

Islam is a Fikrah (Thought) and a Tareeqah (Method)

(Translated)

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Islam has affirmed the presence of the vital energy within human beings. It is the vital energy that drives them to act, and carry out the deeds they perform in their lives. Based on its existence, Islam has established the systems and treatments that the vital energy demands. It has confirmed the existence of the innate instinct of religiosity in humans. Allah (swt) said, ﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَائِمُ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“So be steadfast in Deen in all uprightness O Prophet, the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in all people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know.”** [TMQ Surah Ar-Rum: 30].

And He (swt) said, ﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ ۗ وَآذَىٰ عَالِينَ﴾ **“And remember when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. Allah asked, “Am I not your Lord?” They replied, “Yes, You are! We testify.” He cautioned, “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’”** [TMQ Surah Al-A'raf: 172].

He also affirmed the existence of other instincts and bodily needs, as He (swt) said, ﴿رُزِقَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِصَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبَإِ﴾ **“The enjoyment of worldly desires, such as women, children, treasures of gold and silver, fine horses, cattle, and fertile land, all has been made appealing to people. These are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah is the finest destination.”** [TMQ Surah Aali Imran: 14].

These physiological needs and bodily instincts constitute the human being's vital energy, as he is naturally driven to satisfy them. Without the feeling of hunger and thirst, a person would not be driven to eat and drink. Without the sense of need for a Creator and Sustainer, he would not be driven toward reverence and worship. Without the desire for survival, he would not avoid dangers and perils, seek treatment for illness, or strive for ownership. Without the inclination toward the continuation of the human species, he would not establish family life, show affection to his offspring, parents, or siblings. Thus, this vital energy embedded in bodily needs and instincts is the source of human behavior.

Since the satisfaction of bodily needs and instincts requires behavioral guidelines that direct a person toward proper fulfillment, leading to happiness and well-being, distinguished from improper fulfillment that leads to misery, Allah (swt), the Creator of human beings, their needs, and instincts, revealed divine guidance to clarify for humanity the proper conduct for satisfying these needs.

By explaining the elements of the 'aqeedah, foremost among them belief in Him as Creator, Sustainer, and Guide and then detailing the acts of worship through which a person worships his Creator, such as Salah (Shariah prayer), Sawm (Shariah fasting), Hajj (Shariah pilgrimage), and others, He (swt) organized the fulfillment of the instinct of religiosity, and the relationship between man and his Creator.

By prohibiting fornication and legislating marriage and its related Shariah rulings such as those concerning parenthood, kinship, and honoring one's parents, He organized the fulfillment of the instinct for the preservation of the species.

By legislating ways of earning wealth, property rights, prohibiting theft and unjust consumption of others' wealth, and affirming the right to self-defense and the defense of one's property, even to the extent of using lethal force, He organized the fulfillment of the instinct for survival.

And by permitting the good things of food and drink, and forbidding what is impure among them, He organized the fulfillment of bodily, physiological needs.

Thus, the examples mentioned above are not exhaustive. Islam has regulated the fulfillment of all of a person's innate needs and instincts in a balanced manner, ensuring that no instinct or need dominates, or overwhelms, another.

Since the fulfillment of many of the innate human needs and instincts requires establishing relationships with others, in order to exchange mutually agreed-upon benefits, and to ward off anticipated dangers, it became necessary for people to form societies. Therefore, organizing relationships within society became an essential part of regulating the fulfillment of people's innate needs. Without these needs, societies would not exist in the first place. This means that any system aiming to regulate human behavior must go beyond individual guidance, to addressing the human collective as a society, in addition to the instructions directed at individuals.

It also means that such a system cannot be implemented merely through the voluntary initiative of individuals who choose to follow its guidance and abide by its rulings. Organizing relationships within society requires that all its members adhere to this system. Hence, it is crucial that the system intended to regulate the fulfillment of innate human needs be accompanied by a clear method explaining how it can be brought into existence in real life, how it can be implemented and preserved.

