individual and group, and they allege that it causes division in the Ummah. But Allah stated the opposite:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.

يُصَلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment. [al-Ahzab 33:70-71]

Therefore, speaking the truth with justice is what causes 'islaah' (amendment/improvement). This is the reason why scholars were never shy to speak the truth, one of who was our hero Imam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him. While displaying Imam's steadfastness on the truth, we will cover two angles:

**1. His attitude with scholars of Sunnah:**

It was an era when the narrations were not yet written and preserved in books, therefore to establish or to accept a narration from a specific individual, there was need for science of Jarh wa Ta'deel (which means to establish the status of the narrator in his piety, memory, etc. by examining the reports). Has this science not be there, people would have said what they wanted and wished, as there would be no way to establish authenticity. This is why scholars were never shy to criticize someone openly even if he were his father, son or teacher. This was done for the maslaha (benefit) of the time, era and need. So, it becomes clear that scholars did not believe in doing so unnecessarily. And it is for this reason we find Imam Ahmad and other



muhadditheen (hadith scholars) praising or criticizing narrators in their books.

However, later the need did not remain due to the narrations being all preserved. Scholars today just have to look back into the comments of those scholars and decide the ruling on the men. They, in general, do not need to praise and criticize men by name for this reason.

This in no way means that mistakes are not to be refuted, rather mistakes must be refuted and not the person. Because when refutations are made on men, people's attachment becomes a barrier to accept the refutation, which is sometimes internal politics or taqwa. Another, demerit of refuting by name is that the individual being refuted gets unpaid popularity even among the circles of Ahlus-Sunnah.

We find this to be the methodology of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the beloved prophet as well. The Qur'an is full of refutation of false beliefs and thoughts. However, Allah has rarely refuted by name, which includes the likes of Iblees, Fir'awn (which is not actual name), Abu Lahab, etc. These men did not have countable minor mistakes, rather their mistakes reached so many and major that they were undoubtedly evil themselves. Scholars have pointed that this is one of the merits of the noble Qur'an, which distinguishes it from other books like the Bible which looks like a history book filled with names and dates.

Undoubtedly, the Qur'an's methodology of guidance and correction was followed by the prophet, as he would not refute by name except rarely. We find throughout the books of Hadith that prophet would refute in the following ways without naming the person or people:

**1. General refutation:** Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:

When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of anything of a certain man, he would not say: What is the matter with so and so that he says? But he would say:

" مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَقُولُونَ كَذَا وَكَذَا "

What is the matter with the people that they say such and such? [Sunan Abu Dawood, authenticated by Shaikh al-Albani]

**2. Refutation of wrong etiquettes:** Anas bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) said:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَرْفَعُونَ أَبْصَارَهُمْ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ

"How is it that some people raise their eyes towards the sky during As-Salat (the prayer)?" He stressed (this point) and added, "People must refrain from raising their eyes towards heaven in Salat (prayer), or else their sights will certainly be snatched away." [Saheeh al Bukhari]

**3. Refutation of wrong understanding of fiqh rulings:** 'A'isha reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) granted permission for doing a thing, but some persons amongst the people avoided it. This was conveyed to Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), and he was so much annoyed that the sign of his anger appeared on his face. He then said:

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَرْغَبُونَ عَمَّا رُخِّصَ لِي

What has happened to the people that they avoid that for which permission has been granted to me? By Allah, I have the best knowledge of Allah amongst them, and fear Him most amongst them. [Saheeh Muslim]

**4. Refutation of Bid'ah:** Narrated Anas:

It was narrated from Anas that there was a group of the Companions of the Prophet, one of whom said: "I will not marry women." Another said: "I will not eat meat." Another said: "I will not sleep on a bed." Another said: "I will fast and not break my fast." News of that reached the Messenger of Allah and he praised Allah then said:

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَقُولُونَ كَذَا وَكَذَا

"What is the matter with people who say such and such? But I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not of me." [Sunan an-Nas'ai]

**5. Refutation in matters of Jahiliyyah:** Narrated `Amra:

Aisha said that Buraira came to seek her help in the writing of her emancipation. `Aisha said to her, "If you wish, I will pay your masters (your price) and the wala' will be for me." When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came, she told him about it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to her, "Buy her (i.e. Buraira) and

manumit her, for the Wala is for the one who manumits." Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) ascended the pulpit and said,

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَشْتَرُونَ شُرُوطًا لَيْسَتْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ

"What about those people who stipulate conditions which are not in Allah's Laws? Whoever stipulates such conditions as are not in Allah's Laws, then those conditions are invalid even if he stipulated a hundred such conditions." [Saheeh al Bukhari]

Of-course, there are many more examples but these will be sufficient by the grace of Allah. Following this methodology, we do not find Imam Ahmad naming people except due to the need of Jarh wa Ta'deel to establish authenticity of the narrations.

He criticized those who spoke in favor of the deviant opinions without being forced. The definition of being 'forced' in the understanding of Imam Ahmad was imprisonment or punishment.

قال المقرئزي: وكان أبو عبد الله يقيم عذرهما ويقول: أليس قد حبسا وقيدا، قال الله تعالى: (إلا من أكره وقيله مطمئن بالإيمان) قال أبو عبد الله: القيد كرهه والحبس كرهه والضرب كرهه، فأما إذا لم تنل بمكروه فلا عذر له

Al Maqreezi said that he would excuse such ones, and say: Were they not imprisoned and tied? Allah ta'aala said: "Except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith." [Nahl 16:106] And Abu Abdullah said: Tying in force, imprisonment is force, and being beaten is force. But if he was not forced, then he has no excuse. [Mafateeh al Fiqh al Hanbali, 1/242]

Shaikh Wasiullah said:

ولم يكن يعذر أولئك الذين سارعوا في التقية ولما يصيبهم الاذى في هذه السبيل.

And he would not excuse those who were quick in taqiyyah although they were not even harmed this way. [al Ilal wa ma'rifatir-rijaal, page 81]

An example of this is Yahya Ibn Ma'een and Ali al Madani who said what they said (during the trial of creation of Qur'an) to please Ibn Abi Duaad, and for this reason Ahmad would not talk to them in-spite of them being people of

high status. Later, al-Uqaily included Ali al Madeeni among the weak narrators. And Ibn Rajab as well said strict words against him.

وقال ابن رجب في شرح العلل في ترجمة ابن المديني: أنه تقرب إلى ابن أبي دؤاد، حيث استماله بدنياه وصحبه وعظمه، فوقع بسبب ذلك في أمور صعبة، حتى أنه كان يتكلم في طائفة من أعيان أهل الحديث، ليرضى بذلك ابن أبي دؤاد، فهجره الامام أحمد لذلك

Yet, Imam Ahmad did not declare them to be from Ahlul Bid'ah. And Ibn al Jawzi gave three reasons probably why he abandoned these scholars of sunnah:

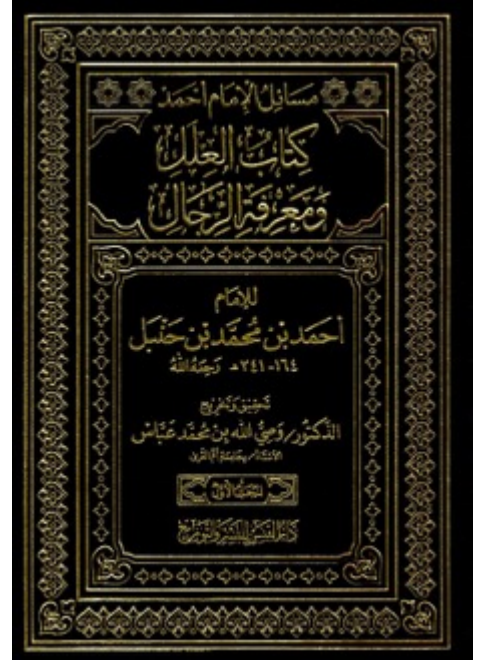
1. To make them realize their mistake in hurrying for taqiyyah.
2. To give them a lesson and punishment.
3. Some of those scholars accepted gifts and money (from those rulers), so they went beyond the limits, which necessitated abandoning them. [Manaqib Ahmad by Ibn al Jawzi, page 390]

Shaikh Wasiullah Abbas explained well whether why Imam Ahmad abandoned some of the scholars of Sunnah:

والحق أن هجر الامام للمحبين في المحنة لم يكن إلا تأديبا وتشنيعا لفعالهم، ولم يكن تجريحا في عدالتهم بحال.  
وعلى هذا الامر نفسه تحمل تركه الرواية عن علي بن المديني وضربه على أحاديثه ويبدو لي أن ترك الرواية عن ابن المديني كان مؤقتا ثم روى عنه فيما بعد، وأوضح مثال لذلك نجد نصوصا كثيرة عنه رواها الامام في هذا الكتاب (العلل) كما نجد روايات كثيرة عنه في المسند. فيمكن أن يكون ضرب على أحاديثه ثم أجازها، فرواها عنه تلامذته.  
كما أننا نجد روايات كثيرة من زيارات عبد الله ورواياته في كتب أبيه وكتابه السنة عن ابن معين .  
ومعروف أن عبد الله لم يكن يكتب الحديث ولا يروي إلا ممن يرضى عنه أبوه ويأذن له في الاخذ عنه، ثم لا يتصور أن الامام عفا عن الذين تسببوا له في الايذاء تقليدا ثم يبقى غاضبا على من اختار التقية.

