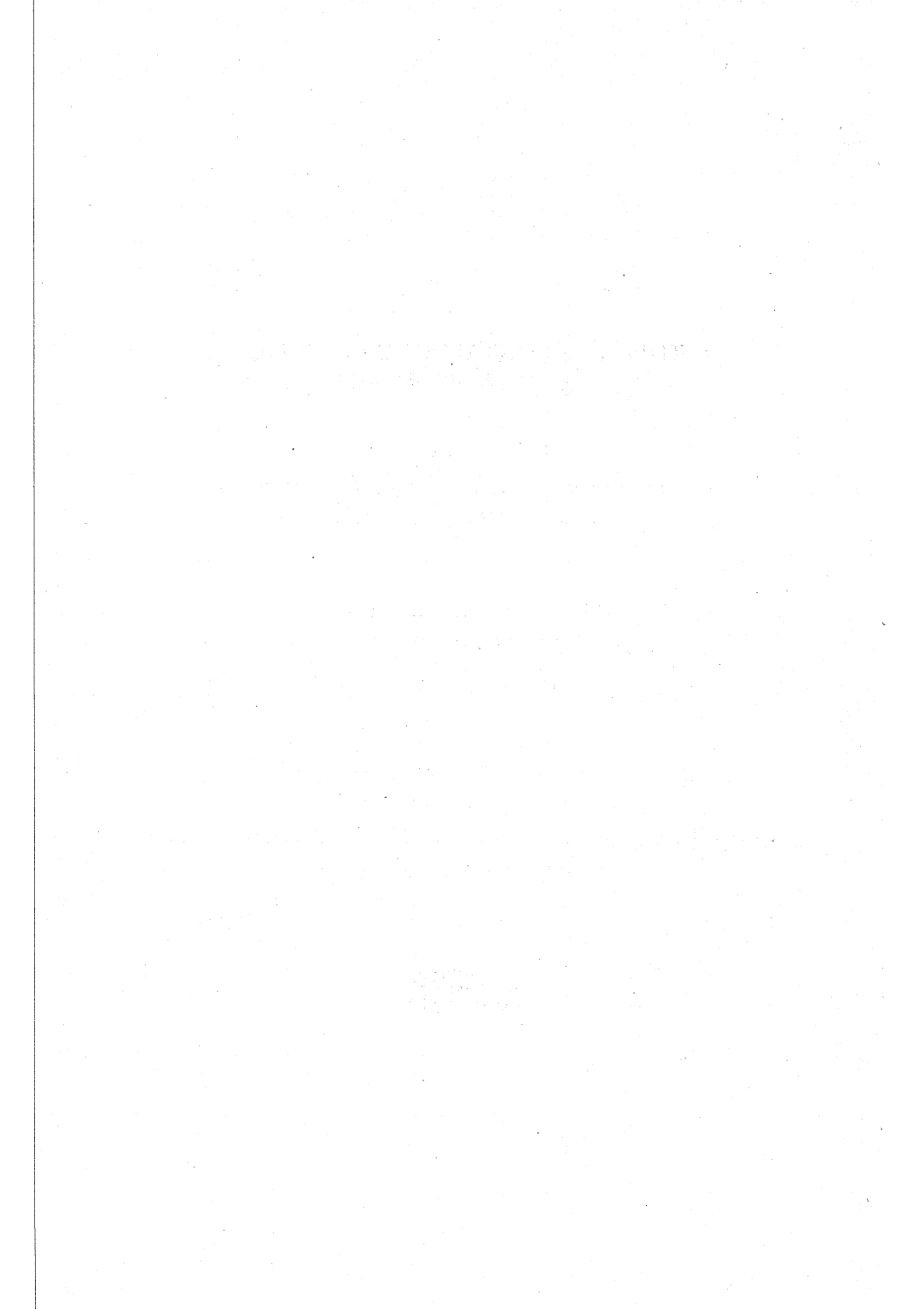


FOLLOW THE SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

Imām
Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī

دار السنة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



THIS TEXT CONTAINS THREE WORKS
BY THE NOBLE IMĀM

THE FIRST TREATISE

*The Ḥadīth is Sufficient Proof in Itself, in
Matters of Belief and Rulings*

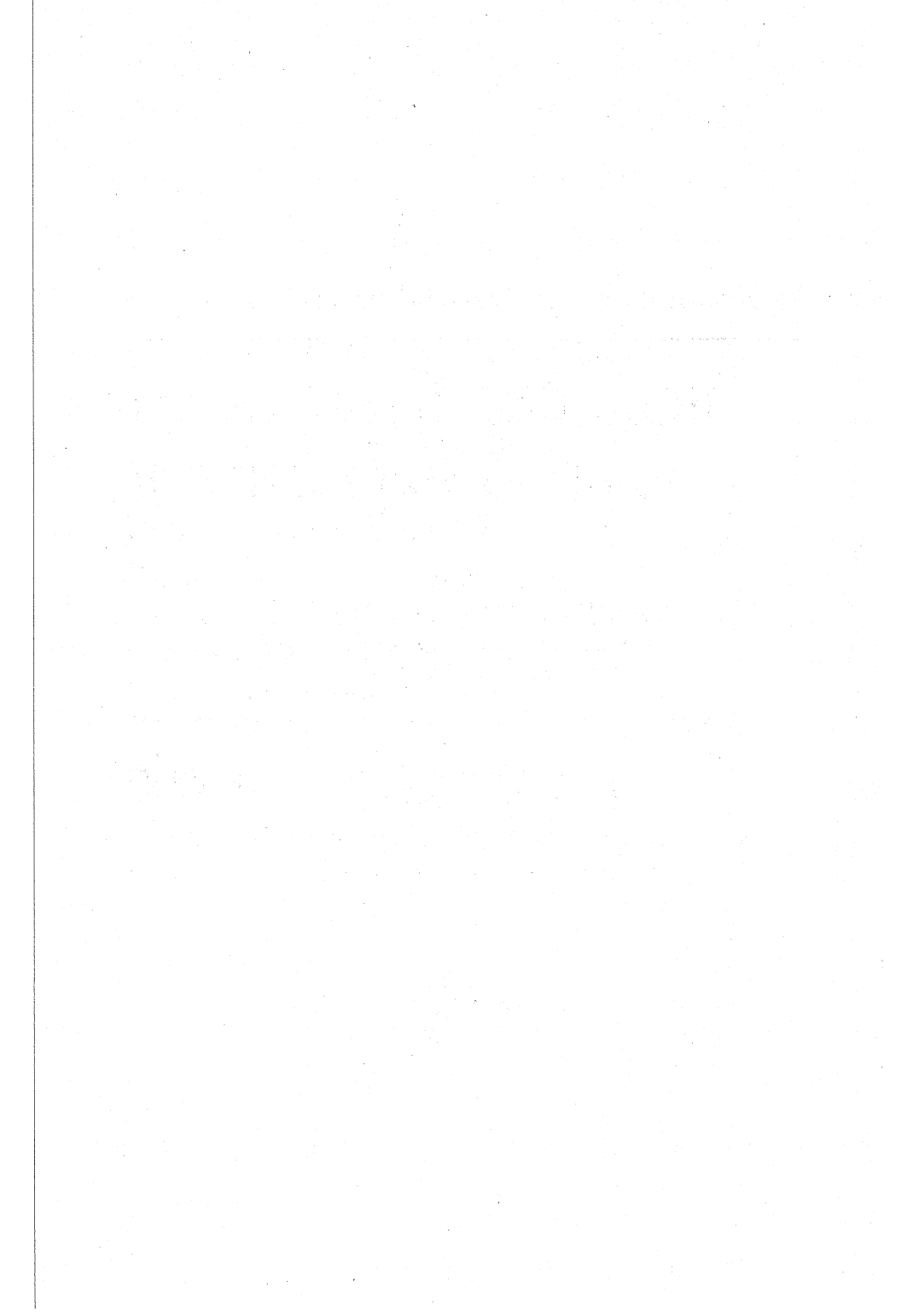
THE SECOND TREATISE

*How it is Incumbent upon us to Explain
the Noble Qur'ān?*

THE THIRD TREATISE

*The Status of the Sunnah in Islām
and Clarification that One Cannot Rely Solely on the Qur'ān
to the Exclusion of the Sunnah*





Imām Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī

FOLLOW the SUNNAH
of the PROPHET ﷺ

being a translation of his

'Al-Ḥadīth Ḥujjah binafsibi fi'l-'Aqā'id wa'l-Aḥkām' and
Kayfa Yajibu 'alayna ann Nūfasiru al-Qur'ān al-Karīm' and
*'Manzilah al-Sunnah fi'l-Islām wa Bayān annahu lā
yustagnā 'anhā bi'l-Qur'ān'*



“And We have revealed to you [O Muḥammad] the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them.”

[*al-Nahl* (16):44]

Follow the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ

by

Imām Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī

(d.1420H)



Dār as-Sunnah Publishers

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THE AUTHOR

Imām Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī
May Allāh have mercy upon him

His Name and Lineage:

He was Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn Nūḥ Ibn Adam Najātī, al-Albānī by birth, al-Dimashqī by residence and al-Urdunī (from Jordan) due to his migration and place of death. He was born into a poor family in the city of Ashkoderā, the capital of Albania, in the year 1332^{AH} (1914^{C.E.}) and it is to this country that he ascribes himself. His father was al-Ḥajj Nūḥ, from the major *Ḥanafī* scholars of his land. During Aḥmad Zogu's reign of Albania there was severe oppression for the Muslims of that land. Due to this, the Shaykh's family migrated to Damascus, Syria and it is there that he and his family took residence.

His Educational Background and Teachers:

His first Shaykh was his father, al-Ḥajj Nūḥ Najātī, who himself had completed *Sharī'ah* studies in Istanbul, returning to Albania as

one of its *Ḥanafī* scholars. Under his father's guidance, the Shaykh studied Qur'ān, *tajwīd*, Arabic language as well as *Ḥanafī fiqh*.

He further studied *Ḥanafī fiqh* and Arabic language under Shaykh Sa'īd al-Burhān.

He would attend the lectures of Imām 'Abdul-Fattāḥ and Shaykh Tawfiq al-Barzah.

The Shaykh met the late *ḥadīth* master, Aḥmad Shākīr, with whom he participated in knowledge based discussions on *ḥadīth* and its research.

He met the late Indian *ḥadīth* scholar, Shaykh 'Abdul-Ṣamad Sharf al-Dīn, who himself had referenced the *ḥadīth* to the first volume of al-Nasā'ī's *Sunan al-Kubrā* as well as al-Mizzī's monumental *Tuḥfat ul-Ashraf*, and they continued to exchange letters on matters of knowledge. In one such letter, Shaykh 'Abdul-Ṣamad expressed his belief that al-Albānī was the greatest *ḥadīth* scholar of the time.

In recognition of his knowledge of *ḥadīth*, he was commissioned as far back as 1955 by the Faculty of *Shari'ah* at Damascus University to carry out detailed analysis and research into *ḥadīth* related to buying and selling and other business related transactions.

Shaykh al-Albānī does have *ijāza* from a number of scholars. From amongst the most famous of them Shaykh Muḥammad Rāghib al-Tabbākh, the historian and *Muḥaddith* of Ḥalab and Shaykh Bahjatul Baytar (through whom his *isnad* stretches back to Imām Aḥmad).

He would correspond with numerous scholars, particularly those from India and Pakistan, discussing matters related to *ḥadīth* and the religion in general, including Shaykh Muḥammad Zamzamī from Morocco and ‘Ubaydullāh Raḥmān, the author of *Mirqāt al-Mafatīḥ Sharḥ Mushkila al-Masabih*.

His skill in *ḥadīth* is attested to by a host of qualified scholars, including Dr. Amin al-Misrī, head of Islāmic Studies at Madīnah University who considered himself to be one of the Shaykh’s students; also Dr. Subḥī al-Salāḥ, former head of Ḥadīth Sciences at the University of Damascus; Dr. Aḥmad al-Asal, head of Islamic Studies at Riyāḍh University; the late Pakistani *ḥadīth* scholar, *Allāmah* Baḍī al-Dīn Shah al-Sindī; Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭayyib Awkij, former head of *Tafsīr* and Ḥadīth at the University of Ankarah in Turkey; not to mention many others.

After a number of his works appeared in print, the Shaykh was chosen to teach *ḥadīth* at the new Islamic University of Madīnah for three years from 1381 to 1383H where he was also a member of University board. After this he returned to his former studies and work in the *Zabirīyyah* library. His love for Madīnah University is evidenced by the fact that he bequeathed his entire personal library to the University.

After carrying out an analysis of the *ḥadīth* in Ibn Khuzaymah’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the Indian *ḥadīth* scholar, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Azamī (head of Ḥadīth Science in Makkah), chose al-Albānī to verify and re-check his analysis and the work is currently published in 4 volumes containing both their comments. This is an indication of the level of trust placed in al-Albānī’s *ḥadīth* ability by other scholars.

His Works:

The Shaykh's printed works, mainly in the field of ḥadīth and its sciences, number over hundred books running into many volumes! He left behind him in manuscript form at least a further seventy works. Just to mention a few of the published works: *Da'if Abū Dāwūd*, *Da'if ibn Mājah*, *Da'if al-Jāmi' as-Ṣaghīr*, *Da'if al-Targhib wal-Tarhib* [2 vols.], *Zilāl al-Jannah*, *Ghāyatul-Marām*, *Irwā' al-Ghālīl* [9 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd* [4 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ Adab al-Mufrad* [3 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Mājah* [4 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr* [2 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī* [4 vols.], *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib wal-Tarhib* [4 vols.], *Silsilah Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* [11 vols.], *Silsilah aḥādīth al-Da'ifah* [14 vols.], *Tamām al-Minnah*, *al-Tasfīyah wal-Tarbīyah*, *al-Tawassulu: Anwāḥu wa-Aḥkāmuhu*, *Talkhīṣ Aḥkam al-Janā'iz*, *al-'Aqīdah al-Taḥawīyyah Sharḥ wal-Ta'liq*, *Ṣifah Ṣalāt al-Nabī*, *Ṣalāh ul-Tarawīḥ Ṣalāt al-Nabawī* and many others.

The Scholars Praise for Him:

The senior scholars and Imāms of this time praised him and they would ask him questions, go to visit him, seek religious verdicts from him and exchange letters with him.

Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz al-Huddā said: 'The Shaykh, the great scholar, the ocean (of knowledge).'

Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shanqītī—used to respect Shaykh al-Albānī so much to the point that when he would see him passing by, and he was giving his class in the *masjid* of Madīnah, he would stop his class to stand and give *Salām* to him out of respect for him.'

The great scholar, the teacher, Muḥibb-al-Dīn al-Khatīb said: ‘And from the callers to the Sunnah who devoted their lives to reviving it was our brother Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Nūḥ Najātī al-Albānī.’

The great scholar Muḥammad Hāmid al-Fiḳī said: ‘...the brother, the *Salafī*, the Scholar; Shaykh Nāṣir al-Dīn.’

The former *Muḥfi* of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Āli-Shaykh said: ‘And he is the upholder of the *Sunnah*, a supporter of the truth and an opposition to the people of falsehood.’

During his lifetime, the Shaykh, ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz said: ‘I have not seen under the surface of the sky a person knowledgeable of the *ḥadīth* in our current time the likes of the great scholar, Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī.’ And he was asked about the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ): “*Indeed Allaah raises up from this ummah at the beginning of every century someone who will revive it for them.*” So he was asked who is the *mujaddid* of this century? He replied: ‘Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. He is the *mujaddid* in my opinion and Allāh knows best.’

Muḥammad Ibn Ṣālih al-‘Uthaymīn said: ‘From what I came to know of the Shaykh through my gatherings with him—and they were few—was that he was very serious about acting upon the Sunnah and fighting against the innovations. And this was regardless of whether it was about the belief or about actions. As for through my readings of his written works, then I have come to know that about him, and also that he possesses a vast amount of knowledge of *ḥadīth*, in terms of reporting them and investigat-

ing them. And Allāh has benefited many people through what he has written such as about knowledge, aspects of the *manhaj*, and concern for the science of *ḥadīth*.’

The great scholar, Shaykh Zayd Ibn Fayād said about him: ‘Indeed, Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī is from the most prominent and distinguished personalities of this era. He had great concern for the *ḥadīth*—its paths of transmission, its reporters and its levels of authenticity or weakness. This is an honorable task from the best things in which hours can be spent and efforts can be made. And he was like any other of the scholars—those who are correct in some matters and err in other matters. However, his devotion to this great science (of *ḥadīth*) is from that which requires that his prestige be acknowledged and his endeavors in it be appreciated.’

Muqbil Ibn Hādī al-Wāḍi‘ī said: ‘Indeed, there cannot be found an equal in terms of the knowledge of *ḥadīth* like that of Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. Allāh has given benefit through his knowledge and his books numerous times more than what has been accomplished by those zealots for Islām who act upon ignorance—those who organise reformation and revolutionary movements. And that which I sincerely believe and am convinced about is that the Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī is from the *mujaddidīn* (reformers/revivers) whom the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke the truth of when he said: “*Indeed Allaah raises up from this ummah at the beginning of every century someone who will revive it for them.*”

His Characteristics:

The Shaykh, may Allāh have mercy on him, had many praiseworthy characteristics. Among the most clear, manifest and highest

of them was his profound precision with regard to knowledge, his diligence, perseverance, his tolerance [with others], his firmness upon the truth, his quickness to return to correctness, his patience with the hardships of knowledge and *da'wab*, and his taking of insults and harms for the sake of the *da'wab*, bearing that with patience and consideration. One of the greatest things that distinguished the Shaykh from many of his brothers amongst the people of knowledge was his strong support for the Sunnah and its adherents, his firmness upon the methodology of the *Salaf al-Sālih*, his love for those who called to it, and his refutation against the deviants from all levels and various positions, with an extreme clearness and a rare clarity.

On one occasion, a man visited the Shaykh in his home in Jordan claiming to be a prophet! How would we have reacted when faced with such a situation? Shaykh sat the man down and discussed his claims at length and in the end the visitor made *taubah* from his claim and all present, including the Shaykh, were overcome with tears. In fact, how often is Shaykh heard on tape bursting into tears when speaking about Allāh, His Messenger and the affairs of the Muslims?

On another occasion, he was visited by three men all claiming that Shaykh was a *kāfir*. When it came time to pray they refused to pray behind him, saying it is not possible for a *kāfir* to lead the prayer. The Shaykh accepted this, saying that in his eyes the three of them were Muslims so one of them should lead the prayer. Afterwards, they discussed their differences at length and when it came time for the following prayer, all three men insisted on praying behind the Shaykh!

His Death:

The Shaykh, did not cease to be devoted to the knowledge, persistent in authoring works, diligent in teaching and educating until he reached the age of eighty-six. He did not stop authoring books, writing letters and doing referencing and checking of *abādīth*—because of his heart’s attachment to that—until the last two months of his life, when he grew very weak. This was until Allāh took his soul in death right before sunset on Saturday when eight days remained for the end of the month *Jumādā al-Ākhirah* of the year 1420^{AH} (2nd October 1999).

He left his will advising his relatives not to wail over his death and hurry his burial. He donated his entire library that included valuable manuscripts to the library of the Islāmic University of Madīnah because of his '*fond memories*' of the years he spent there.

The Shaykh’s funeral prayer was performed on the evening of the same day that he died. Scores of people, whose number exceeded that of five thousand persons, prayed over him. The scholars, students of knowledge and common people were all affected by his loss. May Allāh have mercy on his soul and grant him Paradise and make this work a source of benefit for him.

¹ See Description of the Prophet’s Prayer by Imām Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī published by Dar al-Sunnah Publisher 2009.

FOREWARD

Indeed, all praise and thanks are due to Allāh; we praise Him, we seek His Aid, and we ask His Forgiveness. And we seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of ourselves and the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides, there is none who can misguide him, and whomsoever Allāh causes to go astray, there is none who can guide him. And I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, Alone, without partners; and I bear witness than Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ

مُسْلِمُونَ

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 102]

Allāh, the Most High says:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَتَقْوَارِبَكُمْ الَّتِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
 زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ
 بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿٧١﴾

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and also in respects to the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 1]

Allāh, the Most High says:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٢﴾ يُصْلِحْ
 لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
 فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 70-71]

To proceed: Indeed, the best of speech is the Speech of Allāh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad (ﷺ), while the worst of things are the innovations and every innovation is a heresy, every heresy leads to misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.

Now to our topic: Despite the strength of the flood of disbelief (*kufir*) and misguidance (*dalāl*), which seeks to drive our nation (*ummah*) with its stick and to cast them into the abyss of ruin and destruction. In spite of the attempts of the supporters of the new age of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), their efforts and the uniting of their forces to tear this noble Islāmic *ummah* from their faith, beliefs (*‘aqīdah*) and to separate Islām from its life. But there is a ray of light and a glimmer of hope that helps the observer to understand these events, explains the [contrary] tide that has been born and seeks to push forward the [Islāmic] community. While searching for a way to stem this precipitous and ruinous tide, to drive it back from whence it came and to save lands and people from its effects and its dangers.

And that beloved tide is none other than these delicate, burgeoning blossoms that are opening here and there among the believing Muslim youth. They have opened their eyes and awoken to the calls of some of the preachers and reformers, who have excited within them feelings of [religious] zeal and enthusiasm and awoken in them love for the Religion and the yearning of their souls for it. This young generation seeks to raise up this *ummah* after its long decline and to save it from enemies and dangers, to strive earnestly and sincerely and to persevere, without timidity or fear. But how quickly they were assailed by [feelings] that they had not advanced and that they had returned to their starting position, after a long journey and much preparation. This caused them to feel grief and sorrow and some of them despaired and to desist [from their efforts], leaving others to begin all over again.

These people try [their best] and work hard, but their attempts do not achieve any better results than those of their predecessors. And this situation is repeated time after time.

Yes, this is the situation of most of those who call to Allāh in these times, confused, lost, wandering, uncertain, disordered and unprepared, without any gain, not knowing the correct path and not directed to the skilful guides who would free them from their confusion, rescue them from the wilderness and cause their efforts to be directed towards a beneficial path and their deeds to be turned in a favourable direction that is pleasing to Allāh, which would lead the desired goal and achieve the cherished objective.

And the correct path is none other than the path of the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah and understanding of them in accordance with the methodology of the righteous *Salaf*—may Allāh be pleased with them—acting upon them, calling the people to them and holding fast to their commandments. And those skilful guides are none other than the scholars of the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah, those who act upon them, are devoted to them and follow their guidance.

And in vain do the Muslim youth attempt to attain the support of Islām and the salvation of the Muslims' dignity by means other than this. In vain also do the Islāmic movements seek to attain their desired objective, without the help of these expert and skilful guides.

Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful has blessed us—and all Praise, Grace, Bounty and Benefactions belong to Him—so let us turn towards a true scholar, who is one of the heirs of the righteous *Salaf* and the rightly-guided *Imāms*, for he has shown us the beneficial knowledge from the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah. And Allāh has guided us through him to the truth regarding which people have differed and directed us to inestimable treasures and

the priceless jewels contained in the Words of Allāh and the words of His Messenger, and [as a result], we have felt the cool breeze and serenity, after long toil and hardship and we have realised the right of our ummah in general, on us and the right of the young Muslims in particular, on us. And that right is that we lead them to the goodness with which Allāh, the Most High has enlightened us and that we guide them to the way of salvation which Allāh has granted to us, in order that we take them by the hand to the path of guidance and cooperate with them in shunning the causes of misguidance and destruction. And through Allāh, the Most High success and help are attained always and forever.

For this reason, we have been careful to provide the Muslims from time to time, with all the beneficial knowledge that we have acquired and the serious and powerful study which presents true Islām to them in a clear manner, without ambiguity, simply and without complexity, purely and without stain or blemish, purified from every adulteration and opacity, each question being linked with its proofs and the opinions [of scholars], accompanied by their sources, by means of which students may dispense with the need to refer to numerous books. This will convince them with clear evidences and glaring proofs, and keep them from going astray, or becoming lost, and from differing and confusion. It will also engender among them the unity of thought that will give birth to unity of consciousness, which will be followed—*in sha' Allāb*—by unity of action for the establishment of the Religion, along with striving [in the path of Allāh] for the purpose of applying it, propagating it and consolidating it.

And we desire through these books and treatises that they provide a correct point of departure and a strong intellectual basis for the callers to Islām. For this reason, we present them to *Ablu'l-*

Ra'ī and *Ablu'l-Fikr*,² to the Muslim scholars and the believers calling to Islām, in order that they form their opinions based on it. We welcome every criticism and we thank the one who makes it and we consider him to be a participant in making our work a success and a means of causing them to bear fruit. However, we consider that it is necessary that every criticism should include the following three attributes:

1. Sincere (*ikhlās*) devotion to Allāh, the Most Glorified, the Most High, meaning that the intention (*qaṣd*) of the one making the criticism intends thereby to arrive at the truth and adheres to the obligations of one giving advice (*naṣiḥa*).
2. Correct knowledge (*ilm*) and understanding (*fahm*), based on the two fundamentals of the Religion [i.e., the Qur'ān and Sunnah].
3. High Islāmic decorum (*adab al-Islāmi*) and scholarly etiquette (*ashūb*), that is devoid of vilification, disparagement, derision and accusations of ignorance (*tajhīl*), for none does that except those who exceed the limits, are unjust, intend to do harm and commit slander.

And this treatise, which I present to you today by the teacher and erudite scholar, Muḥammad Nāsiruddīn Al-Albānī, under the title: *'Al-Ḥadīth Ḥujjab binafsihi Fī'l-'Aqā'id wa'l-Aḥkām'*—Ḥadīth is a Proof in Itself in Beliefs and Rulings—is [based on] a lecture given by him at a conference organised by the Association of Muslim Students, which was held in the city of Grenada, in what is now Christian Spain, formerly the Islāmic State of Al-Andalus, in the month of Rajab, in the year 1392 AH, corresponding to the month of August, in the year 1972 CE.

¹The advocates of opinion based on reasoning.