Thus, Islam did not limit itself to presenting an idea that shows the proper way to fulfill instincts and bodily needs in humans. Instead, it went further to explain the method by which this ideology can be established in real life, implemented in society, spread throughout the world, and protected. For this reason, Islam is both an "idea and a method."

Islam, which prohibited adultery (zina) as part of its regulation of the instinct for species preservation, followed this prohibition with the legislation of the hadd (prescribed punishment) for zina, a method for implementing this Shariah ruling. When it prohibited alcohol, theft, apostasy, and falsely accusing believing men and women, it accompanied these prohibitions with hadd punishments for those who violate them. When it forbade assault against lives and bodies, it followed that with the legislation of qisas (retaliatory punishment) rulings. It also legislated ta'zir (discretionary punishment) for other Shariah violations.

When Islam commanded the implementation of the Shariah in general, it clarified the only legitimate method for this implementation, the state, which it commanded to be established. It detailed how to establish this state and explained its system in both the Noble Qur'an and the Blessed Sunnah. Thus, the actions carried out by the Prophet (saw) from the beginning of his mission, until the establishment of the state in Madinah, are actions aimed at founding this state, and they constitute the only Shariah legitimate and practical method for establishing the Islamic state, in case of its absence.

The state that the Prophet (saw) established in Madinah, which expanded during his lifetime to encompass the Arabian Peninsula, became the practical model to be emulated for applying Islam throughout all eras, in terms of addressing human problems and regulating instincts. The extent to which this model is followed serves as the measure for success in implementing these systems and rulings.

Islam, which commanded the carrying of its Risaalah message to the world, also specified the method for doing so: Dawah and Jihad, both of which are undertaken by the state and form the basis of its foreign policy. Islam, which commanded holding rulers accountable, and changing them if they violate Islamic Shariah Law or misapply it, legislated a method for doing this as well namely, the Shariah obligation to establish political parties

based on the Islamic 'aqeedah, which monitor the state and the society's awareness and culture, and fulfill the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong through preaching, education, and accountability.

Islam, which obligated the defense of its Risaalah message and its protection, also legislated the Shariah method for this defensive Jihad, through which the enemies of the Islamic Ummah and its Islamic aqeedah are repelled.

Islam made no distinction between the rulings related to the idea and those related to the method in terms of the obligation to adhere to them. All of them are Shariah rulings revealed by Allah (swt) in His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (saw), and they fall under the meaning of His statement, ﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾ **“Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your Deen.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Ma'idah: 3].

Therefore, it is impermissible to differentiate between the Shariah rulings related to the idea, and those related to the method, in terms of the Shariah obligation to abide by them. Both are part of the Deen by which Allah (swt) is obeyed. Allah (swt) says, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ﴾ **“O believers! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and do not follow Satan's footsteps. Surely, he is your sworn enemy.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 208].

And “Islam” in this verse refers to the whole of Islam.

This distinction between the two types of Shariah rulings, those of the idea and those of the method, did not exist among the fuqaha (jurists) throughout most eras, from the time of Prophethood through the centuries that followed. So why do we adopt this distinction in our contemporary Islamic discourse? This is a very legitimate question. In fact, everyone exposed to this categorization is likely to raise it. While there is no objection to terminology itself, it is not permissible to introduce intellectual or juristic classifications, and terminologies, without practical necessity that is, merely for intellectual indulgence.

Therefore, we answer this question by saying: there are multiple reasons for this distinction, and the following is an explanation of that.

In the past two centuries, a notion has prevailed among many Muslim intellectuals, including some jurists, that Islam laid down Shariah rulings to regulate human behavior and address its problems, and that these rulings must be adhered to. However, they additionally argue that Islam merely suggested methods for implementing these systems and solutions. They claim that these methods were only suitable for the early periods of Islam, and that there is no need to adhere to them in the present age. They claim that we can adopt new methods and approaches that are more in tune with the modern era.

