



Introduction to the Fundamental Principles of Nahdlatul Ulama (*Mukaddimah Qanun Asasi*) (1926)

by Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy'ari

Speech by NU co-founder and the first Chairman of its Supreme Council, Hadratus Shakyh Hasyim Asy'ari, delivered on January 23, 1926 in Surabaya, Dutch East Indies, at the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Nahdlatul Ulama.

All praise be to God, who sent down the Qur'an to His servants to serve as a warning to all men and grant them wisdom and knowledge of His will. For whomsoever is granted this wisdom shall truly be blessed with abundant good fortune.

God Almighty said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

(Q. 33: 45-46) [And as for thee,] “O Prophet - behold, We have sent thee as a witness [to the truth], and as a herald of glad tidings and a warner, (33:46) and as one who summons [humanity] to God by His leave, and as a light-giving beacon.”

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۗ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

(Q. 16: 125) “Call thou [humanity] unto thy Sustainer's path with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner for, behold, thy Sustainer knows best as to who strays from His path, and best knows He as to who are the right-guided.”

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

(Q. 39: 17-18) “Give, then, this glad tidings to [those of] My servants who listen [closely] to all that is said, and follow the best of it: [for] it is they whom God has graced with His guidance, and it is they who are [truly] endowed with insight!”

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ وِليٌّ مِنَ الدُّلِّ وَكَبِّرُهُ تَكْبِيرًا

(Q. 17: 111) “And say: ‘All praise is due to God, who begets no offspring, and has no partner in His dominion, and has no weakness, and therefore no need of any aid’—and [thus] extol His limitless greatness.”

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(Q. 6: 153) “And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way. [All] this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might remain fully conscious of Him.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

(Q. 4: 59) “O you who have attained to faith! Pay heed unto God, and pay heed unto the Apostle and unto those from among you who have been entrusted with authority; and if you are at variance over any matter, refer it unto God and the Apostle, if you [truly] believe in God and the Last Day. This is the best [for you], and best in the end.”

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

(Q. 7: 157) “Those who shall follow the [last] Apostle, the unlettered Prophet whom they shall find described in the Torah that is with them, and [later on] in the Gospel: [the Prophet] who will enjoin upon them the doing of what is right and forbid them the doing of what is wrong, and make lawful to them the good things of life and forbid them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them [aforetime]. Those, therefore, who shall believe in him, and honour him, and succour him, and follow the light that has been bestowed from on high through him—it is they that shall attain to a happy state.”

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

(Q. 59: 10) “And so, they who come after them pray: ‘O our Sustainer! Forgive us our sins, as well as those of our brethren who preceded us in faith, and let not our hearts entertain any unworthy thoughts or feelings against [any of] those who have attained to faith. O our Sustainer! Verily, Thou art compassionate, a dispenser of grace!’”

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ

(Q. 49: 13) “O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most fully conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware.”

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

(Q. 35: 28) “Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with knowledge of the Truth [*ulama*] stand in awe of God: [for they alone comprehend that,] verily, God is almighty, much-forgiving.”

مَنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۖ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

(Q. 33: 23) “Among the believers are men who have [always] been true to what they have vowed before God; and among them are such as have [already] redeemed their pledge by death, and such as yet await [its fulfilment] without having changed [their resolve] in the least.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

(Q. 9: 119) “O you who have attained to faith! Remain fully conscious of God, and be among those who are true to their word!”

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۗ

(Q. 31: 15) “And follow the path of those who have fully surrendered to and rely upon Me.”

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

(Q. 21: 7) “If you do not know this, ask the followers of earlier revelations.”

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

(Q. 17: 36) “And never concern thyself with anything of which thou hast no knowledge.”

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ رِيحٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

(Q. 3: 7) “Now those whose hearts are given to swerving from the truth follow that part of the divine writ which is symbolic, seeking out controversy, and seeking [to arrive at] its final

meaning [in an arbitrary manner]; but none save God knows its final meaning. Hence, those who are deeply rooted in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it; all is from our Lord’—albeit none takes this to heart save those who are endowed with insight.”

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

(Q. 4: 115) “But as for him who, after guidance has been vouchsafed to him, cuts himself off from the Apostle and follows a path other than that of the believers—him shall We leave unto that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure hell: and how evil a journey’s end!”

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً ۖ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

(Q. 8: 25) “And beware of that temptation to evil which does not befall only those among you who are bent on denying the truth, to the exclusion of others; and know that God is severe in retribution.”

