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The Phenomenon of Takfir (Causes and Solutions)

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Abstract. Intellectual, spiritual, and economic voids are significant factors contributing to the spread of the phenomenon of takfir and terrorism. The absence of an effective state role in economic matters, coupled with the lack of involvement by scholars in intellectual and educational aspects, accelerates the spread of this epidemic. Addressing these gaps helps the youth avoid the pitfalls of doubt, extremism, and misguidance. Consequently, students of knowledge, and young people in general, can fulfill their roles in disseminating knowledge, culture, and ethics, becoming beacons of guidance for those lost in the deserts of strife and misguidance, leading them to the oases of guidance and enlightenment. This process quenches thirsty souls, heals wounded hearts, and turns texts and knowledge into rays of light that illuminate the world with love, development, and peace. It offers a gentle touch to the mind, spirit, and heart, acting as a balm that heals afflictions. Humanity, in turn, will find happiness and shelter under the teachings and guidance of the Prophet of Mercy, our Master Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and his noble companions.

Keywords: Takfir Phenomenon, economic voids.

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and may the best prayers and most complete salutations be upon our Master Muhammad, his family, his companions, and those who follow his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

One of the most serious challenges faced by nations, both in the past and present, is the emergence of various epidemics that periodically claim lives in alarming numbers. Medical professionals swiftly rise to confront these epidemics by studying their causes, symptoms, and preventive measures, while developing the necessary vaccines and medications to treat the afflicted and protect the healthy. The challenges continue unabated, for as soon as one epidemic is controlled and eradicated, another emerges, prompting specialists to once again enter the fray, racing against time to develop effective vaccines and strategies to eliminate the new threat and save humanity, as seen recently with the bird flu epidemic.

However, the afflictions and epidemics that beset nations and peoples are not limited to those that impact the human body. There are also grave intellectual, ideological, and moral afflictions that are no less dangerous than the physical epidemics that strike the human body. In fact, they are more perilous and destructive, leading to catastrophic consequences such as bloodshed, violation of sanctities, destruction of crops and offspring, and the ignition of strife that consumes everything in its path, as Allah says: "And fitnah is worse than killing"[1]

The Importance of the Research and the Reason for its Selection:

Among the most dangerous intellectual and ideological afflictions are those that relate to religion and use it as a guise to achieve their perilous objectives. They manipulate religious knowledge to spread misguided teachings and deviant ideas, resulting in disastrous outcomes. History records nothing more dreadful or dangerous than religious wars, from which nations have suffered great calamities.

This grave affliction particularly affects the youth, stirring their deep-seated religious sensibilities and channeling their fervor and energy towards propagating destructive ideas and deviant beliefs among their peers and society. This phenomenon becomes especially pronounced during times of turmoil and crisis, when young people, devoid of employment, beneficial knowledge, or a stable environment in which to cultivate their talents and potentials, are left vulnerable. Hence, it is essential to confront these afflictions, study their causes, identify the necessary measures to address them, and ultimately eradicate them. This includes developing the required "vaccines" to protect future generations from their return, thereby preventing the disintegration of societal cohesion.

This is the critical duty of our era, a responsibility that falls upon everyone. We cannot shirk this mission; everyone must shoulder this responsibility according to their role and position in life, from scholars, educators, and leaders to families, relatives, and friends.

The Islamic nation has been afflicted by this scourge in the past, in various times and places, but Allah has always provided it with righteous scholars and leaders who have eradicated it and ended its evil, as affirmed by the saying of the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "There will emerge people from my nation from the direction of the East who recite the Quran but it does not go beyond their throats; whenever a generation of them emerges, it will be cut off" [13]

1. The emergence of these intellectual epidemics is closely linked to the deterioration of the nation's political, economic, and social conditions. The scourge of takfir has reemerged within the body of the nation since the mid-20th century, spreading among its youth like wildfire, especially as some scholars and leaders of the nation turned a blind eye to it. The epidemic bared its fangs, knocking on the doors of every Muslim country and infiltrating every peaceful home. It soon caused division and discord within the nation, escalating in some Muslim countries, including our own, where it resulted in the killing and displacement of our people and the destruction and devastation of our institutions. This was primarily due to a deep-seated ignorance that clouded the minds of the youth, and a blind following of desires that took hold of their tender hearts. Consequently, they began to apply blessed Quranic verses, revealed concerning disbelievers, to their fellow Muslims, whom they then regarded as infidels and criminals, justifying the shedding of their blood and the seizure of their wealth. They pride themselves on these actions, anticipating great rewards, as the Almighty accurately stated: "Say, 'Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to their deeds? Those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work' [1]

Research Plan:

The topic of this research necessitated the inclusion of an introduction and two chapters, with each chapter containing several sections, followed by a conclusion summarizing the key findings of the research.

