



[15/08/1435 – A – Ibn-Humaid]

١٥-٨-١٤٣٥هـ - أ- بن حميد

Reflections on Reform and Reformers

Khutbah Topic

His Eminence Sheikh Saleh ibn Abdullah ibn Humaid –May Allah protect him– delivered the Friday Khutbah titled “**Reflections on Reform and Reformers**” in which he addressed reform saying that it could not be achieved without true belief and a sound method. He also gave advice and exhortations to reformers and counsellors.

Part One

Praise be to Allah! Praise be to Allah Who set all destinies and Who is All-Knowing. He created all that is living in the most perfect way:

﴿It is He who shows you His signs and sends down to you from the sky, provision. But none will remember except he who turns back [in repentance.﴾ [Ghāfir: 13]

There is no deity except Him. He caused [creatures] to die and gave them life. He caused creatures to laugh and caused them to cry. He brought happiness and brought misery. I thank Him for his incalculable graces, and I praise Him for His favours though my praising Him will never be sufficient. I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah alone with no associate. Mine is a testimony of veracity and certitude; one that is full of worship and servility. I also bear witness that our Master and Prophet Muhammad is the Servant and Messenger of Allah, and that he is the most Allah-fearing and the most righteous of all. May Allah’s *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy), Peace and Blessing be upon him, his immaculate family, his righteous and pious Companions who obtained sublimity and honour, and were therefore ranked high, and upon the *tabi’in* (contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet [May Allah’s *Salat* and Peace be upon him] after his death) and those who followed in their footsteps as long as this religion is preserved throughout the days and the nights, and its banners are flying high east and west!



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Now then, O people!

I advise you, and myself, to observe *taqwa* (fear of disobeying Allah). So observe *taqwa*, may Allah have mercy upon you! *Taqwa* protects from the whims and caprices of the self. Repent to Allah and ask for his forgiveness. Indeed, seeking Allah's forgiveness with persistence would bring you more of Allah's favours, and the safety of man lies in between his jaws. He who aspires to win people's hearts should speak to them kindly, smile at them and forgive them their wrong doings. This worldly life is not worth worrying about. Your livelihood is predetermined; your fate is predestined and your hope lies in the Ever-Living and the Sustainer of all existence. He who seeks health Allah will give it to him, and he who asks Allah for protection Allah will give him protection:

﴿And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew.﴾ [Al-'Ankabūt: 64]

O Muslims!

Man's chief duty in this world is to worship Allah Almighty by believing in His oneness, remembering and mentioning Him, thanking and worshiping Him as He should be worshiped and in living on earth in the way this servitude requires so that religion can prevail and *shar'* be upheld.

Showing servility towards Allah is man's ultimate objective. As for knowledge, occupations, businesses and industries, they are nothing but a means to that end and are dependent on it.

The real enlightenment is the one that comes from the light of divine inspiration and the knowledge of the Book and the *Sunnah*. By contrast, ignorance and darkness lie in being deprived from the light of that divine inspiration. The most honourable feature of human life on earth is that of faith, and the essence of *istikhlāf* (vicegerency, rule on behalf of Allah on earth) is to implement Allah's religion:

﴿[And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakah and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of [all] matters.﴾
[Al-Hajj: 41]

In a statement, Sheikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyah –may Allah bless his soul– summed it all when he said, “*What is meant by, and the duty of, authority is to reform people's conception of religion. If this is neglected, it may cause them irrevocable loss since all their*



worldly gains may not do them any good. What is also meant here is the reform of all worldly affairs without which religion may not be rightly implemented.”

Imam Al-Ghazali –may Allah bless his soul– said, *“The core objective behind the rulings regarding succession to authority, justice, and politics, nay, regarding most of the jurisprudential rulings, is to protect the worldly interests so that those of religion may be upheld.”*

Hence, brothers and sisters in Islam, the highest division of faith is to say *“la ilaha illa Allah”* (There is no deity except Allah) and the lowest is to remove from the road anything that would cause harm to people. Bashfulness is also a branch of faith.

These are words and deeds, whether major or minor, which include individual and collective religious duties as well as acts of benevolence that would help enhance the integrity of religion and the continuation of life.

O servants of Allah! Human beings are predisposed to embrace religion and to worship Allah. Without religion and faith humanity may not be reformed and life on earth may not go on:

﴿But those who hold fast to the Book and establish prayer - indeed, We will not allow to be lost the reward of the reformers.﴾ [Al-A’rāf: 170]

Being strongly committed to his religion and steadfast in his belief, a true believer endeavours to establish and reform life on earth. He never succumbs to the wishes of the media or the masses while addressing religious facts. He remembers His Lord as he reads:

﴿But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.﴾ [Al-Nisā’: 65] ﴿It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair.﴾ [Al-Aḥzāb: 36] and ﴿And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims.﴾ [Fussilat: 33]

How poor is the one who mistakes enthusiasm for extremism and exhortation of righteousness for meddling in others’ affairs! How poor is the one who mistakes enjoining good and forbidding evil for exclusion or interference, and calls committing evil deeds personal freedom!