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ

(Q. 11: 113) “And do not incline towards, nor rely upon, those who are bent on evil doing lest the fire [of the hereafter] touch you.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ۖ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

(Q. 66: 6) “O you who have attained to faith! Ward off from yourselves and those who are close to you that fire [of the hereafter] whose fuel is human beings and stones: [lording] over it are angelic powers awesome [and] severe, who do not disobey God in whatever He has commanded them, but [always] do what they are bidden to do.”

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

(Q. 8: 21) “And be not like those who say, ‘We have heard,’ and yet they do not hearken.”

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

(Q. 8: 22) “Verily, the vilest of all creatures in the sight of God are those deaf and dumb ones who do not use their reason.”

وَأَتَىٰكُمْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

(Q. 3: 104) “And let there be among you a community who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong: and it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state!”

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

(Q. 5: 2) “Help one another in furthering virtue and God-consciousness, and do not help one another in furthering evil and enmity; and remain fully conscious of God: for, behold, God is severe in retribution!”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

(Q. 3: 200) “O you who have attained to faith! Be patient in adversity, and vie in patience with one another, and be ever ready [to do what is right], and remain fully conscious of God, so that you might attain to a happy state!”

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

(Q. 3: 103) “And hold fast, all together, unto the bond with God, and do not draw apart from one another. And remember the blessings which God has bestowed upon you: how, when you were enemies, He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brethren.”

وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ ۗ وَاصْبِرُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

(Q. 8: 46) “And be patient in adversity: for, verily, God is with those who are patient in adversity.”

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

(Q. 49: 10) “Verily, all believers are brethren. Hence, foster peace between your two brethren, and remain fully conscious of God, so that you might be graced with His mercy.”

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا (66) وَإِذَا لَا تَأْتِنَاهُمْ مِنْ لَدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (67) وَلَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

(Q. 4: 66-68) “And if they did what they are admonished to do, it would indeed be for their own good and apt to strengthen them greatly [in faith], (4:67) whereupon We should indeed grant them, out of Our grace, a mighty reward, (4:68) and indeed guide them onto a straight path.”

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

(Q. 29: 69) “But as for those who strive hard to apprehend Us—We shall most certainly guide them onto paths that lead unto Us: for, behold, God is indeed with the doers of good.”

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

(Q. 33: 56) “Verily, God and His angels bless the Prophet: [hence,] O you who have attained to faith, bless him and give yourselves up [to his guidance] in utter self-surrender!”

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

(Q. 42: 38) “And who respond to [the call of] their Sustainer and are constant in prayer; and whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is consultation among themselves; and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance.”

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

(Q. 9: 100) “...as well as those who follow them (Muhājirūn and Anṣār) in [the way of] righteousness - God is well-pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him.”

Accordingly.

Truly, mutual association, help, unity and cohesion are manifest blessings, the benefits of which are known to all. How could this not be? For the Prophet (saw.) said:

يَدُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَةِ فَإِذَا شَدَّ الشَّادُّ مِنْهُمْ اخْتَطَفَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا يَخْتَطِفُ الذَّنْبُ مِنَ الْعَنَمِ

(Narrated by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūfī [1445 – 1505 CE])

“The hand of God is upon the congregation (His help always accompanied the multitude). For if among the congregation there is one who isolates himself, then the devil will pounce on him like a wolf pouncing upon a goat.”

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْضَى لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا فَيَرْضَى لَكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَأَنْ تَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفْرُقُوا، وَأَنْ تَتَّصَحُوا مَنْ وُلَاةُ اللَّهِ أَمْرَكُمْ. وَيَكْرَهُ لَكُمْ قِيلَ وَقَالَ وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ.

“Three things please God, and three things displease Him. God is pleased that you worship Him alone; that you hold fast to His rope (religion) and do not become disunited; and that you improve one another by associating with those who make God your leader. It displeases God for you to argue with one another; ask superfluous questions; and squander property.” (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تحاسدوا، ولا تناجشوا، ولا تباغضوا، ولا تدابروا، ولا يبيح بعضكم على بيع بعض، وتكونوا عباد الله إخواناً

“Do not envy each other, bully each other, or hate each other, and do not exploit one another, [but rather] be brethren in the worship of God.” (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

A single nation is like a single body, and its people are like its limbs. Each member has an appropriate task and role, the performance of which the body cannot neglect.

As is universally acknowledged, human beings are inherently social creatures, mingling with others; for no one can fulfill his or her every need by acting alone. Willing or not, every person must interact socially, interaction that should ideally contribute to the well-being of all other members of society while preserving them from danger. The unity of human hearts, and minds, as people help one another achieve a common goal, is the most important source of human happiness and the strongest factor inducing human beings to love one another.