²The advocates of speculative thinking.

In it, the author spoke about the correct Islāmic stance with regard to the Sunnah, its status and standing as evidence and he [the author], divided it into four chapters. In the first chapter, he spoke about the status of the Sunnah in Islām, the obligation upon the Muslims to return to it, to seek legal judgements from it and to warn against opposing it.

In the second chapter, he spoke about the invalidity of the attempts by the *Khalaf*³ to oppose or contradict it and the falseness of the means they employed to this end, such as analogy (*qiyās*) and some of the rules of *Usūl al-Fiqh*, which they made use of, thereby rejecting the Sunnah.

As for the third chapter, the author—may Allāh preserve him—devoted it providing evidence of the invalidity of the rule that some of the scholars of speculative dogma laid down in the past and which some scholars and preachers have propagated in recent times; and that is their claim that tenets of *'aqīdah* cannot be confirmed by *ḥadīth al-āḥād*,⁴ making clear the error of those who laid down this rule, since they sought to distinguish on the basis of it between *ahādīth* relating to *'aqīdah* and *ahādīth* pertaining to judgements, without any clear, authentic proof, advancing only fancy and conjecture.

At this point, it is important to point out that our teacher has presented this topic in brief here, because he has previously dealt with it in great detail and gone to great lengths to describe in detail

³ *Khalaf*: The later generations of Muslim scholars, as opposed to the *Salaf* (the early generations of Muslim scholars).

⁴ *Ḥadīth Al-Āḥād*: Linguistically, it refers to a ḥadīth narrated by only one narrator. In ḥadīth terminology, it refers to a narration that does not meet all of the conditions necessary to be considered *mutawātir* (so widely narrated that it is inconceivable that the narrators could have agreed upon a lie).

the falseness of this opinion, in a special thesis entitled: '*Ḥadīth Al-Ābād wa'l-'Aqīdah*' (*Ḥadīth al-Ābād* and Belief). It is [based on] a lecturer given by the author to a group of attentive young Muslims in Damascus, around fifteen years ago and it had a commendable effect in weakening the above mentioned opinion and impeding its spread among the educated. And Allāh has made its spread easy under the title of: '*Wujūb Al-Akḥḍ bi-Ḥadīth Al-Ābād fi'l-'Aqīdah*' (The Obligation to Act Upon *Ḥadīth Al-Ābād* Relating to '*Aqīdah*) (no. 5).

As for the fourth and final chapter of this treatise, the author has expounded in it on the third, important matter, which has led to the weakening of the status of the Sunnah in the eyes of the people and the hindering of its practical application—and this is the blind following that has been common place and widespread in all areas of thought and life in the Muslim world for many centuries. And it has continued to affect minds and hearts, causing the death of initiative, the killing of ingenuity and the burial of talent. Further, it has prevented the people from following the Guidance of their Lord, the Most Glorified and hindered them from benefiting from the goodness that has come to them on the authority of Muḥammad (ﷺ), relying instead on the *ijtihād* of scholars, who were not happy for their students to blindly follow them, without understanding.

Indeed, all of them advised those who came after them not to give precedence to anything from the sayings, opinions or *ijtihād* of the scholars over the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), no matter who said it. Likewise, they declared that they were innocent of every opinion, *ijtihād* or *fatwa* that contradicts the Words of Allāh and the words of His Messenger (ﷺ) and their rejection of them during their lives and after their deaths.

And at the close of his lecture, our teacher encouraged the Muslim youth to return to the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah in everything that reaches them and to act in order to attain the highest level of obedience, in accordance with their ability and capacity.

In this way, they will make the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) their sole source of obedience, just as Allāh, the Most High has made him the sole source of guidance in matters of worship. In this way, they will attain both in word and in deed—rather just in word—the meaning of the testimony that none is worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Likewise, they will attain within themselves—in deed, rather just in claim—the slogan: “Judgement belongs to Allāh, the Most High Alone,” having declared it and extolled it. In addition, they will succeed thereby in rearing a Qur’anic generation, who will achieve the establishment of the desired Muslim State, by Allāh, the Most High’s permission.

Further, this lecture achieved a great improvement among the masses of educated Muslim students who heard it. This was due to the fact that they were able to discern in it that his opinion was the right and proper one and they sent numerous letters to the author, requesting that he print and publish it, in order to maximise the benefit to every sincere and enthusiastic Muslim seeking the truth and desiring to hold fast to it.

Likewise, it is good at this point for us to draw attention to the fact that our virtuous teacher as a third topic regarding the Sunnah, which is a lecture that he delivered around two years ago to a gathering of Muslim youth in the noble city of Qatar. In it, he spoke of the importance of the Prophetic Sunnah, its status in Islāmic Law and the need for it in order to understand the Qur’ān

and comprehend its *tafsīr*. Happily, it will also be published soon, by Allāh's permission.

Furthermore, we have asked our noble teacher that he respond to the many requests to print this lecture and he has agreed—may Allāh, the Most High reward him with a goodly recompense—for that praiseworthy act. So we have begun the task of reading it to him and revising it under his supervision and we have placed small headings in order to make it easier for the reader and to help him understand the main essence of the topics. This is a new kind of arrangement, which is good and beneficial and useful.⁵

And I considered it good to include in the treatise explanations for some of the technical ḥadīth terms which have a connection to the topic and have important benefits that it is useful to explain. And I ask Allāh, the Most High that this treatise may be of benefit to many people and that its author, its publisher and the one who conveys it to others may be rewarded with the best of rewards. And through Allāh, the Most Glorified success and righteousness are attained, and from Him Alone comes help and support.

ʿĪd al-ʿAbbāsī

⁵ Then Allāh made it easy for us also to publish it under the title: *Manzilah al-Sunnah Fil-Islām* (The Status of the Sunnah in Islām), as a part of this series, with the number (4). It is the third treatise in this published work.

DEFINITIONS OF ḤADĪTH TERMS

Sunnah, *ḥadīth*, *khabar* and *āthār*.

Sunnah: Linguistically, it means a habitual practice, or a customary procedure in life, such as in the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Whoever dislikes my Sunnah is not one of my followers.” And: “You must adhere to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided *Khulafā’*...”⁶

In ḥadīth terminology it refers to any words or deeds that emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ) or any words or deeds of which he approved and which were intended as legislation for the *ummah*. Excluded from this are worldly and natural actions unrelated to religious matters and with no connection to Divine Revelation.

And the general meaning of the Sunnah in the view of the ḥadīth scholars includes what is obligatory (*wājib*) and recommended (*mandūb*), while according to the terminology of the scholars of Islāmic Jurisprudence, it refers only to what is *mandūb* and does

⁶The former was narrated by the two Shaikhs (i.e., Bukhārī and Muslim) and the latter was narrated by Tirmidhī and others and its *takbrīj* is given in *Mishkāt Al-Masabih*, no. #165 and other works.

not include what is *wājib*.

As for ḥadīth, linguistically, it refers to spoken words and what is transmitted verbally or in writing.

In the terminology of the majority of scholars, it is synonymous with the word Sunnah. Some of them opined that it refers exclusively to the words—but not deeds or approvals—that emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ). But the truth is that the principal linguistic meaning of the Sunnah is: actions and approvals, while the definition of ḥadīth pertains to words or speech. However, since both of them are included in what emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ), most of the scholars of ḥadīth inclined towards the view that they are synonymous. Likewise, they favoured the view that ḥadīth refers only to what can be attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) and that it does not include what emanated from others, except within certain limits.

As for *khabar*, linguistically, it is synonymous with the word ḥadīth; both of them indicate the same thing. However, the view that it refers specifically to what has emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ) is widespread among the scholars that ḥadīth refers exclusively to what has emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ) while the definition of *khabar* is more general than that, and includes what has emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ) and what has emanated from others. So between them there is generality and specificity: Every ḥadīth is *khabar*, but not every *khabar* is a ḥadīth. This is why one who works in the field of the Sunnah is known as a *muhaddīth*, while one who works in the field of history and knowledge of the past (*akhbār*) of the people is known as an *akhbārīyan*. Some of them were inclined to define *khabar* as being a synonym of ḥadīth and Sunnah, but the best opinion is the first.

Athar is something transmitted on the authority of the earlier generations, so like *khabar*, it includes in its principal meaning what has emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ) and what has emanated from others. Some of them defined it as being restricted to what has emanated from the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and the *Tābi‘ūn* and their followers. This is the preferred and better usage, because it distinguishes between ḥadīth that can be attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) and ḥadīth that can be attributed to the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and the *Tābi‘ūn*.

Section One: *Sanad and Matn*

A Prophetic ḥadīth narrated in the books of the Sunnah consists of two basic parts: the first is the *sanad* and the second is the *matn*.

As for the *sanad*, it is the path which connects to the *matn*; that is, the narrators who conveyed and transmitted the *matn*, beginning with the last narrator—who is the author of the book of ḥadīth—and ending with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

As for the *matn*, it is the wording of the ḥadīth that conveys the meaning. The scholars refused to accept any ḥadīth that does not have an *isnād* (*sanad*), due to the spread of lies against the Prophet (ﷺ).

The revered *Tābi‘ī*, Muḥammad Ibn Sirīn—may Allāh have Mercy on him—said: “They did not use to ask about the *isnād*, then when the *fitnah* occurred, they would say: ‘Name for us your *rijāl* (men, i.e., narrators),’ then they would see who were the people of the Sunnah and accept their ḥadīth and they would see who were the

people of *bid'ah* (innovation) and reject their ḥadīth.⁷

After that, the scholars would study every *isnād* that is conveyed to them and if it satisfied the conditions for acceptance—which are that its *rijāl* were accurate, fair and connected [i.e., they actually met and transmitted the ḥadīth to each other], that no anomaly or irregularity was found in it—and if it fulfilled these conditions, they would accept it. If it did not fulfil them, they would reject it. Thus, the *isnād* became “part of the religion and were it not for that, anyone could say what he wished,” as Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak—may Allāh have mercy on him—said.⁸

The scholars of ḥadīth have laid down special rules and principles for both the *sanad* and the *matn*, in order for them to be accepted; and these rules and principles are the subject of specialised knowledge, known as ‘*Mustalab Al-Ḥadīth*’ and whoever wishes, may refer to the works written on the subject, the best of which is the book: ‘*Ikhtisār ‘Ulūm Al-Ḥadīth*’—A Brief Study of Ḥadīth, by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr—may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him—and the best printed version is the one published by an Egyptian publisher, that was revised and annotated by the late Shaikh, Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and whose title was: ‘*Al-Ba’ith Al-Ḥadīth Sharḥ Ikhtisār ‘Ulūm Al-Ḥadīth*’—A Short Dispatch Explaining the Science of Ḥadīth.

⁷The foreword of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, (1/84 and 87), from Al-Nawawī’s explanation of it.

⁸*Ibid.*

Section Two:
The Division of the Sunnah according to the
Manner in which it Reached Us

According to the manner in which it reached us, the Sunnah is divided into: *mutawātir* and *āḥād*. The Hanafi scholars added another category, which is *mustafīd*, or *mashbūr*.⁹

As for the *mutawātir*, linguistically, it means reaching us in succession, one after another, with a period in between; and it is derived from the word '*witr*' (meaning one by one).

As for its meaning in the terminology of the ḥadīth scholars, it is a narration that was so widely reported that it is impossible that the narrators could have agreed on a lie—this being due to both the large number of narrators and their trustworthiness—based on what they saw or heard, or from a similar group. And here it ends in hearing or eyewitness testimony of deeds or a matter approved of by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

And it is clear from this definition that there are four conditions that must be fulfilled in a *mutawātir* ḥadīth:

The first is that it should be based on what they saw or heard and that they are absolutely certain of it, not vague or uncertain.

The second is that their knowledge is based on something perceptible, such as hearing or eyewitness testimony.

The third is that there should be a large number of narrators at

⁹ *Mustafīd* or *Mashbūr*: A ḥadīth narrated by three people or more at every level, but which does not reach the level of *mutawātir*.

every stage of the chain of narrators, so it should have been narrated by a large number from a large number, all the way back to the Prophet (ﷺ), making it impossible that they could have colluded upon a lie. The number is not defined, according to the most correction opinion; rather, it differs according to the trustworthiness of the narrators, along with their precision and their thoroughness.

The fourth is that large number of narrators should continue throughout every level, i.e., at the beginning, in the middle and at the end.¹⁰

As for *ḥadīth al-āḥād*, it refers to every ḥadīth that does not fulfil the aforementioned conditions required for a ḥadīth to be regarded as *mutawātir*. It might be reported by a single person, in which case, it is called *gharīb* (singular); or it might be reported by two or more narrators, in which case, it is called *‘aẓīẓ* (rare). Or it could be spread due to it being narrated by a group, in which case, it would be *mashbūr* or *mustafīd*. In that situation, its description as being *ḥadīth āḥād* would not necessarily mean that it was always narrated on the authority of a single person.

As for the *mashbūr* and the *mustafīd*, they fall into the category of *ḵhabar al-āḥād*, according to the most correct opinion, as opposed to the view of the Ḥanafīs, who placed it in its own individual category and attached special rules to it, saying: “It provides peace of mind [i.e., assuredness] that *ḵhabar al-wāḥid* does not.” And based on this, they said that one is free to act upon it, like the *mutawātir*.¹¹

It is correct that one may observe multiplicity in its narrators and that it is both *mashbūr* and *mustafīd* in its verbal transmission, but the truth is in line with the view of the majority, which is that

¹⁰ See *Irsbād Al-Fuḥūl* of Al-Shawkānī, pp. 41-42 (edited).

¹¹ See *Usūl Al-Fiqh* of Al-Hadhramī, p. 212.

none of this suffices to prevent it being described as *āḥād*, nor to raise it to the level at which it would fulfil the conditions of being *mutawātir*. So it is, from beginning to end, a *ḥadīth āḥād*, regardless of the different names or titles given to it.

For this reason, it is categorised as either *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), *ḥasan* (good) or *ḍaʿīf* (weak).

Furthermore, the scholars have differed as to whether *ḥadīth al-āḥād*—when it is authentic—conveys knowledge and certainty. Some of the scholars—such as Imām Al-Nawawī, in *‘Al-Taqrīb’*—opined that it conveys only conjecture, while others were of the view evinced by the *musnad*¹² narrations of the two Shaikhs, Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their authentic compilations, from which it is inferred that they provide knowledge and certitude. As for Imām Ibn Hazm—may Allāh have mercy on him—he averred, in *‘Al-Aḥkām’* (1/119-137), that *ḵabar al-wāḥid* from an honest person, who heard it from a person of similar integrity, back to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) requires both that it be considered knowledge and that be acted upon.

And the correct view, in our consideration and belief, is that every authentic *ḥadīth āḥād* that the *ummah* receives must be accepted and not rejected or criticised, for it conveys knowledge and certainty, regardless of whether it is found in one of the two authentic compilations [of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim] or elsewhere.¹³ As for what the *ummah* has disputed over, some of the scholars declaring it to be authentic and others declaring it to be weak, according to those who declared it authentic, it only conveys probability. And Allāh knows better.

¹² *Musnad*: That is, with an *isnād* connecting them to the Prophet (ﷺ).

¹³ Then I saw that Al-Khaṭīb Al-Baghdādī had stated this in his book: *‘Al-Faqīh wa’l-Mutafaqqih*, p. 96.

Section Three:

The Sunnah is a Part of Revelation and it is
Protected until the Day of Resurrection

I wanted to draw people's attention to this matter due to its importance and many people's lack of awareness of it; and it is that the Sunnah is a part of the Revelation, which is preserved from loss and protected from interpolation from other sources. Were it not so, it would be impossible to distinguish it or separate it from that which is not a part of it. This is contrary to what the followers of some deviant and misguided sects believe, such as the *Qadyanis* and the *Qur'āniyyūn*, who say that lies and fabrications have been mixed with authentic and confirmed *ahādīth*, that it is not possible for a person to distinguish between them, that after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), his *ahādīth* became confused for the Muslims and were lost and that they were unable to benefit from them and to return to them, because it was not possible to be sure of anything, ever!

In this way, these people rejected the second source¹⁴ of the Islāmic Religion, discarded it and sought to destroy it, even though it is the source through which the first source [i.e., the Qur'ān] is understood and benefited from—and this is an important goal and a great objective for the disbelievers and the enemies of Islām, to which end they expend all that they possess.

Some of them say: 'It is an established fact that authentic *ahādīth* have been interpolated with fabrications, but there is a way to

¹⁴Not second in the sense of being in any way inferior to or, weaker than the Qur'ān, as some erroneously understand. This is firstly, because both are Revelations and secondly, because the Qur'ān and ḥadīth do not contradict each other.

distinguish some of them from others, which is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): ‘Lying against me will become prevalent, so whenever you hear something [that is claimed to be] from me, compare it to the Qur’ān, and whatever agrees with it, [then rest assured] I have said it, and whatever does not agree with it, then I am innocent of it.’”

But according to the consensus of ḥadīth scholars, this is a fabricated ḥadīth. One intelligent scholar said: ‘We have done with this ḥadīth what he (ﷺ) requested of us: We have compared it to the Qur’ān and we have found that it contradicts the statement of Allāh, the Most High:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it].”

[*al-Hasbr* (59):7]

And others. So we have ruled that it is fabricated and that the Prophet (ﷺ) is innocent of it.¹⁵

Among the proofs that the Sunnah is preserved is the saying of Allāh, the Most Glorified, and the Most High:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message (*dhikr*), and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

[*al-Hijr* (15): 9]

So in this Noble verse is a definite promise from Allāh, the Most

¹⁵ See *‘Irshād Al-Fuhūp’*, by Al-Shawkānī [page 29] (edited).

High that He will preserve the message (*dhikr*). Now what is the *dhikr*? There is no doubt that includes the Noble Qur’ān, but on examination and investigation, we find that it also includes the exalted Prophetic Sunnah—and this was the opinion of a number of investigating scholars, including Imām Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī Ibn Hazm (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him), who wrote a lengthy and pleasing chapter in his inestimable book: ‘*Al-Iḥkām Fī Usūl Al-Aḥkām*’ (1/109-122) and he presented in it strong proofs and categorical evidences to show that the Sunnah is a part of the *dhikr*, that it is preserved, like the Qur’ān and that *khabar al-āḥād* conveys knowledge. Among the things he said was [pp. 109-110]: “Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful said regarding His Prophet (ﷺ):

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ (۲) إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (۴)

“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.”

[*al-Najm* (53):3-4],

and He said, ordering His Prophet (ﷺ) to say:

إِن أَنْبِئُكُمْ إِلَّا بِمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

“I only follow that which is revealed to me.”

[*al-Abqāf* (46):9],

and He said:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ (۹)

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message (*dhikr*), and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

[*al-Hijr* (15): 9],

and He, the Most High said:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الذِّكْرَ التَّيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نَزَّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them...”

[*al-Nahl* (16):44]

So it is correct that all of the speech of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) is part of the Religion and the Revelation from Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful and there is no doubt of that, nor is there any dispute among the scholars of Arabic language or those of Islāmic Law that all of the Revelation that descended from Allāh, the Most High is a part of the *dhikr* that was sent down. So we can be certain that all of the Revelation is preserved by Allāh, the Most High; and all that Allāh has undertaken to preserve is guaranteed not to be lost, or to be corrupted, ever, except that the falseness of that corruption is made clear. If the case was other than this, the Speech of Allāh would be a lie and His promise would be broken [i.e., null and void]—and such an idea would not cross the mind of any rational person. So it must be that the Religion that Muḥammad (ﷺ) brought is protected by Allāh, the Most High, and conveyed as it is to everyone who seeks it, forever, until the end of time. Allāh, the Most High says:

لَأُنذِرَكُمْ يَدِيهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ

“that I may warn you and whomsoever it may reach.”

[*al-An‘ām* (6):19]

That being the case, then we must know that there is absolutely no way for anything of the Religion that the Messenger of Allāh

(ﷺ) brought to be mixed with falsehood in such a manner that no one could distinguish it for certain, since if this were possible, the *dhikr* would not be preserved and the saying of Allāh, the Most High:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message (*dhikr*), and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

[*al-Hijr* (15): 9]

would be a lie and a broken promise—and no Muslim would say this.

And if anyone said: ‘Allāh only meant by that the Qur’ān and it is only this that is included in Allāh’s promise to preserve it, not the rest of the Revelation, which is not the Qur’ān,’ we would say to him—and through Allāh, the Most High is success attained: ‘This claim is a mere lie and goes against the evidence, especially the *dhikr*, without any proof, and any such thing is null and void, because Allāh, the Most High says:

قُلْ هَا تَأْتِيهِمْ آيَاتُ رَبِّهِمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

“Say: ‘Bring forth your proofs, if you are truthful.’”

[*al-Naml* (27):64]

So it is true that he who has no proof for his claim is not truthful in it; and *al-dhikr* is a name applied to everything that Allāh has revealed to His Prophet (ﷺ), whether it be from the Qur’ān or the Sunnah that explains the Qur’ān. In Addition, Allāh, the Most High says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them...”

[*al-Nabl* (16):44]

So it is correct that the Prophet (ﷺ) was commanded to explain the Qur’ān to the people; and in the Qur’ān there are many subjects that are mentioned in brief, such as prayer, *ṣalāh*, *Hajj* and other things that Allāh, the Most High has not mentioned in His Words, but were elucidated by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). So if his elucidation of that summarised matter is not preserved or protected from that which is not a part of it, then there would be nothing to be gained from the text of the Qur’ān and most of the Islāmic Laws enjoined upon us would be invalidated and we would not be able to distinguish the correct interpretation of what Allāh, the Most High has willed for us from human error, or deliberate lies—may Allāh protect us from this...”

I say: Imām Ibn Al-Qayyim—my Allāh, the Most High have Mercy on him—has transmitted the words of Ibn Hazm in his book: ‘*Mukhtaṣar al-Sawā’iq Al-Mursalah*’ [pp. 487-493] and he endorsed it and approved of it, adding: “These words of Abū Muḥammad—i.e., Ibn Hazm—are correct and conform to what the *ummah* has accepted both in deed and in belief, without anything *gharīb* that is unknown and which the *ummah* has not accepted.”

Among those who agreed with this opinion is Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak, who was asked: “Are these aḥādīth fabricated?”

And he replied: “The great scholars live by them:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message (*dhikr*),
and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

[*al-Hijr* (15): 9]¹⁶

And similar statements have been transmitted on the authority of Imām ‘Abdu’l-Raḥmān Ibn Mahdī—may Allāh be pleased with him.

Also among them is the most learned scholar, Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Wazīr, who said, after the aforementioned verse was mentioned: “This necessitates that the *Shari‘ah* of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) continues to be preserved and his Sunnah remains protected...”¹⁷

Among the proofs is that Allāh, the Most Exalted declared Muḥammad (ﷺ) to be the Seal [i.e., the last] of the Prophets and He declared his *Shari‘ah* to be the final one, charging mankind to believe in him and follow his *Shari‘ah*, the final *Shari‘ah* and abrogating every *Shari‘ah* that came before it. And the establishment of Allāh’s Authority upon His slaves necessitates that the Prophet’s Religion continue to exist and that his Law be preserved, since it is impossible that Allāh would entrust His slaves with the obligation follow his *Shari‘ah* if it might disappear or be lost. And it is well known that the two principal sources of Islāmic Law are the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, as Allāh, the Most High says:

¹⁶ See ‘*Tadrīb Al-Rāwī*’, by al-Suyūṭī, [page 102] and ‘*Al-Bā‘ith Al-Ḥathūb*’, by Aḥmad Shākir (page 95).

¹⁷ ‘*Al-Rawḍ Al-Bāsim Fī’l-Dhabb ‘an Sunnah Abū’l-Qāsim*’ [page 33].

فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ

“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 59]

While the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed, I have been given the Qur’ān and something like it...”¹⁸ i.e., the Sunnah. Now the Sunnah is preserved and protected due to it having been transmitted to us in a *mutawātir* fashion, which is the highest level of certainty for reports. And since the Sunnah is based upon the Qur’ān, is an explanation of it and it particularises its general statements and limits its unrestricted declarations... and it is not possible to understand the Qur’ān or to act upon it except by means of it, as Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ

الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them...”

[*al-Nahl* (16): 44]

So it is the Prophet (ﷺ) who explains the statements of Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High, that have been revealed to the people by his Sunnah, which demonstrates conclusively that Allāh preserves and protects the Sunnah and has undertaken to ensure its continuation; based on this, it accords with the correct principal rule which states: “If an obligation can only be fulfilled by means of something, then that thing [itself] becomes obligatory.”

¹⁸ Abū Dāwūd and others, with an authentic chain of narrators.

So Allāh, the Most High's Authority over His slaves cannot be established except by preserving the Message and the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and this preservation cannot be attained except by the preservation of the Sunnah, which necessitates the preservation of the Sunnah, so it is a requirement.

Dear reader, I wanted to present these matters to you in this foreword and now nothing remains except for me to hand over the reins to our virtuous teacher, the most learned scholar, Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn Al-Albānī, to let him address us with his sweet explanation and his erudite style and give him our complete attention, in order to follow his speech in our hearts and minds.

And may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh be upon you.

CHAPTER ONE

The Obligation to Refer to the Sunnah and the Unlawfulness of Contradicting it

O noble brothers: All of the early Muslims were in agreement that the Prophetic Sunnah—may the choicest prayers and peace be upon its bearer—is the second and last source of Islāmic Law, in all aspects of life, including matters of belief, practical rulings, politics and education, and that it is not permissible to contradict any of them based on opinion, *ijtihād* or *qiyās* (analogy), as Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī—may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him— said at the end of ‘*Al-Risalah*’: “It is not lawful to resort to *qiyās* (analogy) when *khabar* is present.” Similar statements were made by the later scholars of *Usūl* (Fundamentals of Islāmic Jurisprudence): ‘If an *athar* (tradition) has been reported, then opinion is invalid.’ There is no *ijtihād* in cases where evidence has been reported.” And their evidence for this is the Noble Book [of Allāh] and the pure Sunnah.