نعم حيث إن غضبه كان لله وفي سبيل الله فلم يعف عن المبتدعة الذين جعلوا القول بخلق القرآن ديانة لهم ولسيبه آذوه كل الايذاء أمثال ابن أبي دؤاد رأس الفتنة ورجلها كما مضى ذكره.

And the truth is that abandonment of the scholars (who did taqiyyah) was not except a disciplinary action for what they did, and not a question in their status in anyway.... And it seems to me that abandoning narrating from Ibn Al Madini was only for a limited time after which he narrated, and the clearest of examples is that we find many places where the Imam narrated from him in this book (al-Ilal) like how we find many narrations from him Al-Musnad. So, it is possible that he paused narrating his narrations for a while and then permitted it, then his students narrated from him...



But yes, since his anger was for the sale of Allah, he did not forgive those people of Bid'ah who made speaking in favor of creation of the Qur'an as their religion, the likes of Ibn Abi Dawood the head of the trial as mentioned earlier. End quote. [al Ilal wa ma'rifatir-rijaal, page 84]

And Shaikh-ul Islam spoke from heart, stepped in their shoes, and wrote the following about the reality of the scholars of Sunnah who fell into some mistake or even Bid'ah:

قال شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية -رحمه الله-: "وكثير من مجتهدي السلف والخلف قد قالوا وفعلوا ما هو بدعة ولم يعلموا أنه بدعة، إما لأحاديث ضعيفة ظنوها صحيحة، وإما لآيات فهموا منها ما لم يرد منها، وإما لرأي رأوه وفي المسألة نصوص لم تبلغهم، وإذا اتقى الرجل ربه ما استطاع دخل في قوله: (ربنا لا تؤاخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا)، وفي الحديث: أن الله قال: "قد فعلت"، وبسط هذا له موضع آخر" [معارج الوصول ص:43]

“And a lot of mujtahids from the salaf and khalaf uttered or acted what is an innovation but did not know that it is an innovation, either due to weak narrations which they thought to be authentic, or due to ayaat from which they understood what was not meant, or due to an opinion they concluded due to the proofs not reaching them. But when a man fears his Lord as much possible, he is included in the statement: ‘O Lord do not hold us responsible if we forget or err’; and in the hadith (is the explanation) that Allah said: ‘I have done so’.” [Ma’aarij al Wusool, page 43]



## 2. His attitude with scholars of Bid'ah:

His son, Salih b. Ahmad, said:

قال صالح بن أحمد: سمعت أبي يقول: "افتترقت الجهمية على فرق: فرقة قالوا القرآن مخلوق، وفرقة قالوا: كلام الله وسكنت، وفرقة قالوا: لفظنا بالقرآن مخلوق. قال الله تعالى في كتابه: {فَأَجْرُهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ} [التوبة: 6] فجبرئيل عليه السلام تسمع من الله تعالى ليسمعه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من جبرئيل، ويسمعه أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فالقرآن كلام الله"

"I heard my father say, 'The Jahmiyyah are three sects: A sect who say that 'the Qur'an is created,' and a sect who say, 'It is the Speech of Allah and then remain silent,' and a sect who say, 'Our recital of it is created.' Then he said, 'One should not (even) pray behind those who withhold and remain silent, nor those who say that their recital is created. Allah said in his book: "then grant him protection so that he hears the words of Allah." [at-Tawbah: 6] So, Jibreel (alayhis-salaam) would hear from Allah which the prophet would then hear from Jibreel, and that would be heard by the companions of the prophet, so Qur'an is the speech of Allah.

Ibn Abdil Barr said about Al Karaabeesi, one of the heads of Jahmiyyah:

وَكَانَتْ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَنْبَلٍ صِدَاقَةٌ وَكَيْدَةٌ فَلَمَّا خَالَفَهُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ عَادَتْ تِلْكَ الصِّدَاقَةُ عِدَاوَةً فَكَانَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا يَطْعُنُ عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ أَحْمَدَ بْنَ حَنْبَلٍ كَانَ يَقُولُ مَنْ قَالَ الْقُرْآنُ مَخْلُوقٌ فَهُوَ جَهْمِيٌّ وَمَنْ قَالَ الْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَقُولُ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقٍ وَلَا مَخْلُوقٌ فَهُوَ وَاَقْبِيٌّ وَمَنْ قَالَ لَفْظِي بِالْقُرْآنِ مَخْلُوقٌ فَهُوَ مُبْتَدِعٌ وَكَانَ الْكَرَابِيسِيُّ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ كِلَابٍ وَأَبُو ثَوْرٍ وَدَاوُدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ وَطَبَقَاتِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ الَّذِي تَكَلَّمَ بِهِ اللَّهُ صِفَةً مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ لَا يَجُوزُ عَلَيْهِ الْخَلْقُ وَإِنَّ تِلَاوَةَ التَّالِي وَكَلَامِهِ بِالْقُرْآنِ كَسَبٌ لَهُ وَفِعْلٌ لَهُ وَذَلِكَ مَخْلُوقٌ وَإِنَّهُ حِكَايَةٌ عَنِ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ وَلَيْسَ هُوَ الْقُرْآنُ الَّذِي تَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَشَبَّهُوهُ بِالْحَمْدِ وَالشُّكْرِ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ فَكَمَا يُوجَرُ فِي الْحَمْدِ وَالشُّكْرِ وَالتَّهْلِيلِ وَالتَّكْبِيرِ فَكَذَلِكَ يُوجَرُ فِي التَّلَاوَةِ وَحَكَى دَاوُدُ فِي كِتَابِ الْكَافِي أَنَّ هَذَا كَانَ مَذْهَبَ الشَّافِعِيِّ وَأَنْكَرَ ذَلِكَ أَصْحَابُ الشَّافِعِيِّ وَقَالُوا هَذَا قَوْلٌ فَاسِدٌ مَا قَالَهُ الشَّافِعِيُّ قَطُّ وَهَجَرَتِ الْحَنْبَلِيَّةُ أَصْحَابَ أَحْمَدَ بْنَ حَنْبَلٍ حُسَيْنًا الْكَرَابِيسِيَّ وَبَدَّعُوهُ وَطَعَنُوا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى كُلِّ مَنْ قَالَ بِقَوْلِهِ

There used to be a strong friendship between him – Al Karaabeesi – and Ahmad bin Hanbal. But when he disagreed with him about the Quran, that friendship turned into enmity. They began to criticize each other. And this was because Ahmad would say,

"Whoever says the Quran is created is a Jahmi. And whoever says 'The Quran is the Speech of Allah' and does not say it is not created or it is created is a waaqifee. And whoever says "my utterance of the Quran is created" is an innovator."

Yet Al Karaabeesi, Abdullah bin Kullaab, Abu Thawr, Dawood bin ‘Ali, and their generation would declare: the Quran Allah communicated is one of His qualities. It is not rationally possible for it to be created. And the recitation of the reciter and his utterance of the Quran is his kasb and his action and that is created. And it is an expression of the speech of Allah....and the Hanbalis, the companions of Ahmad bin Hanbal, abandoned Husain Al Karaabeesi and labeled him an innovator and criticized him and anyone else who spoke like him.” End quote from Ibn Abdil Barr (Al Intiqaa p. 165)

Al Haafidh Ibn Katheer, rahimahullah said in the biography of Al Karaabeesi:

And that Al Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal would speak critically of him because of the issue of the Lafdh. And he would also speak about Ahmad. So, people avoided taking from him due to this. (Ibn Katheer) said, I say: what I saw about him is that he said the speech of Allah is uncreated in every way except that my utterance of the Quran is created. And whoever does not say (i.e. believe) that my utterance of the Quran is created is a disbeliever. And this is what has been related from Al Bukhari, and Dawood bin Ali Adh Dhaahiri. And Al Imam Ahmad closed this door to prevent the declaration of the Quran being created.” End quote from Ibn Katheer.