CHAPTER ONE: CAUSES OF THE EMERGENCE OF TAKFIR

The rise of the phenomena of terrorism and takfir (excommunication) can be attributed to several factors, among the most important of which are the following:

First: The Responsibility of Leaders and the Impact of Economic Factors

The responsibility for the spread of takfir, misinformation, and other intellectual, doctrinal, and ethical epidemics falls upon everyone, as previously mentioned. However, the primary burden lies with rulers and leaders, for as the saying goes, "God enforces through authority what He does not enforce through the Qur'an."[5] This is due to the authority and influence that rulers wield in implementing laws, governing the nation, and leading it to safety, ensuring a prosperous life for the people. The failure of economic policies is a significant and primary factor in the emergence and spread of such dangerous intellectual epidemics. What can one expect from the high unemployment rates, a prominent feature in most Arab and Islamic nations? What will result from the decline in living standards, rising prices, lack of economic openness, and the absence of a clear and robust economic reform

program for a century? Will not all these factors, among others, lead to the loss of youth and the dispersal of their creative intellectual and physical energies into the valleys of misguidance, deviation, and extremism?

If those responsible for the nation's policies were to revisit the rich heritage and illustrious history of their nation, they would find beacons of guidance and light, and markers of a great civilization that once dominated the world and led its course for several centuries. Following in their footsteps would bring immense prosperity to the land, as it did for our righteous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them. For instance, when Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, may Allah have mercy on him, sent his agent to Africa to collect zakat from the wealthy and redistribute it to the poor, the agent collected vast amounts of wealth due to the abundance of the rich. However, he could not find a single poor person to give zakat to, so the Caliph ordered him to arrange marriages for the youth and provide homes, servants, and transportation for those who lacked them. Yet, time passed, and today Africa has become one of the poorest and most impoverished continents in the world.

In the past, the Islamic nation became completely self-sufficient in just a few years, and it became the duty of the public treasury to arrange marriages for the youth, provide employment opportunities, and ensure that having a home, transportation, and a maid were essential needs [10] below the sufficiency line available to every individual. What kind of prosperity did the Islamic nation achieve? What kind of advanced civilization did our ancestors build, blessed by the teachings of the noble Shari'ah? Is there a modern Western state today that grants its citizens such privileges? Instead, today's states burden their citizens with a myriad of strange taxes, some even imposing a tax for using roads or crossing bridges!

Our illustrious history is filled with lessons from which we can derive broad principles in various fields, including the care and sufficiency of youth. For instance, it was reported to our master Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that workers stole a camel from their master and ate it. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) asked them about it, and they responded that their master starved them and did not give them their due rights, which led them to steal the camel and eat it. Umar then turned to the employer, rebuking and threatening him, saying, "By Allah, were it not for the fact that I believe you exploit them and starve them, so that if one of them found something forbidden, he would eat it, I would have cut off their hands. But by Allah, if I leave them, I will impose a fine on you that will pain you." [15].

Thus, it is incumbent upon all those in authority to strive to raise the cultural and economic level of youth and to harness their intellectual and physical energies to build a developed and prosperous society. By doing so, we can once again join the ranks of advanced civilizations, both in terms of culture and conduct. We were once the leaders of this global movement and among the first to establish the principles of human and applied sciences, which have contributed to the creation of the present-day civilization enjoyed by the entire world.

Second: The Responsibility of Scholars and the Impact of Knowledge

Islam is a comprehensive and perfect religion, suitable for all successive generations across time and place. This is because it is a divine, well-guided path that leads to the most upright of methods and perspectives, as the Almighty says: *"Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable." [1] However, the deviation of the Muslim ummah from the teachings of its Lord and the Sunnah of its Prophet is the primary reason for the spread of physical, intellectual, and doctrinal diseases and epidemics. The Almighty says: "So let those beware who dissent from the Prophet's order, lest trials strike them or a painful punishment."[1] Did not the truthful and trustworthy Prophet Muhammad inform us that "Immorality never appears among a people to the extent that they announce it openly except that plague and diseases that were unknown among their predecessors will spread among them..."[7].

The epidemic of AIDS, for instance, has spread in many nations—God protect us—and global health organizations are warning against it, striving to limit its spread, and taking the necessary measures to prevent it and find an effective cure. This is all a result of humanity's deviation from the natural disposition that Allah created in them. The Almighty says: "And in whatever you disagree, its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah. Say, 'That is Allah, my Lord; upon Him I have relied, and to Him I turn back.'" [1] He also says: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]." [1]

Our noble Shari'ah has established principles and foundations for the various systems of Islam, drawn from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of our noble Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Among these is the Islamic educational and ethical system, which works to firmly safeguard the Muslim individual, making him a virtuous building block in the structure of a righteous Muslim family. Thus, the Muslim society is built on solid educational and ethical foundations where everyone knows their rights and responsibilities.