Section One:

The Qur’ān Commands us to Refer to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) for Legal Rulings

As for the Book [of Allāh], in it there are many verses, some of which I will mention in this foreword, to serve as reminders [for Indeed, reminding benefits the believers].¹⁹

1. Allāh, the Most High says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33):36]

2. Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدُمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّا اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾

“O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger but fear Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

[*al-Hujurat* (49):1]

3. And He says:

¹⁹ See *al-Dhāriyat* (51):55.

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ

الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“Say: ‘Obey Allāh and the Messenger.’ But if they turn away—then indeed, Allāh does not like the disbelievers”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3):32]

4. And He, the Almighty, says:

وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكُنَّا بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٨﴾

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ

عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾

“And We have sent you, [O Muhammad], to the people as a Messenger, and sufficient is Allāh as Witness. He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh; but those who turn away—We have not sent you over them as a guardian”

[*al-Nisā’* (4):79-80]

5. And He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي

الْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.”

[*al-Nisā’* (4):59]

6. And He says:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ
وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“And obey Allāh and His Messenger, and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart; and be patient. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient.”

[*al-Anfāl* (8):46]

7. And He says:

وَأَطِيعُوا
اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَحْذَرُوا فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَيَّ
رَسُولُنَا الْبَلَّغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾

“And obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and beware. And if you turn away—then know that upon Our Messenger is only [the responsibility for] clear notification.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5):92]

8. And He says:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ
لِيُنذِرَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
يَسْتَلْلُونَ مِنكُمْ لِيُؤَادِّ قَلِيلًا حَذَرَ الَّذِينَ يَخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ
أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

“Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another. Already Allāh knows those of you who slip away, concealed by others. So let those beware who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet's] order, lest *fitnah* strike them or a painful punishment.”

[*al-Nūr* (24):63]

9. And He says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
ءَامَنُوْا اسْتَجِيبُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَلِلرَّسُوْلِ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيْكُمْ
وَاَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهٖۤ وَاَنَّهُۥٓ اِلَيْهِ
تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾

“O you who have believed, respond to Allāh and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allāh intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.”

[*al-Anfāl* (8): 24]

10. And He says:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ
يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَاُوْدٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١٣﴾
وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَهُ يَدْخُلْهُ
نَارًا خٰلِدًا فِيْهَا وَاُوْدٰلِكَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

“and whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein; and that is the great attainment. And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and transgresses His limits—He will put him into the Fire to abide eternally therein, and he will have a humiliating punishment.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4):13-14]

11. And He says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ رَعِمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا نُزِّلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَكَّمُوا إِلَى الظَّالِمِينَ
وَقَدْ أُمرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ
ضَلَكَلًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُتَنَفِّقِينَ يُصَدُّونَ عَنْكَ
صُدُودًا ﴿٦٢﴾

“Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you? They wish to refer legislation to *tāghūt*, while they were commanded to reject it; and Satan wishes to lead them far astray. And when it is said to them: ‘Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger,’ you see the hypocrites turning away from you in aversion.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 60-61]

12. And He, the Most Glorified says:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 أَن يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ
 يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

“The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allāh and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say: ‘We hear and we obey.’ And those are the successful. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger and fears Allāh and is conscious of Him—it is those who are the attainers.”

[*al-Nūr* (24): 51-52]

13. And He says:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا
 نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

“And whatever the Messenger has given you—take; and what he has forbidden you—refrain from. And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

[*al-Hashr* (59):7]

14. And He, the Most High says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ
 حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allāh often.”

[*al-Ahzāb* (33):21]

15. And He says:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۝۱ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۝۲ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ

عَنِ الْمَوَىٰ ۝۳ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وحيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۝۴

“By the star when it descends. Your companion [i.e., Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred. Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed”

[*al-Najm* (53):1-4]

16. And He says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ

الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they may give thought.”

[*al-Nahl* (16):44]

Section Two:
 The Aḥādīth that Call to Obedience to the
 Prophet (ﷺ) in Everything

As for the Sunnah, in it there are many fine, general narrations that oblige us to obey him (ﷺ) in all matters relating to our Religion; and here are some of those established proofs:

1. It was reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “All of my *Ummah* will enter Paradise except those who refuse.” He was asked: “Who would refuse?” He (ﷺ) said: “Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise and whosoever disobeys me, refuses [to enter Paradise].”²⁰

2. It was reported on the authority of Jābir Ibn ‘Abdullāh (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) that he said: “Angels came to the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was sleeping and one of them said: ‘He is sleeping.’ but another replied: ‘The eye sleeps while the heart is awake.’ Then they said: ‘He may be likened to a man who built a house, prepared a feast in it, and sent a messenger to issue invitations. Whoever responds to the one who invites him will enter the house and eat of the feast, but whoever does not respond will not enter the house nor eat of the feast.’ They said: ‘If you interpret it to him, he will understand it,’ whereupon one said: ‘He is asleep.’ Another replied: ‘The eye sleeps while the heart is awake.’ Then they said: ‘The house is Paradise, the one who issues the invitation is Muḥammad, he who obeys Muḥammad has obeyed Allāh, and he who disobeys Muḥammad has disobeyed Allāh. Muḥammad is one who separates between people.’”²¹

²⁰ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in the Book of Holding Fast to the Qur’ān and Sunnah

²¹ Also narrated by Al-Bukhārī

3. It was reported on the authority of Abū Mūsā (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: “The similitude of guidance and knowledge with which Allāh has sent me is like a rain which has fallen on some ground. A fertile part of earth has absorbed water and brought forth much grass and herbs. Another part, which is solid, held the water and Allāh benefits men thereby, who drank and gave others to drink, and used it for irrigation. But some of it has fallen on a portion of sandy land which neither retains the water nor produces herbage. Such is the likeness of the man who understands the Religion of Allāh and who gets benefit from that with which Allāh has sent me; he learns and teaches others. It is also the likeness of the man who neither raises his head on that account²² nor accepts Allāh’s Guidance with which I am sent.”²³

4. It was reported on the authority of Abū Rāfi‘ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he said: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: ‘Let me not find one of you reclining on his couch when he hears something regarding me which I have commanded or forbidden and saying: ‘We do not know; what we found in Allāh’s Book we have followed [and if not, we have not].’”²⁴

5. It was reported on the authority of Al-Miqdām Ibn Ma‘dikarib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he said: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “Indeed, I have been given the Qur’ān and something like it, yet the time is coming when a man replete on his couch will say: ‘Keep to this Qur’ān; what you find in it to be permissible treat as permissible, and what you find in it to be prohibited treat as prohibited.’ But what Allāh’s Messenger has prohibited is like

²² meaning he does not benefit from that with which the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent.

²³ It is narrated by both Bukhārī and Muslim.

²⁴ It is narrated by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī [who declared it to be authentic], Ibn Mājah, al-Ṭahāwī and others, with an authentic chain of narrators

what Allāh has prohibited. The domestic ass, beasts of prey with fangs, a find belonging to a confederate, unless its owner does not want it, are not permissible to you. If anyone comes to some people they must provide hospitality for him, but if they do not, he has a right to extract from them an amount equivalent to what his hospitality demanded.”²⁵

6. It was reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “I have left among you two things which, if you hold fast to them, you will not go astray: the Book of Allāh and my Sunnah. And they will not separate until they come to me at the Pool [of *al-Kawthar*].”’²⁶

Section Three:

What the Aforementioned Proofs Show

In these verses and *abādīth* are very important matters, which may be summarised as follows:

1. That there is no difference between the Judgment of Allāh and the judgement of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that the believer does not have the choice to contradict them; and that disobedience to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) is the same as disobedience to Allāh, the Most High and that is clear error.

2. That it is not permissible to give preference to anything over the saying of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), just as it is not permissible to give preference to anything over the Words of Allāh, the Most High. This is tantamount to saying that it is not permissible

²⁵ It is narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Al-Hākim [who declared it to be authentic] and Aḥmad, with an authentic chain of narrators

²⁶ It is narrated by Mālik in a *mursal* form and by Al-Hākim in a *musnad* (connected) form and he declared it to be authentic.

to contradict his Sunnah (ﷺ). Imām Ibn Al-Qayyim said: ‘That is, do not say, unless he (ﷺ) says it, do not order, unless he (ﷺ) orders it, do not deliver a legal verdict unless he (ﷺ) has delivered it and do not forbid something unless it something on which he (ﷺ) has issued a judgement on it.’²⁷

3. That refusing to obey the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) is nothing more or less than disbelief.

4. That one who obeys the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) obeys Allāh, the Most High.

5. The obligation to reject and refrain from any dispute or disagreement regarding religious matters and refer them to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). Ibn Al-Qayyim also said: ‘Allāh, the Most High has commanded us to obey Him and to obey His Messenger (ﷺ) and He reiterated the order to obey the Messenger in order to make clear that it is obligatory to obey him (ﷺ) even in matters not ordered in the Qur’ān. Indeed, if he (ﷺ) orders [something], it is obligatory for us to obey him, unrestrictedly, regardless of whether the thing he commanded is in the Qur’ān or not. This is because he was ‘given the Qur’ān and something like it’.²⁸

And it is agreed that referring a matter to Allāh means referring it to the Book of Allāh, and referring a matter to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) means referring it to him during his lifetime and referring it to his Sunnah after his death—and that is one of the conditions of faith.

6. That accepting dispute by failing to refer to the Sunnah in

²⁷ See *‘Ilām Al-Muwaqī‘in*, 1/58.

²⁸ See *‘Ilām Al-Muwaqī‘in*, 1/54.

order to end that dispute, is an important cause of the failure of all of the Muslims' efforts and the loss of their strength and power.

7. The warning against contradicting the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) due to the bad end in the life of this world and in the Hereafter that it entails.

8. The *fitnah* that those who oppose his command (ﷺ) deserve in the life of this world and the painful punishment in the Hereafter.

9. The obligation to respond positively to the preaching and the commands of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and that it is a means of attaining a good life and happiness in this world and the Hereafter.

10. That obedience to Prophet (ﷺ) is means of entering Paradise and of great success, and that disobedience to him (ﷺ) and transgressing his limits is a cause of entering the Fire and a humiliating punishment.

11. That among the characteristics of the hypocrites, who outwardly affect to be Muslims and conceal their disbelief is that when they are called upon to refer to the judgement of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and to his Sunnah, they do not respond positively to that; rather, they totally reject it.

12. That the Believers, unlike the hypocrites, when they are called upon to refer to the judgement of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) hasten to respond positively to that and they say: "To hear is to obey." Thus, they become among the successful ones and are rewarded with Gardens of bliss.

13. It is incumbent upon us to obey everything that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) commanded, just as it is incumbent upon us to refrain from everything that he has forbidden.

14. That the Prophet (ﷺ) must be our role-model and our example in all religious matters, if we wish to be among those who hope [for a meeting with] Allāh and the Last Day.

15. That every pronouncement of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) connected with the Religion and matters pertaining to the unseen, that cannot be known to the human mind or deduced by experiment, is Revelation sent to him from Allāh and nothing false comes to him from in front of him or from behind him.

16. That the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is an explanation of what was revealed to him from the Qur'ān.

17. That the Qur'ān does not relieve us of the need for the Sunnah; indeed, it is like it, in regard to the obligation to obey it and follow it. Likewise, one who dispenses with it contradicts the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and disobeys him, and thus contradicts the aforementioned Qur'ānic verses.

18. That whatever the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has declared unlawful is the same as what Allāh has declared unlawful. Likewise, everything that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) brought that is not in the Qur'ān, is like what the Qur'ān has brought, due to the generality of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Indeed, I have been given the Qur'ān and something like it.”

19. That protection from deviation and misguidance is only attained by holding fast to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah; and this is a judgement that will continue until the Day of Resurrection. So

it is not permissible to make a distinction between the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

Section Four:

The Obligation upon Every Generation to Follow
the Sunnah in Matters Pertaining to
Faith and in Rulings

O noble brothers! Just as the aforementioned evidences from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah prove conclusively that it is obligatory to follow the Sunnah unrestrictedly, in everything that the Prophet (ﷺ) brought and that whoever refuses to refer to it for judgement and submit to it, is not a Believer. And I would like to draw your attention to the fact that it also proves, by its general and unrestricted meanings, two important things:

The first is that it includes everyone who hears the call [to Islām] until the Day of Resurrection. This is clear from the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

لَا تُذَكِّرْكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ

“...that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches.”

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 19]

and His Words:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ
بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner.

But most of the people do not know”

[*Sabā'* (34): 28]

And the Prophet (ﷺ) explained it in the ḥadīth: “...Every Prophet was sent to his own nation exclusively but I have been sent to all mankind.”²⁹ And in his words (ﷺ): “By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, anyone of these people, Jew or Christian, who hears of me and then dies without believing in my message, will be among the inhabitants of the Fire.”³⁰

The second is that it includes all matters pertaining to the Religion—and there is no difference between those that relate to faith and belief (*'aqīdah*), and those that relate to rulings, or anything else, just as it was incumbent upon every Companion to believe that when he heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ) or from another Companion who related it from him (ﷺ). Likewise, it was incumbent upon every *Tābi'ī* when he heard it from a Companion. And just as it was not permissible for a Companion, for example, to reject a ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) when it relates to *'aqīdah*, with the claim that it is *kbabar āḥād* which he heard from another Companion, who heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ), likewise, it is not permissible for anyone who came after him to reject it with the same claim, as long as the informer is known by him to be trustworthy. And it is desirable for the matter to continue thus until Allāh inherits the world and those upon it. This was the case in the time of the *Tābi'ūn* and the Imāms who practised juristic reasoning (*ijtihād*), as will be seen from these quotations from Imām Al-Shāfi'ī (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him).

²⁹ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

³⁰ It is narrated by Muslim, Ibn Mandah and others. See *Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ṣaḥībah*, #157.

Section Five:

The Later Scholars' Passing Judgement on the Sunnah,
rather than Referring to it for Judgement

The generations who came after them neglected the Prophetic Sunnah and ignored it, because of principles adopted by some of the scholars of philosophical discourse (*kalām*) and rules that some scholars of *usūl* and blind-following jurists claimed must be adhered to. Among the results of these was the aforementioned neglect, which in turn led to doubt regarding a large part of it [i.e., the Sunnah] and the rejection of another part of it, all due to those principles and rules that contradict it. So rather than referring a Qur'ānic verse to the Sunnah and seeking judgement from it, these people turned the matter on its head and referred the Sunnah to those rules and principles, accepting whatever agreed with them and rejecting whatever did not agree with them. Thus, the connection between the Muslim and the Prophet (ﷺ) was completely severed, especially among the later scholars among them.

As a result, they returned to ignorance of the Prophet (ﷺ), his *ʿaqīdah*, his life, his worship, his fasting, his standing at night in prayer, his *Hajj*, his rulings and his legal judgements. And when they are asked about anything pertaining to that, they reply with either a weak ḥadīth or one that has no basis, or in accordance with the *madhab* of So-and-so. So if it is agreed that it contradicts an authentic ḥadīth and they are reminded of it, they do not mention it and they do not agree to refer to it, due to baseless doubts which it is not fitting to mention here. The cause of all of this is those principles and rules that we have indicated and we shall quote some of them soon, if Allāh, the Most High wills.

This epidemic has spread and inundated all of the Muslim lands,

scholarly periodicals and religious books, aside from a few. As a result, you cannot find anyone who delivers legal judgements based on the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah, except for a small number of them.

Indeed, the majority of them depend on one or other of the four schools of Islāmīc Jurisprudence (*madhāhib*) and resort to others, if they find some benefit in that—according to their claim—while, as for the Sunnah, for them, it has been completely forgotten, unless some claimed benefit necessitates the acceptance of it, as some of them did regarding the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) on the subject of divorce, with the wording of “three”, while during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) it was one [pronouncement of] divorce and they have lowered it to the level of one of the juristic opinions (*madhāhib*) to which greater weight is given. And before embracing it, they would oppose it and oppose then one who called to it!

Section Six:

The Strangeness or Remoteness of the Sunnah to the Later Scholars

Among the things that prove the strangeness of the Sunnah in our time and the scholars’ and muftis’ ignorance of it, is the reply of one of the Islāmīc periodicals that discussed the matter: “Are animals resurrected...?” and its evidence was as follows: ‘Imām Al-Alūsī said in his *tafsīr*: ‘There is no dependable evidence regarding this subject [i.e., the resurrection of animals] in either the Qur’ān or the Sunnah to prove that anything besides mankind and the jinn, such as animals and birds.’

The person responding depended on all of this, and that is

something amazing, which proves to you the extent of ignorance on the part of scholars—aside from a few of them—of the study of the Sunnah, in which it is clearly confirmed in more than one ḥadīth that the animals will be gathered and some of them will retaliate against others, including the ḥadīth of Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ: “The rights will be paid to those to whom they are due, so much so that a hornless sheep will be retaliated for by punishing the horned sheep which broke its horns.” And it was confirmed on the authority of Ibn ‘Amr (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) and others that when the disbeliever sees this requital, he will say:

يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا

“Oh, I wish that I were dust!”

[*al-Nabā’* (78): 40]

Section Seven:

The Principles (*usūl*) of the Later Scholars which Caused them to Abandon the Sunnah

What are these principles (*usūl*) and rules that the later scholars established, which caused them to deviate from study and application of the Sunnah? In answer to that, I would say: Perhaps we may summarise within the following facts:

The first is the saying of some of the scholars of *Kalām*: ‘Matters pertaining to *‘aqīdah* are not confirmed by *ḥadīth al-ābād*, while some of them stated unequivocally that it is not permissible to accept *‘aqīdah* from it, rather, it is unlawful.

The second: I recall some of rules adopted by those *madhāhib* that follow these *usūl* and they are as follows:

- a) Their preference for *qiyās* over *ḥadīth al-āḥād*.³¹
- b) Their rejection of *ḥabābar al-āḥād*, if it contradicts their *usūl*.³²
- c) The rejection of a ḥadīth that contains a ruling that goes beyond the text of the Qur'ān, based on the claim that this is an abrogation of it, and that the Sunnah does not abrogate the Qur'ān.³³
- d) Giving preference to the general over the specific when there is a contradiction, or not permitting *ḥabābar al-wāḥid* to be used to make a generality in the Qur'ān specific.³⁴
- e) Giving preference to the deeds of the people of Al-Madīnah over an authentic ḥadīth.

The third is blind following and taking it as part of a *madhab* and part of the Religion.

³¹ *I'lām Al-Muwaqqi'im*, 1/327 and 300 and *Sharḥ Al-Manār*, p. 623.

³² *I'lām Al-Muwaqqi'im*, 1/329 and *Sharḥ Al-Manār*, p. 646

³³ *Sharḥ Al-Manār*, p. 647 and *Al-Iḥkām*, 2/66

³⁴ *Sharḥ Al-Manār*, pp.289-294: *Irshād Al-Fubūl*, 138,139, 143 and 144

CHAPTER TWO

The Invalidity of Giving Preference to Analogy (*Qiyās*) and Other Things over Ḥadīth

Rejecting an authentic ḥadīth in favour of *qiyās* or one of the aforementioned rules, such as the rejection of it due to it contradicting the practice of the people of Al-Madīnah. This is a clear contradiction to those previously mentioned verses and *aḥādīth* which rule that it is obligatory to refer to the Qur'ān and Sunnah in cases of differing or dispute. And according to scholars, there is no doubt that rejecting a ḥadīth in favour of the rules that we have mentioned is not in line with the consensus of the scholars. Indeed, the majority of scholars contradict those rules and give preference to authentic *aḥādīth* over them, in obedience to the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah. How could it be otherwise, when it is obligatory to act upon a ḥadīth, even when it is though that there is agreement on contradicting it, or it is not known that anyone acts upon it, Imām Al-Shāfi'ī said: 'It is obligatory to accept a tradition

from the moment at which it is confirmed, even though it was not the continuous practice of the Imāms.³⁵

And the most learned scholar, Ibn Al-Qayyim, said: ‘Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him) did not give preference to any action over an authentic ḥadīth, or an opinion, or an analogy, or the saying of someone, or his lack of knowledge of anyone who contradicted it, which many people label ‘ijma’ (consensus) and prefer over authentic ḥadīth. In fact, Aḥmad belied those who claimed this ‘ijma’ and he did not permit preference to be given to anything over a confirmed, authentic ḥadīth. Likewise, Al-Shāfi‘ī stated in his book: ‘*Al-Risalah Al-Jadidah*’ that the term ‘ijma’ is not used to refer to something regarding which no contradiction is known... and the proofs reported from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) are too weighty in the opinion of Imām Aḥmad and the rest of the Imāms of ḥadīth than to have preference given over them by an imagined consensus, based on lack of knowledge of any contradiction. If it was permitted, textual evidence would be invalidated and it would be permitted for everyone who did not know of any contradiction regarding the ruling on a matter to give preference to his ignorance of any contradiction over textual evidence.’³⁶

Ibn Al-Qayyim also said: ‘The noble Salaf were fiercely critical of and angry with anyone who contradicted the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) based on opinion, analogy, deeming something to be good or the saying of some person, no matter who he may be and they would abandon anyone who did that and criticise anyone who quoted it as an example. In addition, they would not permit anything except that we should follow the Prophet’s

³⁵ *Al-Risalah*, p.433/164.

³⁶ *I‘lām Al-Muwaqqi‘in*, 1/32-33.

³⁷ *I‘lām Al-Muwaqqi‘in*, 3/464-465

guidance (ﷺ), to submit to it and accept it, saying: “To hear is to obey.” And it never crossed their minds to refrain from accepting it until it was attested to by action, analogy or the saying of So-and-so. Rather, they would act upon the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ
 لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ

“It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 36]

And other [previously mentioned] examples. So we have arrived at a time when, if it is said to one of them: “It has been confirmed from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said such-and-such, he will reply: “Who alleged this?” He says this in order to repudiate the source of the ḥadīth and he deems his ignorance of the person who said it to be an excuse for him to contradict it and to refrain from acting upon it. Now if he were honest with himself, he would admit that this speech is the greatest falsehood and that it is not lawful for him to reject the Sunan of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) with such ignorance as this.

And it is worse than this if he believes that there is general agreement on the contradiction to that Sunnah, for this is having a negative opinion of the Muslim community, since it attributes contradiction to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to them. And even worse than that, is that he calls to this [so-called] consensus and it is his ignorance and lack of knowledge of who reported the ḥadīth. So the matter revolves around his giving

preference to his ignorance over the Sunnah. And Allāh is the One Whose Help is sought.³⁷

I say: If that is the situation of the one who contradicts the Sunnah, and he believes that the scholars are agreed on their opposition to it, then what is the situation of one who contradicts it when he knows that many of the scholars have supported it and that those who contradict it have no evidence except from those aforementioned rules, or blind following of what will be described in the fourth chapter?

Section one:

The Cause of Their Mistake in Giving Preference to *Qiyās* and Their Principles over Ḥadīth

In my opinion, the origin of the mistake in giving preference to the aforementioned rules over the Sunnah lies in their view that the Sunnah is at a level lower than that of what Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High has sent down [i.e., the Qur’ān] on one side, and in their doubt regarding the reliability of the Sunnah on another side. If it were not so, then how would they permit themselves to give priority to *qiyās* over it, when they know that *qiyās* is based on opinion and *ijtihād* and that it is a clear error, as is well known? This is why it is only resorted to except in cases of need, as stated previously in the quote from Al-Shāfi’ī (may Allāh have mercy on him): ‘It is not lawful to resort to analogy (*qiyās*) when *khābar* is present.’

And how could it be permissible for them to give preference to the practice of the people of a land over it, when they know

³⁸ *Mukallaḥ*: A person obligated to observe the precepts of the Religion.

that they are commanded to refer to it for judgement in cases of dispute, as stated earlier? And how fine is the saying of Imām Al-Subkī, regarding the one who follows a *madhhab* and when he finds a ḥadīth that his *madhhab* does not accept, and he does not know anyone from outside his *madhhab* who supports it: ‘In my opinion, the best course is to follow the ḥadīth and a person should oblige himself to follow the Prophet (ﷺ), when that was heard from him: Is it permissible to hesitate to act upon it?! No, by Allāh; and everyone is *mukallaḥ*³⁹ according to his capacity.’³⁹

I say: This supports what we said, which is that doubting the reliability of the Sunnah is what caused them to fall into this error. If it were not so, and if they had knowledge of it and knew that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had said it, they would not have uttered these rules, let alone applied them, thereby contradicting hundreds of reliable *ahādīth* reported from the Prophet (ﷺ), when there is no basis for them to do so, except opinion, *qiyās* and following the practice of a group of people, as we stated earlier. And the only correct practice is that which conforms to the Sunnah. Any addition to that constitutes an addition to the Religion and any reduction from it constitutes a reduction in the Religion.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said (1/299), in explanation of the addition and reduction of those people: ‘The first is *qiyās* and the second is invalid restriction or particularisation and neither of them are part of the Religion; and if anyone does not restrict himself to the evidences, he will sometimes add things to the textual evidence that which is not a part of it and he will say: ‘This is *qiyās*.’ At other times, he will detract from it that which is an essential part

³⁹ The treatise: ‘The Meaning of the saying of Imām Al-Mutallabi: “*Idha Sabhal-ḥadīth fa huwa madhabi*—If the ḥadīth is authentic, then that is my *madhhab*.”’ See p. 102, vol. 3—‘*Majmū‘ah Al-Rasā‘il Al-Muniriyyah*. see Appendix Three

of it and remove it from its ruling and say: 'This is restriction or particularisation.' And at other times, he will completely abandon the evidence and say: 'It is not the practice [of the people],' or he will say: 'This contradicts *qiyās* or the principles; and [he said]: We consider that the more a person advances into *qiyās*, the more he will contradict the Sunan and we do not see contradiction to the Sunan and the traditions except with the people of opinion and *qiyās*. By Allāh, how many clear and authentic Sunan have been neglected due to that? And how many traditions have had their rulings excluded because of it?