Adh Dhahabi said:

وكان يقول: القرآن كلام الله غير مخلوق، ولفظي به مخلوق، فإن عنى التلفظ فهذا جيد، فإن أفعالنا مخلوقة، وإن قصد / الملفوظ بأنه مخلوق، فهذا الذى أنكره أحمد والسلف وعدوه تجهما.

“And he (Al Karaabeesi) would say: “The Quran, the speech of Allah, is uncreated. But my utterance of the Quran is created” End quote. So if he meant the utterance, then this is fine, for indeed, our actions are created. But if he meant that what is recited and uttered is created, this is what Ahmad and the Salaf denied and considered to be Jahmism.” (Meezaan Al I’tidaal vol 1 page 544)

Qawwam as-Sunnah, Al-Asbahani agreed to the same:

قال قوام السنة أبو القاسم التيمي الأصبهاني: "وأول من قال باللفظ، وقال: "ألفاظنا بالقرآن مخلوقة".  
حسين الكرابيسي.  
فبدعه أحمد بن حنبل، ووافقه على تبديعه علماء الأمصار

“The first one to bring (the issue of) utterance and to say: ‘Our speech the Qur’an is created’, was Hussain al-Karabisi. So Ahmad ibn Hanbal did hid tabdee’, and all scholars of that time agreed to it.”

And Al Imam Al Bukhari said:

قال البخاري -وهو من أصحاب أحمد- في كتابه خلق أفعال العباد: "أما ما احتج به الفريقان لمذهب أحمد ويدعيه كل لنفسه، فليس بثابت كثير من أخبارهم، وربما لم يفهموا دقة مذهبه، بل المعروف عن أحمد وأهل العلم أن كلام الله غير مخلوق، وما سواه مخلوق، وأنهم كرهوا البحث والتنقيب عن الأشياء الغامضة، وتجنبوا أهل الكلام، والخوض والتنازع إلا فيما جاء فيه العلم، وبينه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم."

“As for what the two opposing sides are using to argue in support of the madhhab of Imam Ahmad and to stake a claim to his madhhab for themselves – most of their reports are not sound. And they perhaps did not comprehend the exactitude of his madhhab. What is known from Ahmad and the people of knowledge is that the speech of Allah is uncreated and other than it is created, and that they abhorred investigation and research of deep and unclear matters. They also avoided people of Kalaam and discussion and disagreement except in what knowledge came about, and what was clarified by the messenger of Allah. (see Khalqu Af’aalil ‘Ibaad page 43)

And on the issue of preferring Ali (radiyallahu anh) over Uthman (radiyallahu anh):

كَتَبَ إِلَيَّ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ الْوَرَّاقِ مِنَ الْمَوْصِلِ ، قَالَ : نَبَأَ بَكْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، " وَسَأَلَهُ عَمَّنْ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ ، وَعَلِيٌّ ، وَعُثْمَانُ ؟ فَقَالَ : مَا يُعْجِبُنِي هَذَا الْقَوْلُ ، قُلْتُ : فَيَقَالُ : إِنَّهُ مُبْتَدِعٌ ؟ قَالَ : أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أُبَدِّعَهُ ، الْبِدْعَةُ الشَّدِيدَةُ ، قُلْتُ : فَمَنْ قَالَ : أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعَلِيٌّ وَسَكَتَ فَلَمْ يُفَضَّلْ أَحَدًا ؟ قَالَ : لَا يُعْجِبُنِي أَيْضًا هَذَا الْقَوْلُ ، قُلْتُ : فَيَقَالُ : مُبْتَدِعٌ ؟ قَالَ : لَا يُعْجِبُنِي أَيْضًا هَذَا الْقَوْلُ . قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ : يُرْوَى عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُمْ فَضَّلُوا عُثْمَانَ ، قَالَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ : ، خَيْرٌ مَنْ بَقِيَ ، وَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ : أَصْبَحَ عُثْمَانُ خَيْرًا مِنْ عَلِيٍّ " . وَقَالَ الدُّورِيُّ : سَمِعْتُ يَحْيَى يَقُولُ : قَالَ شَرِيكٌ : لَيْسَ يُقَدَّمُ أَحَدٌ عَلَيَّا عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ فِيهِ خَيْرٌ " .

When he was asked about tabdee’ of the one prefers Ali over Uthman, he replied: ‘I dislike to declare him to be from Ahlul bid’ah. Bid’ah is a strict matter!’ (as-Sunnah by Abu Bakr al-Khallal)

قال الخلال في السنة 530- وأخبرني زهير بن صالح بن أحمد بن حنبل ، قال : حدثنني أبي قال : سئل أبي وأنا أسمع ، عن من يُقدَّمُ عليًّا على عثمان مُبتدِعٌ ؟ قال : هذا أهلٌ أن يُبدِّعَ ، أصحابُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدَّمُوا عُثْمَانَ .

Al Khallal said in 'As-Sunnah' that Saleh, the son of Ahmad ibn Hanbal heard him being asked about the one prefers Ali over Uthman, so he said: "This person deserved tabdee, the companions of the prophet preferred Uthman."

And shaikh-ul Islam said that Imam Ahmad and others like Imam Malik did not behave the same with all Ahlul bid'ah, rather they differentiated between the one who promoted it and the one who remained silent. He said, as in Kitab as-Salah of Majmoo' al Fatawaa':

رأى المسلمون أن يهجروا من ظهرت عليه علامات الزيغ من المظهرين للبدع الداعين إليها والمظهرين للكبائر فأما من كان مستترا بمعصية أو مسرا لبدعة غير مكفرة فإن هذا لا يهجر وإنما يهجر الداعي إلى البدعة ; إذ الهجر نوع من العقوبة وإنما يعاقب من أظهر المعصية قولاً أو عملاً .

وأما من أظهر لنا خيراً فإننا نقبل علانيته ونكل سريرته إلى الله تعالى فإن غايته أن يكون بمنزلة المنافقين الذين كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقبل علانيتهم ويكل سرائرهم إلى الله لما جاءوا إليه عام تبوك يحلفون ويعتذرون .

ولهذا كان الإمام أحمد وأكثر من قبله وبعده من الأئمة : كمالك وغيره لا يقبلون رواية الداعي إلى بدعة ولا يجالسونه بخلاف الساكت وقد أخرج أصحاب الصحيح عن جماعات ممن رمي ببدعة من الساكتين ولم يخرجوا عن الدعاة إلى البدع .

This was explained in more details of how to keep objectives in mind by shaikh-ul Islam as below:

قال شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية رحمه الله تعالى:  
"فالهجران : قد يكون مقصوده ترك سيئة البدعة التي هي ظلم وذنوب وإثم وفساد .  
وقد يكون مقصوده فعل حسنة الجهاد والنهي عن المنكر و عقوبة الظالمين لينزجروا ويرتدعوا ، وليقوى الإيمان والعمل الصالح عند أهله ؛ فإن عقوبة الظالم تمنع النفوس عن ظلمه وتحضها على فعل ضد ظلمه: من الإيمان والسنة ونحو ذلك .  
فإذا لم يكن في هجرانه : انزجار أحد ، ولا انتهاء أحد؛ بل بطلان كثير من الحسنات المأمور بها : لم تكن هجرة مأمورا بها .  
كما ذكره أحمد عن أهل خراسان إذ ذاك: أنهم لم يكونوا يقوون بالجهمية. فإذا عجزوا عن إظهار العداوة لهم سقط الأمر بفعل هذه الحسنة وكان مداراتهم فيه دفع الضرر عن المؤمن الضعيف ولعله أن يكون فيه تأليف الفاجر القوي. وكذلك لما كثر القدر في أهل البصرة فلو ترك رواية الحديث عنهم لا ندرس العلم والسنن والآثار المحفوظة فيهم. فإذا تعذر إقامة الواجبات من العلم والجهاد وغير ذلك إلا بمن فيه بدعة مضرتها دون مضرة ترك ذلك الواجب: كان تحصيل مصلحة الواجب مع مفسدة مرجوحة معه خيراً من العكس. ولهذا كان الكلام في هذه المسائل فيه تفصيل.

وكثير من أجوبة الإمام أحمد وغيره من الأئمة خرج على سؤال سائل قد علم المسئول حاله أو خرج



خطابا لمعين قد علم حاله فيكون بمنزلة قضايا الأعيان الصادرة عن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم إنما يثبت حكمها في نظيرها.