The scholars of Islam from the righteous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them, established a blessed golden rule highlighting the importance of proper upbringing and good conduct in balancing concepts and their necessary proportion in the culture of the Muslim, ensuring that he becomes a constructive element in his society and country. For example, Imam al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, said: " may Allah have mercy on him,

said to me: 'O Muhammad, make your manners refined and your knowledge like salt.'" [19] High moral character and refined manners take precedence over knowledge and worship. It was reported to the Prophet that a woman who fasted during the day and prayed at night but harmed her neighbor with her tongue. He said: "There is no good in her; she is in the Fire." [12]. Poor manners and bad conduct, even just harming a neighbor with the tongue, nullified the value of her fasting and praying during the best of times, the era of the best of mankind. So, what about this era, filled with corruption and trials?

The Prophet ﷺ consistently established the proper standards by which people should evaluate themselves and others. He utilized every opportunity and incident to emphasize the importance of noble character, a pure heart, and refined manners, demonstrating that these qualities take precedence in Islamic law over superficial knowledge or hollow physical acts that lack substance and beauty. The Prophet ﷺ said, "If a person's prayer does not lead them to enjoin good and forbid evil, it only distances them further from Allah" [17].

Once, while sitting with his companions, a man approached, and they praised him highly. The Prophet ﷺ remarked, "There is a trace of the devil on his face" [15]. The Prophet ﷺ used this moment to correct the companions' standards of judgment. Although they praised the man for his outward knowledge and acts of worship, the Prophet ﷺ, with the divine insight granted to him, perceived the inner corruption and spiritual maladies of the man's heart, which manifested as a sign of the devil on his face. Here, the Prophet ﷺ had to speak to the people according to their level of understanding, as was his blessed tradition and sound educational method. He then explained his statement, saying, "There is a trace of the devil on his face," and no better proof exists than the man's own admission. The Prophet ﷺ asked him in front of everyone, "Did you just think that there is no one among us better than you?" The man replied, "Yes" [15]. The man knew that if he concealed anything from the Prophet ﷺ, Allah would soon reveal it in a Qur'anic verse recited until the Day of Judgment. Thus, he had no choice but to admit the truth, which corrected the standards and realigned the measures.

What merit lies in knowledge or worship that produces arrogance, self-importance, and disdain for others? What vile character leads only to division, discord, and strife, causing one to depart from the community and reject Islamic teachings? Imam Ibn ‘Ata’ Allah al-Sakandari, may Allah have mercy on him, aptly said in his Hikam: "A sin that begets humility and brokenness is better than an act of obedience that begets pride and arrogance." [17]

Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ ordered the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to kill the man due to the seeds of discord and rebellion he harbored against the rulings of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. However, the man escaped, by Allah’s decree, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "This is the first horn of the devil that has emerged in my community. If you had killed him, not two people among you would have differed" [17]

Allah Almighty praised His noble Prophet ﷺ, saying, "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" [1]. The Prophet ﷺ also said, "There is nothing heavier in the scales of a believer on the Day of Judgment than good character, and Allah detests the shameless and foul-mouthed" [2]

Thus, what merit can be attributed to a scholar who is foul-mouthed and obscene in both speech and action, who interacts with others only with a scowling face, a harsh tone, and harsh words? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Do not disdain any good deed, even if it is to meet your brother with a cheerful face" [14]. Cheerfulness is the opposite of scowling and refers to having a face full of joy and pleasantness. Undoubtedly, bringing joy to people's hearts is a great virtue. How much we need this noble character today to mend the hearts and spirits broken by the succession of trials, wars, and the evils of blind terrorism.

The Ministry of Education has rightly been guided by God to name their program in such a purposeful manner. They have coupled education with upbringing and prioritized the latter over the former. This is rooted in a correct understanding derived from the lenient teachings of Islam, which places significant emphasis on upbringing and prioritizes it over mere instruction. Imam ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim's statement is enlightening: "I served Imam Mālik for twenty years, spending two of those years on learning knowledge and eighteen years on learning manners. I wish I had devoted the entire time to learning manners." (See: The Etiquette of the Scholar and the Student.). This concept is the necessary path to protect the next generation from extremist ideas, deviation, and takfīr.

Thus, the scholars' tradition has been to nurture the generation and refine its noble ethics so that it may carry the trust of knowledge, capable of understanding and correctly interpreting it. Scholars have inscribed immortal pages in human history, creating generations adorned with the sublime ethics of Islam, who recognize the true worth of everything. This is because they saw in the scholars of the ummah true models to be emulated, and their noble actions and ethics left luminous imprints on the minds and hearts of contemporary generations. What, then, will a reader of the pamphlet learn? What will imprint upon the mind and heart of someone possessed by desires and darkened hearts that sell their religion for a small gain in this world?

Knowledge is a trust; thus, a Muslim should know from whom they are acquiring their religion. Just as one carefully selects the best mechanic for vehicle repairs or the most skilled doctor for medical exams, one should diligently seek out sincere and truthful scholars who have devoted their lives to acquiring legitimate religious knowledge from its authentic sources and righteous practitioners.

