Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah on Rebellion Against the Rulers and A Discussion of the Khurooj Made By the Early Salaf

All praise is due to Allaah and may the prayers and peace be upon the Messenger. To proceed:

These are some words of Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah that are worthy of being written in gold, as they are far reaching, explain the great wisdom contained in the Sharee’ah commands concerning those in authority, and expose what is with the contemporary groups of destruction, from the Khawaarij and other than them, who bring about nothing but mischief and corruption, in the name of rectification.

The Shaykh, Fawzee al-Atharee, in his excellent book, “Irshaad ul-Anaam Ilaa Kaifiyyat Naseehat il-Hukkaam”, quotes the following statement of Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah, from his Minhaaj us-Sunnah (4/527-):

“For verily Allaah the Exalted sent His Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) for the attainment of the benefits and perfection of them, and for the negation of the harmful things and their reduction. And when one of the khaleefahs took authority, such as Zaid and ‘Abdul-Malik and al-Mansoor and others, then either it was said: It is obligatory to prevent him from this authority and to fight him until someone else is given authority - as is held by those who consider it rightful to use the sword.

And this view is corrupt, for the corruption in this is greater than the benefit. And there is hardly anyone who revolted against a leader with authority except that what arose from his action of evil, was actually greater than whatever good came from it, such as those who rebelled against Yazeed in M adeenah, or like Ibn al-Ash’at who revolted against ‘Abdul-Malik in ‘Iraqq, or like Ibn al-Mihlab also, who revolted against his son in Khurasan, and like those who revolted against al-M ansoor in M adeenah and Basrah, and the likes of them.

And their goal is that they are victorious or they are defeated, then their rule (dominion) ceases, and so they do not have any end-result. For Abdullaah bin A llee and Abu M uslim, they are the ones who killed a great number of people, and both of them were killed by Abu Ja’far al-M ansoor. And as for the people
of [the occurrence of] al-Harrah (in Madinah) and Ibn al-Ash’at and Ibn al-Mihlab, and others, then they were defeated, and their associates were also defeated. So they never established the deen and nor did they allow the dunyaa (worldly life) to remain (as it was).

And Allaah, the Exalted, does not order something on account of which rectification of the deen and the dunyaa is not attained – even if the one who does that is from the Awliyaa of Allaah, the Pious ones (Muttaqeens), and from the People of Paradise.

For they are not more superior than Aa’ishah and Talhah and az-Zubair and others, and alongside (what they did), they did not praise what they fell into of fighting, and the likes of these are of greater rank and position in the sight of Allaah, and of better intention than those besides them...

And al-Hasan al-Basri used to say, “Verily al-Hajjaaj is a punishment of Allaah, so do not repel the punishment of Allaah with your hands, but you must (repel it) with humility and submission”.

Editor’s Note: And this is the legacy of all of those who attempt to contend with the authorities in order to sit on the thrones of power themselves. They neither establish the deen by their actions, and nor do they allow the worldly affairs to remain. And the examples of this in the past and also in contemporary times are too numerous to mention.

Editor’s Note: How then when those in our times are from the most despicable and ignorant of people, ignoramuses, who plot evil and destruction in the Muslim lands, while they themselves sit comfortably in the lands of the Infidels, under their protection and sustenance!

Editor’s Note: So when it is the case that those who did fall into fighting in times of tribulation, were of better intention, and more pious and upright than the contemporaries who wish to seize the thrones of power for themselves, and still they erred in what they did, then what excuse is left for the ignoramuses of today, whose intentions are in fact evil, and to whom the error of these ways is manifestly clear and abundant!