In the later periods of the Uthmani Khilafah (Ottoman Caliphate), new opinions emerged that had not been known to earlier generations, throughout past centuries. Some scholars permitted to replace the hudud with ta'zir punishments. As a result, the Ottoman Penal Code was issued, which suspended the implementation of the hudud, and replaced them with discretionary punishments. This was done under the pretext that the objective of the Shariah is to prevent the committing of forbidden acts, and that the hudud are merely a means to achieve that end. Therefore, they argued, there is no harm in substituting one punishment for another, as long as the objective of deterring violations is achieved.

At that time, writers and authors went to great lengths in repeating discussions about the theory of Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Objectives of Islamic law), which holds that Allah (swt) established Shariah legal rulings with specific purposes, and that these rulings revolve around their objectives existing when they exist and ceasing when they cease. As a result, they believed that the primary focus should be on the maqasid, rather than on the Shariah rulings themselves. This led to a neglect of the Shariah rulings under the pretext of observing the objectives (maqasid).

In reality, those who adopted this theory fell into several errors, which were further compounded by later and contemporary scholars, who neglected the conditions and boundaries observed by the early proponents of this theory.

The first of these errors is that they confused the Shariah legal analogical reason ('illah) which the Lawgiver made the basis for a Shariah ruling, and upon which the ruling is dependent, with the objective (maqsad) of the ruling. The 'illah is a specific attribute upon which the Shariah ruling is built, and to which it is attached, such that the ruling exists when the Shariah 'illah exists, and but does not exist when the 'illah is not present. The maqasid, on the other hand, are aims that the Lawgiver seeks to achieve through the Shariah rulings, but without making the rulings conditional upon the objectives, or allowing the objectives to influence or control the rulings. Thus, the non-fulfillment of a maqsad (objective) does not nullify the Shariah ruling, unlike the case with the 'illah, without which the ruling does not exist.

The second error is the assumption that one can know the maqasid of rulings even in the absence of any Shariah evidence indicating them.

The third error is the belief that they are authorized to devise Shariah rulings that achieve the Shariah maqasid without requiring evidence from Islamic sources, going so far as to nullify the rulings established by the Lawgiver, claiming that changing realities demand the development of rulings and rejection of adherence to old methods. They promoted this with the oft-repeated slogan that "rulings change with the change of time and place," which they falsely claimed to be a Shariah principle.

In the present reality we are living in, since the fall of the Islamic state and the Ummah's exit from the sphere of the complete Islamic life, and under the pressure of Western culture, prevailing systems, and the organized assault on Islamic Shariah rulings, many Muslim intellectuals, including those calling for the resumption of Islamic life, both individuals and groups, have been defeated by this pressure. They have submitted to many ideas presented as alternatives to Islamic Shariah rulings especially those related to the rulings of the tareeqah (method).

Thus, the claim became widespread that Islam did not legislate a detailed system of governance, and that it is therefore acceptable for us to adopt any man-made political system that ensures consultation (shura) and justice. This opened the door to accepting the democratic system in its various forms, including republican, parliamentary, ministerial and constitutional monarchy.

Another common claim was that Jihad was used in the past because of the norms of international relations at the time and the limited means of communication. However, today, with the firm establishment of the idea of peoples' right to self-determination and the advancement of communication, media, and outreach, there is no longer justification to carry the Islamic call through Jihad. Hence, Jihad is now deemed acceptable only in the case of repelling aggression.

Among those working to restore the Islamic state, a view has spread that Islam did not obligate us to follow a specific method for establishing the state, and that the actions the Prophet (saw) took to establish it were merely tactics, personal efforts, and human experiences, not binding upon us. They failed to recognize the clear difference between actions the Prophet (saw) undertook as a religious obligation, based on divine command, and those he performed permissibly, as choices of styles or tools to achieve a legitimate goal.

As a result, they began to pursue methods of change that contradict the Prophet's Sunnah: sometimes through unregulated armed struggle, other times by embracing democracy and participating in governance that rules by other than what Allah (swt) has revealed, and at other times by engaging in charitable activities to attract supporters and followers.