If a doctor is the means for healing the body, then scholars are the means for healing the soul, heart, and mind, and for salvation in this world and the Hereafter. They are the inheritors of the prophets through their knowledge and ethics. Is it consistent with following the Sunnah to, for example, shorten a garment because it is a Sunnah while simultaneously violating the honor of scholars and people, which is prohibited by the Quran and Sunnah?

Is it consistent with following the Sunnah to adhere to a specific aspect of prayer's form while not following the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his generosity, humility, patience, forgiveness, and the beauty of his demeanor?

Do we believe in part of the Quran and Sunnah and disbelieve in part?

What we witness today—a harsh reality in which youth are lost in their thoughts and actions—is largely due to ignorance or the failure to acquire knowledge from its rightful sources, coupled with the lack of proper spiritual and moral upbringing. As a result, religious texts accumulate in minds beset by doubts and hearts consumed by desires. In such cases, the affliction of takfīr and misguidance thrives, spreading and growing. Such individuals become instruments of destruction and evil, presenting Islam to others in a distorted and misleading manner, leading most people to believe that this is the true essence of the eternal Islamic teachings and its noble Prophet (peace be upon him). These offensive depictions reflect the Western perception of Islam and its Prophet, which stems from the presence of misguided and ignorant models who stray from the authentic teachings of Islam regarding upbringing, purification, and education.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of sincere scholars and their impact on nurturing a well-rounded, mature Islamic generation, one that is sound in its understanding and application of the lenient teachings of Islam. Conversely, the absence of such sincere scholars leads the ummah to follow ignorant leaders who issue misguided fatwas without proper knowledge, thus misguiding others from the right path. [6]. We often see individuals who, despite claiming the title of scholars and dressing in their attire, are far removed from authentic Islamic knowledge. They are disconnected from the refined spirit of Islamic texts that aim to serve the best interests of the ummah, leading them to mislead people from the correct path. These are the scholars of corruption and destruction. [16].

The story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his quest for knowledge is a beautiful example. Despite being a prophet of high rank, Moses did not let his status prevent him from seeking knowledge from those more learned, adhering to their conditions, and making considerable efforts to reach them. His persistence and dedication to achieving his goal, even if it required traveling for years, reflect the earnest pursuit of knowledge. Upon meeting his teacher, which is the inevitable outcome of sincere effort, Moses demonstrated humility and a genuine desire to learn, not to elevate himself above others or use knowledge to criticize or condemn them. The manners and ethics of the prophets and righteous scholars should be emulated by students of knowledge in all times and places.

Reflect on the beautiful manner in which Moses (peace be upon him) requested to be accepted as a student. He said: "May I follow you on the condition that you teach me from the knowledge you have been given?" [1]. When informed by his teacher that he could not be patient with the hardships of the journey and the difficulty of understanding, Moses responded promptly, expressing his readiness to obey and not to oppose: "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in any command" [1]. The teacher instructed him to adhere to certain conditions, including not asking questions until given permission: "If you follow me, then do not ask me about anything until I mention it to you" [1]. Moses agreed to these terms and, importantly, refrained from disputing his teacher. Thus, Moses learned noble and profound sciences regarding destiny and divine will. Had he stayed longer with his teacher, he might have gained even more remarkable knowledge. However, he courteously refrained from asking further questions after failing to adhere to his initial agreement, saying: "If I ask you about anything after this, then do not keep me as a companion; you have already provided me with an excuse".

Today, where are we in terms of students' manners and their diligence in seeking knowledge? Enthusiasm has waned, manners have diminished, and there is an increase in denial, skepticism, and criticism of scholars. Where are the scholars of the Hereafter, those with lofty aspirations and pure hearts? Their presence has become rare, like red sulfur, but by God's grace, they remain a part of this blessed ummah, and their contributions continue through the diligent scholars and students who uphold the trust of conveying the teachings of this noble religion, which seeks to relieve hardship and ease for all people.

The etiquette of scholars, including their teaching, learning, and transmission in the noble Islamic law, is extensive. This is only a glimpse of the vast knowledge that fills volumes, which are treasures of precious jewels left to us by the esteemed scholars of the ummah. May Allah reward them greatly on our behalf.

Indeed, it is a truth that these noble etiquettes and beneficial objectives have been lost, as enthusiasm wanes and goals diminish. Consequently, students are demeaned, and scholars and teachers are disrespected. Denial has become a hallmark of contemporary youth, and the scholars of the Hereafter, those of guidance and mercy, are obscured by the scholars of corruption and destruction.

When the ego-driven soul overpowers its owner, leading them to use their knowledge for malicious purposes, distorting truths, and altering knowledge, it results in the accumulation of faults that block the doors to goodness

and well-being. Such a heart becomes like a stone, devoid of sensitivity to what is good, beneficial, and balanced. [16].