Because of this principle, many nations have become prosperous. Slaves have become rulers, fostering widespread development. Nations have become advanced; the rule of law enforced; transportation networks constructed, enabling economic and cultural exchange to flourish. Countless other benefits arise from social unity, for social unity is the highest virtue and most powerful instrument for promoting the common good.

The Prophet (saw.) brought his companions together so that they might live in mutual affection and love, maintaining cordial relations until they became like one body. When one member of the body complained of pain, the whole body was feverish and could not sleep. This is why, despite being few in number, the believers triumphed over their enemies. They subdued kings, conquering nations and cities. They spread prosperity like a verdant canopy, built kingdoms and made their way along the straight path.

For God said:

وَأَتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

(Q.18: 84) “And I gave him a path to (accomplish) all things.”

The above affirms the words of the poet who rightly said:

*“Gather together my children if
The moment of crisis strikes
Do not become scattered and alone
Cups are averse to breaking when Together
When scattered
One-by-one they shatter”*

Sayyidina Ali (ra.) [601 – 661 CE] said:

“God gives nothing good to those who are divided, either in the past or in the future.”

The reason for this is that a people whose hearts are divided are ruled by their passions, leaving no place for the common good. Instead of being a unified nation, they are merely individuals gathered together in the physical sense: though one might think that they are unified, their hearts are, in reality, disunited and discordant.

They have become—as some say—like goats scattered in an open field, surrounded by ravenous beasts. If the goats are well for a time, this is merely because predators have yet to reach them but, one day, these predators will surely arrive. It may be that the ravenous beasts fight among themselves and subdue one another, such that the victors become robbers and the losers thieves. Even so, the goats will fall prey to both the robbers and the thieves.

Division has been the cause of weakness, defeat and failure throughout the ages. It is the root of destruction and bankruptcy, the source of collapse and ruination, and the agent of humiliation and chaos.

How many large families have lived—at first—in prosperity and comfort in many houses that made them feel at ease until, one day, the scorpion of divisiveness crawled among them, its creeping poison corrupting their hearts as the devil played his part against them? In the end, the family becomes a chaotic mess, and their houses collapse upon them.

The Prophet's Companion Ali (ra.) eloquently stated: "The cause of Truth can become weak due to strife and internal division; while evil may grow strong through cohesion and unity of purpose."

In short, whoever looks into the mirror of history and turns its many pages about diverse nations and the ebb and flow of time—and sees what happened to these nations up until the point of their extinction—will know that the glory which once enveloped them was nothing other than a blessing attributable to their unity of ideals, thoughts and purpose. This unity was the decisive factor which elevated their dignity and ensured their sovereignty: the impregnable fortress which safeguarded their strength and ensured the preservation of their teachings.

A united people's enemies can do nothing to harm them; rather, they bow their heads in respect for that people's power and dignity. A united people are able to brilliantly accomplish their many goals.

This is the destiny of a people upon which God's sun never sets; rather, the rays of His Light always shine upon them and not upon their enemies.

O ulama and God-conscious [enlightened] leaders of the Sunni community, who follow the four schools of jurisprudence: you have all drawn from the well of knowledge of those who came before you; and those who came before you drew knowledge from those who came before them, in an unbroken chain of transmission (*sanad*) that extends [from the Prophet Mohammad saw.] to each of you today. And each of you is continually learning from whoever may impart unto you the wisdom of your religion.

Thus, you are the gatekeepers and the guardians of this precious knowledge. Do not enter a house except through its front door. Whoever enters through a different means will be called a thief.

For there is a class of people [Wahhabis] who fall into the depths of strife (*fitnah*), choosing to embrace innovation rather than the Prophet's teachings (saw.), while the majority of believers are simply stunned into silence. And so the heretics and thieves [including Wahhabis] run rampant. They pervert the truth in order to suit themselves, enjoining evil as if it were good and forbidding good as if it were evil. They call others to follow their interpretation of God's book, even though their actions are not in the least bit guided by the teachings of the Qur'an.

They did not stop at this, but rather, founded organizations to systematically propagate their deviant teachings and amplify their manifest error. The poor flocked to these assemblies and did not hear the words of the Prophet (saw.):

فَانظُرُوا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَ دِينَكُمْ

“So look carefully at those from whom you take your religion...” — a reliable Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad and Imam al-Hakim — “...Indeed, as the day of Apocalypse approaches, many liars will appear. Do not weep for religion if it is in the hands of those who know the Truth (*ulama*). Rather, weep for this religion (Islam) if it falls into the hands of ignorant charlatans.”