Editor’s Note: Stated al-Hasan al-Basri, “Know – may Allaah pardon you – that the tyranny of the kings is a retribution (niqmah) from among the retributions of Allaah the Most High. And Allaah’s retributions are not to be faced with the sword, but they are to be faced with taqwa and are repelled with supplication and repentance, remorse (inaabah) and abstention from sins. Verily, when the punishments of Allaah are met with the sword, are more severe. And Malik bin Deenaar narrated to me that al-Hajjaaj (Ibn Yoosuf) used to say, “Know that every time you commit a sin Allaah will bring about a punishment from the direction of your ruler (sultaan)”. And I have I have also been told that a person said to al-Hajjaaj, “Do you do such and such with the Ummah of Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam)?” So he replied, “For the reason that I am the punishment of Allaah upon the people of Iraq, when they innovated into their religion whatever they innovated, and when they abandoned the commands of the their Prophet – alaihis salaam – whatever they abandoned.” (Adaab H asan...
And the most superior of the Muslims (from the early Muslims) used to forbid revolting and fighting in the times of tribulation, such as ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar and Sa’eed bin al-Muayyad, and ‘Alee bin al-Hasan and others, all of them used to forbid, during the year of Harrah, from the revolt against Yazeed, and just as al-Hasan al-Basree and Mujaahid and others used to forbid from revolt during the tribulation of Ibn al-Ash‘at.

And it is for this reason that it is firmly established with Ahl us-Sunnah to abandon fighting in times of tribulation due to the authentic ahaadeeth that are established from the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), and they began to mention this matter in the course of (authoring their works) on their aqeedah, and they would command with patience towards the oppression of the leaders, and the abandonment of fighting against them – even if a fair portion of the people of knowledge fought against them during the tribulation...

And whoever reflects upon the authentic ahaadeeth that are established from the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) concerning this topic, and also considers with the consideration of those with insight and deep knowledge, will know that that which the Prophetic Texts have come with is from the best of all affairs.

5 Editor’s Note: However some of the ignoramuses, newly-arisen and foolish minded, have ignored the fact that the vast majority of the Salaf prohibited from this type of revolt, even though some of the notables from the people of knowledge fell into this. So out of deceit, they attempt to justify this manhaj of revolt in the current times, with the excuse that there is a precedent from the people of knowledge from the Salaf!

Al-Khattaabee said, “And Ikhtilaaf (in a matter) is not a proof, rather the explanation of the Sunnah is a proof against the opposers, whether they be from the first (Muslims) or the later ones.” (A‘laam al-Hadeeth 3/2093).

And al-Haafidh Abu Umar Ibn Abdul-Barr said, “Ikhtilaaf is not a proof in the view of anyone that I know from the Fuqhaa of this Ummah, except the one who has no vision, and who has no knowledge, and who has no proof in his saying.” (Jaami’ Bayaan ul-Ilm 2/229)

6 Editor’s Note: And as for the Khaarijyyah Asriyyah, from the Qutubiyyah, Surooriyyah and other than them from the wandering strayers, then in their view, those who enjoin what the Prophetic texts enjoin, then they are from the most wretched of people, who speak with the most evil of affairs! May Allaah sever them! And they have a doubt which is that there is a difference between the leaders of those times and leaders of our times – and with this doubt, they confuse the ignorant, and attempt to nullify and abolish the narrations, and attempt to
And for this reason, when al-Husayn (radiallaahu anhu) desired to revolt against the people of ‘Iraaq, they wrote many letters to him, as has been indicated by the people of knowledge, such as Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbaas, ‘Abu Bakr bin Abdur-Rahmaan bin al-Haarith bin Hisaam, that he should not revolt, and their overwhelming belief was that he would be killed... and they were actually desiring to give sincere advice to him, and were seeking what was beneficial and better for him, and for the Muslims in general, and Allaah and His Messenger, verily, they only command with rectitude, not with corruption. However, the opinion can sometimes be correct and can sometimes be wrong.’

So it has become clear that the correct affair was what they had said, and there was not to be found in the revolt any rectification or benefit for the deen and nor for the dunyaa. Rather, those oppressive wrongdoers were able to overcome the grandson of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) until they killed him as one oppressed, a martyr. And in his revolt and his fighting (against them) was such corruption and mischief that would not have occurred had he sat and remained in his own town.