فإن أقواما جعلوا ذلك عاما ، فاستعملوا من الهجر والإنكار ما لم يؤمروا به ، فلا يجب ولا يستحب وربما تركوا به واجبات أو مستحبات وفعلوا به محرمات . وآخرون أعرضوا عن ذلك بالكلية فلم يهجرُوا ما أمروا بهجره من السيئات البدعية ؛ بل تركوها ترك المعرض ؛ لا ترك المنتهي الكاره ، أو وقعوا فيها ، وقد يتركونها ترك المنتهي الكاره ولا ينهاون عنها غيرهم ، ولا يعاقبون بالهجرة ونحوها من يستحق العقوبة عليها ، فيكونون قد ضيعوا من النهي عن المنكر ما أمروا به إيجابا أو استحبابا ، فهم بين فعل المنكر أو ترك النهي عنه ، وذلك فعل ما نهوا عنه وترك ما أمروا به . فهذا هذا . ودين الله وسط بين الغالي فيه ، والجافي عنه . والله سبحانه أعلم " انتهى من " مجموع الفتاوى - 212 / 28 ) ( 213 ) .

"The aim of shunning may be to keep away from the evil of innovation which constitutes wrongdoing, sin and mischief. Or the aim may be to engage in jihad and forbid what is wrong, and to punish the wrongdoers so that they will be deterred, and so as to support the faith of people who do righteous deeds. Punishing the wrongdoer protects others from his wrongdoing and gives them shelter so that they may do that which is the opposite of his wrongdoing, such as believing, following the Sunnah and so on.

But if shunning will not deter anyone, or make anyone give up innovation – rather it may lead to cancelling out a lot of good deeds that are enjoined – then in this case shunning is not enjoined.

As Ahmad said of the people of Khurasan of his time: They cannot resist the Jahamis, so if they are unable to show enmity towards them, then doing this good deed is waived in their case, whereas treating them with kindness may lead to warding off harm from the weak believers, and may also soften the hearts of strong evildoers. Similarly, when the Qadaris became prevalent in Basra, if the scholars stopped narrating hadith from them, then knowledge, and the hadiths and reports that were preserved with them would disappear. If it is not possible to carry out one's duties of learning, engaging in jihad and so on except with the help of people who follow some innovations, the harm of which is less than the harm of giving up that duty, then achieving the obligatory interest that may result from carrying out one's duty with some negative consequences that are outweighed thereby is better than the opposite. Hence this matter is not straightforward, and it is subject to further discussion.





Many of the answers of Imam Ahmad and others were given in response to questions asked by questioners of whom the one asked was aware, or came in the form of statements that were issued to particular individuals whose situations were known. Therefore, they may be regarded as issues that were connected to particular individuals with whom the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) dealt. Such rulings are only to be applied in similar cases (and are not general in application).

But some people regard that (namely shunning the follower of innovation) as being general in application, so they use the concept of shunning and denouncing in a manner that is not enjoined, and that is not required of them and is not recommended. And perhaps on that basis they may end up neglecting something that is obligatory and recommended, whilst doing something that is prohibited. And there are others who turn away completely from the concept of shunning, so they do not shun what they are obliged to shun of bad innovations; rather they shun it by way of ignoring it, not by way of keeping away from something because they disapprove of it; or they may even fall into it themselves. Or they may shun it by way of keeping away from it because they disapprove of it, but they do not forbid others to do it, and they do not try to rebuke others by shunning them and the like, in the case of those who deserve such a rebuke. Thus, they fail to forbid an evil that they are obliged – either by way of it being obligatory or recommended – to forbid. Thus, they are either doing something that is forbidden or failing to forbid it to others, and that is doing what they were forbidden and failing to do what is enjoined. But the religion of Allah is a middle path between extremes and neglect. And Allah, may He be glorified, knows best.” End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (28/212-213)

And he also explained that Imam Ahmad was very careful in looking into pros and cons of tabdee’ and boycott:

قال في " مجموع الفتاوى " ( 206/28 ) :

" وهذا الهجر يختلف باختلاف الهاجرين في قوتهم وضعفهم وقتلتهم وكثرتهم فإن المقصود به زجر المهجور وتأديبه ورجوع العامة عن مثل حاله . فإن كانت المصلحة في ذلك راجحة بحيث يفضي هجره إلى ضعف الشر وخفيته كان مشروعاً . وإن كان لا المهجور ولا غيره يرتدع بذلك بل يزيد الشر والهاجر ضعيف بحيث يكون مفسدة ذلك راجحة على مصلحته لم يشرع الهجر ; بل يكون التأليف لبعض الناس أنفع من الهجر .

والهجر لبعض الناس أنفع من التأليف ؛ ولهذا كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يتألف قوما ويهجر آخرين . كما أن الثلاثة الذين خلفوا كانوا خيرا من أكثر المؤلفلة قلوبهم لما كان أولئك كانوا سادة مطاعين في عشايرهم فكانت المصلحة الدينية في تأليف قلوبهم وهؤلاء كانوا مؤمنين والمؤمنون سواهم كثير فكان في هجرهم عز الدين وتطهيرهم من ذنوبهم وهذا كما أن المشروع في العدو القتال تارة والمهادنة تارة وأخذ الجزية تارة كل ذلك بحسب الأحوال والمصالح .

وجواب الأئمة كأحمد وغيره في هذا الباب مبني على هذا الأصل ولهذا كان يفرق بين الأماكن التي كثرت فيها البدع كما كثر القدر في البصرة والتنجيم بخراسان والتشيع بالكوفة وبين ما ليس كذلك ويفرق بين الأئمة المطاعين وغيرهم وإذا عرف مقصود الشريعة سلك في حصوله أوصل الطرق إليه .

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“Shunning varies according to how strong or weak, and how few or how numerous the people who are doing the shunning are. The purpose is to rebuke and discipline the person being shunned and to deter the masses from doing likewise.

If the purpose is more likely be to achieved by shunning, and it will weaken and reduce the evil, then it is prescribed, but if the person being shunned and others will not be deterred by that, rather the evil will increase, and the person doing the shunning is weak and the bad consequences will outweigh the good, then shunning is not prescribed, rather softening the hearts of some people is more effective than shunning.

But in some cases shunning is more effective than softening the hearts. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sought to soften the hearts of some people and shunned others, and the three who stayed behind (from Tabook) were better than most of those whose hearts were to be softened, because they were leaders who held positions of influence among their tribes. So the interests of Islam dictated that the hearts of the leaders be softened, whereas the three who were shunned were believers and there were many other believers besides them. So, shunning them was supporting Islam and was a means of purifying them of their sins. Similarly, what is prescribed with regard to the enemy is to fight them sometimes, and to seek truces with them sometimes, and to take the jizyah sometimes, according to circumstances and what is in the ummah’s best interests.

And the opinions of the Imams like Ahmad and others in this issue is based on this foundation, and this is why he would differentiate between places

where bid'ah had increased like the qadariyyah in Basrah, and astrology in Khurasaan, and shi'ism in Kufah, and places where it was not the case..." End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (28/206).

And this agrees to the general principle in the sharee'ah:

الدين مبني على مصالح

"The religion is based masalih (benefits/pros)."

And the well-established principle:

الضرر الأشد يزال بالضرر الأخف

"The greater harm is to be pushed away with the help of the lesser harm."

All this clearly shows that Imam Ahmad did not ask people to abandon or to make tabdee' left and right without looking into the below matters:

- i. Establishing the truth: Whether the person actually say or believes so, or it is mere rumors.
- ii. Explaining to the person: Tabdee' is not the objective, but the objective is guidance.
- iii. He used to see tabdee' an extremely very severe matter!
- iv. Situation of the people: Is the person saying (or hiding) it out of force, or some maslaha, etc.
- v. Is the person in general a person of Sunnah or not? Not everyone who does a Bid'ah becomes a mubtadi'.
- vi. Is naming the person really beneficial? Refuting the bid'ah without naming the person is the general rule; because naming the person gives him free advertisement among the Ahlus-Sunnah,
- vii. Does the person remains quite or unites due to political benefit? Like how Imam Ahmad did and remained in submission under the Ahlul Bid'ah rulers.
- viii. Knowledge of the people: Establishing whether the person is mujtahid or not.
- ix. Clear or ambiguous: Establishing whether it is a matter of ijtihaad or not.
- x. Level of the Bid'ah: Confirming whether the Bid'ah constitutes shirk, kufr, or merely some sin.