The Sunan and the traditions in the view of the people of opinion and the upholders of *qiyās*, are empty and their rulings are ignored or rejected, deprived of its power and its authority. It has the name, while the ruling is held by something other than it. It has the name and the discourse, while the command and the prohibition are held by something else. If not, then why has it been abandoned?⁴⁰

Section Two:

Examples of Authentic Aḥādīth that are Contradicted by those Rules

1. The ḥadīth regarding the initial sharing of time: That if a bride is a virgin, she has the right to spend [a honeymoon lasting] seven nights with her husband, while if she is widow or a divorcee, it is three nights. After that, he should share his time equally between his wives.
2. The ḥadīth of banishing one who commits unlawful sexual intercourse, aside from the *mubsan*.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibn Qayyim in his *al-ʿIlām Al-Muwaqqiʿin*, 1/299.

⁴¹ *Mubsan*: One who is married, or has been married.

3. The ḥadīth of conditions in *Hajj* and the permissibility of release [from *iḥrām*] on condition.
4. The ḥadīth of wiping over the socks.
5. The ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and Mu‘āwiyah Ibn Al-Ḥakam al-Sulamī regarding the speech of one who forgets and of the ignorant one does not invalidate the prayer.
6. The ḥadīth of completing the Morning Prayer by one on whom the sun has risen when he has completed one *rak‘ah* of it.
7. The ḥadīth of continuing fasting by one who ate due to forgetfulness.
8. The ḥadīth of fasting on behalf of a deceased person.
9. The ḥadīth of performing *Hajj* on behalf of a person suffering from a chronic illness from which he is not expected to be cured.
10. The ḥadīth of pronouncing judgement on the basis of an oath with a single witness.
11. The ḥadīth concerning the cutting of a thief’s hand for stealing a quarter of a *dīnār*.
12. The ḥadīth which states that a man who marries his father’s wife should be beheaded and his property confiscated.
13. The ḥadīth which states that a believer should not be executed for killing a disbeliever.
14. The ḥadīth which states that Allāh’s Curse is on the man who makes a woman lawful for her first husband and also on the man for whom she was made lawful.
15. The ḥadīth which states that there is no [lawful] marriage without the consent of her legal guardian.
16. The ḥadīth regarding the woman who is divorced by her husband three times and who has nowhere to live and no income.
17. The ḥadīth which states: “Give her a dowry, even if it is an iron ring.”

18. The ḥadīth regarding the permission to eat horse meat.
19. The ḥadīth which states: “Every intoxicant is unlawful.”
20. The ḥadīth which states that there is no *ṣadaqah* (*ṣakāb*) due on less than five *wasqs*.⁴²
21. The ḥadīth regarding *muḥarāʿab*⁴³ and *musāqāb*.⁴⁴
22. The ḥadīth which states that the slaughter of the foetus is included in the slaughter of its mother.
23. The ḥadīth which states that an animal that is owned by a mortgager may be ridden and milked by the mortgagee.
24. The ḥadīth regarding the prohibition of making vinegar from *kbamr*.
25. The ḥadīth which states: “One or two sucks [of breastmilk] do not make [marriage] unlawful.”
26. The ḥadīth which states: “You and your wealth belong to your father.”
27. The ḥadīth pertaining to the performance of ablution (*wudūʾ*) after eating camel meat.
28. The *aḥādīth* regarding wiping over the turban (*imāmah*).
29. The ḥadīth regarding the order to repeat the prayer for one who prayed on his own, behind the row.
30. The ḥadīth stating that one who enters the masjid while the Imām is delivering the sermon on Friday, should offer a two *rakʿah* prayer as salutation to the masjid.
31. The ḥadīth regarding offering [funeral] prayers for one who is absent.
32. The ḥadīth regarding pronouncing the word: *Amīn* aloud in prayer.

⁴² *Wasq*: A camel-load (sixty *sāʾ*).

⁴³ *Muḥarāʿab*: Share-cropping; an agreement between two parties in which the landowner agrees to allow a portion of his land to be used by another, in return for a share of the produce of the land.

⁴⁴ *Musāqāb*: A contract in which the owner of land shares its produce with another person in return for him irrigating it.

33. The ḥadīth regarding the permissibility for the father to take back a gift that he gave to his son and that it is not permissible for anyone else to do so.
34. The ḥadīth regarding going out for the *ʿĪd* prayer on the morrow, when it is known that it is *ʿĪd* after sunset.
35. The ḥadīth regarding sprinkling water on the urine of a baby boy who has not yet eaten [solid] food.
36. The ḥadīth regarding prayer over the grave.
37. The ḥadīth regarding Jābir (*radīy Allāhu ʿanhu*) selling his camel on condition that he be allowed to ride on its back.
38. The ḥadīth pertaining to the prohibition of the use of the skins of predatory animals.⁴⁵
39. The ḥadīth which states: “No one should prevent his neighbour from fixing a wooden peg into his wall.”
40. The ḥadīth which states that if a person embraces Islām and he is married to two sisters, he may choose whichever of them he wishes.
41. The ḥadīth regarding offering the *witr* prayer on a riding beast.
42. The ḥadīth which states that every predatory beast that has fangs is unlawful.
43. The ḥadīth which states that it is from the Sunnah to place the right hand over the left hand during prayer.
44. The ḥadīth which states that prayer is not valid if a man does not bring his backbone to rest while bowing and prostrating.
45. The *ahādīth* regarding raising the hands during prayer when bowing and straightening up from it.
46. The *ahādīth* regarding opening the prayer with *duʿāʾ al-istiftāh*.
47. The ḥadīth which states: “Its beginning is the *takbīr* (saying: ‘*Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is Greater]),’ and its end is the *taslīm* (saying: ‘*Al-Salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāh* [may the Peace

⁴⁵ That is, for him to ride on it to Al-Madinah, an event which took place during the return from the Battle of Khaybar.

- and Blessings of Allāh be upon you.}”).”
48. The ḥadīth regarding carrying a small child during prayer.
 49. The *ahādīth* pertaining to the ‘*aqīqah*.⁴⁶
 50. The ḥadīth: “If a man looks into your house without your permission...”
 51. The ḥadīth: “Indeed, Bilāl calls the *adhān* at night.”
 52. The ḥadīth prohibiting fasting on Fridays.
 53. The ḥadīth regarding the eclipse prayer and the rain prayer.
 54. The ḥadīth regarding stud fees for a stallion.
 55. The ḥadīth regarding the person in a state of *ihrām* who died; his head should not be covered and his body should not be perfumed.

I say: All of these *ahādīth*, or most of them, were abandoned due to *qiyās* or the aforementioned rules, some of which Ibn Hazm attributed to the abandoners of the Sunnah, because of the practice of the people of Al-Madīnah.

And here I present to you other examples of these people’s contradiction of the Sunnah; these include their contradiction of the following:

1. The ḥadīth concerning the Prophet’s (ﷺ) recitation of *Sūrah al-Tūr* in the Maghrib prayer, and of *Sūrah Al-Mursalāt* towards the end of his life.
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) saying “*Amin*” after reciting *Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah*.
3. The Prophet’s (ﷺ) prostration in *Sūrah Al-Insbiqāq*.
4. The Prophet’s (ﷺ) leading the people in prayer in sitting position, while they sat behind him. And they said: “The prayer of one who prays like that is invalid!”
5. The ḥadīth which states that Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq (*radīy Allāhu*

⁴⁶ ‘*Aqīqah*: Slaughtering an animal on the occasion of the birth of a baby.

'*anbu*) began leading the people in prayer, and then the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived, entered and sat beside Abū Bakr (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) and finished leading the people in prayer. But they said: "It should not be acted upon; and whoever prays like this, his prayer is invalid!"

6. The ḥadīth regarding combining the *zuhr* and the 'aṣr prayer [i.e., in Al-Madīnah], without reason of fear or travel.⁴⁷
7. The ḥadīth which states that a baby boy was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he urinated on his garment, upon which he (ﷺ) called for water, which was brought to him and he sprinkled it on it, but did not wash it.
8. The ḥadīth which states that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite *Sūrah Qāf* and *Sūrah Al-Qamar* in the 'īd prayers.
9. The ḥadīth which states that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed over Suhayl Ibn Baydā' in the masjid.
10. The ḥadīth which states that the Prophet (ﷺ) stoned a Jewish man and woman for committing unlawful sexual intercourse. But they said: "It is not permissible to stone them!"
11. The ḥadīth was in a state of *iḥrām*.
12. The ḥadīth which states that he applied perfume to himself to release himself from *iḥrām* before performing circumambulation of the House [of Allāh].⁴⁸
13. The *ahādīth* pertaining to two *taslīmahs* in prayer.

And other *ahādīth* concerning which they contradicted the orders of the Prophet (ﷺ), and which, if we enumerated them, we might find numbered in the thousands, as Ibn Hazm (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him) said: 'We have previously studied the

⁴⁷ This is in cases where some difficulty is encountered, as proven by the reply of Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*), when he was asked: 'What did he intend by that?' And he replied: 'That his *Ummah* should not be placed in difficulties.'

⁴⁸ Ibn Hazm in his *Al-Iḥkām Fee Usūl Al-Abkām*, 2/100-105.

matter of giving preference to *qiyās* and other things over ḥadīth; now let us study two other matters in the light of the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah and the aforementioned proofs, in order to ascertain the reality of them in two chapters.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ibn Hazm in his *Al-Iḥkām Fī Usūl Al-Aḥkām*, 2/100-105.

CHAPTER THREE

Ḥadīth *al-Āḥād* is a Proof in Beliefs and Rulings

Those who said that matters pertaining to belief are not confirmed by *ḥadīth al-āḥād* claimed at the same time that legal rulings are confirmed by *ḥadīth al-āḥād* and thus, they had distinguished between beliefs and rulings. But do you find this distinction in the aforementioned proofs from the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah? No, a thousand times, no! On the contrary, by their general and unrestricted meanings, they must also include beliefs. And they require us to obey him (ﷺ) in them, because without doubt, they are included in the “matter” mentioned in the verse:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ

“It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they

should have any option in their decision.”

[*al-Abzāb* (33): 36]

Thus did Allāh, the Most High command obedience to His Prophet (ﷺ), forbid disobedience to him and warn against contradicting him; and in addition, He praised the Believers who say, when they are called upon to refer to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) for judgement, say: “*To hear is to obey.*” All of this proves the obligation to obey him and follow him (ﷺ) in matters pertaining to beliefs and rulings. And He also says:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it.”

[*al-Hashr* (59): 7]

The Arabic word “*mā*” (whatsoever) is a general and inclusive term, as is well known. And if you ask those people who claim that it is obligatory to act upon *ḥadīth al-āḥād* in rulings about the proof for that, they cite as evidence the aforementioned verses and others, which we shall not mention, for the sake of brevity.

Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) has dealt with them all extensively in his book: ‘*Al-Risalah*’ and whoever wishes may refer to it. So what has caused them to except belief from the obligation to act upon it, when it is included in the generality of the verses? Restricting them to rulings and excluding beliefs is restriction without cause and that is invalid; and whatever is required by something invalid is, itself invalid.

Section One:
A Specious Argument and the Reply to it

A specious argument has been presented to them and then it has become a belief to them! This belief is that *ḥadīth al-āḥād* does not convey anything except opinion; and by that, of course, they mean the weightiest opinion—and it is obligatory to act upon the weightiest opinion when it pertains to rulings, according to the consensus of opinion, while, according to them, it is not permissible to act upon them when they relate to matters connected to the unseen and questions of knowledge, by which they mean belief (*‘aqīdah*). Now if, for the sake of argument, we accept unreservedly their argument that *ḥadīth al-āḥād* does not convey anything except opinion, we would ask them: ‘From where did you get this distinction? And what is the evidence that it is not permissible to act upon *ḥadīth al-āḥād* in matters of belief?!’

We have observed some contemporaries citing as evidence for that the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ^ط

“They follow but an opinion and that which they themselves desire.”

[*al-Najm* (53):23]

And the Words of Him, the Most Glorified:

وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُعْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

“They follow but an opinion and Indeed, opinion is no substitute for the truth.”

[*al-Najm* (53):28]

And other such verses in which Allāh, the Most High censures the pagans for their adherence to opinion. But what has eluded these people who cite these verses as proof, is that the opinion mentioned in these verses is not the weightiest opinion, which is conveyed by *khabar al-āḥād*, and is obligatory to act upon, according to the consensus of scholars. It only refers to doubtful things that are [based on] conjecture. It has been mentioned in “*al-Nihāyah*” and “*al-Lisān*” and other books of Arabic language that “*ẓann*” is: ‘something doubtful that presents itself to you in some matter and you confirm it and act upon it.’ So it is this “*ẓann*” for which Allāh, the Most High rebukes the pagans; and what supports this is His saying:

إِن
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

“They follow only a conjecture and they only invent lies.”

[*Yūnus* (10): 66]

So He has described “*ẓann*” as “*conjecture*”, which is only guess-work and surmise.

Now if the “*ẓann*” for which Allāh rebuked the pagans in this verse was the weightiest opinion—as those who cite it as evidence claim—it would not be permissible to take rulings from it either; and this is for two reasons:

The first is that Allāh has censured them absolutely and unrestrictedly and He did not limit it to *‘aqīdah* and exclude rulings.

The second is that He, the Most High has stated clearly in some

other verses that the “*ẓann*” for which He has rebuked the pagans includes both *‘aqīdah* and rulings. Listen to the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ

“Those who associated with Allāh will say: ‘If Allāh had willed, we would not have associated [anything] and neither would our fathers....’”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6): 148]

[This is *‘aqīdah*]:

وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ

“and we would not have forbidden anything [against His Will].”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6): 148]

[And this is a ruling]:

كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا
قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا
الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ

“Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say: ‘Do you have any knowledge that you can produce for us? You follow not except assumption, and you are not but falsifying.’”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6):148]

And this is explained by the Words of Him, the Most High:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا
 بَطَّنَ وَأَلَا تَمُ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ
 سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

“Say: ‘My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—what is apparent of them and what is concealed—and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allāh that which you do not know.’”

[*Al-A‘rāf* (7): 33]

So it has been confirmed by what has preceded that the “*ẓann*” which it is not permissible to act upon is the linguistic “*ẓann*”, which is a synonym for conjecture, surmise and speaking without knowledge and also that basing rulings on it is unlawful, as is basing beliefs on it—and there is no difference between them.

And if such is the case, then the aforementioned saying is proven to us: that all of the verses and *ahādīth* referred to previously, which prove by their generality and their comprehensiveness that it is obligatory to accept them in matters pertaining to beliefs also.

And the truth is that making a distinction between beliefs and rulings with regard to the obligation to accept *ḥadīth al-āḥād* is [no more than] a spurious philosophy that has been added to Islām and it was unknown to the righteous *Salaf* and also to the four Imāms, who are blindly followed by the majority of Muslims nowadays.

Section Two:

Basing their Beliefs on not Accepting *Ḥadīth al-Āḥād* is
Basing it on Error and Self-Deception

Among the most surprising things that a rational Muslim will hear today is this saying, which is repeated by many sermonisers and writers, the more their belief in ḥadīth is weakened, even if the ḥadīth is *mutawātir* according to the scholars of ḥadīth, such as the ḥadīth pertaining to the descent of [Prophet] 'Isā (*alayhis-salām*) towards the end of time. This they conceal with their saying: “*Aqīdah* cannot be confirmed by *ḥadīth al-āḥād*.” And the surprising thing here is that this saying of theirs is itself '*aqīdah*', as I said once to some people with whom I debated this matter. So based on this, it is incumbent upon them to bring forth indisputable evidence for the correctness of this claim. If they cannot, then they are contradicting themselves in it. And it is preposterous, for they have no evidence at all, aside from their claim and such a thing is rejected in matters pertaining to rulings, so how much more in matters relating to '*aqīdah*? They have fled from the view that supports the weightier opinion in '*aqīdah*, towards something that is worse than it, which is their endorsement of the weaker opinion in it:

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٥٩﴾

“So take warning, O people of vision.”

[*Al-Hasbr* (59):2]

And there is no cause for this except their remoteness from correct understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, guidance through their light and being diverted from it by the opinions of men.

The first proof is the saying of Allāh, the Most High:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِیَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً
 فَلَوْلَا نَفَرْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّیَنْفِقُوا فِی الدِّینِ
 وَلِیُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَیْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ یَحْذَرُونَ ﴿۹﴾

“And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn [i.e., advise] their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 122]

So Allāh, the Most Glorified and the Most High has encouraged the believers to let a group of them go out to the Prophet (ﷺ), in order to learn their Religion from him and achieve understanding of it. And there is no doubt that this is not restricted to what is called the branches [of jurisprudence] and rulings. Rather, it is more general; indeed, it is established that the teacher and the student should begin with what is most important and then what is of lesser importance when teaching and learning. And there is no doubt that beliefs are more important than rulings or judgements. Because of this, some claim that beliefs are not confirmed by *hadīth al-ābād*, but this opinion of theirs is invalidated by this noble verse, for just as Allāh, the Most High has encouraged a group to learn and understand ‘*aqīdah* and rulings in it, He has encouraged them to warn their people when they returned to them, utilising the beliefs and rulings they had learnt.

The word “*tā’ifah*” in Arabic language is applied to one or more people. So were it not a fact that proof of ‘*aqīdah* and rulings is established by *hadīth al-ābād*, Allāh, the Most High would not have

given a general encouragement to a “*tā’ifab*” to convey [the message], with His saying:

لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

“that they might be cautious”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 122],

which clearly states that knowledge is attained by the warning of a ‘*tā’ifab*’ (which could be one person), for it is similar to the Words of Allāh, the Most High in His legislative Signs and those that encourage the acquisition of knowledge through observation, such as the words of Him, the Most High:

لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

“that perhaps they will give thought.”

[*al-A’raf* (7): 176]

And:

لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

“that they might be guided.”

[*al-Anbiya’* (21): 31]

So the verse is proof that *khabar al-āḥād* is evidence when it comes to conveying beliefs and rulings.

The second proof is the saying of Allāh, the Most High:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.”

[*al-Isrā’* (17): 36]

That it is, do not follow it and do not act upon it; and it is well known that since the time of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), the Muslims have continued to follow *akhbār al-āḥād*, acted upon them and confirm the matters pertaining to the unseen contained in them and the truths pertaining to beliefs, such as the beginning of creation and the signs of the Hour; indeed, they confirm by them Allāh, the Most High’s Divine Attributes. Now if they did not convey knowledge and did not confirm belief, the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), the *Tābi‘ūn*, their followers and all of the Imāms of Islām would have followed something of which they had no knowledge, as Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘and this is something that no Muslim would say.’⁵⁰

The third proof is the saying of Allāh, the Most High:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَاٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوْا

“O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, *fatabayyanoo* (verify it)”

[*al-Hujurat* (49): 6]

And in another recitation: “ascertain its veracity (*fataḥabbatū*).”

This proves that if an honest person brings some news, then proof is established thereby and that it does not require verification, but is accepted immediately.

This is why Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘This proves that it is obligatory to accept news from a single person and that it does not require verification. Now if his news did not convey knowledge, Allāh would have ordered verification of it, in order for it to do so. It is also proven by the fact

⁵⁰ See Ibn Qayyim in his *Mukhtaṣar Al-Sawā‘iq*, (2/396)

that the righteous *Salaf* and the Imāms of Islām continued to say: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said such-and-such,” “he (ﷺ) did such-and-such,” “he (ﷺ) ordered such-and-such” and “he (ﷺ) prohibited such-and-such,” which is something well known. And in *‘Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī’*, it says “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said...” in numerous places; and in many *ahādīth* related by the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), one of them will say: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said...” when in fact, he only heard it from another Companion (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*). This is a testimony from the speaker and a positive assertion of the saying or action that was attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ). Now if news from a single person did not convey knowledge, he would be testifying to something from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) without knowledge.⁵¹

The fourth proof is that the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) prove that *khabar al-āḥād* is accepted.

The Sunnah relating to action that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) followed during his lifetime and after his death also prove clearly and conclusively that there is no difference between *ḥadīth al-āḥād* pertaining to *‘aqīdah* and those pertaining to rulings. It also shows that it is an established proof in all of that. I would now like to mention, by Allāh’s permission, some of the authentic *ahādīth* that reach to him.

Imām Al-Bukhārī (may Allāh have mercy on him) said in his *‘Ṣaḥīḥ’*: ‘Chapter: What has been said regarding permitting news from a single, honest person concerning the *adhān*, prayer, fasting, religious obligations and rulings and the saying of Allāh:

⁵¹ Ibn Qayyim in his *al-‘Ilām Al-Muwaqqi‘in*, (2/394)

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَآفَّةً
 فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ
 وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

“And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn [i.e., advise] their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 122]

And a man is referred to as a “*tā’ifah*” (party) because of the saying of Allāh, the Most High:

وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا

“And if two factions among the believers should fight.”

[*al-Hujurat* (49):9]

So if two persons fought, they would be included in the meaning of the verse and the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا

“O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, *fatabayyanū* (verify it).”

[*al-Hujurat* (49): 6]

So how could it be that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent his emirs [messengers, generals, preachers etc.], one after another and if one of them forgot, he would be corrected by the one who came after him?²⁵²

Then Imām Al-Bukhārī quoted a ḥadīth as evidence for what the acceptance of *khābar al-wāḥid* and what was meant by it was the permissibility of acting upon it and of saying that it is a proof. So here, I will quote some of it:

The first: It was reported on the authority of Mālik Ibn al-Ḥuwayrith (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he said: ‘We came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and we were all young men of nearly equal age. We stayed with him for twenty nights, and as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was extremely kind and tender of heart, so when he thought that we were eager [to see] our family, he asked us about the members of the family that we had left behind and when we informed him, he said: ‘Go back to your family, stay with them, and teach them [beliefs and practices of Islām] and exhort them to good; and pray as you have seen me praying.’”

So he (ﷺ) ordered every one of those young men to teach every one of their people, and teaching includes ‘*aqīdah*’; indeed, it is the first thing included in this generality, so if evidence could not be established *khābar al-āḥād*, there would be no meaning to this command.

The second: It was reported on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the people of Yemen came to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and said: ‘Send with us a person who will teach us the Sunnah and Islām.’ He [the narrator] said: ‘He (ﷺ) caught hold of the hand of ‘Ubaydah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and said: “He is the trusted man of this *ummah*.”’⁵³

⁵² Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8/132

⁵³ It is narrated by Muslim (7/29) and it was also narrated by Muslim in an abbreviated form.

I say: If evidence were not established by *khābar al-wāḥid*, the Prophet (ﷺ) would not have sent Abū 'Ubaydah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) alone. Likewise, it is said that he (ﷺ) sent other different delegations to them, or other Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) to various parts of their lands, such as 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, Mu'adh Ibn Jabal and Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) and their *aḥādīth* are in the authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim and others. And there is no doubt that among the things they taught to those to whom they were sent was *'aqīdah*. Now if evidence could not be established by their teachings to them, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would not have sent them one after another, because that would have been a futile action and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was far above that. This is the meaning of the saying of Imām Al-Shāfi'ī (may Allāh have mercy on him): 'And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would not have sent them to them unless evidence was established by what they transmitted from him; and he could have gone and spoken to them, or sent a number of people to them, but he sent single individuals whom they trusted to them.'⁵⁴

The third: While some people were at *Qubā'* [offering] the Morning Prayer, a man came to them and said: 'Last night Qur'ānic verses have been revealed whereby the Prophet (ﷺ) has been ordered to face the Ka'bah [in Makkah], so you too should face it. So they, keeping their postures, turned towards the Ka'bah.'⁵⁵

This is clear evidence that the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) accepted *khābar al-wāḥid* with regard to the abrogation of something that was settled among them, i.e., the obligation to face *Bayt al-Maqdis*—and they abandoned that and turned instead towards the Ka'bah, based on his information. Now were it not a proof in

⁵⁴ Imām Al-Shāfi'ī in his *Al-Risalah*, p. 412

⁵⁵ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

their eyes, they would not have contradicted something that was established among them, i.e., facing the first *Qiblah*. Ibn Al-Qayyim said: ‘And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not rebuke them; rather, they were praised for that.’

The fourth: It was reported on the authority of Sa‘īd Ibn Jubayr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he said: ‘Indeed, Nawf Al-Bikalī claims that Mūsā (*‘alayhis-salām*), the companion of Al-Khidr, is not the same Mūsā of Banu Isra‘īl.’ Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) replied: ‘The enemy of Allāh has lied. Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated to us that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: ‘‘Mūsā got up to deliver a sermon...’’ Then he quoted the ḥadīth of Mūsā (*‘alayhis-salām*) and Al-Khidr, in which he mentioned something that proves that Mūsā (*‘alayhis-salām*) was the companion of Al-Khidr. It was narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in a long version and also by Al-Shāfi‘ī in an abbreviated version and he said: (442/1219).

Section Three:

Al-Shāfi‘ī Confirms *‘Aqīdah* based on *Khabar al-Wahid*

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*), with his understanding and his piety, confirms the information of Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), to the extent that he belies the statement of a person from among the Muslims, since what he related to him from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) constitutes evidence that Mūsā, from Bani Isra‘īl was the companion of Al-Khidr.”

I say: This saying from Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) is proof that he saw no distinction between *‘aqīdah* and

action, regarding the citing of *khabar al-āḥād* as evidence, because being the companion of Al-Khidr (*‘alayhis-salām*) is a matter relating knowledge and not a ruling that must be acted upon, as is clear. This is supported by the fact that the Imām (may Allāh have mercy on him) wrote a chapter in *‘Al-Risalah’* under the heading: *‘The Evidence Confirming Khabar al-Wāḥid’* and in it, he presented numerous proofs from the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah (pp. 401-453)—and they are unrestricted, or general proofs, which, by their unrestricted and general nature, include the fact that *khabar al-wāḥid* is proof in matters of *‘aqīdah* also.

Likewise, his saying regarding it is also general; and he closed his treatise by saying: ‘There are *ahādīth* which confirm that *khabar al-wāḥid*, the mention of a few of which is sufficient here; and this continued to be the way of the righteous *Salaf* and those who came after them. And what we have mentioned previously was transmitted to us from the earlier jurists in every town and city.’