For whatever he intended of the attainment of good and repelling of evil, then nothing from it occurred. Rather, only evil increased by his revolt and his fighting, and the goodness diminished on account of that. And that was also the cause of a great deal of evil, and the killing of Husayn itself was what brought about the tribulations, just as the killing of ‘Uthmaan was from that which brought about tribulations.

7 Editor’s Note: And this is exactly the very same that Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa’ah, the Salafis, the Atharis, advise the astray ones with – those put to trial with the teachings and methodologies of Qutb, Banna, Suroor and Mawdoodi, they give sincere advise to the Muslims and to the Ummah and advise them with that which is better for rectification and better for the worldly affairs, and for them to abandon that in which there lies nothing but further loss of life, oppression, constraints and mischief that cannot be counted.

8 Editor’s Note: And this is the very same as what Imaam Ahmad feared when a group from the people of knowledge came to him, and asked concerning the revolt against the Khaleefah, for his preaching the doctrine of kufr, the saying that the Speech of Allaah is created, so he rejected this and said that there would be much bloodshed and that the tribulation would increase. And the likes of this fiqh (understanding) is only granted to the firmly rooted Imaams, who speak with knowledge and insight (baseerah). And this insight is the very same that the firmly rooted Imaams of our times speak with in their advice to the Ummah.
And all of this is what explains that whatever the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) has commanded of patience towards the tyranny of the Rulers and abandonment of fighting against them and revolting against them, that this is of the most beneficial and rectifying of affairs, in both this life and the next, and that whoever opposes this deliberately, or due to an error, then no rectification is attained by his action, rather only corruption.

And for this reason the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) praised al-Hasan with his saying, “Verily, this son of mine is a leader (sayyid) and Allaah will bring about reconciliation through him between two great factions from...” up until he said, after mentioning that the basis of the Sharee’ah is built upon the welfare and benefits of the servants: “...The Prophet (sallallaahu ‘alaihi -wasallam) legislated for his ummah, the obligation of rejecting the evil so that by its rejection, the goodness that Allaah and His Messenger love is obtained. And when rejecting the evil leads to what is more evil and more hated by Allaah and His Messenger then it is not allowed to reject it - even if Allaah hates it and detests those who perform it (the evil). And this is like rejection [inkaar] against the kings, and the ones in authority by coming out against them [with arms etc. to fight them] - for verily, that is the basis and foundation of every evil (sharr) and every tribulation (fitnah) till the end of time.” (I‘laam al-Muwaqqi‘een)

Stated Shaikh Ibn Uthaimen, “These words are very good (i.e. Imaam al-Albaanee’s). Meaning, that those people pass judgement against the Rulers of the Muslims, that they are disbelievers, what benefit do they achieve by judging them to be disbelievers? Are they able to put an end to them? They are not able. And when it is the case that the Jews have occupied Palestine for around 50 years, yet despite that the Islamic Ummah has not been able in its entirety - Arabs and Non-Arabs alike - to remove them from their place! How then, after this, can we go and strike those who rule over us with our tongues (i.e. make takfir of them) while we know that we are not capable of putting and end to them, and that blood will be shed, and the taking of wealth will become lawful, and even the honours of people. And then we will not even have achieved the desired result!! Therefore, what is the benefit-such that if a person was to believe - in that which is between him and his Lord - that amongst the rulers is one who is a disbeliever in truth, with the kufr that ejects from the religion - what then is the benefit in announcing this and spreading this, except the kindling of tribulation?! ” (Fitnah of Takfir, p.74)

Editor’s Note: And this also exposes the corruption and evil of many of those ignoramuses who call for revolts and rebellions and taking up of arms, against the authorities in the Muslim lands, wasting a fair portion of their time, and that of others, attempting to argue for this methodology - while it is known to them, that this is opposed to the Sunnah and opposed to that in which there is better rectification and correction. And due to the spread of the da’wah of Ahl us-Sunnah, and their clarifications in the likes of these affairs, it is not hidden to many of the modern day neo-Kharijites, and all those poisoned with their poison, that what they promote and propagate, is not something that will bring true rectification. So they know this and understand this but it is the desire that blinds and kills!
amongst the Muslims”, but he did not praise anyone on account of fighting in the time of tribulation, and nor on account of revolting against the leaders, and nor on account of withholding from obedience, or separating from the Jamaa’ah.