Some even concluded that all Islamic Shariah rulings can be applied without the Islamic state. They claimed that preaching and moral guidance are enough to encourage people to adhere to acts of worship, obligations, and recommended deeds, and to avoid prohibitions and disliked acts. They asserted that Islamic private schools, institutes, and universities can teach Muslims Islamic culture and sciences. They asserted that that charitable organizations, endowments, and voluntary zakat funds can meet the needs of the poor. They claimed that Islamic financial institutions and investment companies can apply Islamic economic laws and offer Shariah-compliant services to Muslim investors. They also added that Shariah courts can govern personal status and social transactions according to Islamic law; and that Muslims can agree upon scholars or juristic bodies to arbitrate in disputes. They even claimed that modern media and communication tools, satellite channels, the internet, etc. are sufficient to carry the Islamic message to the world.

These assertions and claims strip Islam of the attribute of sovereignty that Allah intended for it, as He said, ﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾ **“He is the One Who has sent His Messenger with true guidance and the Deen of truth, making it prevail over all others, even to the dismay of the polytheists.”** [TMQ Surah At-Tawbah: 33].

And as the Prophet (saw) said, «الإسلام يعلو ولا يعلى» **“Islam is supreme and nothing shall surpass it.”**

Such individuals whether out of neglect, or willful ignorance, fail to see that the systems implemented by the ruling authority, in any society, control its relationships by force, and stamp them with their character. These systems play the greatest role in shaping the identity of society and its way of life. In fact, those institutions established by these wishful thinkers whether charitable, educational, financial, or media-based cannot even exist or function except by permission of the state, under its man-made laws, and in line with the policies of rulers appointed to serve the interests of major world powers and to spread their culture and lifestyle.

They have also forgotten, or chosen to forget, that no system of life and society can be applied except through authority and governance, and that it is impossible for two systems to coexist in one society, especially when one of them is Islam.

Hence, it is essential to clarify that Islam is not merely a set of spiritual, moral, or behavioral guidelines that people follow voluntarily, without regard for the dominant system governing their lives. Instead, Islam is a comprehensive system for life, society, and the state. It provides solutions to human problems arising from their vital energy, and the relationships this energy demands. Islam includes a method that explains to those who embrace this system how to implement it, spread it, and protect it.

In summary, the aqeedah that provided a comprehensive view of this worldly life what precedes it, what follows it, and its relationship to both has resolved...

In summary, the aqeedah that resolved the greatest existential question for human beings by providing a comprehensive view of this life, what comes before it and after it, and their interrelation along with the divine rulings that regulate human affairs and address human problems as such, are what we refer to by the term “Shariah rulings of the idea.”

As for the Shariah rulings that Islam legislated as a method to implement these solutions in real life and society, to propagate them globally, and to preserve and defend them these are what we refer to by the term “Shariah rulings of the method.”

Thus, the Shariah rulings on worship that regulate the satisfaction of the human instinct for devotion, the Shariah rulings of the social system that govern family relationships and the interaction between men and women and the consequences of that interaction, the Shariah rulings of the economic system that clarify property laws and regulate economic relations, as well as the Shariah rulings on food, clothing, manners, and ethics all these fall under Shariah rulings of the idea.

On the other hand, the Islamic state and its institutions, the system of governance, and the rulings related to it such as the establishment of schools, the state treasury (Bayt al-Mal), media institutions, courts, penal laws including hudud, qisas, and ta'zir, foreign policy, and the rulings on Jihad are all part of the Shariah rulings of the method.

Likewise, the obligation to establish political parties, and their responsibility to monitor the intellectual and emotional state of society, hold rulers accountable, engage in Dawah, and carry out enjoining maroof (good) and forbidding munkar (evil), whether done by the state or the parties are all from the Shariah rulings of the method.

When we closely examine the Shariah rulings of the idea and the method, we find a clear distinction between them. The rulings of the idea were legislated to regulate human affairs, and therefore, adherence to them and implementing them is legally required for their own sake.