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A good believer is able to distinguish alien ideas from destructive concepts which have infiltrated education, culture and media in Muslim communities. Science, knowledge, authority, politics and businesses, and the like, should be judged in as much as they serve to foster religion, disseminate values and purify the soul.

We must be cautious of the philosophies and approaches that can neither build sound thought nor establish righteous behaviour. We must beware of glorifying a science, certain knowledge or culture that is devoid of values, for exaggeration is the source of aberration. There is a difference between what is useful and what is deceptive. Not all that glitters is gold.

A good reformer would not deviate from *shar'* (religious law) in retaliation for the mistakes committed by some of those defending it. He would accept advice, and ask Allah to forgive the guilty. He would reconsider his relationship with his Lord; if it is right, he would maintain his course and do more. If it is wrong, he would repent to Allah. A difference of opinion should not undermine loyalty.

How imperative it is for reformers and advocates of modernism to know that in Islam there are some eternally fixed fundamentals and constants that are subject to neither change nor modification, such as the unchangeable beliefs and monoliths of religion. They should know that Islam itself is not subject to reform. Reform and rectitude are achieved through Islam which is the means to reform and the criterion of rectitude:

﴿This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.﴾ [Al-Māidah: 3] ﴿And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.﴾ [Al-Nahl: 89]

Brothers and sisters in Islam!

Science, technology and the job market are not interchangeable with belief, ethics and good behaviour. What good will industries and trade bring if they do not build a righteous and conscientious believing citizen? If souls are corrupt, no regulations, laws or instructions would be of any avail:

﴿And Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.﴾ [Al-Ra'd: 11]

O Muslims!

Enough about reform! Now let us address reformers and advocates of modernism. A plight of our age is that modern societies are open societies equipped with the state-of-the-art



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means of communication, mass media and various channels of knowledge. Therefore, everybody is free to participate.

A true reformer and an honest advisor is the one who sets right his priorities by order of importance. He is the one who seeks to build his character and to secure benefit for his country avoiding useless quibbles and arguments. He should beware of giving the desire for speaking and arguing priority over serious giving and working. Good intention is one thing; good work is another.

Social networks must not be exploited for charging people's emotions and spreading extremism in the name of freedom, the right of criticism and the desire for reform. In fact, this is likely to foment chaos, wipe out the positivity and lay to rest all that is good, thus throwing the baby with the bathwater. In addition, some of these networks and media have their own agenda and biases; they even have their own means of attracting (the audience) to their own ideas, employing information (for their own ends) and gaining (people's) sympathy.

O you who wish to reform! Nothing penetrates the heart faster than profound belief, true worship, good purpose, pure heart, good dealing, and forgiveness, ﴿...so remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you]...﴾ [Al-Shūrā: 15], not as you wished.

A true reformer must heed confidentiality of exhortation, love of the advised, and defence of Muslims' honour. The fruit of knowledge is action and the fruit of action is *taqwa*. The reformer must avoid showing off and self-aggrandisement. He should be a servant of Allah's religion. He must not use Allah's religion for his own benefit. Right must be served through him, and not he through right.

A true reformer must avoid succumbing to whims, selfishness, egoism and fanaticism. The safety of religion comes before the safety of the method, and the safety of the method before the method of safety.

He should beware of being a means to spreading dissent among the *ummah* (nation) or hatred among brothers. He should be moderate and objective in his words and deeds, and he should think well of his brothers and sisters in Islam.

He has to keep under control the work of his heart (thoughts, desires, whims etc.) for it is the source of those functions related to the senses. Let him beware of despair and betrayal (letting down others), and the fancies of fear; let him be constructive, not destructive:

﴿But Allāh is the Best to guard, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.﴾ [Yūsuf: 64]



He must also remember the tolerance and leniency of Islam especially toward people holding different views as long as they follow the *Sunnah* and seek the Truth. Let the seeker of reform rest assured, for the process of truth and the defence of religion does not stop at him nor does it totally depend on him; Working for Islam is managed by Allah Almighty according to His own Wisdom and the sincerity of the servant:

﴿And you (Muhammad SAW) threw not when you did throw but Allâh threw.﴾ [Al-Anfâl: 17]

﴿if you are suffering (hardships) then surely, they (too) are suffering (hardships) as you are suffering, but you have a hope from Allâh (for the reward, i.e. Paradise) that for which they hope not, and Allâh is Ever All Knowing, All Wise.﴾ [Al-Nisâ': 104]