This is also general, as is his saying (page 457): ‘If it were possible for a person to say, regarding knowledge in particular: ‘The Muslims are in agreement, both formerly and latterly, that *khabar al-wāḥid* is confirmed—because it is not known that any of the Muslim jurists rejected it,’—I would add: I am unaware of any Muslim jurist who has disagreed regarding the confirmation of *khabar al-wāḥid*.’

Section Four:

Not Accepting *ḥadīth al-āḥād* regarding *‘aqīdah* is an Innovation and a Heresy

In short, the proofs from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, the actions of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and the sayings of the scholars prove conclusively—as we have made clear—that it is obligatory to accept *ḥadīth al-āḥād* in all categories of the *Shari‘ah*—regardless of whether it relates to beliefs or actions and that distinguishing between them is an innovation that was unknown to the *Salaf*, which is why the most learned scholar, Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him) (2/412): ‘This distinction is invalid, according to the consensus of the *ummah*, because these *āḥādīth* continue to be cited as evidence in matters of information and knowledge [i.e., in *‘aqīdah*], just as they are in matters pertaining to action, especially since rulings relating to action include information from Allāh that He has legislated this, obligated it and sanctioned it as a matter of Religion. And His Legislation and His Religion derive from His Names and Attributes, and the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), the *Tābi‘ūn* and their followers and the scholars of *ḥadīth* and the Sunnah continued to cite these *Akḥbār* in matters relating to [Divine] Attributes, Allāh’s *Qadr*, His Names and His Rulings. And it has never been transmitted from any of them that he permitted the citing of them as evidence in matters relating to rulings, but not in matters relating to information about Allāh and His Names and Attributes. So on what basis do they distinguish between the two matters? Yes, there were those before them from among the later philosophers, who have no interest in what has been reported from Allāh, His Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*). Rather, they turn hearts away from being guided by the Qur’ān and Sunnah and the sayings of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) in this mat-

ter and they turn towards the opinions of philosophers and the rules of the *mutakallifūn*,⁵⁶ for it is they who are known to make a distinction between the two things... and they claimed that there is a consensus concerning this distinction, when no such consensus has been recorded from any Muslim Imām, or from the Companions (*radīy Allābu ‘anhum*) and the *Tābi‘ūn*.... So we call upon them to produce any authentic distinction between that which may be confirmed by *khābar al-wāḥid* in the Religion, and that which may not. But they cannot find any way to do so, except through false and invalid claims, such as the saying of some of them: ‘The *usūliyyat* are the scientific matters [i.e., relating to knowledge] and the *furū‘at* are the practical matters [i.e., relating to action]’ [and this is a false and invalid distinction].

Two things are required by *al-‘amaliyyāt*⁵⁷: knowledge and action; and what is required by the *‘ilmiyyāt* is also knowledge and action, and that is love of the heart and hatred of the heart; love is for the truth that are proven by them and hatred is for that which is false and invalid and which contradicts them. And action is not limited to action of the limbs; indeed, actions of the heart are the basis for actions of the limbs—and actions of the limbs are the result of them. This was neglected by many of the philosophers in matters of faith, who thought that it is only belief and not action! And this is a great and ugly mistake because many of the disbelievers were convinced of the truthfulness of the Prophet (ﷺ) and did not doubt him, but they did not combine action of the heart with that belief. Part of loving that which he brought is accepting it and wanting it, and friendship and enmity for its sake. This matter should not be neglected, for it is extremely important and through it one knows the truth of faith.

⁵⁶ *Mutakallifūn*: Those who pretend and fabricate things which do not exist.

⁵⁷ In the original manuscript, it says: ‘Two things are required by them...’ but it is likely that what we have determined is more correct.

So the matters relating to knowledge are [also] practical, and the practical matters are [also] connected with knowledge. This is because the Lawgiver did not require the *mukallaf*⁵⁸ to act in practical matters, without knowledge, nor did He require him to have knowledge of *al-‘ilmiyāt* without action.”

So it is clear from the words of Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) that the aforementioned distinction—as well as being invalid, according to the consensus of scholars, due to it being a contradiction of what was practised by the *Salaf* and a clear violation of the previously mentioned proofs, which is also false with regard to the belief of those who distinguish between them that there is no requirement to combine knowledge with action and action with knowledge. This is an extremely important point, which will help the believer to understand the subject well and to believe with certainty in the invalidity of this distinction.

Section Five:

Many *Akbbār Al-Āḥād* convey Certain Knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-yaqīn*)

The research and verification of the view that the above mentioned distinction—which is false—is based only on the supposition that *khabar al-wāḥid* conveys nothing more than the weightier opinion and does not convey certainty and conclusive knowledge. So it is necessary that it be known that this is not accepted at all. Rather, there is detail mentioned in its place; but what concerns us is its mention now, which is that *khabar al-āḥād* does convey certain knowledge in many instances, including *ahādīth* that the *ummah* has accepted, such as that narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in

⁵⁸ *Mukallaf*: One who is obligated to observe the precepts of Islām.

their authentic compilations—which no one criticises and which are definitely authentic—and certain knowledge is attained from it, as Imām Ibn al-Ṣalah asserted in his book: “*Ulūm Al-Ḥadīth*” (pages 28-29) and he was supported in this by Ibn Kathīr in his ‘*Mukhtaṣar*’—and before him, Shaikh al-Islām, Ibn Taymiyyah, who was followed (in that opinion) by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in ‘*Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawā’iq*’ (2/383) and he quoted a number of *aḥādīth* as examples, such as the ḥadīth of ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*): “Deeds are purely in accordance with intentions,” the ḥadīth which states: “If one lies on his wife and compresses her, *ghusl* is necessary, even if he does not insert his penis,” and the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*): “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) made *ṣadaqat al-fitr* [the charity that must be paid on completion of the fast] in Ramaḍān an obligation upon every child and adult, male and female,” and other such examples.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said: ‘Shaikh Al-Islām, Ibn Taymiyyah said: ‘This conveys certain knowledge, according to the consensus of the *ummah* of Muḥammad (ﷺ), from the earliest to the latest. As for the *Salaf*, there was no disagreement among them regarding that, while as for *Khalaf* (the later generations), this was the *madhhab* of the major jurists among the companions of the four Imāms. The subject was transmitted in the books of the Ḥanafis, the Mālikis, the Shāfi’is and the Hanbalis. These included the likes of Al-Sarkhasī and Abū Bakr Al-Rāzī from the Ḥanafis, Shaikh Abū Ḥāmid, Abū’l-Ṭayyib and Shaikh Abū Ishāq from the Shāfi’is, Ibn Khuwayz Mandād and others from the Mālikis, the likes of Al-Qāḍī Abū Ya’lā, Ibn Abī Mūsā, Abū’l-Khaṭṭāb and others from the Ḥanbalis and the likes of Abū Ishāq Al-Isfarā’īnī, Ibn Fawrak and Abū Ishāq from among the *Mutakallimūn*⁵⁹ Ibn Al-Ṣalah also discussed it and

⁵⁹ *Mutakallimūn*: Those who indulge in philosophical discourse on religious matters.

he declared it to be correct and preferred it. But he was unaware of the large number of those who said it and thus did not quote them to support his case; he only said it based on the authentic evidence and the opinions of those knowledgeable Shaikhs who had [correct understanding of the] Religion and who opposed it. However, they did not have complete knowledge in this matter, which is that what Abū ‘Amr Ibn Al-Ṣalah said was his singular opinion, which contradicted that of the majority of scholars! But they may be excused due to the fact that they were referring in this matter to what they found in the words of Ibn Al-Hājjib. But if they were raised thereby a degree, they went down [a degree] to Al-Ṣayf Al-Amidī and Ibn Al-Khaṭīb, and if their support was increased, they went down again by referring to Al-Ghazālī, Al-Juwaynī and Al-Baqilānī. [He said]: All of the scholars of ḥadīth agree with what Shaikh Abū ‘Amr said; and the evidence for the opinion of the majority is that the *Ummah* accepted the information, both believing it and acting on it, and there was a consensus among them regarding this—and the *Ummah* will never agree on misguidance.⁶⁰ Just as, if they had agreed upon a general obligation or an unrestricted one, or on something that is established, or on the obligation of *qiyās*, they would not agree upon a mistake. And if a single one of them was looked at, he would not be safe from error, because the protection is confirmed with regard to the consensus. Likewise, when a narration is *mutawātir* it is still possible for it to be a mistake or a lie on the part of one of the narrators, but it is not possible that all of them are lying, when the *Ummah* are protected from error in their narrations and in their opinions. [He said]: And the *āḥād* in this matter could be opinions with their conditions; and if they are strengthened, become knowledge, while

⁶⁰ A reference to a ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and graded ḥasan by the author. It should be pointed out here that this ḥadīth refers to the scholars of the *Ummah*, not the common populace.

if their weakened, become baseless fancies and imaginings.

[He said]: And know that the majority of the *ahādīth* of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim fall into this category, as stated by Shaikh Abū ‘Amr and the scholars who preceded him, such as Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ṭāhir Al-Salafī and others. Knowledge is inferred from the narrations accepted and believed by the scholars of ḥadīth and they convey certainty. And those who oppose them among the proponents of *kalām* and *usūl* merit no attention, because the reference to consensus in all religious matters pertains to the scholars and not to others. Likewise, only the scholars are referred to regarding legal rulings, not the proponents of *kalām*, the grammarians and the doctors. Similarly, the consensus on the truth or lack of truth of a ḥadīth does not include anyone except those with knowledge of ḥadīth and their *ṭuruq* (sources) and defects—and they are the scholars of ḥadīth, those possessing knowledge of their Prophet (ﷺ) and of his sayings and actions and those who are heedful of them, who are more careful regarding them than are the blind followers with the sayings of those they follow.

And just as knowledge of the *mutawātir* is divided into general and specific, that which is *mutawātir* to the educated may not appear so to others. The scholars of ḥadīth, due to their firm adherence to the Sunnah of their Prophet (ﷺ) and their mastery of his words and deeds and his circumstances, know things without doubt, that others are completely unaware of.⁶¹

⁶¹ See Ibn Qayyim in his *Mukhtaṣar Al-Ṣawā’iq*, (2/373).

Section Six:

The Invalidity of Comparing Legal *Khabar* with Other *Akbbār* in Order to Convey Knowledge

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘Those who rejected that *khabar al-wāhid* conveys knowledge only did so because they relied on invalid analogy (*qiyās*), comparing *khabar* from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that relates to a general rule of Islāmic Law for the *Ummah*, or to one of Allāh, the Most High’s Divine Attributes with a *khabar* that comes from a witness in a particular matter. But how far apart are they! For one who relates something from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), if it were to be assumed that he had deliberately lied or made a mistake and proof of his error was not apparent, mankind could not fail to be misguided. The discussion concernsthe *khabar* that is accepted by the *Ummah* and is acted upon by them, that is confirmed by Attributes of Allāh and His Actions. And the *khabar* that must lawfully be accepted cannot be invalid in itself, especially if all of the *Ummah* has accepted it. The same thing must be said regarding all proofs that must legally be followed—it cannot be anything but truth and what it proves is confirmed. So we must accept what they contain in matters of Islāmic Law and Allāh’s Names and Attributes. This is as opposed to the particular testimony of a person in a particular matter. If someone testifies to something that he witnessed, his testimony may be true or false.

The essence of this matter is that it is not possible for *khabar* from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), by which the *Ummah* worships the Creator and which conveys to them confirmation of His Names and Attributes, to be a lie and false. They are Allāh’s Proofs upon His slaves and Allāh’s Proofs cannot be lies and falsehood; rather, they cannot be anything except the truth. And it is not permis-

sible to say that proofs of truth and falsehood are equal. Nor is it possible for a lie against Allāh, His Law and His Religion to be confused with the Revelation that Allāh has sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ) and by which mankind worships Him, so that it is not possible to distinguish one from the other. This is because the difference between truth and falsehood, sincerity and lying and the Revelation of Allāh via His angel and that of Satan are so clear, that it is impossible to confuse one with the other. Has not Allāh made the truth a light, like the light of the sun and He has clothed falsehood in darkness, like the darkness of night.

And it is not strange for night and day to be confused for a blind person, just as truth and falsehood are confused for those whose hearts are blind. Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal (*radīy Allāhu 'anhū*) said regarding the matter: "Accept the truth from whoever says it, for the truth possesses a light." But when hearts are darkened, eyes are blinded due to the shunning of what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) brought. And when darkness increases, due to dependence on the opinions of men, truth becomes confused with falsehood and it is cited as evidence!⁶²

He also said (2/379): The proponents of *kalām* are people of injustice and ignorance; they compare the *khābar* of [Abū Bakr] *al-Ṣiddīq*, [al-Farūq] 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (*radīy Allāhu 'anhūm*) with that of common people, the difference between the two types of *khābar* is absolutely clear. Who is more unjust than one who equates *khābar al-wāḥid* from the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhūm*) with that of some individual from among the [lay] people? This is like equating them in knowledge, religion and virtue."

⁶² See Ibn Qayyim in his *Mukhtaṣar Al-Ṣawā'iq*, (2/368).

Section Seven:

The Reason for Their Claim that *Ḥadīth al-Āḥād*
does not Convey Certainty is Ignorance

Ibn Al-Qayyim said: ‘If they said that the *akbbār* and *ahādīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) do not convey knowledge, they are talking about themselves, saying that they do not derive benefit from them, in which case, they are speaking the truth regarding what they say about themselves. But they are lying in their statement that they [those *akbbār*] do not convey knowledge to the scholars of ḥadīth and the Sunnah.’⁶³

He also added: “They are unaware of the different sources and routes by which a ḥadīth was narrated that caused the scholars of the Sunnah to accept it. So their claim that they did not derive knowledge from it does not necessitate a general rejection of that. This is like claiming that person who discovered something and has knowledge of it, did not discover it and has no knowledge of it! It is also similar to when a person feels inside himself pain, or pleasure, or love or anger, but some other person stands before him and tries to prove that he is not feeling pain, pleasure, love or anger! He conjures up for him many doubts, with the aim of saying: ‘I do not feel what you feel; now if it were a fact, then we would both have felt it!’ This is the essence of falsehood. And how fine are the words of the one who said:

*‘I say to the one who blames me for my love:
Taste the love, and if you are (still) able to blame me, then do so.’*

It should be said to him: ‘Direct your concern towards what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has brought, covet it, follow it and collect

⁶³ See Ibn Qayyim in his *Mukhtaṣar Al-Ṣawā’iq*, (2/432).

it. Study the circumstances and the lives of those who transmitted it and shun anything else. Make it the aim of your study and the end result of your efforts. Rather, strive for it with a striving similar to that of the followers of the schools of Islāmic Jurisprudence (*madhābīb*), but with knowledge of the *madhābīb* of their Imāms, which led them to certain knowledge that they are truly a part of their *madhābīb* and their opinions. If any of them disputed this, they would mock him, at which point, you would know: Do the *akbbār* of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) convey knowledge, or not? But if you reject them and do not seek knowledge from them, they will not convey knowledge.

If you say that they do not convey even opinion to you, then you are describing yourself and your own [meagre] share and [lack of] benefit from them!⁶⁴

Section Eight:

Two Examples of the Stance of Some Jurists towards Ḥadīth and their Ignorance of the Sunnah

I say: This is a fact accepted by everyone who works in the field of ḥadīth researching their routes and their wordings and studying the stance of some of the jurists towards some narrations. Let me quote two examples, one of which is old and the other new:

The first is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book [i.e., *Surah Al-Fātiḥah*].” This ḥadīth, as well as being authentic, is narrated in the two authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. But followers of the school of Abū Ḥanīfah rejected it, claiming that it contradicts the apparent meaning of the words of Allāh, the

⁶⁴ See Ibn Qayyim in his *Mukhtasar Al-Sawā'iq*, (2/432).

Most High:

فَأَقْرءُوا مَا تَسْرَعُونَ

“so recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur’ān.”

[*al-Muzzammil* (73):20]

They altered its meaning, due to its being *ḥadīth al-āḥād*, according to their claim, although the Commander of the Faithful in *ḥadīth* was Imām Al-Bukhārī and he stated clearly at the beginning of his book: “*Chapter: The Section on Recitation*” that the *ḥadīth* is *mutawātir* from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)!

Is it not incumbent upon them to benefit from the knowledge of this Imām, who specialised in the study of *ḥadīth* and to change their opinion that it is *āḥād* and add it to the verse, in order to restrict its general meaning. In addition to this, it is known that the above mentioned noble verse refers to the night prayer and it does not refer to the obligatory recitation of *Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah*!

The second is the *ḥadīth* regarding the Descent of [Prophet] ‘Isā (*‘alayhis-salām*) towards the end of time. This *ḥadīth* is narrated in the authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. A number of years ago, the Shaikhs of Al-Azhar were asked about it and one of them replied in the magazine ‘*Al-Risalah*’ that it is *ḥadīth āḥād* and that all of its narrations emanate from Wahb Ibn Munabbih and Ka’b Al-Ahbar. However, the truth is that the specialists and those with knowledge of the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) testify that it is *mutawātir* and I have personally researched the sources up to the Prophet (ﷺ) and I discovered that it was narrated from him (ﷺ) by more than forty Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and of these forty narrations, the *asānīd* (chains of narrators), at least twenty of them were authentic and some of them had more

than one authentic source in the authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the books of the *Sunan*, the *Masānīd*,⁶⁵ *al-Ma'ājim*⁶⁶ and other books of the Sunnah.

And the strange thing is that these sources contain absolutely no mention of Wahb Ibn Munabbih and Ka'b Al-Ahbar!!

I wrote a summary of this afore mentioned research consisting of two pages, which I sent to '*Al-Risalah*' at that time, in the hope that they would print them, as a service to knowledge, but they did not publish them.

These two examples are among hundreds of clear illustrations that make clear to us that the people of knowledge did not attain the goal that was obligatory upon them from the Prophetic ḥadīth, based on the fact that it is the second source of Islāmic Law, without which it is absolutely impossible to understand the first source [i.e., the Qur'ān] in the correct manner, as Allāh, the Most Glorified, the Most High wills.

And because of that, they fell into shameful ignorance of the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ), a clear deviation from belief in it and a rejection of what the Prophet (ﷺ) brought. Allāh says:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it.”

[*al-Hashr* (59):7]

But they took some of it and abandoned it!

⁶⁵ *Masānīd* (sing. = *musnad*): Compilations of ḥadīth arranged according to their asāneed, rather than according to subject matter.

⁶⁶ *Ma'ājim* (sing. = *mu'jam*): Compilations of ḥadīth arranged alphabetically.

فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا

“Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except...”

[*al-Baqarab* (2):85]

In summary, it is incumbent upon the Muslim to believe in every *ḥadīth* that has been confirmed to have emanated from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), according to the scholars, regardless of whether it pertains to *‘aqīdah* or rulings, whether it is *mutawātir* or *āḥād* and whether he considers that *āḥād* conveys absolute certainty or preponderant opinion, as we said earlier. The obligation in all of this is belief in it and acceptance of it. In this way, a person will attain the acceptance that is required of him:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ

ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ

تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“O you who have believed, respond to Allāh and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allāh intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.”

[*al-Anfāl* (8): 24]

And there are other verses that were mentioned previously, in the foreword of this book, which I hope that Allāh, the Most High will cause to be of benefit and accept as an action sincerely devoted to Him and a service to His Book and to the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

CHAPTER FOUR

Taking *Taqīd* as a *Madhhab* and as Religion

Section One:

The Reality of *Taqīd* and a Warning Against it

Linguistically, the word *taqlid* is derived from the *qiladah* (necklace) which one person places on another. An example of that is the necklace that is placed around the necks of livestock that are offered as sacrifices during the *Hajj*. So the *muqallid* is the one who follows someone by [metaphorically] placing a necklace around the neck of the *mujtabid* he is following. In *ḥadīth* terminology, it means acting upon the saying of another without evidence.

Not included in this are: acting upon the words of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), acting upon the consensus of the scholars, an ordinary person seeking a religious ruling (*fatwa*) from a scholar

and for a judge to accept a righteous person's testimony, because proof has been established thereby.⁶⁷

The above mentioned legal passage has delivered two important benefits to us:

The first is that *taqlid* does not constitute beneficial knowledge (*'ilm nāfi*).

The second is that it is the practice of the ordinary, ignorant folk (*jāhil*).

And it is essential to make clear the reality of these two things and to examine them both in the light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, citing the opinions of the Imāms. Then, we must study the circumstances of all those who claim to follow them and ascertain the truth of their assertion to follow their opinions.

1. As for the fact that *taqlid* is not knowledge, it is because Allāh, the Most High has censured it in more than one verse of the Noble Qur'ān. This is why there are numerous sayings of the early Imāms prohibiting it. Imām Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr, the Imām of Al-Andalus (may Allāh have mercy on him), came to this conclusion in a special chapter in his book: *'Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi*', in which he confirmed that. He said what may be summarised as follows: "*Chapter: The Invalidity of Taqlid, Rejection of it and the Difference between Taqlid and Following Evidence: Allāh has censured taqlid in many places in His Book; He says:*

⁶⁷ See *'Irshād Al-Fuhūl*' (page 234). I say: It should be observed that his being excluded from the charge of *taqlid* (i.e., the ordinary person who seeks a ruling from a *mufti*) is with regard to Islāmic terminology, and it does not negate it being, linguistically speaking, *taqlid*, so be mindful of this.

اتَّخَذُوا

أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ

“They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allāh”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 31]

And he narrated on the authority of Hudayfah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and others that they said: “They did not worship them besides Allāh, but they made things lawful for them and declared [other] things unlawful for them and they obeyed them.” ‘Adiyy Ibn Hātim (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said: ‘I went to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and I was wearing a cross around my neck. He (ﷺ) said to me: “O ‘Adiyy! Remove this idol from yourself!” And I heard him reciting from *Sūrah Al-Bara‘ah*:

اتَّخَذُوا

أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ

“They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allāh”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 31]

I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! We did not take them as lords. He (ﷺ) said: “On the contrary! Do they not make lawful for you that which was unlawful for you and you regard it as lawful? And do they not make unlawful to you that which Allāh, the Most High has made lawful for you and you consider it unlawful?” I said: ‘Yes.’ He (ﷺ) said: “That is worship of them.””

And Allāh, the Almighty and the All-Powerful says:

وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا
 إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
 قُلْ أُولَٰئِكَ تُكْفَرُونَ بِمَا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ

“And similarly, We did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said: ‘Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.’ [Each warner] said: ‘Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?’”

[*al-Zukhruf* (43): 23-24]

So their imitation of their forefathers prevented them from accepting the guidance. They said:

قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers.”

[*al-Zukhruf* (43): 23-24]

And He, the Almighty, the All-Powerful says, reproving the disbelievers and censuring them:

مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي
 أَنتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

“What are these statues to which you are devoted?” They said: ‘We found our fathers worshippers of them.’”

[*al-Anbiya'* (21): 52-53]

And examples of this in the Qur'ān, in which Allāh condemned blind following of people's forefathers and leaders, are numerous. The scholars cited these verses as evidence for the refutation of *taqlīd*. And the disbelief of those people did not prevent them [the scholars] from citing the verses as evidence. This is because the similarity is not based on the disbelief of one of them and the belief of the other. Rather, in both cases, it is based on *taqlīd* [as both of them involve obedience]⁶⁸ without evidence for the one who is blindly followed, as is the case when one man blindly follows another and commits an act of disbelief, while another blindly follows someone else and commits a sin and a third person blindly follows someone else in a matter and commits an error. In each case, the blind follower is rebuked for blindly following someone without evidence. This is because all of these forms of *taqlīd* resemble one another, even though the sin differs in each case.⁶⁹

Further, it was narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) that he used to say: 'Be either a scholar or a student and do not be like a sheep (*imma'ab*) between the two.'

And from another source, it was reported from him that he said: 'During the *Jabiliyyah* (the days of ignorance) we used to refer to one who was invited for a meal and brought others with him [who were not invited] as an *imma'ab*. But these days, he is *mubqib* in his religion.'⁷⁰

And it was reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu*

⁶⁸ This is not present in the original documents, but the context necessitates it.

⁶⁹ Imām Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr in his *Jāmi' Bayān Al-'Ilm wa Fadlībi*, (2/109-114)

⁷⁰ Ibn Al-Athīr said: 'He meant by this the one who follows everyone in religious matters, i.e., he bases his religion on following the religion of others, without any evidence or any narration. So he is like the saddlebag behind the rider.'

'anbumā) that he said: 'Woe to the followers of the scholar's mistakes.' He was asked: 'How would that be?' He replied: 'The scholar says something based on his opinion, then he finds one who is more knowledgeable than he concerning the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and he abandons that saying of his, but those followers continue to follow his [former] opinion.'

Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said: 'And it has been confirmed on the authority of the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "The scholars will disappear, and then the people will take their leaders from among the ignorant. They will be asked and they will issue *fatawa* without knowledge and as a result, they will be misguided and they will misguide [others]."⁷¹

All of this constitutes a prohibition of *taqlīd* and an invalidation of it, for whoever understands it and is rightly guided... and there is no dispute between the Imāms throughout the world that *taqlīd* is invalid and there is no need to say more than this.⁷²

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said: 'It is not permissible to issue a *fatwa* based on *taqlīd*, because it is not knowledge and because the blind follower is not considered to be a scholar.'⁷³

Likewise, Al-Suyūṭī said: 'The blind follower is not referred to as a scholar.' This was transmitted by Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Sindī al-Ḥanafī at the start of his notes on Ibn Mājah and it was confirmed by

⁷¹ Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated something similar from the ḥadīth of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al-Āṣ (*radīy>Allāhu 'anhumā*) and its *takbrīj* is given in my book: '*Al-Rawḍ Al-Naḍīr*' (no. #549) and its wording will be given shortly.