In contrast, the Shariah rulings of the method, having been legislated as a means to implement, propagate, and preserve the Shariah rulings of the idea, are not required for their own sake. It is not permissible to undertake them without ensuring that they achieve their intended outcomes. Instead, the Shariah rulings of the method must be carried out in a way that leads to the realization of their intended goal: the implementation of the Shariah rulings of the idea in real life, even though it is possible and conceivable that the desired outcomes might not be achieved in some instances.

The Islamic state is not an end in itself, nor is it the ultimate goal that Muslims must achieve. Instead, it is a method for taking care of people's affairs that is, for implementing Islam in society and conveying its message to the world. Therefore, when establishing the state and forming its institutions as defined by the Shariah, as well as in determining the policies it adopts, it is essential to ensure the proper implementation of the Islamic system and the proper carrying of Islam's Risaalah message to the world.

In order to ensure the proper functioning of this state, and to preserve the role it is meant to play, Shariah obligates Muslims to offer sincere advice to the state. In fact, they must take the initiative to hold it accountable whenever the need arises, since the state is acting on their behalf in implementing Islam and conveying its Risaalah message. This accountability was not left to be merely voluntary or individual. Instead, the Shariah obliges Muslims to establish at least one political party whose specific function is to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Allah (swt) says, **﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ﴾** **“Let there be a group amongst you who call others to goodness, encourage what is maroof (good), and forbid what is munkar (evil). It is they who will be successful.”** [TMQ Surah Aali Imran: 104].

Imam Ibn Kathir said in his commentary on this verse, **«المقصود من هذه الآية أن تكون فرقة من الأمة، متصدية لهذا الشأن، وإن كان ذلك واجباً على كل فرد من بحسبه** **“The meaning is that there should be a group from within the Ummah dedicated to this task, even though it is obligatory upon every individual to do so according to their ability.”**

At the forefront of this duty is commanding the rulers to do what is maroof (good) and forbidding them from doing what is munkar (evil) because the uprightness of the state brings immense good, while its corruption leads to widespread harm and devastation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«أفضل الجهاد كلمة حق عند سلطان جائر»** **“The best Jihad is a word of truth spoken before a tyrannical ruler.”**

Accordingly, political structures that are established on the basis of the Islamic aqeedah are not commanded by Shariah for their own sake. Instead, they are among the Shariah rulings of the method legislated for the sake of something else, whether in the presence of the Islamic state or in its absence.

As for the case when Islamic life exists under the Islamic state, the role of these political structures is to monitor the rulers, advise them, and hold them accountable whenever they fall short, act unjustly, or oppress. Their role also includes guardianship over the society's

culture and collective public awareness, in order to ensure that it continues to be shaped by Islamic culture and its sentiments, and to guard against the infiltration of any cultural or civilizational influences alien to Islam into the public customs, and consequently into public opinion and societal relations. For the extent to which an Islamic society is influenced by non-Islamic ideas and emotions determines how much its Islamic way of life becomes disturbed and begins to drift away from Islamic living. Islamic history is the clearest testimony to this principle.

As for the case when Islamic life is absent, as is the reality of the Ummah today, then it is assumed that these political structures, and the intellectual and political work they carry out, must serve as the Shariah legitimate and practical method for resuming the Islamic life, through the establishment of the Islamic state. Therefore, the actions carried out by the structure, based on the Shariah rulings of the method derived from Shariah evidence, starting from its formation, the building of its study circles, the process of ideological culturing within the circles, addressing society, confronting non-Islamic ideas, politically challenging the ruler, all the way to seeking nussrah (military support) for establishing the Islamic state, none of these actions are to be undertaken for their own sake. Instead, each must be carried out with careful attention to achieving the objectives for which they were legislated. Otherwise, these actions would be merely symbolic and pointless exercise and indeed, a waste of time.

The structure must be a real and effective one, not just a formal or superficial structure. This can only be achieved if it is formed upon a specific culture and method, adopted and adhered to by all its members without exception, and if it possesses an administrative structure that regulates its progress toward the objectives. The formation of its circles, and the ideological culturing within them, must always be guided by the purpose for which they were originally established.