And the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) that are established in the Saheeh, all of them indicate this... and this explains that the reconciliation between the two parties was praised and was loved by Allaah and His Messenger, and that what was done by al-Hasan in bringing this about was from the greatest of his excellencies and his stations, on account of which the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) praised him. And if fighting had been obligatory or recommended - and the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) never praised anyone for the abandonment of that which is obligatory or recommended - and for this reason the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) did not praise anyone on account of what happened of fighting on the Day of the Camel, and Siffeen, let alone what occurred in Madinah on the Day of Harrah, and whatever happened in Makkah in the besieging of Ibn az-Zubayr, and what happened in the fitnah of Ibn al-Ash’at and Ibn al-Mihlab and other such tribulations.

Rather, it has been successively narrated (tawaatara) from him that he commanded fighting against the Khawaarij, the Renegades, those whom the Chief of the Believers fought against, Alee bin Abee Taalib (radiallaahu anhu), at Nahrawaan, after they had revolted against him at Harooraa. For the narrations (sunan) from the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) were in abundance (i.e. spread, known) concerning the fighting against them (the Khawaarij), and when Alee (radiyallaahu anhu) fought against them, he rejoiced with fighting against them, and he also narrated the hadeeth concerning them, and the Companions also agreed upon fighting them.

10 Editor’s Note: And as for what is argued by the Neo-Kharijites, from the Qutubiyyah and others, that this was only for those rulers in those times, and not for the rulers of our times – then this is falsehood, and they know it is falsehood. For the prohibition of revolting is based around the prevention of greater evil and corruption in the land and the prevention of greater harm to the Muslims in general. And as for when clear, manifest disbelief is observed from the one in authority, then this in and of itself does not warrant revolt and rebellion and fighting - as the people of knowledge have explained. Rather, a further matter is required; consideration is given to what will result from the revolt and fighting. And this is not a matter that is submitted to by the neo-Khawaarij, whose only goal is to rouse the common folk, after making takfeer in general, unrestricted terms, of all of the rulers, and then calling for activism which is actually geared towards confrontation and contention.

11 Editor’s Note: Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, “And the way, seerah, of the Muslims has never ceased upon this (methodology). They did not declare them (i.e. the Khawarij) to be apostates like those whom as-Siddiq (radiallaahu anhu) fought against. And this despite the command of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) to fight against them,
And similarly the people of knowledge after them, this fighting (against the Khawaarij) was not like the fighting of the people of the Camel and Siffeen and other than them, from those matters in which no text of Ijmaa' has come, and neither any praise of the noble ones who entered into it. Rather, they were remorseful about it, and also returned (i.e. recanted) from it.

And this hadeeth (i.e. concerning al-Hasan) is from the signs of the Prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), when he mentioned about al-Hasan whatever he mentioned, and praised him for what he praised him. So whatever he mentioned and whatever he praised was in agreement with the truth that actually occurred after more than 30 years...

as occurs in the authentic hadiths, and also despite what has been reported about them in the hadeeth of Abu Umaamah, collected by at-Tirmidhi and others that they are “the most evil of those who are killed under the sky and how excellent is the one killed by them”. Meaning that they are more harmful to the Muslims than others, for there are none which are more harmful to the Muslims than them, neither the Jews and nor the Christians. For they strived to kill every Muslim who did not agree with their view, declaring the blood of the Muslims, their wealth, and the slaying of their children to be lawful, while making takfir of them. And they considered this to be worship, due to their ignorance and their innovation that caused to stray...” Minhaj us-Sunnah 5/248.

Ibn Hubairah concerning the hadeeth of Abu Sa’eed al-Khudree, “In this hadeeth is proof that fighting the Khawarij comes before fighting the pagans, mushrikeen. And the wisdom in that is that in fighting against them is a preservation of the capital of Islaam, whereas in fighting the people of Shirk there is the seeking of increase (in capital). So preserving the capital comes first.” Fath ul-Bari 12/301.