The presence of individuals who claim to be scholars and don the attire of learned men has created a state of fragmentation and confusion affecting millions of young Muslims. These youth, having listened to and followed corrupt scholars, have caused division and discord within the Islamic community, fostering enmity and hatred among people. Is this the role of scholars? Is discord and destruction their esteemed mission?

O youth of the generation, gradual progression is a divine principle evident throughout the cosmos and life. For example, just as humans grow progressively, human weakness encompasses all forms of frailty, including physical and intellectual weakness. Allah says: "And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing, and He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks" [1]. Humans, like other living beings, gradually acquire strength and knowledge. This principle of gradual development applies to all aspects of life; without it, significant disruption occurs, and actions fail to yield their desired results. Just as a structure cannot be stable without a proper foundation, seeds not buried in the earth do not grow. Consider if one wished to practice medicine; it requires passing preliminary and secondary studies, achieving a suitable grade for medical school, enduring a lengthy and arduous study period, and maintaining diligence and respect towards professors. After completing medical school, one embarks on further theoretical and practical training in a specific field of medicine. A successful doctor continues to evolve with advancements in medical science, studying new diseases and treatments to keep pace with contemporary developments.

This applies to every profession or field of knowledge, whether large or small. One cannot be a mechanic, baker, or builder without apprenticing under an expert and completing necessary stages of learning. Why, then, do we trivialize the study of Islamic law and underestimate its importance? Why, when entering a mosque, do some individuals consider themselves more knowledgeable than the imam, leading to disputation and denial?

Why do we trust a doctor without question, and when required to undergo surgery, do we consent with complete confidence, even if it involves invasive procedures? Why do we entrust a mechanic with purchasing a new engine for our vehicle? This approach is consistent across all specialized fields, where people seek the approval and satisfaction of experts, showing respect and obedience. Yet, scholars are met with disrespect, denial, argumentation, and criticism. Who benefits from this malady that sows discord among compatriots and creates a significant rift between the youth of the ummah and its scholars?

Do young people believe that the sciences of noble Islamic jurisprudence can be acquired merely from books and that they can understand the meanings and the vibrant essence of the texts just through reading and studying? Have they not read the words of Allah: "And when there comes to them a matter of security or fear, they spread it around. If only they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those who are able to extract the knowledge from them would have known about it" [1]. Here, the "authorities" are the righteous scholars, who are the experts in the blessed sciences of Sharia.

Do these young people understand that the sciences of the Arabic language—being the language of the Qur'an and the purified Sunnah—comprise several branches such as syntax, morphology, and other related fields? These are known as "sciences of the tools" because they are instrumental for understanding the texts of Sharia. For instance, to illustrate the importance of these sciences in understanding texts, consider this example: young people might believe that the imperative verb form in the Qur'anic texts and Sunnah always indicates an obligation to perform the commanded action. This is not entirely accurate. For example, in the verse: "Establish prayer" (31), the imperative "establish" certainly denotes the obligation of prayer. However, this does not apply to all imperative verbs in the Qur'an. For instance, in the verse: "When you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down" (32), "write it down" is an imperative, but it does not indicate absolute obligation. If it did, every debt between two people, no matter how small or large, would need to be documented. Instead, the imperative here suggests a recommendation for safeguarding assets and preserving rights. Similarly, in the verse: "And when you are released from Ihram, then hunt" [1], the imperative "hunt" does not imply recommendation or obligation but rather permissibility. After prohibiting hunting during Ihram, Allah permits it after the state of Ihram has ended, allowing anyone to hunt if they wish. Scholars of the ummah have identified numerous meanings for the imperative verb form (افعل) in the Arabic language, ranging from twenty to fifty, including guidance, amazement, warning, wish, supplication, and discipline. These interpretations are detailed in the esteemed works of our scholars, and it is recommended to review these sources. [18].

This is a small glimpse into the sciences of our noble Sharia related to one of the sciences of tools. How much more extensive is the knowledge of other sciences? We are on the shore of an endless sea. How can the youth read a verse from the Qur'an or a hadith from the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and hasten to derive rulings without a solid foundation of knowledge or understanding?

Third: Sectarian and Racial Agitation

Our noble Sharia is distinguished by the blessed trait of humanity, with its fundamental essence being a mercy to all worlds. This is a characteristic of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), as stated by Allah: “And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds” [1]. The profound and sublime principle reflected in the Quranic verse “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted” [1] epitomizes this spirit. With these divine guidelines, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) established the civilization of Islam.