Umar bin Khattab (ra.) [584 – 644 CE] was entirely correct when he said: “The religion of Islam disintegrates in the hands of hypocrites who argue skillfully manipulating the Qur'an.”

All of you are upright souls capable of dispelling the falsehoods of those who are expert at propagating evil; the religious interpretation of fools; and the debauchery of those who exceed all bounds; by employing the proofs (*hujjah*) that have been provided to us by God, Lord of the universe, who demonstrates the proof of His Truth through the tongue of whomever He wills.

And all of you are among the community described by the saying of the Prophet (saw.): “There is a group of my people who never waver; who always stand firmly upon the truth; and who always obtain victory. They cannot be harmed by their enemies before the coming of God's Day of Judgement.”

Come! All of you, and all your followers among the poor and the wealthy, the weak and the strong. Flock to this blessed community (*jam'iyah*) which is called: “*Jam'iyah Nahdlatul Ulama*.”

Enter [this community] with a spirit overflowing with love, compassion, harmony and unity of purpose. Enter with a bond that unites us, body and soul. This is an upright community (*jam'iyah*): peaceful, whose nature is to improve character and foster politeness towards others. It tastes sweet in the mouths of those who are devoted to goodness and obstructs the throats of the wicked, choking those [who may be skilled at reciting the Qur'an, but do not apprehend its inner meaning in their hearts]. In this regard, all of you should seek to remind one another to work harmoniously together, employing means that are satisfying and appeal to the heart, along with irrefutable proofs [regarding one's convictions]. Clearly convey what God has commanded you, so that religious fabrications are purged from all people in every direction.

For the Prophet (saw.) said: “Whenever religious fabrications and strife appear, and my companions are reviled, beseech those who know the Truth (*ulama*) to reveal their knowledge. Whoever fails to do this shall be cursed by God, the Angels and all humanity.” (Hadith narrated by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī [1002 – 1071 CE] in *al-Jāmi‘*.)

God (swt.) has declared:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى

(Q. 5: 2) “And assist one another in fostering virtue and developing full awareness of God.”

Sayyidina Ali (ra.) said: “No one—even though he has long and sincerely tried his best to please God through his actions—can achieve full and complete obedience to God. Nevertheless, among God’s rights that His servants are obliged to respect is the duty to advise and assist one another, with all their strength, in upholding the Truth.

“No one—no matter how exalted his position in knowledge of the Truth, and no matter how noble the degree of his excellence in religion—can transcend the condition of needing assistance in order to fulfil his responsibilities to God. And no one, no matter how lowly his status in the opinion of others, is unable to aid and mutually assist others in fulfilling their obligations to God.”

Mutual aid and assistance is the foundation of social order. For without the spirit of mutual aid and assistance, people’s will to action and their enthusiasm will inevitably be paralyzed, as they feel incapable of achieving their dreams in isolation.

Whoever wishes to mutually assist others in addressing the problems of this world and [attaining salvation in] the next will enjoy perfect happiness, comfort, prosperity and tranquility.

Sayyid Ahmad bin Abdillah as-Saqqaf said:

“This community (*jam‘iyyah*) is an association that has revealed exhilarating signs of wellbeing: its regions are united; its buildings stand tall; so where would you wish to go by leaving it? Where? Oh you who spin around, be the first (to enter this *jam‘iyyah*), and not among those who follow behind. Do not be left behind, for later critics will reproach you and say: ‘They (the hypocrites) were well-pleased to remain with those who were left behind (not striving in the cause of God)—wherefor their hearts have been sealed, so that they cannot grasp the truth.’” (Q. 9:87)

No one feels safe from God’s torments, except for those who ruin [others through their corrupt example.]

رَبَّنَا لَا تَزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

(Q. 3: 8) "O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts swerve from the truth after Thou hast guided us; and bestow upon us the gift of Thy grace: verily, Thou art the Greatest Giver of Gifts.”

رَبَّنَا فَاعْفُرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ

(Q. 3: 193) “O our Sustainer! Forgive us, then, our sins, and cleanse us of our bad deeds; and let us die the death of the truly virtuous!”

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

(Q. 3: 194) “O our Sustainer, grant us that which Thou hast promised us through Thy messengers, and do not humiliate us on Judgement Day! Verily, Thou never failest to fulfil Thy promise!”

Translated by Thomas G. Dinham and C. Holland Taylor