⁷² See Ibn Al-Qayyim transmitted it in *Al-Īlām Al-Muwaqqi'in*, (2/294-298)

⁷³ See Ibn Al-Qayyim transmitted it in *Al-Īlām Al-Muwaqqi'in*, (1/51).

al-Shawkānī, saying: ‘*Taqīd* is ignorance, not knowledge.’⁷⁴

This agrees with what was stated in the Ḥanafī books, which is that it is not permissible to appoint an ignorant person to the position of judge. The most learned scholar, Ibn Al-Ḥumam explained the word ‘*jāhil*’ as meaning ‘blind follower’.

Section Two:

The Imāms’ Prohibition of *Taqīd*

There are many sayings from the Imāms of *ijtibād* firmly prohibiting blind following of them or anyone else.

1. Abū Ḥanīfah (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him) said: ‘It is not lawful for anyone to act upon our saying without knowing from where we took it.

And in another version: ‘It is unlawful for the one who does not know my evidence to issue a *fatwa* based on my words, for we may say something today and contradict it tomorrow.’

2. And Mālik (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘I am only human; I get things wrong and I get things right. So look at my opinion and everything that agrees with the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah, accept it and everything that does not agree with the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah, reject it.’

3. And Al-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘There is a consensus among the Muslims that if anyone knows of a Sunnah from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), it is not lawful for him to abandon it in favour of anyone’s opinion.’

⁷⁴ See *Irshād Al-Fuhūl* (p. 236)

He also said: ‘Every matter regarding which there exists a narration from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) with the scholars of [ḥadīth] transmission, and which contradicts what I have said, I reject it [my saying] both during my life and after my death.

He also said: ‘Whatever I have said, if there exists an authentic report from the Prophet (ﷺ) contradicting it, then the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) is more worthy. So do not blindly follow me.’

4. Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘Do not blindly follow Mālik, or Al-Shāfi‘ī, or Al-Awzā‘ī or Al-Thawrī; but [instead], take from where they took [i.e., the Qur’ān and Sunnah].’⁷⁵

And it is well known from them that they said: ‘If the ḥadīth is authentic, then that is my *madbhab*...’ and other similar sayings transmitted from them. I have quoted a fine selection of them in the foreword of my book: ‘*Sīfat Ṣalāh Al-Nabī* (ﷺ)’; and what we have mentioned is sufficient.⁷⁶

Section Three: Knowledge Consists of What Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) Say

If that is the status of *taqlīd* in the view of the scholars, then this means that it is not permissible for the people of knowledge, who are capable of ascertaining the truth with evidence, to discuss matters of Islāmic Jurisprudence except with verification from the

⁷⁵ *Sīfat al-Ṣalāh Al-Nabī* (ﷺ) p28-38. Please refer to the English Translation, ‘*Description of the Prophet’s Prayer*’ published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2013 p28-38.

⁷⁶ See Appendix One p208

Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah. This is because knowledge—true knowledge—is only found in them, not in the opinions of men. This is why Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘It is an obligation on the scholars not to say anything unless they have knowledge of it. Some people spoke about matters pertaining to knowledge, regarding some of which it would have been better and safer for them to remain silent, Allāh Willing.’⁷⁷ In another place, he said: ‘It is never permissible for anyone to say regarding something that it is lawful or unlawful, unless it is from a source of knowledge; and the source of knowledge is the *khābar* from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, *ijmā‘* and *qiyās*.’

He also said in another place: ‘If he [the scholar] spoke without the necessary *khābar* or *qiyās*, it would be more of a sin than if a person who was not a scholar said it due to his ignorance.’ Allāh has not permitted anyone after the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to say something unless it is from an accepted source. And the source of knowledge after the Qur’ān and Sunnah is *ijmā‘* and the traditions—and what was described from analogy based on them.’⁷⁸

Among the greatest misfortunes that have befallen the educated Muslims—let alone the common folk among them—is that the majority of them today—and in centuries past—are completely ignorant of what is conveyed by these proofs from the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, the traditions narrated on the authority of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and the sayings of the Imāms who rejected *taqlīd* and held that it does not constitute knowledge and that knowledge is only what Allāh says and what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said. For this reason, it never crosses the mind of any

⁷⁷ See *Al-Risālah* (pp.131-132)

⁷⁸ See *Al-Risālah* (pp.39-120)

of them that praiseworthy knowledge, according to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, lies in understanding the beliefs and rulings that they contain. They further understand that the scholars who are praised in them are only those who have knowledge of them, not those who are knowledgeable concerning the opinions of the Imāms and their rulings based on juristic reasoning (*ijtihād*). This is why one sees them confused with regard to them; they are unable to distinguish between those that agree with the Qur'ān and Sunnah and those that contradict them. Likewise, when any of them reads *ahādīth* regarding the Signs of the Hour, such as: "Knowledge will be taken away and ignorance will prevail..."⁷⁹ It hardly enters his mind that the ignorance that will prevail includes the "knowledge" of the blind follower, which is [in reality], ignorance. This is because such a person has no [real] knowledge, as we reported earlier from the Imāms. Similarly, the blind follower pays no heed when he hears the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Indeed, Allāh does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the people, but He takes it away by taking away [the lives of] the religious scholars..."⁸⁰ He ignores the fact that they are only the scholars of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

Rather, we hear many of them quoting this ḥadīth whenever one of their Shaikhs of *taqlīd* dies and likewise, they misunderstand the rest of the ḥadīth: "...until He leaves none of the scholars alive. Then the people will take ignorant people as their leaders, who, when asked to deliver religious verdicts, will issue them without knowledge (in Al-Bukhārī's version, it says: "based on their opinion,"), the result being that they will go astray and will lead others astray." And they think that what is referred to [those who will be taken as scholars] is the common folk, who have no

⁷⁹ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

⁸⁰ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

knowledge of blind following jurisprudence and no knowledge of *madhābīb*. But the reality is that the blind followers are included in this description; they are those who are satisfied with knowledge of the *ijtihād* of their Imāms and blind following of them, as we indicated earlier, when we quoted the words of Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr Al-Andalusī. This supports the aforementioned sayings of the scholars, who cite this ḥadīth as evidence that in time, there will be no scholars capable of *ijtihād* and this is explained in detail in ‘*Fath Al-Bari*’ (13/244). They indicated it to prove that what is meant by the scholars referred to in it is those who perform *ijtihād* and the leaders are the ignorant, blind followers.

The cause of this complete ignorance [that *taqlīd* does not constitute knowledge] is that they do not understand the reality of knowledge and of who are the scholars referred to in these verses and *ahādīth*, such as the words of Allāh, the Most High:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ

“Are those who know equal to those who do not know?”

[*Al-Zumar* (39):9],

His Words:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

“Allāh will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees.”

[*Al-Mujadilah* (59):11],

The words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “The virtue of the learned man over the [ordinary] worshipper is like my virtue over the lowest

among you.”⁸¹ The words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: *ṣadaqah jariyah* [continuing charity]; a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him [i.e., the deceased].”⁸² The words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “He who does not honour our elders, is not merciful to our young and does not acknowledge our scholars as they deserve to be acknowledged is not one of us.”⁸³ And numerous other verses and *ahādīth* regarding the virtue of knowledge and of scholars. And Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr included a special chapter in his book: *Jāmi‘ Bayān Al-‘Ilm*’ in explanation of this fact (2/23), saying: “Chapter: Understanding the Principles of Knowledge and its True Nature and What May be Referred to as Fiqh and Knowledge in General.” The venerable scholar, Al-Fulānī mentioned it in his book: *‘Iqāz Himam Ulil-Absār*’ (pages 23-26), then they both quoted under it some of the *ahādīth* and traditions that explain it; and Al-Fulānī ended by saying: ‘I say: These *ahādīth* and traditions clearly show that the term “knowledge” is only applied to what is contained in the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), consensus or that which was deduced from analogy based on these fundamental sources, when no clear evidence exists. This is unlike the sayings beloved of the blind followers and the fanatics, who acquire their “knowledge” from what is written in the books of *madhhab*-based opinion, spite of the fact that some of these opinions contradict Prophetic *ahādīth*.’

In summary, we may say that *taqlīd* is rejected, because it is ignorance and not knowledge. True knowledge is only what is found in the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah and acquiring understanding of them.

⁸¹ It is narrated by Tirmidhī; its chain of narrators is authentic, as we made clear in the *takbrīj* of *‘Mishkāt Al-Maṣābiḥ*, #213.

⁸² It is narrated by Muslim

⁸³ It is narrated by Al-Hākim; its chain of narrators is ḥasan, as made clear in the *takbrīj* of *‘Al-Targhib*’ (1/46).

Section Four:

Permissibility of *Taqīd* for the One Who is Unable to
Acquire Knowledge Himself

It might be said: 'Not everyone has the ability to be a scholar based on this definition.' To such a person, we would say: 'Yes, that is true; but who would dispute this, when Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful says:

فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾

“So ask the people of the Message, if you do not know.”

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 7]

And He says:

فَسْأَلْ بِهِ خَيْرًا ﴿٥٩﴾

“So ask about Him one who is well informed.”

[*al-Furqān* (25): 59]

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said to those who delivered legal verdicts based on ignorance: “Did they not ask when they did not know? The cure for the confused one is to ask.” We did not, however, mention in the aforementioned research the definition of who is able to do that and who is unable to do it. Rather, the scope of our research is limited to the educated people, who are believed to be the people of knowledge and to have the ability to understand [religious] matters, or some of them, at least, with evidence. They are, in reality, the scholars of the opinions of the *madhab*, but ignorant of the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah. So the question is not relevant in the first place, especially since I stated at the beginning of this chapter that the aforementioned legal passage

has conveyed two important things to us:

The first is that *taqlid* does not constitute beneficial knowledge; and I have explained this in a convincing manner, *insha' Allāh*.

The second is that it is the practice of the ordinary, ignorant folk. The knowledgeable person, who is able to acquire evidence, is excluded from this category. Also, the one who does not practise *taqlid*. Rather, it is incumbent upon him to exercise *ijtibād* and this is made clear by the explanation of the other matter. Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said, after mentioning what we have transmitted from him, what may be summarised as: "All of this is for those other than the common folk, for the common folk must practise *taqlid* of their scholars in legal matters, because they are unable to comprehend the evidence or to acquire knowledge of that, due to lack of understanding.

This is because knowledge consists of levels and there is no way to reach the highest of them except by [first] attaining the lowest of them. And this is the barrier that stands between the ordinary person and the acquisition of evidence. And Allāh knows better. There is no disagreement among the scholars regarding the fact that it is incumbent upon the ordinary folk to practise *taqlid* of their scholars and that it is they who are referred to in the words of Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful:

فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾

"So ask the people of the Message, if you do not know."

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 7]

There is agreement among scholars that the blind person must

make *taqlīd* of someone else whom he trusts, if he wishes to know the direction of the *Qiblah* when he is unable to find it himself. Likewise, the one who has no knowledge and is incapable of following the Religion must make *taqlīd* of one who knows it. In addition; there is no dispute among the scholars that it is not permissible for the ordinary folk to issue legal rulings. This is because—and Allāh knows better—due to their ignorance of the meanings of those proofs of what is lawful and what is unlawful and of knowledge in general.”

But I consider that generalising about common folk and saying that they must all practise *taqlīd* is false; this is because if you remember that *taqlīd* means acting upon the sayings of others without evidence to prove them, then it is easy in many cases for some intelligent people among the common folk to understand the clear evidence when it is shown to them. Who can claim that an ordinary person cannot understand the ḥadīth: “*Tayammum* means striking [the sand or dust] once for the face and hands.”? Even people of lesser understanding can understand this evidence.

Therefore, the fact is that it should be said: Whoever is unable to understand the evidence, it is incumbent upon him to practise *taqlīd*, for Allāh does not burden a soul except with that which it can bear. To close the discussion, we will support this argument with the saying of Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him). Furthermore, even the scholar is sometimes forced to practise *taqlīd* in some matters, when no evidence from Allāh or His Messenger (ﷺ) is apparent and he finds nothing except the saying of one who is more knowledgeable than he. In that case, he practises *taqlīd* of him out of necessity, as Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him) did in some cases. This

is why Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said (2/344): ‘This is the action of the people of knowledge and it is obligatory. This is because *taqlīd* is only permissible for one who has no alternative. As for one who turns away from the Book [of Allāh], the Sunnah and sayings of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) in favour of *taqlīd* and from ascertaining the truth with evidence, when he is capable of doing so, he is like one who turns chooses [the meat of] a dead animal, when he is able to obtain one that was sacrificed in accordance with Islāmic rites. This is because the fundamental principle is that the saying of another is not accepted without proof and the blind followers have made *taqlīd*—which is supposed to be the exception—into their main priority!’

Section Five:

The Opposition of the Blind Followers of the *Madhāhib* to *Ijtihād* and Their Claim that *Taqlīd* is an Obligation on Everyone

When this becomes clear, it only remains for us—as we promised earlier—to study the circumstances of those who claim to follow their Imāms and the validity of their following of their sayings. So I say:

The position of the majority of the blind following Shaikhs for a long time is a strange one: They claim that they are unable to refer to the Qur’ān and Sunnah when attempting to understand rulings. They further claim that they are obliged to blindly follow the Imāms and one sees them rejecting the charge of ignorance laid against them, which is what the sayings of their scholars necessitate. However, one also sees them rejecting *taqlīd* of their Imāms in many principles established by them and they bring forth rules that they themselves have invented without right,

while claiming to practise *taqlīd*—especially since they contradict the proofs from the Qur’ān and Sunnah—when they have only brought forth these rules in order to obligate for themselves blind following of the Imāms in various matters of *fiqh*, in contradiction to their previously mentioned commandments. They claimed that “the unrestricted *mujtabid* no longer exists,”⁸⁴ and it is widely believed among them that the door to *ijtihād* has been closed after the fourth century AH. Ibn ‘Abidīn mentioned something similar in his ‘*Ḥāshiyah*’ (1/551) and based on this, they forbade Muslims from attempting to understand the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah and imposed upon themselves the obligation to practise *taqlīd* of one of the four Imāms, as the author of ‘*Al-Janḥarab*’ said: “*Taqlīd* of one of them [the four Imāms] is obligatory, this is what the people said in clear, understandable words.”

They claimed that knowledge of ḥadīth and *fiqh* has spoiled and burnt [i.e., there is nothing more to be derived from it and nothing remains except blind following of the Imāms].⁸⁵ They confirmed this and strengthened it with the words of Abū’l-Ḥasan Al-Karkhī, who said: ‘Every [Qur’ānic] verse that contradicts that which our companions follow can be explained [in a manner that agrees with our *madhhab*] or it is abrogated; and likewise, every ḥadīth can be explained or is abrogated.’⁸⁶ This is why, no matter what verse or ḥadīth one brings, they deem it permissible for themselves to reject it out of hand, without even considering their meanings, or whether they do, in fact, contradict their *madhhab*. And they will answer you by saying: “Are you more knowledgeable, or is the *madhhab*?!”

⁸⁴ ‘*Al-Durr Al-Mukhtār*’ (1/45 — ‘*Ḥāshiyah*’).

⁸⁵ ‘*Al-Durr Al-Mukhtār*’ (1/45 — ‘*Ḥāshiyah*’).

⁸⁶ ‘*Al-Durr Al-Mukhtār*’ (1/45 — ‘*Ḥāshiyah*’).

Section Six:

The Followers of the *Madhābī*'s Contradiction of their Imāms in Fanatically Following them and their Obligation to Practise *Taqlīd* of them

By imposing these rules which they themselves have innovated and which contradict the advice of their own Imāms; they have consolidated *taqlīd* in their hearts and in the hearts of all the seekers of knowledge. In this way, they turned them away from understanding the Qur'ān and Sunnah and the word *fiqh* came to be understood by them as meaning understanding the opinions of the scholars as written in their books. But not content with all this, they called [others] to fanatical adherence to their *madhhab*, saying things such as: 'If we are asked about our *madhhab* and the *madhhab* of one who opposes us, we would reply that our *madhhab* is correct, though it is [theoretically] possible for it to be wrong, while the *madhhab* of one who opposes us, is wrong, though [theoretically] it is possible for it to be right. And if we are asked about our belief and the belief of one who disputes with us, we would say in reply that the truth is what we follow, and what the one who disputes with us follows is false.'⁸⁷

No one from among the Imāms said these and other similar things—which we have not mentioned—for they were more knowledgeable and feared Allāh, the Most High too much to have uttered such words—which are clearly invalid for two reasons:

The first is that they contradict numerous texts from the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah, which order mankind not to say anything without knowledge, such as the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

⁸⁷ 'Tārikh Al-Tashrī' Al-Islāmī', by the most learned scholar, Al-Khudrī (p. 332).

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.”

[*Al-Isrā'* (17): 36]

This, we know that true knowledge is only what appears in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. So where in them is there anything to prove their saying?!

The second is that they claim to be practising *taqlid*, and the proof of the *muqallid* is the opinion of his Imām, as is well known from their books. So where is that to be found in the sayings of their Imām?

Section Seven:

The Numerous Divisions among the Blind Followers, as Opposed to the Few to be Found Among the Scholars of Hadīth

Whoever understands this will realise the reason why groups of blind followers have continued to adhere to this disgraceful for long centuries, many of them even delivering legal verdicts that prayer behind an Imām who follows another *madbhab* is invalid or hated! Some of them even forbade a man who follows the Ḥanafī school from marrying a woman who adheres to the Shāfi'ī school!

Others permitted this, but forbade a Ḥanafī woman from marrying a Shāfi'ī man, justifying this with the words: 'Her situation is similar to that of one of the People of the Scripture!' Did not Allāh command them:

وَلَا
تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾

“And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.”

[*Āl-Imrān* (3): 105]

and:

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلَّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ
فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

“But they [i.e., the people] divided their religion among them into portions [i.e., sects]—each faction, in what it has, rejoicing.”

[*Al-Mu'minūn* (23): 53]

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: ‘*Al-Zubūr* means that every group composed books for themselves which they adhered to, acted upon and called to, in opposition to the books of the other groups, as is evident today.’

I say: It is likely that these books are those to which ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr referred (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) in the narration reported from him by ‘Amr Ibn Qays Al-Sukūnī, who said: ‘I set out with my father, in a delegation to Mu‘āwiyah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and I heard a man addressing the people, saying: ‘Indeed, among the Signs of the Hour is that the status of evil folk will be raised and the status

of good folk will be diminished.⁸⁸ And when *al-mathnab* is recited to the people, none of them change it or refute it.’ It was said: ‘And what is *al-mathnab*?’ He replied: ‘That which has been written besides the Book of Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful.’⁸⁹

It would appear that his devotion to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah lay behind Imām Aḥmad’s (may Allāh have mercy on him) aversion to writing books that contained minute details about *fiqh*-related matters and opinions.⁹⁰

This was due to his fear that people would ignore the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah in favour of them, exactly as the blind followers have done. They prefer their *madhhab* to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah in cases of differing and consider it to be the standard against which they should be measured, as stated previously from Al-Karkhī, when it was incumbent upon them to follow the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, as called for by them. This also makes it obligatory for them to follow the sayings of their Imāms and to follow the other schools of Jurisprudence, with regard to their sayings that rely on the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah. But sadly, they remained divided and disputing, which is why Ibn Al-Qayyim said: ‘When he mentioned the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) “Whosoever among you shall live after me will see much discord. So hold fast to my Sunnah...”’

⁸⁸ That is, the people will view evil persons as occupying a high status and they will regard good people as occupying a low status.

⁸⁹ It is narrated by Al-Hākim (4/554-555), who said: ‘Its chain of narrators is authentic.’ Al-Dhahabī concurred with this, saying: ‘Though it is *mauqūf*, it has the status of a *marfū’* report, because it is from among the matters pertaining to the unseen, of which no one speaks based only on opinion, especially since one of the narrators declared it to be *marfū’* [emanating from the Prophet (ﷺ)] and he also said that it was authentic.

⁹⁰ Ibn Al-Jawzi in ‘*Manāqib Aḥmad*’ (p. 192).

This is a censure of those who differ and a warning against following their path. Division and differing have only proliferated because of *taqlid* and its followers, who have caused differing in the Religion and divided the people into sects. Each sect supports its Imām and calls upon people to follow him and criticises those who oppose it. They do not consider that one should act upon their sayings, to the extent that it is as if they belong to another religion! And they strive to refute them, saying: “[Those are] their books and [these are] our books,” “[Those are] their Imāms and our [these are] Imāms,” and “[That is] their *madhhab* and [this is] our *madhhab*.” This is in spite of the fact that our Prophet (ﷺ) is one, the Qur’ān is one and the Lord is One.

So it is incumbent upon everyone to unite upon a single saying and not to obey anyone except the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) or elevate the sayings of any other, so that they are put on a par with his statements. And they should not take each other as lords besides Allāh. If their stance becomes unified upon that, all of them follow those who call to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) and all of them seek judgement from the Sunnah and the traditions of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), differing will be reduced, if it does not completely vanish from the earth.

This is why one finds the least differing among the followers of the Sunnah and ḥadīth, for there is no group on the face of the earth that is more in agreement and less in disagreement than they. This is because they have built their beliefs on this basis. And the further from ḥadīth a group is, the greater and more severe the differing one finds amongst them. This is because when a person rejects the truth, he will become confused and mixed up and unable to discern that which is correct and he will not know where to go, as Allāh, the Most High says:

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ

“But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.”

[*Qāf* (50):5].⁹¹

He also said: ‘We do not claim that Allāh has made it incumbent upon the whole of His creation to know the truth along with its evidence in every religious matter, both major and minor. We only reject what the Imāms and the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and the Tābi‘ūn before them rejected, including what occurred after the first [three] virtuous centuries of Islām and during the fourth century, which was criticised by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). They took the sayings of one man and treated his legal rulings as if they were of the same status as the texts of the Legislator [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Indeed, they gave precedence to them and to his sayings over all those scholars of the *Ummah* who came after the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). They contented themselves with making *taqlīd* of him, rather than acquiring rulings from the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and the sayings of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*). They also claim that he [the man whom they blindly follow] did not say anything except what is in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). This testimony consists of swearing to something of which he has knowledge and saying things about Allāh without knowledge. It also suggests that anyone who contradicts them—even though he may be more knowledgeable than he—is not speaking in accordance with the Qur’ān and Sunnah. And he will say: “He whom I follow is correct,” or he will say: “Both of them are in accordance with the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunnah—even though

⁹¹ See Ibn Al-Qayyim transmitted it in *Al-Ilām Al-Muwaqqi‘in*, (2/333).

their sayings contradict each other. So he deems the proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah to be contradictory, so that Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) [supposedly] rule on something and contradict it at the same time! This means that his religion consists of following the opinions of men and he has no fixed opinion on any particular matter. He either follows this path or declares that those who contradict his Imām are wrong. This is their only way and he must do one of the two. This is the misfortune of *taqlīd*.

Once this is understood, we may say that Allāh, the Most High has made it obligatory upon His slaves to fear Him and as much as they are able. The basic principle of *taqwā* (fear of Allāh) is knowledge of what to fear and then acting upon it, for it is an obligation upon every slave to take pains to acquire of that which he should fear, including what Allāh has commanded and what He has forbidden. Then he must remain obedient to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). That which is unknown to him may also be unknown to others such as he, aside from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Some things may be unknown to any individual—besides him (ﷺ)—regarding some of that which he brought. But that does not mean that he is not one of the people of knowledge. And Allāh will not hold him accountable for not knowing the truth and following it in matters that are outside his knowledge.”⁹²

Section Eight:

The Dangers of *Taqlīd* and its Evil Effects on the Muslims

O my respected brothers! The danger of *taqlīd* and its evil effects on our *Ummah* are greater than can be explained in this brief text. There are a number of books which deal with this issue in detail

⁹² See Ibn Al-Qayyim transmitted it in *Al-ʿIlām Al-Muwaqqiʿin*, (2/347).

and anyone who wishes to acquire more information may refer to them. But the aim here is to make clear that the cause, or possibly the main cause among many causes, of turning Muslims away from following the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah and holding fast to them, and instead blindly following the opinions of men. This is because the blind following groups consider *taqlid* to be an obligation—as you have heard—and a religion that must be followed.

They also believe that it is not permissible for anyone who lived after the fourth century to deviate from that; and anyone who does so is maligned by them, using the worst of epithets and subjected to ruthless attacks—and no one who is suspected of this is spared by them. Anyone who has read any treatises written on the subject by either side knows this very well.

Many people today have not studied what is known as comparative *fiqh*; the study of it reveals to the researcher the extent to which the blind followers have strayed from adherence to the Qurʾān and Sunnah, indeed, even from blind following of the Imāms themselves, due to their fanatical devotion to their *madhhab*. And among them are holders of doctorates who have undertaken the study of this subject! This being the case, it is incumbent on anyone among them to bear in mind those aforementioned *ahādīth* in the first two sections—and they are but a few among thousands that the blind followers have rejected, due to their fanatical devotion to the *madhhab* of one who is not infallible!

The most learned scholar, Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) has quoted seventy-three clear examples in his book: *ʿAl-ʿIlām Al-Muwaqqiʿim* from the clear and authentic Sunnah that were rejected by the blind followers, along with a detailed, calm

and scholarly discussion of them. At the start of it, examples from the Sunan that they rejected are given, some of which pertain to *'aqīdah*, such as the matter of Allāh's being above His creation and His ascending over His Throne. In confirmation of this, I say:

It is stated in the book: *'Iqāz Al-Himam'* by Shaikh Al-Fulānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) (p. 99) that the most learned scholar and investigator, Ibn Daqīq Al-Īd (may Allāh have mercy on him) has compiled the writings that contradicted authentic ḥadīth from each of the *madhābīb* in a large volume.

At the beginning of the book, he stated that: 'Attributing these things to the four Imāms, who were *mujtabidūn*, is unlawful and it is an obligation upon the scholars of Islāmic Jurisprudence who blindly follow them must have knowledge of these matters, in order not to attribute them to them, in which case, they would be guilty of lying against them.'