- xi. Pros and cons (masaalih and mafaasid): Will tabdee' have a negative effect and people would leave scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah out of love and extremism for that person and his bid'ah?
- xii. Abandoning (or even public tabdee') is applied when it benefits. Or else, the Ahlul bid'ah would be happy when we abandon them!
- xiii. Are their greater responsibilities? Can it be postponed until the right time?
- xiv. Differentiating between da'ee to bid'ah and a blind follower: Like he differentiated between a shia and a caller to shi'ism in his narrations.
- xv. Differentiating between whether the person hides his bid'ah or not. The case is just like the hypocrites who are to be treated on their apparent behavior and deeds, not on what lies in their heart or secret meetings.
- xvi. Young and beginner students who do not know to even wash a body if a member of their family were to die must never pass fatwas, forget about judgements which lies in the hands of a qadhi (appointed judge). Many of those questing Imam Ahmad for rulings would be themselves scholars in their own right, but wouldn't speak.

**His care for enjoining good and forbidding evil:**

This is from the obligations which best describes the best of people, Allah says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ

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. [3:110]

On the authority of Abu Sa`eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith.” [Saheeh Muslim]



It is narrated on the authority 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) observed:

"Never a Prophet had been sent before me by Allah towards his nation who had not among his people (his) disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his command. Then there came after them their successors who said whatever they did not practise, and practised whatever they were not commanded to do. He who strove against them with his hand was a believer: he who strove against them with his tongue was a believer, and he who strove against them with his heart was a believer and beyond that there is no faith even to the extent of a mustard seed." [Saheeh Muslim]

And there is not doubt that implementation of this obligation of the religion requires much patience, bravery, knowledge of the correct method of implementing it, etc

Dear reader, Imam Ahmad was so exemplary in this that it is not hidden from any of us. He would perform Salah while tied in chains. He would perform Salah while still bleeding due the lashes. At times, he would not be even able to stand due to the severity of the pain, so he would perform Salah sitting. When he was told that most scholars have retracted, and that it is permissible to lie at times of oppression, so he replied saying, "How can I speak that which is not true, when people just behind this door are writing what I am speaking (ie., taking him as a role model)." Thus, he passed months in the prison just to protect one single issue of Aqeedah.

And his followers followed this way in implementation of commanding good and prohibiting evil. Due to this, you'll find in Tabaqat Ibn Abi Ya'la that he describes many of the main Hanbali scholars as: الامار بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

"The one who would enjoin good and prohibit others from evil."

There are several examples that we could quote, but it's alive form is what is still found in KSA called:

هيئة الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

They encourage people for Salah, to study Islam and attend Islamic courses and general lectures, stop them from behaving immorally in shopping malls



and streets, etc., and all praises are for Allah! This is not found in most other lands, may Allah preserve them.

It is the effect of studying the life of the messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the companions, and the life Imam Ahmad that they wrote several books on this topic. For example. The one written by Abi Bakr Al Khallal (311H), Abi Bakr bin Abi ad-Dunya (281H), Qadhi Abu Ya'la (458H), Hafiz Abdul Gani Al Maqdisi (600H), Shaikh-ul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (728H), etc.

These Imams would explain and discuss in detail the correct methodology in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah. And it is due to giving it much importance and emphasis, they would discuss this and even include this as a chapter in their books of Aqeedah (creed) and Tawheed. For example: Imam Barbahari (329H) said in Sharh us-Sunnah: "And commanding good and prohibiting from evil is obligatory except when..." and he said: "And commanding good and prohibiting evil is done by through hand, through tongue and through heart, without the use of the sword." [Tabaqaat Al Hanabilah 2/35]

And he added "without the use of the sword" so that he would clarify that Ahlus Sunnah, unlike Ahlal Bid'ah, do not cross the limits, obey the rules set by ruler, do not oppose him by sword or protests, in the name of "commanding good and prohibiting evil." This is because most people of innovations use their intellect against the narrations and methodology of the salaf in opposing the ruler at times of oppression, and they think that it is part of "commanding good and prohibiting evil." [Al Adaab ash-Shar'iyyah, Ibn Muflih, 1/181; Al Amr bil Ma'roof wan-Nahi anil-Munkar, Ibn Taymiyyah, page 40]

Therefore, they always agreed that enjoining good and forbidding evil must be done in accordance to the knowledge, power and strength one has. They justified it from the fact that the prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ." [رواهُ مُسْلِمٌ].

On the authority of Abu Sa`eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith.” [Muslim]

Their deduction was based on the part of the narration: “and if he is not able to”. The noble scholar Shaikh Saleh Al Usaymi said:

قال شيخنا العصيمي: الواجب على احاد الناس ليس كالواجب على طلبة العلم، والواجب على طلبة العلم ليس كالواجب على العلماء، والواجب على احاد العلماء ليس كالواجب على العلماء الذين يقبلوا منهم ولي الأمر ويدخلون عليه.... فالواجب على حسب القدرة. انتهى.

“What is obligatory on the laymen is not like the obligation on the students of knowledge, and the obligation on the students of knowledge is not like the obligation on the scholars, and the obligation on the scholars is not like the obligation on the scholars who meet the people of authority... so the obligation is in accordance to the ability.” End quote from his explanation of Thalatul Usool.

And this is why Shaikh-ul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah the great mujahid who single handedly united the Muslims to go out and defend against the battle of Tatar, said:

وقال شيخ الإسلام في صارم المسلول: " فمن كان من المؤمنين بأرضٍ هو فيها مستضعف أو في وقت هو فيه مستضعف فليعمل بآية الصبر والصفح عمن يؤذي الله ورسوله من الذين أوتوا الكتاب والمشركين وأما أهل القوة فإنما يعملون بآية قتال أئمة الكفر الذين يطعنون في الدين وبآية قتال الذين أوتوا الكتاب حتى يعطوا الجزية عن يد وهم صاغرون." انتهى.

Anybody who is from the Muslims, who is in a land where he (or they) are weak in that land or there is a time when the Muslims are weak, the Muslims need to implement the (Quranic) verses of patience, and the verses of forgiving (the blasphemy) on the person who is harming Allah and his messenger from the Ahl al Kitaab and Mushrikeen. [Sarim al-Maslool 1/221]

### **Siyaasah (Politics):**

Now that we have an idea about the oppression of the rulers of his time, and his care for encouraging good and forbidding evil, let's see what Imam Ahmad said about following the rulers. He wrote a letter to Abdoos bin Malik Al 'Attar:

والسمع والطاعة للأئمة وأمير المؤمنين البر والفاجر، ومن ولي الخلافة فاجتمع الناس عليه ورضوا به .  
ومن غلبهم بالسيف حتى صار خليفة وسمي أمير المؤمنين .  
والغزو ماض مع الأمراء إلى يوم القيامة البر والفاجر لا يترك .  
وقسمة الفيء وإقامة الحدود إلى الأئمة ماض ليس لأحد أن يطعن عليهم ولا ينازعهم ، ودفع الصدقات إليهم جائزة ونافذة ، من دفعها إليهم أجزأت عنه برا كان أو فاجرا .  
وصلاة الجمعة خلفه وخلف من ولي جائزة تامة ركعتين ، من أعادهما فهو مبتدع ، تارك للأثار ، مخالف للسنة ، ليس له من فضل الجمعة شيء إذا لم ير الصلاة خلف الأئمة من كانوا برهم وفاجرهم ، فالسنة أن تصلي معهم ركعتين ، من أعادهما فهو مبتدع ، وتدين بأنها تامة ، ولا يكن في صدرك من ذلك شك .  
ومن خرج على إمام المسلمين وقد كان الناس اجتمعوا عليه وأقروا له بالخلافة بأي وجه كان بالرضا أو بالغلبة فقد شق هذا الخارج عصا المسلمين ، وخالف الآثار عن رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فإن مات الخارج عليه مات ميتة جاهلية .  
ولا يحل قتال السلطان ولا الخروج عليه لأحد من الناس ، فمن فعل ذلك فهو مبتدع على غير السنة والطريق

"Listening and obeying the rulers, and the Ameer ul Mu'mineen: be they good or evil. And to whoever inherits the caliphate, and people have gathered for his support, and pleased with him; and the one who revolts against them and seizes power by sword, and is called Ameer ul Mu'mineen (commander of the believers). Fighting the enemies of Islam, under the banner of Muslim princes, whether pious or sinful, will continue until the day of Resurrection, as will the division of spoils and responsibility of the Imams to apply the penalties for crimes against religion. (These are their exclusive rights, so) no one is to impugn (mock) them, or attempt to take their rights. Entrusting ones charities to them is valid. Whoever entrust ones charity to them, be they pious or sinful, has done his duty.