What is intended is the formation of Islamic personalities and sincere carriers of the Dawah. Public discourse must be conducted with the aim for which it was legislated in mind namely, to change the prevailing customs, and then reshape them according to Islamic concepts, ultimately leading to the formation of Islamic public opinion.

Political struggle must also be carried out with its intended purpose in view: to expose colonialist domination plans, unveil the treachery of the rulers and their violations of the Shariah, and to bring down their false legitimacy.

As for seeking nussrah (military support), it must be undertaken with the aim for which it was legislated: to bring Islam into actual implementation, namely, to bring it to the position of governance and authority.

Jihad, which is among the most noble and significant rulings of the tareeqah (method), is not undertaken for its own sake. Instead, it must be carried out with the realization of the objectives for which it was legislated such as repelling a disbelieving enemy from Islamic lands, conquering lands of kufr (disbelief) in order to transform them into lands of Islam, weakening the enemy to avert its danger or to pave the way for its defeat, or instilling fear in the enemy to deter it from aggression against the Ummah and its interests.

Allah (swt) says, **﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَعَآخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ﴾** **“Prepare against them what you believers can of military power and cavalry to deter Allah’s enemies and your enemies as well as other enemies unknown to you but known to Allah.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Anfal: 60].

And He (swt) says, **﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ﴾** **“Fight against them if they persecute you until there is no more persecution, and your devotion will be to Allah alone.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 193].

And He (swt) says, **﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا﴾** **“And what is it with you?**

You do not fight in the cause of Allah and for oppressed men, women, and children who cry out, “Our Lord! Deliver us from this land of oppressors! Appoint for us a saviour; appoint for us a helper—all by Your grace.” [TMQ Surah An-Nisa: 75].

The rulings on punishments such as hudud (fixed punishments) and qisas (retaliatory punishments) were only legislated to deter offenders, and others whose souls may tempt them to commit crimes, evils, and violations. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ **“There is security of life for you in the law of retaliation, O people of reason, so that you may become mindful of Allah.” [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 179].**

And He (swt) said, ﴿الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْشِهْدَ عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ **“As for female and male fornicators, give each of them one hundred lashes, and do not let pity for them make you lenient in enforcing the law of Allah, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a number of believers witness their punishment.” [TMQ Surah An-Nur: 2].**

Thus, Allah (swt) commanded that a group of the believers witness their punishment to fulfill the objective for which the hudud was legislated: that they serve as a deterrent example for others who may be tempted to commit indecency.

However, our statement that Islam is an idea and a method, and that the Shariah rulings related to the method are binding Shariah rulings, does not mean that Islam has legislated a detailed ruling for every aspect of the idea, to clarify how it is to be implemented. Instead, it means that the rulings related to the method which Islam has legislated are binding upon us, just like all other Shariah rulings, just like the Shariah rulings of the idea itself. It is not permissible to neglect them under the pretext that they are rulings legislated for the sake of something else, and not for their own sake, or under the claim that rulings can change with time and place.

Accordingly, when the Shariah legislates a ruling from among the rulings of the idea, without legislating a detailed method for its implementation, then Muslims are authorized to choose the means and styles suitable for carrying out that ruling, in the required manner. This is where the importance of distinguishing between the method (tareeqah) and the means and styles (wasa'il wa asalib) comes in.

The rulings of the method are obligatory because the Shariah has mandated them, and provided Shariah evidence for them therefore, Muslims are obligated to adhere to them and have no choice in whether to adopt them or not. As for the means and styles, they are permissible actions or tools the Shariah has indicated their Shariah permissibility, and not their obligation, so Muslims may choose whichever is more appropriate among them to implement the Shariah rulings of the idea. An example is the best way to clarify this.

Islam has obligated those who possess the nisab (minimum amount) of wealth to pay zakat on their wealth, and it made the state the method for collecting zakat funds and distributing them to their legitimate recipients. Allah says, ﴿خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا﴾ **“Take zakah from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it.” [TMQ Surah At-Tawbah: 103].**

So, Islam commands the head of state to collect zakat from the Muslims.