The reformer is not responsible for results or achievements; rather, he has to be confident that he is on the right path, obedient to his Lord, following His guidance, adhering to His orders, and abstaining from His prohibitions,

﴿Not upon you (Muhammad SAW) is their guidance, but Allâh guides whom He wills.﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 272]

﴿Never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allâh had guided us!﴾ [Al-A'râf: 43]

O Reformer! Call to (the path of) Allah in light of a clear Guidance; be hardworking and diligent; always try to do what is right and remember that infallibility is not a human feature; be a person of faith yourself; highlight values in your own conduct; be critical of yourself, and take extra care to attract the hearts and minds of others not their attention. Change what exists in yourself so that what exists around you will change:

﴿Verily! Allâh will not change the good condition of a people as long as they do not change their state of goodness themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allâh).﴾ [Al-Ra'd: 11]

When the heart is whole, then the whole body is whole; but when it is diseased, then the whole body is diseased.¹

Stay away from lobbying, from conflicts of interest, partisanship, and factions. Never think that you are responsible of managing Allah's ordainment the way you wish. So if somebody you like is inflicted with a calamity, you say he is a good believer who is tested by Allah; but if somebody you dislike is inflicted with a calamity, you say it is a punishment

1. This is the meaning of a *Hadith* by the Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) that says: "**Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be whole, all the body is whole and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart.**" [Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim]



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against a bad oppressor! Thus you justify things for whomever you like and do injustice to whomever you dislike. You hold a good opinion of yourself and those whom you like, and mistrust those whom you do not like.

O you there! All people have shortcomings; yet it is the All-Courteous and the All-Knowing of the Unseen (Allah) who covers them.

Abu Bakr Ibn Ayyāsh –may Allah have mercy on his soul– was once asked: "*Who is the gentleman?*" He said: "*It is he who remains unbiased when whims and desires are mentioned in his presence.*"

Al-Shawkāni –may Allah have mercy on his soul– says: "*A fanatic may have sound eyesight, but his inner eye is blind and his ear is deaf to hear the truth; he pushes away the truth thinking that he is pushing away falsehood.*"

The sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyah –may Allah have mercy on his soul– says: "*An innovation (in religion) is associated with disunity, while the Sunnah is associated with keeping to the Muslim congregation.*"

Now then, O brothers and sisters!

The people of the truth, good, and reform must be united; they should not hinder each other by word or deed. Rather they should work to fulfil the mission with which they have been entrusted (by Allah) and in accordance with the knowledge, expertise, and understanding with which they have been endowed.

Reform may be carried out properly only by cooperation. Thus a reformer's task may be to spread knowledge: fundamental and derivative principles, another reformer's task is in calling to (the path of) Allah: directing and guiding, a third's is to promote economics, finance, and trade: in theory and practice; yet a fourth's is to practice politics: in wisdom and experience.

I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan:

﴿Invite (mankind, O Muhammad SAW) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islām) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'ān) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.﴾ [Al-Nahl: 125]

May Allah Almighty benefit me and you with the Great Qur'ān and the Guidance of Muhammad [May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him]. I say this and ask Allah to forgive my sins, yours, and those of all the Muslims, so ask Him for forgiveness, for He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful!



Part Two

Praise be to Allah! There is no deity truly worthy of worship except Him. I praise Him (May He be extolled) and thank Him. He sees the ants walk on a flat rock in the dead of night. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah with no associate to Him in His names, attributes, Lordship and Divinity. I also bear witness that our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, is Allah's Servant and Messenger, a Messenger who must not be disbelieved and a Servant who must not be worshiped. May Allah's *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy), Peace and Blessing be upon him, his family and Companions, the owners of privilege, honour, and success, the *tabi'in* (contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet [May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him] after death) and those who followed them righteously in worshipping Almighty Allah.

Now then, O fellow Muslims!

It is not required of a Muslim, especially seekers of knowledge, reformers, and men of opinion, to have a say in every matter, to get involved in every discipline or novelty. Indeed, whoever does this will be perplexed and perplexing; he will do more harm than good.

Let the sane know his status and value his gift and talent. Let him also focus solely on his art, specialization, and field of his expertise. Always bear in mind to keep up with the changes and the new developments so that whenever something new comes up, you change your destination.

Leave each art and field of knowledge to its own people: ﴿but over all those endowed with knowledge is the All-Knowing (Allâh).﴾ [Yûsuf: 76]

You have to stick to what you know and do as much as you can, then leave the rest to its own people. Remember that whoever desires everything loses everything; thus participation in every issue is not really an indication of maturity, nor is it a sign of feeling care about and interest in the affairs of Muslims; rather, this might be a sign of immaturity and irresponsibility.