And praying the Friday prayer behind him, and the Salah of the one prays the two rak'aat (units) behind them is complete. And the one who repeats it is an innovator and contradicts the narrations, opposes of the Sunnah. He will not receive any virtue of performing the Jum'ah if he does not considers Salah behind them to be valid, be they pious or sinful. The Sunnah (correct way) is to pray two units with them, and you should have no doubt about it.

If the people accept someone as ruler over the Muslims and confirm him, under whatever circumstance, whether willingly or under duress, and agree for his caliphate, then anyone who rebels against that ruler, it is doubted that



he has separated from the unity of Muslims, and has opposed the narrations from the messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and if he dies as such he died a death of Jahilyyah (ie., ignorance, as rebellious sinners).

Nor is it permissible for anyone to fight against the Sultan (ruler/governor), for the sake of anyone else, and the one who does that is an innovator, away from the Sunnah and the straight path." [Tabaqaat 1/244; Sharh Usool I'tiqaad Ahlus Sunnah, al-Laalikaa'e]

He considered both, the Umayyid and Abbasid caliphs and caliphate to be Islamically valid. [Madhab Al Hanbali, Dr. Abdullah at-Turki 1/365]

He would listen and obey them, and emphasize on being with the Jamaa'ah (group), but would ask Allah for help in matters where he was oppressed, like all the other scholars of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah.

The height of it is that he was oppressed and persecuted so severely by the rulers that those who witnessed his punishment would say that even if an Elephant would give up if it was persecuted in such a way. However, he never called for revolt, nor did he permit anyone with that. Indeed, he implemented what he advised others with. But most people give up, and abandon the narrations when it comes to gaining personal rights and benefits.

And the proof for what we claim is when the fuqahaa' (jurists) gathered with Imam Ahmad to discuss the issue of creation of Qur'an, and whether what deserves to be done:

، يَقُولُ فِي وِلَايَةِ الْوَاتِقِ : " اجتمع فقهاء بغداد إلى أبي حنبلًا ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ عِيسَى وَأَخْبَرَنِي ، عبد الله ، أبو بكر بن عبيد ، وإبراهيم بن علي المطبخي ، وفضل بن عاصم ، فجاءوا إلى أبي عبد الله ، فاستأذنت لهم ، فقالوا يا أبا عبد الله ، هذا الأمر قد تفاقم وفسا ، يعنون إظهاره لخلق القرآن وغير ذلك ، فقال لهم أبو عبد الله : فَمَا تُرِيدُونَ ؟ قَالُوا : أَنْ نُشَاوِرَكَ فِي أَنَّا لَسْنَا نَرْضَى بِإِمْرَتِهِ ، وَلَا سُلْطَانِهِ ، فَنَظَرَهُمْ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ سَاعَةً ، وَقَالَ لَهُمْ : عَلَيْكُمْ بِالنَّكْرَةِ بِقُلُوبِكُمْ ، وَلَا تَخْلَعُوا يَدًا مِنْ طَاعَةٍ ، وَلَا تَسْفُؤَا عَصَا الْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَلَا تَسْفِكُوا دِمَاءَكُمْ وَدِمَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مَعَكُمْ ، انظُرُوا فِي عَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِكُمْ ، وَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَسْتَرِيحَ بَرٌّ ، أَوْ يُسْتَرَاخَ مِنْ فَاجِرٍ ، وَدَارَ فِي ذَلِكَ كَلَامٌ كَثِيرٌ لَمْ أَحْفَظْهُ وَمَضُوا ، وَدَخَلْتُ أَنَا وَأَبِي عَلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَمَا مَضُوا ، فَقَالَ أَبِي لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ : نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ السَّلَامَةَ لَنَا وَلِأُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ ، وَمَا أَحِبُّ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ هَذَا ، وَقَالَ أَبِي : يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، هَذَا عِنْدَكَ صَوَابٌ ، قَالَ : لَا ، هَذَا خِلَافُ الْإِثَارِ الَّتِي أَمَرْنَا فِيهَا ، قَالَ : قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : إِنْ ضَرَبَكَ فَاصْبِرْ " ، وَإِنْ . . . ، أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِالصَّبْرِ ، ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ

وَإِنْ فَاصْبِرْ ، فَأَمَرَ بِالصَّبْرِ ، قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ : وَذَكَرَ كَلَامًا لَمْ أَحْفَظْهُ

Hanbal, the son of his brother said: "During the rule of Wāthiq, the jurists of Baghdad gathered in front of Abu Abdullah (Ahmad bin Hanbal). They included Abu Bakr bin 'Ubaid, Ibrāhīm bin 'Alī al-Matbakhī and Fadl bin 'Āsim. So they came to Ahmad bin Hanbal so I gave them permission. They said to him, 'This affair (i.e. the inquisition) has become aggravated and elevated.' They were referring to the ruler making manifest the issue of the Qurān being created and other than that. So Ahmad bin Hanbal said to them, 'So what is it that you want?' They said: 'We want you to join us in saying that we are not pleased with his rule and leadership.' So Ahmad bin Hanbal debated with them for an hour and he said to them: 'Keep opposing [the false belief itself] with your statements but do not remove your hands from obedience and do not encourage the Muslims to rebel and do not spill your blood and the blood of the Muslims along with you. Look to the results of your actions. And remain patient until you are content with a righteous or sinful rule...'"

And he said: "This isn't correct, and it opposes the narrations which command us with patience." Then Abu Abdullah said: The messenger said: "If he beats you, remain patient" [Al-Sunnah, Abu Bakr Al-Khallaal, Hadith 96]

So, we learn how Imam Ahmad referred back to the narrations and the advice of our the messenger of Allah, and called for unity with the group, and spoke about the preciousness of blood of the Muslims.

Abul-Haarith Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Saa'igh, the close and respected friend of Imam Ahmad, reported:

أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي هَارُونَ ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ ، أَنَّ أَبَا الْحَارِثِ حَدَّثَهُمْ قَالَ : سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، فِي أَمْرٍ كَانَ حَدَثَ بِبَغْدَادَ ، وَهَمَّ قَوْمٌ بِالْخُرُوجِ ، فَقُلْتُ : " يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، مَا تَقُولُ فِي الْخُرُوجِ مَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ ، فَأَنْكَرَ ذَلِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ ، وَجَعَلَ يَقُولُ : سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ، الدَّمَاءُ ، الدَّمَاءُ ، لَا أَرَى ذَلِكَ ، وَلَا أَمْرٌ بِهِ ، الصَّبْرُ عَلَى مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْفِتْنَةِ يُسْفِكُ فِيهَا الدَّمَاءُ ، وَيُسْتَبَاحُ فِيهَا الْأَمْوَالُ ، وَيُنْتَهَكُ فِيهَا الْمَحَارِمُ ، أَمَا عَلِمْتَ مَا كَانَ النَّاسُ فِيهِ يَعْنِي أَيَّامَ الْفِتْنَةِ ، قُلْتُ : وَالنَّاسُ الْبَرِّمَ ، أَلَيْسَ هُمْ فِي فِتْنَةٍ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ؟ قَالَ : وَإِنْ كَانَ ، فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ خَاصَّةٌ ، فَإِذَا وَقَعَ السَّيْفُ عَمَّتِ الْفِتْنَةُ ، وَانْقَطَعَتِ السُّبُلُ ، الصَّبْرُ عَلَى هَذَا ، وَيَسْلَمُ لَكَ دِينُكَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ ، وَرَأَيْتُهُ يُبَكِّرُ الْخُرُوجَ عَلَى الْأَيْمَةِ ، وَقَالَ : الدَّمَاءُ ، لَا أَرَى ذَلِكَ ، وَلَا أَمْرٌ بِهِ .

I asked Abu 'Abdillaah (Imam Ahmad) about something that had occurred in



Baghdad, and [because of which] some people were considering revolting [against the ruler]. I said, "O Abu 'Abdillaah, what do you say about taking part in the revolt with these people?" He decried it and started saying, "Subhanallah! The blood [of the people], the blood [of the people]! I do not believe in this and I do not tell others to do it. For us to suffer our situation in patience is better than the fitnah (tribulation) in which blood is spilt, property is taken, and the prohibited are violated (e.g. the honor of women). Do you not know what happened to the people (in the days of the previous fitnah)?"