‘Asim bin Shumaikh said, “So I saw him – meaning Abu Sa’eed al-Khudree (who reported the hadith about the killing of the Khawarij) – after he had grown old and when his hands began to tremble, saying, Fighting them - meaning the Khawarij - is greater to me than fighting an equal number of the Turks”. Ibn Abi Shaybah 15/305 and Musnad Ahmad 3/33.

And fighting the Khawaarij is in all times, and it is obligatory to repel them, by way of the pen, tongue or sword as they will never cease to emerge until in the midst of the last of them appears the Dajjaal. The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said, “A group will appear reciting the Qur’aan, it will not pass beyond their throats, every time a group appears, it is to be cut off, until the Dajjaal appears within them”. (Reported by Ibn M aajah and it is H asan. And see Silsilat ul-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah of al-Albaanee, no. 2455).

And the two main features of the Khawaarij are takfīr by way of major sins and adopting revolt and rebellion as a methodology of reform. And a new band of K hawarij has emerged in contemporary times under the influence of teachings, doctrines and works of their pole and axis, Aal Q utb – who have aided in the proliferation of the aqeedah and manhaj of the Khawaarij.
And this very thing is the actual wisdom that the legislator (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) was attempting to bring about and nurture in his prohibition of revolting against the rulers, and he taught abandonment of fighting in times of fitnah - even if those who fell into this considered that their intent is to enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

And it is actually from this angle (i.e. intending the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil) that the Khawaarij made lawful the (raising of the) sword against the people of the qiblah, until they killed Alee and others from the Muslims. And similarly, those who agreed with them in revolting against the Rulers, with the sword, in general terms - such as the M u'tazilah, the Zaydiyyah, and the Fuqahaa (Jurists), and others. Such as those who revolted alongside Muhammad bin Abdullaah bin Abdullaah bin Hasan bin Husayn, and his brother, Ibraaheem bin Abdullaah bin Hasan bin Husayn and others.

For the people of the religion are from the likes of these (i.e. those who revolted), but they err from two angles:

**The first:** That what they considered to be from the deen is not actually from the deen, such as the viewpoint of the Khawaarij and other than them from the people of desires. For they believe in an opinion that is an error and an innovation, and then they fight the people over it. Rather, they declare as disbelievers those who oppose them. Hence, they become errant in their opinion and also in fighting those who oppose them, or making takfir of them and cursing them.

And this is the condition of the People of Desires in general, such as the Jahmiyyah who called the people to the rejection of the realities of the Beautiful Names of Allaah, and His Lofty Attributes. They say: Verily, He does not have speech except the speech which He created in others (besides Himself), and that He will not be seen, and other such things. And they also put the people to trial, when some of the rulers inclined towards them (i.e. towards the Jahmiyyah), and so they would punish whoever would oppose them in their opinion, either with death, or with imprisonment, or with banishment and prevention of sustenance. And the Jahmiyyah did this on more than one occasion (in history), and Allaah supports His believing Servants against them.

And the Rafidah are more evil than them, when they gain authority, for they are loyal to the Kuffaar and aid them, and they show enmity towards all those from the Muslims who do not agree with their viewpoint. Similarly, those who have something within them of innovations, either the innovation of the Hulooliyyah... or the innovation of the Negators (of the Attributes) or those who exaggerate in affirmation (of the Attributes), or the innovation of the
Qadariyyah, or that of Irjaa', or other than that. You will find him believing in corrupt beliefs, and then declare as a disbeliever or curse whoever opposed him. And the Khawaarij Renegades are the Imaams of all of these in making takfeer of Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah and in fighting them.  

The second: The one who fights based upon his belief in a viewpoint to which he calls the one who opposes the Sunnah and Jamaa'ah, such as the People of the Camel, and Siffeen, and al-H arrah, and al-Jamaajim and others. However, he thinks that the desired rectification and benefit will be attained by way of this fighting, but this fighting attains no such thing. Rather, the corruption and harm becomes greater, much more than what it was initially. And then what the legislator (i.e. the Prophet) actually indicates and direct towards (of what entails true rectitude) finally becomes clear to them at the end of the affair.

