

Introduction of the Second Edition

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الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ فَاِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدَهُ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

“This is God’s guidance guideth He with it, whomsoever of His servants He pleaseth; and if they were to associate others (with Him) certainly would be vain for them what they were doing. These are they whom gave We the Book and the authority and the apostleship; so if these (people) disbelieve in it, indeed have We (already) entrusted it unto a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom God hath guideth, therefore follow their guidance.” (6: 88–90)

While introducing the second edition of my book *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, or *Difa’ ‘an al-hadith*, I find myself obliged to present an express comment on its first edition, and how was the reaction and response toward it on the part of people with their different strata and inclinations.

Concerning the eminent scholars and leading thinkers in our homeland and other countries, this book – thanks to God for His favour and help – has gained their pleasure and appreciation with much applause, may Allah reward them the best, on my behalf and that of knowledge. In regard of those who dislike investigation in research, strival (*ijtihad*) in comprehension, and free thinking, seeing knowledge to lie only in whatever they have learned through dictation from their chiefs and *shaykhs* ... these people reacted to it – as was expected – with severe protest, making widespread campaign against it here and there, and even authoring books to this end. My reaction or stance toward such people was turning away from them, never facing them with the same stance and practices.

But, through any of these books – despite their voluminousness and abundance – I have never come across even one study of worth or a subjective criticism based on a modern scientific style that showing a truth or rectifying an error, or modifying a viewpoint, with their value being only disclosing the actual morals and nature of their authors with the level of their knowledge. And if such type of criticism was justifiable for some people in the past, it has verily become nowadays so detested, with no one resorting to it but only the ignorant who know nothing of the principles of criticism.

This is due to the fact that the proper criticism in the present time verily rests upon established principles of full perfect knowledge, sagacious intellect and sound logic, beside the critic's being of chaste tongue and polite style as a prime condition. Through these conditions alone, criticism can undertake its mission best so as to be approved and accepted by people, with having the required effect and impression upon hearts and minds altogether.

The fact of which man may never perish out of wonder, being that all those who blasted and opposed my book have in fact neither managed to recognize its real purpose and objective, nor been able to be aware of its aims. The reason behind this might be traced back to its being beyond their cognizance and perception, and its theme being strange and unknown to them. Beside its research being based on modern scientific methodology which they fail and be short of attaining and recognizing, as when they were faced with it were frightened entailing to their denial and opposition to it for fearing from its implications for them.

I wish that they, on failing to comprehend and realize my words, would have chosen to keep silent, causing no bother to people (out of their opposition), heeding to the counsel of the wise poet who said:

I wish that who having no knowledge,

Had kept us immune from evil of his knowledge!

After all this, I announce with full confidence and self-assurance that verily no harm is there to inflict my book because of such a feeble baseless criticism, which only added to its value, and sublimated its position.

For Truth and History

Following is the story of my book with the investigating and non-investigating scholars, recorded here, in a brief statement for sake of serving the truth and history, so as to remain for ever as a sincere ensign and evidence to be read by all generations throughout ages. Through this, people get to know how some *shaykhs* of religion – in our age, of enlightenment, knowledge and atom – would react toward knowledge books produced through serious investigation in research, and strival in conceptualization, and freedom in thought!!

I have no choice here but to refer to a point I found so clear in the criticism launched by the critics, that is

their campaigns were intensified in regard of Abu Hurayrah in particular, and reliability of the Companions (*Sahabah*) in general, to an extent reaching an unreasonable stage. Therefore, for fulfilling my duty toward truth and history and respecting knowledge sanctity, I found myself obliged to review and revise my book as a whole. Out of this I intended to reinforce its sections and support its chapters, with authentic sources and *asanid* having consideration among *Ahl al-Sunnah* of which I abstained publishing in the first edition and which may be found after the coming out of this edition. They cover these two subjects (Abu Hurayrah and Sahabah) with all other topics of the book that actually need reconsideration, revision, rectification, omission, addition and elucidation, especially those points being stated for the first time, till the book turned to be defectless and perfect.