I said, "And the people today, Abu 'Abdillaah, are they not in fitnah [because of the ruler]?" He replied, " If so, it is a limited fitnah, but if the sword is raised, the fitnah will engulf everything and there will be no way to escape. To suffer patiently this [current difficulty], such that Allah keeps your religion safe for you, is better for you." I saw him decry revolting against the leaders, and say, "[Do not spill the people's] blood. I do not believe in this and I do not command it." [Al-Sunnah, Abu Bakr Al-Khallaal, Hadith 95]

If this was his stance towards Al Wathiq, who so severe against him, then what do think was his stance about Ma'moon and Mu'tasem, those who were more dangerous, as they were the ones who opened the door and popularized the belief of creation of Qur'an?

Qadhi Abi Ya'la said:

وقال أيضاً في رواية المروزي " فإن كان أميراً يعرف بشرب المسكر والغلول يغزو معه، إنما ذلك له في نفسه، وقد روى عنه في كتاب المحنة: أنه كان يدعو المعتصم بأمر المؤمنين في غير موضع. وقد دعاه إلى القول بخلق القرآن، وضربه عليه، وكذلك قد كان يدعو المتوكل بأمر المؤمنين، ولم يكن من أهل العلم، ولا كان أفضل وقته وزمانه. وقد روى عنه ما يعارض هذا؛ فقال في رواية حنبل " وأي بلاء كان أكبر من الذي كان أحدث عدو الله وعدو الإسلام: من إماتة السنة؟ " يعني الذي كان أحدث قبل المتوكل فأحيا المتوكل السنة. وقال فيما رأيته على ظهر جزء من كتب أخي رحمه الله " حدثنا أبو الفتح "ابن منيع قال " سمعت جدي يقول: كان أحمد إذا ذكر المأمون قال: كان لا مأمون

It is narrated from him (Imam Ahmad) in his book "Al Mihnah" that he called Mu'tasem as "Ameer ul Mu'mineen" many times, though he called for belief in the creation of the Qur'an, and lashed him for it. And similarly, he would call Al Mutawakkil as "Ameer ul Mu'mineen", though he was not from the people of knowledge, nor was he the best of people of his and era. And

something has been narrated that (apparently) contradicts it in a narration from Hanbal: "And which trial was bigger than the one which the enemy of Allah and enemy of Islam? Referring to what happened before Al Mutawakkil revived the Sunnah... and it has been narrated: When Ahmad would mention Ma'moon, he would say: "He was not Ma'moon (ie., he did not lived up to his name, which meant trustworthy)." [Al Ahkaam as-Sultaaniyyah, Qadhi Abi Ya'la, page 20]

Shaikh Muhammad Ameen Ash Shinqitee justified Imam Ahmad's stance of not revolting against in-spite of all what happened. Below is an excerpt from his tafseer named "Adwaa' al Bayan":

الأولى : إذا طرأ على الإمام الأعظم فسق ، أو دعوة إلى بدعة . هل يكون ذلك سببا لعزله والقيام عليه أو لا ؟ قال بعض العلماء : إذا صار فاسقا ، أو داعيا إلى بدعة جاز القيام عليه لخلعه . والتحقيق الذي لا شك فيه أنه لا يجوز القيام عليه لخلعه إلا إذا ارتكب كفرا بواحا عليه من الله برهان . فقد أخرج الشيخان في " صحيحيهما " عن عبادة بن الصامت - رضي الله عنه - قال : بايعنا رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - على السمع والطاعة في منشطنا ومكرهنا ، وعسرنا ويسرنا ، وأثرة علينا ، وأن لا ننازع الأمر أهله ، قال : " إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم فيه من الله برهان " .

وفي " صحيح مسلم " من حديث عوف بن مالك الأشجعي - رضي الله عنه - قال : سمعت رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - يقول : " خيار أئمتكم الذين تحبونهم ويحبونكم ، وتصلون عليهم ويصلون عليكم ، وشرار أئمتكم الذين تبغضونهم ويبغضونكم ، وتلعنونهم ويلعنونكم " قالوا : قلنا يا رسول الله أفلا نناذبهم عند ذلك ؟ قال : " لا ما أقاموا فيكم الصلاة ، لا ما أقاموا فيكم الصلاة ، إلا من ولي عليه وال فرأه يأتي شيئا من معصية الله فليكره ما يأتي من معصية الله ، ولا ينزع يدا من طاعة " .

وفي " صحيح مسلم " أيضا : من حديث أم سلمة - رضي الله عنها - أن رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال : " ستكون أمراء فتعرفون وتنكرون ، فمن عرف برئ ، ومن أنكر سلم ، ولكن من رضي وتابع " . قالوا : يا رسول الله أفلا نقاتلهم ؟ قال : " لا ما صلوا " .

وأخرج الشيخان في " صحيحيهما " من حديث ابن عباس - رضي الله عنهما - قال : قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : " من رأى من أميره شيئا فكرهه فليصبر ؛ فإنه ليس أحد يفارق الجماعة شبرا فيموت ، إلا مات ميتة جاهلية " .

وأخرج مسلم في " صحيحه " من حديث ابن عمر - رضي الله عنهما - أنه سمع رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - يقول : " من خلع يدا من طاعة لقي الله يوم القيامة لا حجة له ، ومن مات وليس في عنقه بيعة مات ميتة جاهلية " والأحاديث في هذا كثيرة .

فهذه النصوص تدل على منع القيام عليه، ولو كان مرتكباً لما لا يجوز، إلا إذا ارتكب الكفر الصريح الذي قام البرهان الشرعي من كتاب الله وسنة رسوله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - أنه كفر بواح؛ أي: ظاهر باد لا لبس فيه.

وقد دعا المأمون والمعتصم والوائق إلى بدعة القول: بخلق القرآن، وعاقبوا العلماء من أجلها بالقتل، والضرب، والحبس، وأنواع الإهانة، ولم يقل أحد بوجوب الخروج عليهم بسبب ذلك. ودام الأمر بضع عشرة سنة حتى ولي المتوكل الخلافة، فأبطل المحنة، وأمر بإظهار السنة.

واعلم أنه أجمع جميع المسلمين على أنه لا طاعة لإمام ولا غيره في معصية الله تعالى. وقد جاءت بذلك الأحاديث الصحيحة الصريحة التي لا لبس فيها، ولا مطعن كحديث ابن عمر - رضي الله عنهما - أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "السمع والطاعة على المرء المسلم فيما أحب وكره، ما لم يؤمر بمعصية، فإن أمر بمعصية فلا سمع ولا طاعة" أخرجه الشيخان، وأبو داود.

وعن علي بن أبي طالب - رضي الله عنه - عن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - أنه قال في السرية الذين أمرهم أميرهم أن يدخلوا في النار: "لو دخلوها ما خرجوا منها أبداً؛ إنما الطاعة في المعروف" وفي الكتاب العزيز: (ولا يعصينك في معروف) [60 \ 12].

Shaikh Shinqiti wrote:

"If the public sees evil doing on part of the head ruler, or calling to Bid'ah, will that be a reason for withdrawal (from pledge of obedience) and to revolt against him, or not? Some scholars say: If he becomes a fasiq (evil doer), or a caller to Bid'ah then it is permissible to revolt against him to remove him. But the truth is that about which there is no doubt that it is not permissible to revolt against him to remove him unless he does a clear kufr against which there is clear proof from Allah.

The two shaikhs (Bukhari and Muslim) narrated in their 'Saheeh' from 'Ubadah ibn Samit (radiyallahu anh) said: "He took the Pledge from us, was that we were to listen and obey (the orders) both at the time when we were active and at the time when we were tired, and at our difficult time and at our ease and to be obedient to the ruler and give him his right even if he did not give us our right, and not to fight against him unless we noticed him having open Kufr (disbelief) for which we would have a proof with us from Allah."

And in 'Saheeh Muslim' is a narration from Auf bin Malik al Ashja'ee - may Allah be pleased with him - said: I heard the messenger of Allah say: "The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who invoke

God's blessings upon you and you invoke His blessings upon them. And the worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you and whom you curse and who curse you. It was asked (by those present): Shouldn't we overthrow them with the help of the sword? He said: No, as long as they establish prayer among you. If you then find anything detestable in them. You should hate their administration, but do not withdraw yourselves from their obedience."

And in 'Saheeh Muslim' it has been narrated on the authority of Umm Salama that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

In the near future there will be Amirs and you will like their good deeds and dislike their bad deeds. One who sees through their bad deeds (and tries to prevent their repetition by his hand or through his speech), is absolved from blame, but one who hates their bad deeds (in the heart of his heart, being unable to prevent their recurrence by his hand or his tongue), is (also) safe (so far as God's wrath is concerned). But one who approves of their bad deeds and imitates them is spiritually ruined. People asked (the Holy Prophet): Shouldn't we fight against them? He replied: No, as long as they say their prayers.