An example of the Prophet’s approach to addressing issues of division and differentiation is found in the Hadith narrated by Al-Ma’rur bin Suwaid: “I met Abu Dharr at Al-Rabadhah, and he was wearing a cloak, and his servant was wearing a cloak. I asked him about this, and he said: ‘I had scolded a man and taunted him about his mother. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to me: "O Abu Dharr, did you taunt him about his mother? You are a man in whom there is ignorance of the pre-Islamic era. Your brethren are your dependents; Allah has placed them under your control. Whoever has a brother under his control should feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears. Do not burden them with what is beyond their ability, but if you do burden them, then help them.” [6]

The Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) response to division and differentiation was immediate and comprehensive, addressing both individuals and groups. He recognized the dangers of sectarianism and tribalism, which lead to the emergence of repugnant partisanship and the proliferation of enmity and revenge. This is illustrated in the Hadith narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah: “We were on a campaign, and Sufyan once mentioned in a battalion that a man from the Muhajirun struck a man from the Ansar. The Ansar cried out: 'O Ansar!' The Muhajirun cried out: 'O Muhajirun!' When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) heard this, he said: 'What is this call of the days of ignorance?' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah, a man from the Muhajirun struck a man from the Ansar.' He said: 'Leave it, for it is repugnant.’” [6].

Fostering a spirit of humanity and brotherhood is an effective way to combat the malevolent tendencies towards revenge and sectarianism. It is sufficient that people unite and cooperate on the common ground of our shared humanity, which is a hallmark of our noble religion that advocates justice, kindness, and compassion towards those who differ in religion, let alone those who differ in sect or interpretive approaches to texts. Allah says: “Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly” [1].

Let us all reflect on this noble example and the guiding principles leading to the path of truth. We should reject sectarianism and racism in all its forms and methods, which stir up negative emotions within ourselves. By doing so, we can enjoy a life of peace filled with love, brotherhood, forgiveness, and tolerance. Indeed, Allah is the Most Merciful of the merciful.

Chapter Two: Methods of Preventing Takfir

The danger posed by such epidemics affects everyone, thus everyone bears the responsibility for combating and addressing these issues. Foremost among these are specialists in the field, the healers of hearts and minds, the scholars of the nation who serve as its steadfast pillar and bulwark against the floods of misguidance and ideological and doctrinal deviation. Additionally, the rulers responsible for the governance of the country and its people are charged both legally and morally with safeguarding public security and the well-being of their citizens. These are the focal points of the second section.

First: The Economic Aspect and the Role of the State

The noble Sharia has commanded people to work and encouraged industriousness, while prohibiting idleness, incapacity, and laziness. With equal force, it obliges the state and its officials to provide employment opportunities and means of livelihood for the unemployed, in accordance with their capabilities and talents. It also mandates the establishment of institutions such as human resources management or labor force planning departments, and encourages the support of civil society organizations in this noble endeavor. This is not an alien concept within Islamic civilization but rather an established principle. Juridical texts in this area include the statement by the jurists that a poor farmer who is unable to cultivate his land should be provided a loan from the public treasury sufficient to enable him to work and farm his land. [4]. This legislation and similar measures have a significant impact on supporting and achieving food and social security within Islamic communities.

In this context, we should reflect on the profound lessons in the following hadith: A poor man from the Ansar came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) complaining of his poverty and need. The Prophet asked him if he had anything in his house, to which the man replied that he had a cloak that they used partially as clothing

and partially as a mat, and a cup for drinking water. The Prophet instructed him to bring these items to him. When the items were brought, the Prophet held them in his hand and asked, "Who will buy these?" A man offered to buy them for one dirham. The Prophet asked for a higher bid twice or thrice. Another man offered two dirhams, and the Prophet accepted the offer. He then instructed the man to use one of the dirhams to buy food and give it to his family, and to use the other to purchase an axe. The man did so, and the Prophet tied a stick to it with his own hands, saying, "Go and gather firewood. I do not want to see you for fifteen days." The man complied, gathering and selling firewood, and returned with ten dirhams. The Prophet instructed him to buy food and clothing with some of the money. He then said, "This is better for you than coming to me with a mark of begging on your face on the Day of Judgment. Begging is only appropriate for someone in dire poverty, severe debt, or a grievous injury." [8]. This hadith highlights important aspects of human development, the welfare of community members, and their engagement in beneficial activities.

The following aspects include:

1. Clarifying the Role of the State in Providing Suitable Employment Opportunities: The state has a duty to create employment opportunities that align with the talents and capabilities of the unemployed. This includes assisting them with necessary work requirements such as equipment and machinery, or providing them with the required financial support.
2. Considering the Situation of the Unemployed and Their Dependents: It is important to address the condition of unemployed individuals and their dependents by helping to alleviate their suffering and need.
3. Promoting a Culture of Legitimate Consumption: The state should ensure the provision of essential needs such as food, drink, and housing, which form the foundation of consumer protection institutions in the modern era.
4. Community Involvement in Addressing Unemployment: Civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations, and media outlets should engage in efforts to support the unemployed and secure job opportunities for them. The mosque historically played this role. The inaction of the unemployed can adversely affect society by contributing to crime, moral degradation, increasing class distinctions, political instability, internal conflicts, bloodshed, and violations of freedoms, creating opportunities for extremist groups to recruit youth into paths of radicalization and terrorism.
5. Fostering a Culture of Work and Its Importance: It is essential to emphasize the significance and benefits of work, regardless of its perceived value to some. Work is a means of earning sustenance, which only Allah, the Provider, fully understands. Many individuals who began with modest jobs, such as porters in the marketplace, eventually become prominent wholesale traders after many years.
6. Recognizing Human Potential as a Means to Overcome Poverty: Human capabilities should be seen as a factor that can help lift individuals out of poverty, given their potential for development and utility. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Charity is not appropriate for the strong and capable person." [8]. The term "capable" here refers to physical strength and health.