Concerning Abu Hurayrah, due to his own special situation, in which none of the Companions shares, and no parallel to him is there among them, whether in regard of his *sirah* (conduct) or biography, or abundance of the traditions he narrated, I have dedicated a separate book for him under the title: Shaykh al-mudirah, having it printed and published twice.²

With regard to the *Sahabah*, I opined to support my writings in the first edition with quoting whatever revealed about them from the most truthful book, referred to by Muslims in East and West of earth, which is the holy Qur'an. Whoever intends and be able to dispute or argue regarding any of its verses, or debates any of its words, he is free to do, being thus so bold and valiant. Some people (of Sunnites) may claim that the verses revealed in regard of the *Sahabah* and their conditions were abrogated! Further, they say that if they were on this state during the lifetime of the Prophet (S), they afterwards have been quite innocent and immaculate,³ and anyone claiming the opposite is verily a *zindiq* (blasphemous) whose faith is corrupt.⁴

In conclusion of speech I say: I am ready to accept, with delight and pleasure, all the criticism launched against me. May Allah's mercy be upon Ibn Hazm, who said:

“Whoever ponders and meditates, training his self to be pacified at realities, though they be painful for it at first shock, his rejoicing at being censured by people shall be much more than that rejoice caused by praising him.

May Allah guide us all toward the straightforward path and bestow upon us His grace and pleasure. He is surely the Benevolent the Merciful.

An Indispensable Explanation

Before finishing with preparing the second edition of this book, I find myself obliged to publish this explanatory statement to give replies for two accurate comments. One given by the honourable scholar Dr. Taha Husayn after reading the first edition of this book twice, as he expressed – may God preserve him – in the interesting chapter he wrote about my book, in which he applauded it and its author, for which I present my gratitude and sincere praise. I have sought God's guidance to make of this chapter

the introduction to this edition.

Following is the first comment that was given by the Doctor and some scholars:

While citing to people the story of *hadith*, exposing what happened to it at the hands of the narrators, and that which befell it out of the fabrication of fabricators and others, beside alike things I stated in my book, I quote again some traditions as proofs for whatever I intend to confirm or negate, or other than this! Which seems to be only paradox.

This comment is worthy of regard, should I believe in the veracity of the traditions I am quoting, assuring their being uttered, with their words and denotations, by the Prophet (S)! For warding off this suspicion I say: The traditions I am citing through my discussion as evidences supporting my views in the book, are only mentioned for convincing those who can never be persuaded but only by such traditions, since they consider them as intuitions in which they firmly believe.

Through this I have not transgressed the principles of logic and methods of argumentation and debate. Since we have the term *al-dalil al-iqna'i* (the convincing evidence), where one can argue with his opponent with something the latter considers intuitive. The example for this being the Muslim's arguing the Christian with something stated in the Gospel, while he himself disbelieving in that with which he is arguing.

Or on the contrary of this, or what is called by them *dalil al-ilzam* (the binding evidence), in which they say: "Bind them with the laws with which they have bound themselves." This issue is quite common among scholars needing no proofs or evidences to prove it.

But this fact never includes all the traditions cited in my book, as signs of veracity seem apparently on some of them, like an exposition of the holy Qur'an, or being in harmony with the sound reason, or "be in accordance with the principles upon which religion was established, toward which the *da'wah* (call) was launched, and for which Prophethood was bestowed," or through whose denotations I be enlightened by a ray of *Nubuwwah* light, though being dim and scanty.

Feeling this fact through my inner consciousness, I would take and narrate those traditions in which confidence is felt and reason can believe and admit, considering them to be among the Messenger's explanation of the noble Book. This, while being certain of their being among *ahad* traditions, and of conjectural evidence that never amounting to the degree of peremptoriness indicating certainty (*yaqin*), with their narration being through denotation and not with the original words uttered by the Prophet (S).

Intuitionism necessitates us to believe in authenticity of some traditions like the one: "Never write from me other than the Qur'an," the *hadith* on which I based my book. Because all the contexts and evidences indicate its veracity, with being supported by the acts of the *Sahabah*, who have all followed it absolutely, abstaining from writing down the Messenger's traditions, besides forbidding people from inscribing them. In this way, all these traditions have reached us through narration (*riwayah*), not through

inscription as in the case of the Qur'an.

The second comment given by the honourable Doctor was through his own words when saying: You have abundantly reported from al-Sayyid Rashid Ridha' (may God's mercy be upon him). I heard this note too from other eminent *ulama*, which I admit to be an undeniable truth!

My reply to this comment being that, my doing so was never out of unawareness or lacking to evidences, but was verily on purpose on my part for significant reasons.

Of them, that this Sayyid is regarded nowadays one of the reputable leaders of *fiqh*, whom *Ahl al-Sunnah* were considering reliable and trustworthy mujtahids, of whom they were taking (traditions and *ahkam*). And also his being the unrivalled chief of *Ahl al-Sunnah* traditionists in our time, to the extent being aware of whatever related to the traditions contained in the famous Sunnah books, recognizing what afflicted them at the hands of narrators, beside whatever relevant to subject of my book, unless any other scholar be aware of such things. Sufficient be is that *al-Azhar* – that great institute – has never introduced or educated, throughout many ages or in our time, anyone that can be his equal in knowledge and research. I am fully responsible for these words.