However, Islam did not specify a detailed manner for how zakat should be collected. Therefore, the state is permitted to adopt any styles and means that are permissible by Shariah in order to implement this obligation. This is why the styles and means differed between the time of the Prophet (saw), and those who came after him. New means and styles emerged and developed, with changing times.

A notable example of this is what the Khalifah al-Rashid (Rightly-Guided Caliph) Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra) did when he established the Diwans (administrative registers), a qualitative step forward in this domain.

An example of this is that Islam has made the Bay'ah (pledge of allegiance) the Shariah method for appointing the general leader of the Muslims, the Khalifah (Caliph). It is the only legitimate and binding method for Muslims. The Bay'ah is a consensual contract between the Muslims and the one being pledged to lead, whereby he governs the affairs of the people both domestically and externally according to Shariah.

No one is permitted to assume the Khilafah (Caliphate) through mere seizure of power (ghalabah), hereditary succession (wilayat al-ahd), or any other means. The Bay'ah, which Islam legislated as the method for appointing the Khalifah (Caliph), affirms that authority belongs to the Ummah.

However, this method was not accompanied by detailed instructions on how it should be carried out. Thus, the form and manner of implementation differed among the Khulafaa ar-Rashidun (Rightly-Guided Caliphs) (ra), while the Companions (ra) has unanimous consensus on the legitimacy of each of their pledges of allegiance.

In our present time, various styles and means can be adopted to implement the selection and the bayah (pledge of allegiance) to the Khalifah (Caliph). For example, the Ummah may be represented by elected delegates through ballot boxes, who would be the ahl al-hall wal-'aqd (people of authority and decision) or the Council of the Ummah. Alternatively, the Ummah may directly carry out the selection itself through elections. A third possibility is to split the process between the Ummah and its representatives: the Council of the Ummah would shortlist the candidates, and then the Ummah would choose one of the nominated candidates through direct voting.

And among the examples of the difference between the method (tareeqah) and the means and styles (wasa'il wa asalib) are:

The political structure working to resume Islamic life is commanded to address society and politically struggle against the rulers. These are binding Shariah rulings of the method that fall under the method of establishing Islamic life, as the Prophet (saw) mandated this in accordance to the text of the Noble Qur'an. However, the Shariah legal evidences did not specify detailed procedures for public Dawah and political struggle, so it is permissible to choose lawful means and styles that ensure the implementation of these two duties.

The Prophet (saw) in Makkah employed multiple styles, including standing on a mountain to address the people, organizing processions through the neighborhoods of Makkah, speaking to people in markets, gathering places, and in front of the Kaaba. In our time, public addresses, lectures, conferences, satellite channels, radio broadcasts, the internet, publishing books, magazines, leaflets, marches, and conferences can all be used. These are all permissible means and styles that can be employed to fulfill the Shariah of addressing society and engaging in political struggle.

In summary, Islam is an ideology composed of both an idea and a method. The idea refers to the creed (aqeedah) and everything related to it, thoughts, information, and the Shariah rulings that stem from it which regulate human behavior as a human being. As for the method, it consists of the Shariah rulings that explain how to implement these solutions in real life, in order to establish a society that lives an Islamic way of life. It also outlines how to spread the ideology throughout the world to bring the rest of humanity into the Islamic society, and how to preserve, safeguard, and defend the ideology.

As for the means and styles, they are the permitted things and actions that Muslims may adopt as ways to implement rulings for which the Shariah has not specified a particular method of execution. It is not obligatory to adhere to a specific style or means; rather, it is permissible to choose what is most suitable, easiest, and most effective among them for implementing the Shariah rulings provided that they are not substitutes for the rulings of the method, and that there is Shariah evidence indicating their permissibility. Allah (swt) says, ﴿قُلْ

Say, O Prophet, "If you sincerely love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. For Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [TMQ Surah Aali Imran: 31].