The two shaikhs (Bukhari and Muslim) narrated in their 'Saheeh' from Ibn `Abbas:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If somebody sees his Muslim ruler doing something he disapproves of, he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the Muslim group even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners).

And Muslim reported in his 'Saheeh' from Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying, "One who withdraws his hand from obedience (to the Amir) will find no argument (in his defense) when he stands before Allah on the Day of Resurrection; and one who dies without having sworn allegiance will die the death of one belonging to the Days of Ignorance."

So, these prove prohibition of revolting against him, even if he does what is not permissible for him, except if he did clear kufr about which is based on legal proofs from the book of Allah and the Sunnah of his messenger ﷺ - that it is clear kufr, i.e., open without any confusion.

And Ma'moon, Mu'tasim and Wathiq called to innovation of 'creation of the Qur'an', and the punished the scholars by killing, beating, imprisonment, and different forms of harms; yet no one declared obligation of revolting due to that reason. And the matter lasted for ten long years until Mutawkkil became the caliph, so he ended the persecution and commanded the rise of Sunnah.

And know that scholars agreed by consensus that there is obedience for a ruler or anyone other than him in disobedience to Allah ta'aala. And there are authentic clear narrations where there is no ambiguity nor any issue like the narration of Ibn Umar – may Allah be pleased with him – that the messenger of Allah said: "It is obligatory upon a Muslim to listen (to the ruler) and obey whether he likes it or not, except when he is ordered to do a sinful thing; in such case, there is no obligation to listen or to obey." Narrated by the two shaikhs, and Abu Dawood.

And Ali ibn Abu Talib – may Allah be pleased with him- narrated from the prophet ﷺ that he said about the expedition in which their leader asked them to burn themselves: "If they had entered it (the fire) they would never have come out of it, for obedience is required only in what is good."

And in the Book of All-Mighty: "nor will they disobey you in what is right" [al-Mumtahinah 60:12]

End quote from Adwaa al bayan (vol 1/ explanation of surah Baqarah 2:30)

Shaikh Abdul Kareem al Khudair commented on this explanation of shaikh Shinqiti and said: We do not care about what people say about us... And this (explanation) is something which both mind and proof agree with... And everyone must prefer before doing anything the general maslaha above the specific maslaha... [End quote from his explanation of selective ayaat from surah Baqarah from Adwaa al Bayan]

And explaining the same, shaikh Sulayman ar-Ruhaily said:

السلف ينهون الناس عن الخروج على ولي امرهم ان كان مسلما مطلقا. وان لم يكن مسلما ينهون عن الخروج عليه ادا لم تكن عندهم: قدرة على ازالته ، او كان تترتب على الخروج مفسدة اعظم من مفسدة بقاءه، او لم يكن عندهم من يحكم البلاد لو ازالوا.

"The Salaf used to forbid revolting against their ruler unrestrictedly, if he was a Muslim. And if he was not a Muslim then the (salaf) used to forbid revolting against him: **1)** If the Muslims did not have the ability to remove



him. 2) Or if revolting results in a greater evil than (this ruler) staying in his place. 3) Or they do not have anyone who can rule the country if they remove (the disbelieving ruler). [End quote from the video “The Syrian situation explained in beautiful detail”]

But forget about revolting, Imam Ahmad would not even curse these oppressors:

وقال يحيى بن نعيم: لما خرج أبو عبد الله أحمد بن حنبل إلى المعتصم يوم ضرب قال له العون الموكل به ادع على ظالمك قال ليس بصابر من دعا على ظالمه يعني الإمام أحمد أن المظلوم إذا دعا على من ظلمه فقد انتصر كما رواه الترمذي من رواية أبي حمزة عن إبراهيم عن الأسود عن عائشة مرفوعاً من دعا على من ظلمه فقد انتصر قال الترمذي حديث لا نعرفه إلا من حديث أبي حمزة وهو ميمون الأعرور، ضعفه لا سيما فيما رواه عن إبراهيم النخعي، وإذا انتصر فقد استوفى حقه وفاته الدرجة العليا.

قال تعالى: (ولمن انتصر بعد ظلمه فأولئك ما عليهم من سبيل) إلى قوله (ولمن صبر وغفر إن ذلك لمن عزم الأمور)

Once when he was asked to curse on his oppressor, he replied: “He is not bearing patience who curses his oppressor.” This was mentioned by Imam Muhammad ibn Muflih al-Maqdisi in Adaaab ash-Sharee’ah (2/237). He also proved this statement of Imam Ahmad using the ayaat: And whoever avenges himself after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame] ... And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination. [ash-Shoora 42:41-43]

Subhanallah, may Allah give us something of intellect and patience that He bestowed on Imam Ahmad!

#### Accepting or rejecting money from the rulers:

Shaikh Wasiullah commented on the below narration and explained Imam Ahmad’s stance on working under rulers:

وَعَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ: { أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - كَانَ يُعْطِي عُمَرَ الْعَطَاءَ، فَيَقُولُ: أَعْطِهِ أَفْقَرَ مِنِّي، فَيَقُولُ: "خُذْهُ فَتَمَوَّلْهُ، أَوْ تَصَدَّقْ بِهِ، وَمَا جَاءَكَ مِنْ هَذَا الْمَالِ، وَأَنْتَ غَيْرُ مُشْرِفٍ وَلَا سَائِلٍ فَخُذْهُ، وَمَا لَا فَلا تُتْبِعْهُ نَفْسَكَ". } رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated on the authority of his father

(radiyallahu anh) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave 'Umar bin Al-Khattab something (some money), but he said to him, 'Would you give it to a person, who is more needy than me'? Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would said, 'Take it. If you are given something from this property, without you having asked for it or being eager to receive it, and if you are not given, do not go and ask for it.' (Related by Muslim)

The muhadditheen (hadith experts) explained that the messenger (ﷺ) was offering him zakat money. The beloved messenger (ﷺ) was the owner of Baitul - maal, and it would include all types of money (zakat, ordinary charity, etc). And so Umar (radiyallahu anh) probably rejected it for this reason. But the messenger (ﷺ) told him that it is not permissible for him to reject it as it is from Wali al Amr ie., himself. Rejecting this money is not included in Wara' and taqwa.

Scholars have explained that if the ruler practices Islam and is known for goodness, then he would give money only for some benefit. And he would not waste it. The beloved messenger (ﷺ) said:

إن رجالا يتخوضون في مال الله بغير حق فلهم النار

***"There are such men who are wasting the wealth of Allah (charity) without any right are deserving of Naar (hell - fire)."***

If the "Wali al Amr" or "Ameer al Mu'mineen" gives money, then he would give for some benefit. Take it without being avaricious or greedy, and there is no need to ask whether it is zakat money or not.

But this Ameer al Mu'mineen should be ruler of believers who is a true believer. Not that he is a fasiq and a fajir, who wastes the wealth (from bayt al maal) for personal benefits, in which case it is obligatory to avoid it.

When situation began deteriorating (evil rulers came to throne), Imam Ahmad **rejected** working for the government, or accepting their salaries, or to help them in anyway. And he would denounce those who would work under the govt. and say that they are not from the good ones as they are working under them though those rulers were **forcing on others to accept deviant**

beliefs like "khalq al Qur'an" (creation of Qur'an) and were close to deviants like Ibn Abi Duaad etc.

Thus, we learn that one should accept it if the ruler is a true Ameer ul Mu'mineen. **But if it is doubted that while working under the ruler, he may ask you to even oppress others and take their rights, then such jobs is what Imam Ahmad stopped others from.** End quote from Shaikh Wasiullah's explanation of Bulugh al Maram, vol. 1.

So, we warn those who fabricate stories on Imam Ahmad like he stopped eating bread in the house of his son Salih when he became the judge.

وقد قال الشيخ تقي الدين: كذبوا على أحمد بن حنبل حكايات في السنة والورع، وذكر هذه الحكاية، وحكاية امتناعه من الخبز الذي خبز في بيت ابنه صالح لما تولى القضاء

Shaikh ul Islam said: "They fabricated on Ahmad bin Hanbal concerning his level of adherence to the Sunnah and piety." And he mentioned this report, which says that he refused to eat bread from the house of his son Salih when he was appointed as a judge. [al-Mustadrak 'ala Majmoo' Fatawa (1/24)]

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