Section Nine:

The Obligation upon the Muslim Youth Today

O brothers! In conclusion, it is not my intention by this discussion to impose on you all the obligation to be Imāms, *mujtabidūn* and investigating scholars of Islāmic Jurisprudence—though that would please me as much as it would please you—since it is not possible in most cases, due to the necessity of people specialising in different areas of knowledge and of some of those specialists collaborating with others. I only intended two things by it:

The first is that you be aware of something that is unknown to many believing and educated youths today, let alone those who are not well educated. This is expressed in the words: "Legislation

belongs only to Allāh,” and this is clear from the proofs from the Qur’ān and Sunnah that we quoted at the beginning of this discussion. I say: At the same time, many of these youths remain unaware that regarding the forbidden participation referred to in the expression: “Legislation belongs only to Allāh, the Most High,” there is no difference between obeying a Muslim besides Allāh in his erroneous rulings and following a disbeliever who attributes to himself the right to legislate besides Allāh. Likewise, it makes no difference whether he is a scholar or an ignorant person. All of this is rejected by the aforementioned principle in which these youths believe, all praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Most High. It is this of which I wanted you to be aware and of which I wanted to remind you:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يُنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

[*al-Dhāriyāt* (51):55],

for I have heard many of them delivering sermons filled with praiseworthy Islāmic passion and zeal confirming that legislation belongs to only to Allāh and rejecting thereby the right of disbelieving rulers to legislate by other than what Allāh has ordained; and this is a fine thing, even though we are unable to change it. But there is something in the hearts of many of us which contradicts the above mentioned principle and that is something that it is easy for us to change, yet we do not warn the Muslims against it or remind them of it—and that thing is adopting *taqlīd* as one’s religion, while rejecting the proofs from the Qur’ān and Sunnah in favour of it. And this zealous sermoniser himself, if I were to draw his attention to the fact that he is contradicting a Qur’ānic verse or a Prophetic ḥadīth, he will immediately resort to citing

the *madhab* as evidence, without realising—sad to say—that by this action, he invalidates that great principle to which he calls the people, though Allāh, the Almighty and the All-Powerful says:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 أَن يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

“The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allāh and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say: ‘We hear and we obey.’ And those are the successful.”

[*al-Nūr* (24): 51]

And it is incumbent upon him to immediately accept what he hears of the Reminder and the evidence [from ḥadīth], because that is the knowledge; and he should not resort to *taqlīd*, because that is ignorance.

The second is that they should strive to attain in their hearts the highest possible level that is achievable for every Muslim, without attaining the level of *ijtihād*, which is unattainable except to a few highly trained people—and that level is one of obedience to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) alone, each of you according to his ability. So just as you confirm Allāh, the Most High’s sole right to be worshipped, you must also affirm the sole right of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to be followed and obeyed.

He Whom you worship is One and he whom you obey is one (ﷺ). If you do this, you will have implemented the testimony that none is worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allāh.

So, my respected brothers, establish belief in your hearts in every ḥadīth that you know to have been authentically reported from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), regardless of whether it pertains to ‘*aqīdah* or rulings and regardless of whether the Imām of the *madhab* upon which you were raised in your area—or any other Imām from among the Muslim Imāms—said it or not. And do not base any of those [aforementioned] rules that were created based on the opinions and *ijtibād* of men who are not qualified to exercise *ijtibād*. Doing so will turn you away from obedience to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Do not blindly follow any person, no matter how elevated his status may be, and do not give preference to his sayings over those of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) after they have been conveyed to you.

And know that in this way alone—not in any other way—will you attain knowledge and action upon the principles: ‘*Lā Ilāhā Illā Allāh* (none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh) is the path of life,’ and ‘Legislation belongs only to Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High, Alone, without partners.’ Without this, we will never become that peerless Qur’ānic generation, which alone can establish a Muslim society, with its required attributes and can lead to the Muslim State that we all desire, confirming the truth of saying of one of the major Islāmic callers (may Allāh have mercy on him), who said: “Establish the Muslim State in your hearts and it will be established for you on your earth.” Happy, that may be soon.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
 وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَٰهٌ
 مُّحْشَرُونَ

“O you who have believed, respond to Allāh and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allāh intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.”

[*Al-Anfāl* (8): 24]

And may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh be upon you.

THE SECOND TREATISE

*How it is Incumbent upon us to
Explain the Noble Qur'ān?*

FOREWORD

All praise and thanks be to Allāh, we praise Him and we seek His Aid and ask His Forgiveness, and we seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of ourselves and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides, there is none who can misguide him and whomsoever Allāh causes to go astray, there is none who can guide him. I bear witness that none is worthy of worship except Allāh, Alone, without partners and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger.

To proceed:

This treatise is: “How it is Incumbent upon us to Explain the Noble Qur’ān?”

And it is based on questions that were posed to Shaikh Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on him), to which he gave answers, which were recorded after which, they were written down on paper. They were then shown to the Shaikh (may Allāh, the Most High have mercy on

him) and he read it and added comments to it by hand.

Maktabah Al-Ma'arif in Riyādh published this work [in Arabic], in order to maximise the benefit of it, spread the knowledge of the Shaikh and deliver reward to him in his grave, may Allāh have Mercy on him.

And though it is a brief treatise, it contains huge benefits and is extremely useful to the Islāmic Nation, since it explains the principles and rules that it is incumbent upon us to follow, if we wish to make *tafsir* of the Noble Qur'ān in the correct way, which is pleasing to our Lord, Most Glorified, Most High and which has been legislated for us on the tongue of His Prophet (ﷺ) and then followed by the best of this *Ummah*: his Companions (*radiy Allāhu 'anhum*), and then those who followed them with excellence (*radiy Allāhu 'anhum*).

Likewise, in spite of its brevity, it contains many general rules which it is important for every Muslim who wishes to be one of the Saved Sect to know and to which it is incumbent upon them to hold fast and act upon, in order that it may lead them to the correct path, such as the rule: “The more one gives life to a *bid'ah*, the more death is brought to the Sunnah...” and other such enlightening rules that Allāh caused the Shaikh (may Allāh have mercy on him and grant him forgiveness) to know. He possessed vast learning and knowledge of Islāmic Law and the Sunnah of our Messenger (ﷺ). And Allāh spoke the truth when He said:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

“Allāh will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees.”

[*Al-Mujadilah* (59):11]

May Allāh have Mercy on the Shaikh and reward with goodness those who undertook the spreading of his knowledge after him; and may He benefit every Muslim who reads it.

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Question 1: O learned Shaikh! I read a ḥadīth in a small book that said: “Take from the Qur’ān whatever you wish, for whatever you wish.”⁹³ Is this ḥadīth authentic? Advise us, may Allāh reward you with goodness.

Answer: This ḥadīth: “Take from the Qur’ān whatever you wish, for whatever you wish,” has become common on the tongues of some people, but it is—unfortunately—among those *ahādīth* that have no basis in the Sunnah, for which reason, it is not permissible to narrate or to attribute it to the Prophet (ﷺ).

In addition, this wide and comprehensive meaning is not correct and is absolutely not confirmed in Islāmic Law: “Take from the Qur’ān whatever you wish, for whatever you wish.” For example, if I sat inside my house and did not work at my trade and my craft and I sought sustenance from my Lord, asking that He send it down to me from the heavens, because I take from the Qur’ān for this! Who would say this?!

This saying is false and invalid and it is likely that it was invented by idle *Sufis*, whose custom it is to sit and live in what they call caravansaries. They stay in them and wait for Allāh’s Sustenance to be delivered to them by the people, knowing that this is not the nature of the Muslim, because the Prophet (ﷺ) taught all Muslims to be high-minded and have a sense of self-respect; he (ﷺ) said: “The upper hand is better than the lower hand, the upper hand is the one which gives and the lower hand is the begging one.”⁹⁴

In this regard, what I have read about the ascetics and *Sufis*

⁹³ See ‘*Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth Al-Da’ifah wa’l-Mawḍū’ah*’, #557.

⁹⁴ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī, #1429, whose wording it is, and by Muslim, #1033.

amazes me—I will not speak at length on this, for their stories are numerous and astonishing:

They claim that one of them went travelling through the earth without provisions and he reached a state where he was about to die from hunger, then a village appeared to him in the distance and so he went to it. The day was Friday and according to his claim, he had set out depending on Allāh, so in order not to invalidate his claimed dependence on Allāh, he did not allow any of those present in the masjid to see him, but instead, he concealed himself under the pulpit, so that no one should be aware of him. However, he told himself that perhaps someone might notice him, so when the Imām had delivered his sermon, he did not pray with the congregation! After the Imām had completed his sermon and the prayer and the people began to exit the masjid's doors, singly and in groups, the man felt that the masjid was almost empty. But at this point, the doors were closed and he remained alone in the masjid, without food or drink. So no course remained for him except to cough, in order to announce his presence to the people. Some of the people turned to look and they found him, and his appearance indicated that he was suffering severely from hunger and thirst, so they took him and they gave him relief.

They asked him: 'O man! Who are you?!

He said: 'I am an ascetic, who depends on Allāh.'

They said: 'How can you say that you were depending on Allāh, when you were almost dying?! If you were depending on Allāh, you would not have asked and you would not have announced your presence by coughing, but remained silent until you died!'

This is an example of what a ḥadīth such as this leads to: "Take from the Qur'ān whatever you wish, for whatever you wish."

In summary, we may say that there is no basis for this ḥadīth.

Question 2: Learned Shaikh! The *al-Qur'āniyūn* say: 'Allāh, the Most High says:

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ نَفْصِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾

“And everything We have set out in detail.”

[*al-Isrā'*(17):12]

and He, the Most High says:

مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

“We have not neglected in the Book a thing”

[*al-An'ām* (6):38],

While the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “A part of this Qur'an is in Allāh's hand and a part of it is your hands, so hold fast to it, for you will not go astray and you will never be destroyed after it.”⁹⁵ We request that your eminence comment on this.

Answer: As for the words of Allāh, the Most High:

مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

“We have not neglected in the Book a thing”

[*al-An'ām* (6):38],

The reference to the Book in this verse is only to the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*) and it does not refer to the Noble Qur'an.

⁹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb wa'l-Tarhīb* (1/93/35).

As for the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَضَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾

“And everything We have set out in detail.”

[*al-Isrā'*(17):12],

If you add to the Noble Qur'ān what we have explained above, then it will be completely clear that Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful has explained everything in detail, but with another addition, for you know that the explanation can sometimes be through a general principle, by applying general rules under which there are details too numerous to mention. And by the Wise Lawgiver's addition of well-known rules to these numerous details, the meaning of the noble verse becomes apparent. And sometimes it can be by a detailed explanation which is suggested by this verse, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I have not left anything from among the things that Allāh commanded, except that I have ordered you to do it and I have not left anything that Allāh forbade except that I have forbidden it to you.”⁹⁶

So the explanation is sometimes by way of the rules under which there are numerous details and sometimes, it can be through terms and rulings that do not require reference to any of those aforementioned rules.

Among the rules under which many subsidiary branches are included—and which reveal the greatness of Islām and the wide scope of Islām in lawmaking—is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Let there be no harm and no reciprocating harm.”⁹⁷

And his saying (ﷺ): “Every intoxicant is *kehamr* and every kind

⁹⁶ *Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥībah*, #1803.

⁹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi'*, #7517.

of khamr is unlawful.”⁹⁸

And his saying: “Every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.”⁹⁹

These rules and concepts do not exclude anything connected with harm to the self or harm to property in the first ḥadīth, or anything connected with intoxicants, as stated in the second ḥadīth. This is regardless of whether the intoxicant is derived from grapes—as is usual—or from corn or some other substance—as long as it produces intoxication, it is unlawful.

Likewise, in the third ḥadīth, it is not possible to enumerate or list the innovations (*bid'āt*) due to their great number, but in spite of this—in spite of its brevity—states clearly: “...and every innovation is a misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.”

This is an explanation, but with rules.

As for the rulings than you know, they are explained by words that have been mentioned in the Sunnah in most cases; and sometimes, like the rulings on inheritance, for example, they are mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān.

As for the ḥadīth that was mentioned, it is an authentic ḥadīth and acting upon it requires us to adhere to it to the best of our ability, as stated in the ḥadīth: “I have left two things with you. As long as you hold fast to them, you will not go astray. They are the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *'Irwā' Al-Ghalīl'*, (8/40/2373).

⁹⁹ *'Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib wa'l-Tarhīb'* (1/92/34) and *'Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tarāwīḥ'* (page 75).

¹⁰⁰ *'Mishkāt Al-Masābīḥ'* (1/66/186).

So holding fast to the Rope of Allāh—which is in our hands—is only acting upon the Sunnah, which explains the Noble Qur’ān.

Question 3: There are those who say: If a ḥadīth contradicts a verse of the Qur’ān, then it is rejected, regardless of its level of authenticity; and they cite as an example of this, the ḥadīth: “Indeed, the deceased is punished for the weeping of his family for him.”¹⁰¹ And they cite as evidence the words of ‘A’ishah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhā*) in reply to the ḥadīth with the saying of Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful:

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.”

[*Fātir* (35):18]

How we reply to those who say this?

Answer: The reply in this ḥadīth exemplifies the problem of responding to the Sunnah with the Qur’ān and it proves the deviation of that path.

As for the reply to this ḥadīth—and I refer specially to those who adhere to the ḥadīth of ‘A’ishah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhā*)—which is:

Firstly: From the ḥadīth perspective: There is no way to reply to this ḥadīth from this perspective for two reasons:

The first is that it has been reported with an authentic chain

¹⁰¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi’*, #1970.

of narrators on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*).

The second is that Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) was not alone in reporting it; indeed: ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) also reported it; and he and his son were not alone in reporting it, for it was also reported by Al-Mughīrah Ibn Shu‘bah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*). This is all that I can call to mind at the present time, which is that, these narrations on the authority of the above mentioned Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) are recorded in the authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

But if a researcher were to conduct an exhaustive investigation, he would find other sources for these three *ahādīth*, whose chains of narrators are authentic. So they cannot be replied to with only a claim of contradiction with the Noble Qur’ān.

Secondly: From the perspective of *tafsīr*: This ḥadīth has been explained by the scholars from two aspects:

The first: That this ḥadīth is only applied to the deceased person who did not know during his lifetime that after his death, his family would commit violations of Islāmic Law and he did not advise them or instruct them not to weep for him, because this weeping would be a cause of the deceased being punished.

The use of the prefix (*al*) indicates the definite article in the word (*al-mayyit*) does not indicate entirety or comprehensiveness, i.e., the ḥadīth does not mean that every deceased person is punished for the weeping of his family for him. It only refers to the deceased person who does not advise his family not to commit actions that contradict Islāmic Law after his death. It is this person who will be punished due to the weeping of his family for him. As for one

who performed the obligatory advice and instruction not to wail for him and not to commit the sins that are commonly committed in this day and age, he would not be punished; but if he did not advise them, he would be punished.

If we know this explanation, which it is obligatory for us to understand from the first *tafsīr* made by many renowned scholars, such as Al-Nawawī and others, it becomes clear to us that there is no contradiction between this ḥadīth and the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6): 164]

The contradiction is only apparent if we understand that the prefix (*al*) in the word (*al-mayyit*) indicates entirety or comprehensiveness, i.e., that every deceased person is punished, which case, the meaning of the ḥadīth would be unclear and would contradict the noble verse. But if we understand the above mentioned meaning, then there is no contradiction and no ambiguity. This is because the person who is punished is only punished because he did not undertake the obligation of advice and instruction. This is the first aspect that has been spoken of regarding the explanation of this ḥadīth in order to reject the claimed contradiction.

As for the second aspect:

It was stated by Shaikh Al-Islām, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) in one of his books that the punishment here is

not punishment in the grave or punishment in the Hereafter, but that it is pain with the meaning of sadness: i.e., that the deceased hears the weeping of his family for him and he is afflicted by sorrow and sadness, caused by their grieving for him.

This is what Shaikh Al-Islām, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) said and if it is correct, then the ambiguity is completely eradicated.

But I say: This explanation contradicts two facts, which is why there is no alternative but for us to rely on the first explanation of the ḥadīth.

The first fact is that in the ḥadīth of Al-Mughīrah Ibn Shu‘bah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) which I indicated earlier contains an addition which makes it clear that the punishment does not mean sadness; it only means punishment, i.e., in the Fire, unless Allāh, Most Glorified, Most High pardons him. This is clear from the words of Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ
ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Indeed, Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills.”

[*al-Nisā’* (4):48]

And in the narration of Al-Mughīrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), it was reported that he said: ‘Indeed, the deceased will be punished because of the weeping of his family for him on the Day of Resurrection.’ It is clear from this that the deceased will punished because of the

weeping of his family for him on the Day of Resurrection, and not by pain and sadness in the grave, which was the explanation of Ibn Taymiyyah.

The second fact is that when the deceased passes away, he is unaware of what is going on around him, regardless of whether it is good or bad—which is proven by the evidences in the Qur’ān and Sunnah—except in some circumstances which were mentioned in some *ahādīth*, either as a rule that is applied to every deceased person, or one that is applied to some of them, since Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful allowed them to hear some things that caused him pain.

An example of the first is the ḥadīth narrated by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), who said: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: ‘When the deceased is placed in the grave, he listens to the sound of the shoes [as his friends and relatives return after burying him]. Then two angels come to him...’”¹⁰² In this authentic ḥadīth, there is confirmation of the particular hearing of the deceased at the time of his burial, when the people depart from him, i.e., at the time when the angels make him sit and his soul is returned to him. It is in this situation that he hears the sound of the footsteps; the ḥadīth clearly does not mean that this deceased person—and every deceased person—has his soul returned to him and that he continues to hear the footsteps passing between the graves until the Day when all of the dead will be sent forth! Certainly not.

This is a particular event that befalls some of the dead, because it states that his soul is returned to him, so if we accept the *tafsīr* of Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him), it would extend

¹⁰² *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi’*, #1675.

the scope of the deceased's perception beyond what occurs around him—regardless of whether it was before his burial or after he was placed in his grave—so the meaning of that is that he hears the weeping of the living for him. This requires evidence and that is missing. This is an example of the first.

As for the second, some evidences from the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah prove that the dead do not hear—and this is a lengthy discussion, but I will quote one ḥadīth and then end the reply to this question. That ḥadīth is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Indeed, Allāh has angels who are *sayyābūna* in the earth and they convey to me the salutations of peace from my nation (*ummah*).”¹⁰³ His saying: ‘*sayyābūna*’ means roaming through the gatherings and every time a Muslim sends salutations of peace on the Prophet (ﷺ), there is an angel who is charged with the responsibility of delivering the salutations from that Muslim to the Prophet (ﷺ). So if the deceased could hear, the most entitled of these deceased persons to hear would be our Prophet (ﷺ), because of the favours bestowed on him by Allāh, the Most Glorified, and the Most High and the special qualities granted to him above and beyond those granted to all of the Prophets and Messengers and all of the people of the worlds. If anyone could hear, it would be the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ); and if the Prophet (ﷺ) could hear something after his death, he would be able to hear the salutations of his *ummah* upon him.

From this, you will understand the error—indeed the misguidance—of those who seek help not only from the Prophet (ﷺ), but from other persons, regardless of whether they are Messengers, Prophets or righteous folk, because if they sought help from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) he would not hear them, as is

¹⁰³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi'*, #2174.

clear from the Qur'an:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

“Indeed, those you [polytheists] call upon besides Allāh are servants [i.e., creations] like you. So call upon them and let them respond to you, if you should be truthful.”

[*Al-A'raf* (7):194]

and:

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ

“If you invoke them, they do not hear your supplication...”

[*Fāṭir* (35):14]

—up to the end of the verse.

Therefore, the dead—after their demise—do not hear anything except that for which there is particular evidence—as I stated earlier—such as the deceased hearing the footsteps [of those departing from the graveyard]. And with this, I end the answer to this question.

Question 4: If a tape recorder is playing the Noble Qur'an and some of those present are not listening because they are busy talking, what is the ruling on not listening? Are any of those present, or the one who plays the tape recorder guilty of sin?

Answer: The answer to this question differs depending on the type of gathering in which the Qurʾān is recited from the recorder; if the gathering is one of learning, remembrance [of Allāh] and Qurʾānic recitation, then it is obligatory—in these circumstances—for complete attention to be given to it. Anyone who does not do so is guilty of sin, since he is contravening the words of Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ
فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

“So when the Qurʾān is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy.”

[*Al-Aʿrāf* (7):204]

However, if the gathering is not one of learning, remembrance [of the Qurʾān], or Qurʾānic recitation and is just a normal gathering, such as when someone is working, studying or reading at home, in these circumstances, it is not permissible to play a tape recorder and to raise the volume of the recitation, so that it reaches the ears of others in the house or in the gathering. In this situation, they are not required to listen, because they did not gather to listen to it. The person responsible is the one who raised the volume of the recorder and made its sound audible to the others. This is because he has pressed the people and forced them to listen to the Qurʾān at a time when they are not prepared to do so.

The closest example to this is that one of us passes by on the road and hears a butter merchant, a falafel seller and one who sells these cassette tapes—and the sound of the Qurʾān fills the air, so that wherever he goes, he hears the sound. Now are these

people who are walking on the road—all of them passing on their way—required to listen to this recording of the Qur’ān that is being played in an inappropriate place?! The only one responsible is that person who presses the people and forces them to listen to the recitation of the Qur’ān, either for the purpose of selling or to attract the people’s attention or for some other similar financial benefit. If they treat the Qur’ān as a kind of entertainment—as mentioned in some *ahādīth*¹⁰⁴ then they purchase with the verses of Allāh a small price in a manner other than that of the Jews and Christians, regarding whom Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful said:

أَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا

“They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price.”

[*al-Tawbah* (9): 9]

Question 5: Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful informs us about Himself, saying:

وَمَكُرُوا وَمَكَّرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينِ

“And they [i.e., the disbelievers] planned, but Allāh planned. And Allāh is the best of planners.”

[*Al-‘Imrān* (3):54]

It is possible that the minds of some people might have difficulty in understanding the apparent meaning of this verse and since we are not in need of *ta’wīl*,¹⁰⁵ in what way is Allāh

¹⁰⁴ ‘*Silsilah Al-Ahādīth Al-Ṣaḥībah*’ (#979)

¹⁰⁵ *Ta’wīl*: Distortion of the apparent meaning.

the Best of planners?

Answer: The matter is easily explained, by Allāh's Grace. This is because we know that the word '*maker*' is not always used in a negative manner, meaning evil, just as it is not always used to mean goodness. So a disbeliever might plot against a Muslim, but this Muslim is intelligent and discerning, not careless or stupid, so he is aware of the plotting of his disbelieving antagonist. So he deals with him in opposition to his plotting, so that the result is that the Muslim by his good planning defeats the disbeliever with his evil plotting. So would it be said that when this Muslim '*plots*' against the disbeliever, that he has done something unlawful? No one would say this.

And it is easy for you to understand this fact from the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "War is deception."¹⁰⁶ And what is said regarding deception may be said of plotting or planning. For a Muslim to deceive another Muslim is unlawful, but for a Muslim to deceive a disbeliever, who is an enemy of Allāh and an enemy of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), is not unlawful. Rather it is unavoidable. Likewise, a Muslim plotting against a disbeliever who intends to plot against him—in order for the Muslim to defeat the plotting of the disbeliever—is a good plot (and protection). This is a human being and that is a human being.

So what may we say with regard to the Lord of the worlds, Who is the Most Able, the All-Knowing, the Most Wise?

He foils the plots of all of the schemers, which is why He says:

¹⁰⁶ It is narrated by Al-Bukhāri, #3030 and Muslim, #1740.

﴿٥٤﴾ وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ

“...and Allāh is the best of planners.”

[*Al-Imrān* (3): 54]

So when our Lord, the Almighty, the All-Powerful describes Himself in this way, He is directing our attention to the fact that plotting or planning—even when it is on the part of human beings—is not always of the blameworthy kind, because He says: “*the best of planners*,” so there is a planner who plans with goodness and there is one who plans through evil. One who plans with goodness is not blameworthy; and Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful is, as He says: “*the best of planners*”.

In summary, I would say: Everything that crosses your mind, Allāh is different from that, so if a person imagines something that does not benefit Allāh, he should know straight away that he is mistaken, for this verse constitutes praise of Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful and there is nothing in it that is impermissible to attribute to Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High.

Question 6: How do we reconcile these two verses:

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion—never will it be accepted from him”

[*Al-Imrān* (3): 85]

and the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّٰبِغُونَ وَالنَّصْرَى
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

“Indeed, those who have believed [in Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)] and those [before him] who were Jews or Sabeans or Christians—those [among them] who believed in Allāh and the Last Day and did righteousness—no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 69]

Answer: There is no conflict between these two verses, as the questioner imagines. This is because the verse of Islām is after the call to Islām was conveyed to those peoples whom Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful described in the second verse as follows:

فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

“no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 69]

and He included mention of the Sabians. Now when mention is made of the Sabians, one thinks of those who worshipped the stars, but in truth, they are all those peoples who fell into *shirk*, having formerly been people of *tanbīd*. The Sabians were people who believed in the Oneness of Allāh, then *shirk* and worship of stars afflicted them, while those who were mentioned in the verse are those of them who were Believers and remained people of

tawhīd. These people lived before the call to Islām and they were like the Jews and Christians and they were also mentioned in the same thread as the Sabians; and it is these that included those who held fast to their religion during their time and were among the Believers referred to in Allāh's saying:

﴿٦٦﴾ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 69]

But after Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful sent Muḥammad (ﷺ) with the Religion of Islām and the call to Islām reached those people from among the Jews, Christians and Sabians, nothing would be accepted from them except Islām.

Therefore it is clear that the saying of Allāh:

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion—never will it be accepted from him.”

[*Al-Imrān* (3): 85]

means after the coming of Islām on the tongue of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and the call to Islām reaching him; such a person will not have any religion accepted from him, except Islām.