The Prophet could have given the beggar some charity or instructed one of the wealthy companions to assist him, but instead, he taught the ummah valuable principles through this individual. The Prophet transformed a person who had reached a state of dependency and begging into a productive individual who experienced the rewards of work. This person became a role model for his children and future generations.

Each element of the Prophet's guidance contains profound implications. His instruction to the man to be absent for fifteen days carried significant psychological and economic effects. It aimed to remove him from his accustomed environment of laziness and dependency, and to encourage movement, vitality, and activity. This is the essence of Islam’s approach to work, construction, and development. When options become limited, inactivity is not permissible. As Allah says in the Qur’an, “Those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging themselves, they will say, ‘In what condition were you?’ They will reply, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ They will say, ‘Was not Allah’s earth spacious so that you could have migrated therein?’ Those are their refuge in Hell, and evil it is as a destination.” [1].

The general principle of the verse applies beyond the specific context of its revelation: “Travel in the land and eat of its sustenance.” [1]. Allah has associated sustenance with movement and activity on earth, which aligns with the principles governing worldly causes. The rulers and leaders, as those responsible for managing worldly affairs, should mitigate harms and prevent their causes to protect the nation's well-being.

Secondly: The Educational and Cognitive Aspect

It is neither feasible nor acceptable to place the entire responsibility on Muslim rulers while remaining passive and inactive, making no effort to address the state of the nation and combat its intellectual and doctrinal maladies. We cannot simply wait for rulers to act, especially considering that they have subjected the nation to decades of

disillusionment and repeated setbacks, becoming, in the eyes of many, the primary obstacle to the nation's progress and prosperity.

Therefore, it is imperative for scholars—who are the heirs of the prophets—to make their mark and fully assume their responsibility to rescue the nation from its intellectual and doctrinal afflictions. Have the intellectual and spiritual healers fulfilled their duty to combat the modern affliction and find an effective remedy for it?

Imam Muhammad bin Sirin said, "This knowledge is religion, so look carefully from whom you take your religion." [14]. This profound statement deserves to be inscribed in gold. Knowledge acquired merely from books remains superficial, lacking depth and reliability, and it is an exaggeration to even call it knowledge. True knowledge must be obtained from knowledgeable individuals who have learned it from legitimate sources and in a proper methodological context, having first acquired the necessary manners to carry this significant trust, rather than from those who are merely perceived as scholars but are actually instigators of discord.

The words spoken by an individual reflect the condition of their heart. A heart filled with desires, arrogance, and pride will emit speech tainted by these dangerous spiritual ailments. Consequently, such speech only distances the listener from God, and imparts hardness of heart and confusion. Souls are akin to soldiers; they are affected by and influence one another. Thus, love plays a significant role in shaping the character and acquired ethics of a Muslim individual. The companion influences the companion in their morals and thoughts, and this is even more pronounced with a teacher. God says, "O you who have believed, fear God and be with the truthful" [1]. Hence, the beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "A man follows the religion of his close friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends." [8].

The approach of the pious predecessors in imparting religious knowledge was meticulous and stringent. They would not grant knowledge except to those who were truly deserving and sought it earnestly. Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) would not accept a student until he had sent someone to observe and evaluate their character and manners over an extended period. Only after confirming their suitability would he admit them as a student and impart to them his sacred knowledge

If we examine the history of Islam and its blessed civilization, we find the exemplary conditions of the eminent scholars who directed their souls to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, ascending in their spiritual journey to Him, following the guidance of the Seal of the Prophets. The accounts of these figures are indeed remarkable. For instance, the esteemed Tabi'i Abu Hanifa al-Nu‘man ibn Thabit al-Kufi, a pioneer in the Iraqi intellectual school of Islamic jurisprudence, devoted his entire life to teaching his sciences for free and declined the position of a judge in the Abbasid state. He divided his day between teaching and earning a livelihood by working in a shop as a textile merchant, and he spent most of his earnings on supporting students of knowledge and providing charity to the poor and needy.

Similarly, the illustrious scholar Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi‘i, the leading authority on hadith among scholars of the regions, grew up in poverty and attained a high rank in knowledge while remaining poor. When the caliph Harun al-Rashid sent him ten thousand dinars, he immediately distributed the money to pay copyists and scribes to transcribe the works of Iraqi scholars and gave away the remainder to the poor and needy in a single day. He remained a devout soul, detached from worldly pleasures, seeking only the pleasure of God and eternal life.