And from that which is desirable to be known is that the causes of these tribulation are actually mixed, shared. For certain states and conditions come over the hearts that prevent them from knowing the truth and desiring it, and thus they resemble the state of Jaahiliyyah. Since, in Jaahiliyyah there was no knowledge of the truth and nor the desiring of this truth. And then Islaam came with beneficial knowledge and the righteous action, which is the knowledge of the truth, and desiring it.

So it is agreed that some of the rulers commit oppression by way of monopoly, control (i.e. being authoritarian and misappropriating), and then the souls do not show patience over his oppression. And it is not possible for them to repel his oppression except by what is even greater corruption than it (i.e. his oppression). However, for the sake of the love of a person, so that his due legal right can be given, and that oppression can be repelled from him, he does not look at (and consider) the general corruption, mischief that would arise on account of his action.

And for this reason the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said, “Verily, you will face hardship, so have patience until you meet me at the Hawd”, and it is likewise established in the Saheeh, that he said, “Upon a Muslim is to hear and obey, in times of difficulty and in ease, in the disliked things (to which one

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12 Editor’s Note: And it comes as no surprise that the Imaams of Takfir in contemporary times remain the Khawaarij, those who make takfir of those who do not adopt their own takfir of the Rulers and the Scholars, in unrestricted terms. And some of them are explicit in their takfir of the Salafis, and of inciting the ignorant against them. And others are explicit in their tabdee’ of the Salafis, and warning the ignorant from them, merely because they advised and called to that which the Sharee’ah itself calls to, of the reduction of evil and the call to the true rectification, following the methodology of the Prophets in all of that.
disapproves of) and in likeable things (to which one shows zeal), and when he preference is given (to other than him)"

For the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) ordered the Muslims that they should be patient when they are controlled, monopolised (in oppression), and that they should obey those who in charge of their affairs, even if they (the rulers) give preference to themselves over them (the subjects), and that they should not contend for authority. And many of those who revolted against those in authority, or the vast majority of them, then they revolted so that they may contend with them (for authority), alongside their misappropriation, monopoly, over them, so they did not show patience upon this... and the one who fights remains thinking that he is only fighting him so that there is no more fitnah and so that the deen, all of it is for Allaah, and yet the greatest of that which actually motivated him (mobilised him) was seeking his portion, either of leadership, or of wealth.\(^\text{13}\)

Just as Allaah, the Exalted said, ‘If they are given part thereof (of alms), they are pleased, but if they are not given thereof, behold! They are enraged!’ (At-Tawbah 9:58) and in the Saheeh from the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) that he said, “There are three whom Allaah will not speak to, nor look at on the Day of Judgement, and nor will he purify them, and they will have a tormenting punishment... and a man who gives the pledge of allegiance to a leader (imaam) and he does not do so except for the sake of the world, if he is given from it, he is pleased, and if he is prevented from it, he is enraged..."

And he ordered having patience upon their misappropriation, and prohibited fighting against them, and contending with them (for authority), alongside their oppression. Because the corruption, mischief that arises from fighting during fitnah, is greater than the corruption in the oppression of those in authority. Thus, the lighter of two evils is not to be removed by the greater of the two. And whoever reflects upon the Qur’aan and the Sunnah that is established from Allaah’s Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) and considers it will find it to be in agreement with what he finds in his own soul.”

End of Shaykh ul-Isaam’s words.

\(^{13}\) Editor’s Note: Indeed, this is the very condition of those who traverse towards “Tawheed ul-Kursee”, which is “Unification of the Thrones (of Power)” – for themselves that is. So some of them wish to contend with the authorities directly, with force and power (the Qutubi route) and others sell themselves and enter into the political arena, and democracy and elections, and Machiavellian politics, so as to arrive at the “Kursee” (the Bannaawi route).
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