Moreover, he has inherited knowledge of Professor al-Imam Muhammad Abduh, whose knowledge and virtue needing no mention, besides being widely known among the leading religious authorities and leaders. So whatever is uttered by al-Sayyid Rashid I consider as if issued by his teacher al-Imam, due to identicalness between their methodology and way of viewing the religion.⁵

Due to his enjoying all these attributes, his sayings and opinions shall be – undoubtedly – be considered by *Ahl al-Sunnah* as decisive arguments (*hujaj*) and convincing proofs, with no one daring to dispute or deny. That is why I have extensively quoted his sayings and views in my book, taking them as strong evidences supporting my statements.

The same can be true in regard of any other scholar whose utterances I usually quote like Ibn Taymiyyah, of whom I have abundantly quoted. *Ahl al-Sunnah* call him Shaykh al-Islam, imparting upon him high esteem and status. At the same time we recognize worth of these two eminent scholars, we are aware too of the points for which they be reproached. And the utterances of everyone can be quoted and refuted, except for the owner of the message (S).

I have deliberately done so, since I was aware of the protest to be launched against my book, on the part of those calling themselves *Ahl al-Sunnah*, exactly as was seen in their reaction toward some chapters of this book that were published in *al-Risalah* journal several years before coming out of my book. This fact is explicitly demonstrated through the hardships and misfortune I experienced after the coming out of the book from press.

This being my reply to the observations of Dr. Taha Husayn and others, hoping this reply be sufficient and satisfactory for him and all learned 'ulama. I will content myself with this answer.

Here I avail myself of this opportunity to add some lines to this statement in which I disclose a firm reality of whose comprehension some people are misled.

This point being their claim that from my book I intend to achieve a latent purpose, being to impede the Prophetic *Sunnah* (traditions) from spread and be content with the holy Qur'an in taking all precepts and rules of religion! I know not wherefrom they got this mistaken conception, nor in which chapter of my book I mentioned it, or referred to it in a way or another.

Whereas what I have expressed through clear-cut statements with no ambiguity or obscurity, was that calling people to be precautious and reservative in taking and accepting the traditions, trying their best to seek and find only the *sahih* (veracious) and authentic ones. Beside discarding and not heeding to the unauthentic and composed ones, after that much distortion to them at the hands of narrators, the fact I elaborated in details in my book. I haven't introduced in this respect anything as a novelty; rather it was the conduct (*Sunnah*) of the precedent leaders of Islam, and the usual practice of the knowledgeable 'ulama.

Reiterating and emphasizing this more than once, I am certain that the Qur'an being verily the origin of the straightforward religion, and the *Sunnah* being only its expositor. So the exposition and demonstration should be correct and obvious, and devoid of any suspicion.

Though my words being so obvious and clear, much criticism and sarcasm reached me. But all this has no effect on me whatsoever, and can never be in a way or another detrimental to my book.

Jizah of Fustat,

Friday 8th of Muharram 1383 H.

May 31, 1963, A.D.

1. I have deleted from this introduction more than seventeen pages, in which I stated the standpoint of those who attacked me and my book. Because I preferred to deal mildly and respond to evil with good and kindness, the fact led me to neglect whatever they said and spoke against me. I invoke Allah to forgive all those who vexed and slammed me, and to guide them toward the straightforward path.

2. This book was printed twice, one edition in the city of Sour in Lebanon, and the second one in Cairo.

3. The principle upon which some depend is that the Sahabah as a whole being reliable, inferring the hadith: "My Companions are like stars ..." which is baseless. See the book al-Muntaqa of Ibn Taymiyyah, p. 551, and other books.

4. Refer to my book Shaykh al-Mudirah, so as to find the name of that who issued such a judgement, who is – regrettably – a professor teaching the Islamic Shari'ah in one of the Egyptian universities.

5. The great Allamah al-Shaykh Mustafa Abd al-Raziq, the former lecturer in al-Azhar University (may God's mercy be upon him) says: If al-Shaykh Muhammad Abduh be a religious authority (imam), so al-Sayyid Rashid Ridha' would be undoubtedly his companion, interpreter of his madhhab and his complement. The founder of al-Manar (may God's mercy be upon him) has exerted in this respect a tremendous effort, replete with religious researches and fiqhi debates, which had an effective impact on knowledge-seekers and their curricula, and on methods of the Islamic studies throughout all the Islamic countries. (See the book Ra'id al-Fikr al-Misri, p. 15).

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