Moreover, Abu Ishaq, author of the "Al-Muhadhdhab" on Shafi‘i jurisprudence, who passed away in 476 AH, enriched Baghdad with knowledge and jurisprudence. He lived on a daily diet consisting of a piece of bread, which he would take to a friend in the market who sold boiled beans, using the leftover water from the pot to soften the bread before consuming it. He accepted only a simple beast of burden for his travel arrangements when appointed by the caliph to a diplomatic mission beyond the river to improve the conditions of the Muslims. His reputation for knowledge and asceticism was so well known that every city he passed through celebrated his arrival, distributing flowers and sweets to express their joy.

These scholars were indeed beacons of guidance and mercy. How did they achieve such high levels of noble character, great asceticism, and profound respect? They undoubtedly followed the correct method in acquiring religious knowledge: they pursued it sincerely, closely adhered to righteous scholars, and endured the long journey with utmost decorum and elevated character. This was a manifestation of their obedience to Allah’s commands and adherence to the Quranic guidance on seeking knowledge from its proper sources while maintaining manners and submission. Allah says in the Qur’an, "So ask the people of the message if you do not know" [1], a directive mentioned twice in the Quran. He also says, "The Most Merciful, so ask about Him one aware" [1]. Furthermore, the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) provides numerous insights: Abu Darda reported that he heard the Prophet say, "Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for him. The angels lower their wings in approval for the seeker of knowledge... The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon over all the stars. Indeed, scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams; they left behind knowledge, and whoever takes it, takes an abundant portion." [8].

Therefore, young people who aspire to learn the blessed Islamic sciences should follow the proper path according to its principles. One cannot reach their goal without traversing the path that leads to it and following the guidance of esteemed mentors. Every path has its guides and instructors. Allah says, "Whomever Allah guides, he is the rightly guided; and whomever He leaves astray, you will not find for him a guiding protector" [1]. He also says, "And follow the way of those who turn back to Me" [1]. By adhering to these principles, one will attain the light, blessings, and guidance reflected in the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), "Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for him" [9]. It should be noted that this statement is general and applies to all forms of knowledge (Of course, excluding the knowledge of magic and associated sorcery) that benefit the community and advance its state to align with the progress of civilized humanity. However, youth must navigate this path, which involves several stages. The learner must be armed with sincerity, driven by a genuine pursuit of knowledge, and guided by a capable teacher who has previously traversed this path and is familiar with its routes and pitfalls. Patience is also essential to overcome obstacles such as lethargy, discouragement, and the inclination towards laziness and inactivity. The path to knowledge has a beginning but no end; there is no limit to the pursuit of knowledge. Allah says, "And you have not been given of knowledge except a little" [1].

The pursuit of Islamic knowledge, like other fields, follows the principle of gradual progression. It is necessary to engage in specialized schools and universities that offer these sciences or to be under the tutelage of a righteous scholar. This will facilitate the learning process, shorten the path, and help the student recognize their talents and abilities. The scholar will provide the necessary knowledge tailored to the student's needs during their period of study. Through a series of well-planned and consecutive steps, the student will gain access to a treasure trove of knowledge that leads to all that is good, merciful, and ease. Allah is the Bestower of success.

CONCLUSION

Praise be to Allah, whose grace perfects all that is good. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, the leader of the leaders, and upon his family and companions, who are distinguished by their virtues and honors. May peace and blessings be upon them as long as the earth and heavens endure.

The intellectual, spiritual, and economic deficiencies are significant contributors to the spread of the affliction of takfir and terrorism. The lack of an active role by the state in the economic domain and the insufficient engagement of scholars in the intellectual and educational spheres exacerbate this epidemic. Addressing these gaps will help young people avoid the pitfalls of doubts, extremism, and deviations, and will enable students of knowledge, in particular, and youth, in general, to take on their roles in spreading knowledge and virtues. They will thus serve as beacons of guidance for those lost in the wilderness of trials and delusions, leading them to the oases of enlightenment and light.

In this way, thirsty souls will be nourished, wounded hearts will be healed, and religious texts and knowledge will become beacons of light that illuminate the path of life with love, construction, and peace. They will offer a compassionate touch to the mind, soul, and heart, acting as a gentle balm to heal afflictions. Humanity will then find joy in the guidance of the noble Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his noble family and companions, as the doves mourn in the trees.

May Allah grant success to scholars, leaders, students of knowledge, and youth in pursuing what is good and righteous. May He guide us through the noble teachings of Sharia to achieve success and prosperity. Our Lord, teach us what benefits us, benefit us with what You have taught us, and increase us in knowledge. All praise is due to Allah under all circumstances. We seek refuge with Allah from the state of those who are contentious, ignorant, and hypocritical. Our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his companions

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