Indeed, the sane does not hasten to speak or express his opinion, especially in the presence of people of knowledge, experience, and specialization.



One of the calamities of our time is that various subjects: religious, political, economic, social, educational, etc. have become subject to gossip in meetings, forums, and tweets. Therefore, delving into all such matters is more likely to be destructive rather than constructive, and harmful rather than useful, for it contradicts with the right methodology.

Therefore, fear Allah, O servants of Allah, and let each reformer use the knowledge and understanding with which Allah has blessed him. Let him show Allah that he believes in goodness, truthfulness, and justice, and that he behaves accordingly,

﴿And Allâh has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not.﴾ [Yûsuf: 21]

Ask Allah to send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace upon the Given Mercy and the Offered Blessing, your Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, for Allah commanded you to do so in His Book, and Allah has indeed spoken the truth:

﴿Allâh sends His Salât (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad), and also His angels (ask Allâh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salât on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmîc way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum).﴾ [Al-Aḥzâb: 56]

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy) and Peace upon Your Servant and Messenger, our beloved *Al-Mustafa* (the Chosen) Prophet Muhammad [May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him], his kind virtuous family and his wives, the mothers of the believers! O Allah! Be pleased with the four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, all the Companions, and those who righteously follow them till the Day of Judgement! O Allah! Be also pleased with us all, along with them, by Your Pardon and Generosity, O You, the Most Generous and Bounteous of all!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims and fail polytheism and polytheists (who associate partners with You)! O Allah! Render unsuccessful the despots and atheists and all the enemies of faith and religion!

O Allah! Grant us security in our homelands! Make good our leaders and those responsible for our affairs, and make our leadership from among those who are fearful of Allah, who guard *taqwa*, and follow the path that leads to your acceptance! O You, Lord of al-'ālamîn (the worlds)!

O Allah! Grant our leader who is responsible for our affairs a success of Your own! Grant glory to him through his trust in You and obedience to You! Raise Your word high



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through him! Make him an asset for Islam and Muslims! Impart on him health and well-being and extend his life in Your obedience! Guide him, his deputies, his brothers and his aides to do what You love and please, and lead them to righteousness and piety!

O Allah! Help Muslim leaders abide by Your Book and follow the *Sunnah* of Your Prophet, Mohammad [May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him]! Make them a blessing on Your faithful, and unite them on the grounds of righteousness and truth! O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Make for this *Ummah* a matter (an affair) of rationality (guidance) whereby the pious are honoured and the sinful are guided, and where virtue is promoted and vice is prevented! Verily, You are the Omniscient!

O Allah! Protect our brothers and sisters in Syria, Burma and Central Africa! O Allah! Draw them closer at heart! Stop their bloodshed, cure their sick, have mercy on their diseased! O Allah! Draw them closer at heart! Set right their conditions, O You the Most Merciful!

O Allah! Defeat the tyrants and oppressors! O Allah! Defeat the tyrants and oppressors! O Allah! Make their destruction in their own plotting, O You, the Powerful, the Exalted in Power!

O Allah! Set right the conditions of our brothers and sisters in Iraq, Yemen, and Libya! O Allah! Stop their bloodshed, give leadership to the best among them, unite their word on the Truth, the right guidance, and the *Sunnah*! Spread security and prosperity in their homelands! O Allah! Lift off war and hardship from amongst them, O You, the Owner of blessings, graces, and beneficence!

O Allah! Make better our religion which is our bond, and make better our *Dunya* (life in this world) which is the source of our living, and make better our Hereafter to which we are returning, and make life for us an increase of all that is good, and death a relief from every evil! O Allah! Grant us a good ending in all of our affairs and save us from the humiliation of the worldly life and the punishment of the Hereafter!

O Allah! Whoever intends to do any evil against us, our religion, our homeland, our *Ummah*, our security, our leaders, our *ulamā* (religious scholars), the righteous and benevolent among us, or our unity and accord, O Allah, make him preoccupied with himself! Let his plotting boomerang, and make his destruction in his planning, O You, the Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Destroy the usurpers among the Jews, for You are certainly able to do so! O Allah! Inflict Your wrath which is so inevitably destined to strike the people who are *Mujrimûn* (criminals, polytheists or sinners)! O Allah! We pray You to drive them off to their own detriment and we seek refuge in You from their evils!



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O Allah! We beg You for that which incites Your Mercy and the means of Your forgiveness, safety from every sin, benefit from every good deed, success in attaining Paradise and deliverance from Fire!

﴿Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.﴾
[Al-A'rāf: 23] ﴿... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 201]

Glorified be Your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from what they attribute unto You! May peace be upon all the messengers! And all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!