As for those who lived before the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was sent with Islām, or those who might be alive today, but the call to Islām has not reached them, or it has reached them, but in a form that has been twisted from its original meaning and its true nature. As I have mentioned on some occasions, with regard to

the Qadiyanis for example, who have spread today throughout Europe and America and call to Islām; however, this “*Islām*” to which they call is not the true Islām, because they claim that other prophets came after the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad (ﷺ); and these people in Europe and America—who are called to the “*Islām*” of the Qadiyanis and whom the call to true Islām has not reached—fall into two categories:

One category follows the religion they formerly adhered to and they still hold fast to it; it is these to whom this verse applies:

فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

“no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 69]

Then there is a category for those who have turned away from this Religion—as is the situation with many Muslims today—so the proof is established against them.

As for those whom the call to Islām has never reached—regardless of whether it was before or after the sending of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)—these people will be dealt with in a particular way in the Hereafter, which is that Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful will send a messenger to them to test them—as the people were tested in the life of this world—and those who respond positively to that messenger during the gathering of the Day of Resurrection and obey him will enter Paradise, while those who disobey him will enter the Fire.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ *'Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ṣaḥīḥah'*, #2468.

Question 7: Allāh, the Most High says:

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

“But We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness.”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6): 25]

Some people sense force in this verse. What is your opinion of that?

Answer: This setting is ‘*kawnī*’ and in order to understand it, we must explain Divine *Irādah* and Divine *Irādah* falls into two categories:

Irādah Shar‘iyyah: This is everything that Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful has legislated for His slaves and that He has encouraged them to do, including acts of obedience and acts of worship, according to their various rulings, such as obligatory acts and recommended acts; these acts of obedience and acts of worship are in accordance with Allāh’s Will and are things that He loves.

As for *Irādah Kawmiyyah:* It can sometimes be things that Allāh has not legislated, but that He has decreed; this kind of *Irādah* was only called *Irādah Kawmiyyah* based on the Words of Allāh, the Most High:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ، كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

“His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be!’ and it is.”

[*Yāsīn* (36): 82]

Now the word ‘thing’ is the infinitive, so it includes everything, regardless of whether it is an act of obedience or an act of disobedience—and it only comes to pass because of the saying of Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High: “Be!”, i.e., by His Will, His Ordainment and His Decree. So when we understand this *Irādah Kawniyyah*—which includes everything, regardless of whether it is an act of obedience or an act of disobedience—we have no alternative but to refer to the subject of Divine Ordainment and Decree (*al-Qaḍā’ wa’l-Qadr*), because the meaning of the saying of Him, the Almighty, the All-Powerful:

﴿إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

“His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be!’ and it is.”

[*Yāsīn* (36): 82]

Is that the thing for He says “Be!” He has made it something that is ordained and He has willed it to exist, so that it must be. Everything with Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful is by [His] Decree and this also encompasses good and evil. But what it entails for us, the two creations—mankind and the jinn, who are charged and commanded by Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful—is to pay attention to what we do: either it is purely by our will and our choice, or it is against our will. This latter is the second category and it has no relation to obedience or disobedience and nor does it result in Paradise or the Fire. It is only the first category around which legal rulings revolve and according to this, the recompense of a person will be either Paradise or the Fire. That is, what a person does by his will and which he pursues by his choice, it is this for which he will be held accountable; if it is good, then [he will be rewarded with] good and if it is evil, then he will reap the recompense of that.

A person chooses many of his actions and this is a fact that cannot be argued with, either legally or logically.

As for legally, the proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah are numerous with regard to the obligation for a person to what he is commanded to do and to abandon what has been prohibited to him—and these proofs are too numerous to mention.

As for logically, it is clear to every person and unarguable that when he speaks, when he walks, when he eats and drinks or does anything by choice, he has opted to do that without any compulsion whatsoever. So if I wish to speak now, there is naturally no one who has forced me to do that, but it is decreed; and the meaning of these words of mine is that it is [Divinely] decreed, but by my choice, for it is possible for me to remain silent, in order to make it clear to anyone who has doubt about what I say, that I choose to say these words.

Therefore, a person's choice falls into two categories—with regard to reality—is a matter that brooks no discussion or argument, so a person who argues about something such as this is only indulging in sophistry and doubt regarding matters that are clear. And if that person reaches this stage, discussion with him should be terminated.

Therefore, a person's deeds fall into two categories: voluntary and compelled; there is no discussion regarding the compelled actions, neither from the perspective of Divine Legislation, nor from the de facto perspective. The Law relates only to matters of choice and this is reality. So if we concentrate our minds, we will be able to understand the aforementioned verse:

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً

“but We have placed over their hearts coverings.”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6):25]

This “*setting*” is *kawnī*, so it is incumbent upon us to remember the previously mentioned verse:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا

“His command is only when He intends a thing.”

[*Yāsīn* (36):82]

And to realise that the “*will*” here is *kawniyyah*, but it is not in spite of this person on whose heart Allāh has set a veil.

An example of this from the physical perspective would be that when a person is created, his flesh is fresh and tender; then as he grows, his flesh becomes rougher and his bones become stronger; but not all people are the same in this regard; this person, for example, is destined for study and learning, so what is his strength? His strength is his intellect and his brain in the area in which he is involved and into which he pours all of his efforts. But from the physical and bodily aspect, he is not strong and his muscles are not developed.

And vice versa, this person is destined to work in the area of physical things and every day he does physical exercises—as they say today—and so his muscles and his body are strong and his form becomes as we sometimes see today in reality and in pictures and all of the bodies of these champions appear to be muscles. So was he created like this, or did he acquire this powerful, muscular form? This is something that he acquired by his efforts and by his choice.

That is like a person who persists in his misguidance and his stubbornness and his disbelief and rejection and he reaches the stage where, due to the accumulation of sins, Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful places a veil over his heart, not due to a command or compulsion from Allāh, but because of his actions and his choice. So this “*setting*” [of the veils] is *kawnī*, which these disbelieving people earn and they reach this stage, which the ignorant imagine means that it was forced on them, while the truth is that it was not forced on them, but was the recompense of their actions—and Allāh is not unjust to His slaves.

Question 8: What is the ruling on kissing a copy of the Qur’ān?

Answer: In our view, this falls into the generality of the ḥadīth in which it is said: “Beware of new things in [religious] matters because every new thing is an innovation, every innovation is misguidance.”¹⁰⁸ And in another ḥadīth: “And every misguidance is in the Fire.”¹⁰⁹ Many people have a particular stance regarding points such as this, saying: “What is wrong with that? It is nothing but a demonstration of veneration and glorification of this Noble Qur’ān. We would say to them: “You have spoken the truth; there is nothing in it except veneration and glorification of the Noble Qur’ān! But do you consider that this veneration and glorification was unknown to the first generation—who were the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)—and likewise, the Ṭabī‘ūn and those who came after them? There is no doubt that the answer will be as the scholars of the Salaf said: If there was any goodness in it, they would have done it before us.

¹⁰⁸ ‘*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Targhib wa’l-Tarhib*’ (1/92/34).

¹⁰⁹ ‘*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Tarāwīḥ*’ (p. 75).

This is one thing; the other thing is: Is the basis for kissing something permissibility, or is it prohibition?

Here, it is necessary to quote the ḥadīth narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their authentic compilations, in order that he who wants to be reminded will be reminded and will realise how far the Muslims of today are from their righteous forebears, from their understanding [of the Religion] and of the cure that they employed to deal with any matter that might confront them.

That ḥadīth is: It was reported on the authority of ‘Abbās Ibn Rabī‘ah that he said: ‘I saw ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) kissing the [Black] Stone and he said: ‘I know that you are only a stone and you cannot cause harm or bring benefit. Were it not that I saw the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) kiss you, I would not have kissed you.’

So why did ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) kiss the Black Stone, when, as it was stated in the authentic ḥadīth: “The Black Stone is from Paradise.”?¹¹⁰ Did he kiss it because of some philosophy that emanated from him, so that a person might claim: ‘This is the Speech of Allāh, so we kiss it?!’ Did ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) say: ‘This Stone is a relic from the Garden that was promised to the pious, so I am kissing it; and I am not in need of any proof from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to make clear to me the legality of kissing it.?’ Or did he deal with this particular matter using the logic that some people today employ, which is the logic to which we call and which we refer to as *al-Mantiq al-Salafi*, which consists of sincerity in following the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and those who followed his Sunnah until the Day of Resurrection?

¹¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi‘*, #3174.

This was the position of ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*); he said: ‘Were it not that I saw the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) kiss you; I would not have kissed you.’

So the fundamental principle regarding such kissing as this is that we deal with it in accordance with the Sunnah and we do not rule based on things such as those referred to earlier and say: “This is good,” or “What is wrong with that?” Call to mind with me the position of Zayd Ibn Thabit (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and how he faced the proposal of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) to collect the Qur’ān in order to preserve it from loss: He said: “How can you do something that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not do?!” But this understanding of the Religion does not exist among the Muslims of today at all.

If it is said to the one who kisses the Qur’ān: “How can you do something that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not do?” He will respond to you with a very strange reply, such as: “O my brother! What is wrong with that?! It shows glorification of the Qur’ān!” You should reply to such a person by saying: “O my brother! These words of yours are turned back on you: Did the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) not glorify the Qur’ān? There is no doubt that he did glorify the Qur’ān! Yet he did not kiss it.” Or they will say: “You criticise us for kissing the Qur’ān! But do you not ride in a car, or travel in an aeroplane, when these things are innovations?” The answer to what you have heard is that the innovation which is misguidance is that which is in religious matters.

As for [innovations] in the life of this world, as we indicated earlier, they can be permissible or they can be unlawful and so on.... This is something well known and requires no examples. When a man who embarks on an aeroplane in order to travel to the Sacred

House of Allāh for the purpose of performing *Hajj*, there is no doubt that it is lawful, but when a man gets on an aeroplane and travels to the west, making that his place of “*pilgrimage*”, there is no doubt that this is an act of disobedience and so on....

As for matters pertaining to worship regarding which a person is asked: “Why are you doing it?” And he replies: “To get closer to Allāh,” I would say: “There is no way to get closer to Allāh, Most Glorified, the Most High except through that which Allāh has prescribed; however, I want to remind you of something and it is—in my view—extremely important to establish and support this rule: “Every heresy is a misguidance.”

One of the *Salaf* said: “No [religious] innovation occurs except that a Sunnah is killed.” And I have personally experienced this fact because of my research into heresies in religious matters and how they frequently contradict that which was brought by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

Certainly, when the people of knowledge and virtue pick up a copy of the Qur’ān in order to read it, you will not see them kissing it; they only act upon what is contained in it. As for the common people—whose sentiments are uncontrolled—they say: “What is wrong with that?” and they do not realise what it entails, we say: “No [religious] innovation occurs except that a Sunnah is killed.”

And there is another heresy similar to this: We see people—even the sinful folk among them, who still have a small portion of faith in their hearts—when they hear the *mu’adhin*, they stand up; and when you ask them: “Why are you standing?” they reply: “To glorify Allāh, the Almighty, and the All-Powerful!” Yet they do not

go to the masjid and continue to play with their dice, chess games and such like. But they believe that they are glorifying our Lord by standing up in this way! From where did this standing come? It came—naturally from a fabricated ḥadīth, that has no basis, which states: “When you hear the *adhān*, stand up...”¹¹¹

This ḥadīth does have a basis [of sorts], but it was fabricated by one of the weak narrators and liars; he said: “*Qūmu*” (stand up), instead of: “*Qūlu*” (say...) and he abbreviated the authentic ḥadīth, which states: “When you hear the *adhān*, say the same thing as he [the *mu’adhin*] says, then send prayers on me...”¹¹² up to the end of the ḥadīth. See how Satan makes religious innovations appear attractive to a person and convinces him that he is a Believer who is glorifying the Symbols of Allāh and that the proof of this is that when he picks up the Qur’ān, he kisses it and when he hears the *adhān*, he stands up!

But is he acting upon the Qur’ān? No, he is not acting upon the Qur’ān! For example, he might pray, but does he not devour that which is unlawful? Does he not devour usury? Does he not feed [others] with usury? Does he not spread among the people the means by which they increase their disobedience to Allāh? Does he not... does he not... does he not...?

Questions without number; this is why we confine ourselves to the acts of obedience and worship Allāh has prescribed for us and we do not add a single thing to them, because, as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “I have not left anything from among the things that Allāh commanded, except that I have ordered you to do it and I have not left anything that Allāh forbade except that I have

¹¹¹ *Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth Al-Da‘īfah wa’l-Mawḍū‘ah*, #711.

¹¹² It is narrated by Muslim, #384.

forbidden it to you.”¹¹³ So this thing that you do, is it a means of drawing closer to Allāh? If the answer is “yes,” then bring forth the evidence from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). But the truth is, that there is no evidence, so it is a heresy and every heresy is a misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.

It is easy for anyone to say: “This matter is a simple [i.e., unimportant] one, yet you say that it is misguidance and that the one who does it is in the Fire?!”

Imām Al-Shāṭibī answered this by saying: “Every heresy—no matter how small—is a misguidance.”

And no attention is paid with regard to this ruling—which is a misguidance—to the essence of the heresy. Attention is only paid to the place in which it occurs; and what is this place? This place is the Law of Islām, which is complete and perfect, so there is no occasion for anyone to emend it by the addition of any heresy, regardless of whether it be small or large. From here the misguidance of religious innovation comes, not simply due to its being an innovation, but because it implies that it is possible to add something to what our Lord, the Most Blessed, and the Most High and our Prophet (ﷺ) have brought.

Question 9: How must we explain the Noble Qur’ān?

Answer: Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High revealed the Noble Qur’ān to the heart of His Messenger, Muḥammad (ﷺ), in order to deliver mankind from the darkness of disbelief and ignorance to the light of Islām; Allāh, the Most High says:

¹¹³ Mentioned previously

الرَّكْتَابُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾

“*Alif, Lām, Rā.* [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord—to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy”

[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 1]

And He made His Messenger (ﷺ) the elucidator, explainer and clarifier of what is in the Qur’ān; He, the Most High says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*al-ḥikmah*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them.”

[*al-Nahl* (16):44]

So the Sunnah came to explain and clarify what is in the Noble Qur’ān, which is Revelation from Allāh; He, Most High says:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾

“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.”

[*al-Najm* (53):3-4]

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed, I have been given the Book and something like it with it, but soon a man will be lying satiated

on his couch and he will say: You should adhere to this Qur'ān. Whatever you find in it that is lawful, take it as lawful, and whatever you find in it that is unlawful, take it as unlawful, for Indeed, the Messenger of Allāh has made unlawful that which Allāh has made unlawful.”¹¹⁴

The first thing that explains the Noble Qur'ān is the Noble Qur'ān [itself] and the Sunnah—which consists of the sayings and deeds of the Messenger (ﷺ), along with the things which he condoned—and after that, the explanation of the people of knowledge, the foremost of whom are the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ); and among the most prominent of these is 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhū*), due to his long years of companionship with the Prophet (ﷺ), on the one hand, and his preoccupation with asking questions about the Qur'ān, coupled with his understanding of its *tafsīr* on the other. He is followed by 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*), of whom Ibn Mas'ūd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhū*) said: “He is the Interpreter of the Qur'ān.” After them, any Companion whose interpretation of a Qur'ānic verse is confirmed—as long as there is no dispute between the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*)—in that case, we accept and condone that *tafsīr*. If there is no explanation from them, it is incumbent upon us to accept the *tafsīr* of the *Ṭabī'ūn*, who occupied themselves with the acquisition of *tafsīr* from the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), such as Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Ṭāwūs and their like from among those who were renowned for having acquired *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān from some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), in particular, Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*), as we stated earlier.

Sadly, there are some verses that have been interpreted based

¹¹⁴The *takbrīj* of '*Mishkāṭ Al-Maṣābiḥ*', no. #163.

on opinion or *madbhab*, without any direct clarification from the Prophet (ﷺ); so some of the later scholars of *tafsir* have based their explanations only in line with their *madbhab*—and this is a very serious problem, since their *tafsir* of the verse is based on their desire to support their *madbhab*. Mean while, the [other] scholars of *tafsir* have interpreted it in a manner other than that of the followers of the *madbhab*.

And perhaps we might cite some examples of that, such as the saying of Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High:

فَأَقْرءُوا مَا يَسَّرَ مِنْهُ

“so recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur’ān.”

[*Al-Muzzammil* (73):20]

Some of the *madhbāhib* interpreted it as referring to the recitation itself, i.e., what is obligatory from the Qur’ān in all of the prayers is only one long verse or three short verses!

They said this despite what has been reported in an authentic ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book [i.e., *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*] in it.”¹¹⁵ And in another ḥadīth, it is stated: “Whoever offered a prayer in which he did not recite the Opening of the Book [*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*], it is deficient, it is deficient, it is deficient and incomplete.”¹¹⁶

So the proof in these two ḥadīths has been rejected—in favour of the aforementioned *tafsir* of the above verse—with the claim that it applies to recitation and according to them, it is not

¹¹⁵ ‘*Saḥīḥ Al-Jamī’*, #7389.

¹¹⁶ ‘*Ṣifāḥ Ṣalāḥ Al-Nabī’*, #97.

permissible to interpret the Qur’ān except with a Sunnah that is *mutawātirah*.¹¹⁷ That is to say, it is not permissible to explain that which is *mutawātir* except with that which is also *mutawātir*. So they reject the two above mentioned ḥadīths, relying on their opinion-based or *madhhab*-based explanation of the verse.

This is in spite of the fact that the scholars—all of the scholars of *tafsīr*, and we do not distinguish between the earlier ones and the later ones—made it clear that what is meant by the noble verse: “so recite...” is: Pray whatever is easy for you from the night prayer, because Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful said this in relation to His saying:

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۗ عَلِمَ أَن لَّنْ نُحْصِيَهُ فَنَابَ
عَلَيْكَ كَافِرًا ۗ وَأَمَّا يُتَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۗ﴾

“Indeed, your Lord knows, [O Muḥammad], that you stand [in prayer] almost two thirds of the night or half of it or a third of it, and [so do] a group of those with you. And Allāh determines [the extent of] the night and the day. He has known that you [Muslims] will not be able to do it and has turned to you in forgiveness, so recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur’ān.”

[*Al-Muzzammil* (73):20]

That is, pray what is easy for you of the night prayer; so the verse has no particular relation to what it is obligatory for a person to recite in the night prayer. Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful has

¹¹⁷ *Mutawātirah*: That is, so widely reported that it is impossible that all of the reporters could have colluded upon a lie.

only made it easy for the Muslims to pray what is easy for them of the night prayer. So it is not obligatory for them to pray what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to pray—which, as you know—was eleven units [of prayer].

This is the meaning of the verse and it is known in Arabic usage as being in the category of applying a part to the whole. Therefore, the saying of Allāh, the Most High: “*so recite...*” means: Pray; and the prayer refers to all [prayer]. The recitation is the part, and this clarifies the importance of the part referring to the whole. This is like the saying of Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High in another verse:

أَقِمْ
 الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ
 قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ﴿٧٨﴾

“Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian] until the darkness of the night and [also] the Qur’ān [i.e., recitation] of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed.”

[*Al-Isrā’* (17):78]

And what is meant by “*the Qur’ān of dawn*” is the *fajr* prayer and so the part is also applied here to the whole. Such usage in the Arabic language is well known.

Therefore, after the explanation of this verse has been made clear by the scholars of *tafsir*—without disagreement between the earlier and the later ones—it is not permissible to reject the first and second ḥadīth, based on the claim that it is *aḥādīth aḥād*

and that it is not permissible to interpret the Qur'ān with a *ḥadīth āḥād*! This is firstly, because the abovementioned verse has been explained by the sayings of scholars who are well-versed in the language of the Qur'ān and secondly, because the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) does not contradict the Qur'ān; rather, it explains it and clarifies it, as we said at the start of this discussion.

How could it be otherwise, when the verse has no connection with the subject of what is obligatory for the Muslim to recite in prayer, regardless of whether it is an obligatory prayer or a voluntary prayer?!

As for the two above mentioned ḥadīths, their subject is clear, which is that the prayer of a worshipper is not valid without the recitation of *Sūrah Al-Fāṭihah*: “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book [i.e., *Sūrah al-Fāṭihah*] in it.” And: “Whoever offered a prayer in which he did not recite the Opening of the Book [*Sūrah al-Fāṭihah*], it is deficient, it is deficient, and it is deficient and incomplete.”¹¹⁸ That is, it remains incomplete; and whoever leaves his prayer without completing it, has not prayed and his prayer will be invalid, as is clear from the first ḥadīth.

Once this fact is clear to us, we can be assured that with regard to the *ahādīth* reported in the books of the Sunnah, whose chains of narrators are authentic, and we do not express doubt or uncertainty in them, based on the philosophical discourses that we hear in the present day, which states: “We do not reject *ahādīth al-āḥād* as long as they are related to rulings; we only reject those that pertain to beliefs, for beliefs are not established by *ahādīth al-āḥād*.”

¹¹⁸The reference for these two ḥadīths was given on the previous page.

This is what they claim, though we know that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) sent Mu‘ādh (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) to call the People of the Scripture to belief in the Oneness of Allāh¹¹⁹ —and he was one person.

And in this short lecture, there is sufficient evidence pertaining to the topic: How it is Incumbent us to Explain the Noble Qur’ān?

*And may the Blessings and Peace of Allāh be upon our
Prophet, Muḥammad and upon all his family and Companions
and those who Followed them in Excellence
until the Day of Judgement.
All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.*

¹¹⁹ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī, #1458 and Muslim, #19.

THE THIRD TREATISE

*The Status of the Sunnah in Islām
and Clarification that One Cannot Rely Solely on
the Qur'ān to the Exclusion of the Sunnah*

FOREWORD

All praise and thanks be to Allāh, and may the Blessings and Peace of Allāh be upon the Messenger of Allāh and upon his family and his Companions and those who support him.

To proceed:

This is a lecture that I gave in the city of Dohah, the capital of Qatar, in the blessed month of Ramaḍān, in the year 1392 AH and some brothers suggested to me that it should be printed, because of the important benefits it contains and the Muslims' need for such a booklet; and in response to their request, I am now making it generally available, in order that they may benefit from it and in order to that it may serve as a reminder and for posterity.

We have added to it some explanatory headings, in order to help the noble reader to comprehend its principal ideas.

And I ask Allāh, the Almighty, the All-Powerful to record me

among the defenders of His Religion and the supporters of His Law and reward me for that, for He is the Most Generous of those who are asked.

Damascus,
22nd of Muharram, 1394 AH.

CHAPTER ONE

The Status of the Sunnah in Islām and Clarification that One Cannot Rely Solely on the Qur'ān to the Exclusion of the Sunnah

Indeed, all praise and thanks are due to Allāh; we praise Him, we seek His Aid, and we ask His Forgiveness. And we seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of ourselves and the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides, there is none who can misguide him, and whomsoever Allāh causes to go astray, there is none who can guide him. And I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, Alone, without partners; and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تَقٰوْبِهٖۚ وَلَا تَمُوْنُوْا اِلَّا وَاَسْمُ
مُسْلِمُوْنَ

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in sub-

mission to Him].”

[*Āl-‘Imrān* (3): 102]

Allāh, the Most High says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
 زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ
 بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.”

[*al-Nisā’* (4): 1]

Allāh, the Most High says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ
 لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
 فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 70-71]

To proceed: The most truthful speech is the Book of Allāh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad, while the worst of matters are the innovated ones; and every innovation is a heresy,

every heresy is misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.

I believe that I will be unable to present to this noble gathering—especially since it contains venerable scholars and virtuous professors—any knowledge that is new to them. And if my surmise is correct, then I will be content for this speech of mine to be a reminder, in obedience to the Words of Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يُنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

[*Al-Dhāriyāt* (51): 55]

I do not consider that my speech on this blessed night in the glorified month of Ramaḍān should be an explanation of its virtues and rulings, or the virtue of standing in prayer on those nights, which are common topics, dealt with by lecturers and callers and are of benefit to fasting people and bring goodness and blessings to them. Instead, I have decided that my speech should be on a very important topic, because it is one of the principles of the beautiful Islāmic Law; and that is, the importance of the Sunnah in matters pertaining to legislation.

CHAPTER TWO

The Relationship of the Sunnah to the Qur'ān

You all know that Allāh, Most Glorified, Most High chose Muḥammad (ﷺ) to be His Prophet, that He conferred on him the blessing of Messengership and revealed His Book, the Noble Qur'ān to him. In that Book, amongst the many Commands that He gave to him was that he explain it to mankind; He, Most High said:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And We revealed to you the message (*dhikr*) that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them.”

[*al-Nahl* (16):44]

And it is my opinion that the explanation mentioned in this noble

verse is of two types:

The first is an explanation of the wording and the order of the words; this is the act of conveying the Qur'ān, without concealing anything of it and of presenting it to the people, as Allāh, Most Glorified, and the Most High revealed it to his heart. This is what is meant by the Words of Him, the Most High:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ

“O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord.”

[*Al-Mā'idah* (5): 67]

And 'A'ishah (*radiy Allāhu 'anhā*) said in a ḥadīth: “Whoever told you that Muḥammad (ﷺ) concealed something that he was commanded to convey [to you] has fabricated the worst possible lie.” (The narrator said): “Then she recited the aforementioned verse.”¹²⁰ In Muslims version, it was stated that she said: “If the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had concealed anything of what he was commanded to convey, he would have concealed the words of Allāh, the Most High:

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ
 أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ
 مُبْدِيهِ وَتُخْفِي النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تُخْفِيَهُ

“And [remember, O Muḥammad], when you said to the one on whom Allāh bestowed favour and you bestowed favour, ‘Keep your wife and fear Allāh,’ while you concealed within yourself that which Allāh

¹²⁰ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

is to disclose. And you feared the people, while Allāh has more right that you fear Him.”

[*Al-Abzāb* (33):37]

The second is the explanation of the meaning of a phrase, sentence or verse for which the *ummah* requires explanation; and most of that occurs in the ambiguous (*mujmalah*), general (*‘āmmah*) and single unspecified things (*mutlaqah*). So the function of the Sunnah is to clarify the ambiguous, to make the general specific and to limit or restrict the unspecified. And that is achieved through the words, deeds and approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

CHAPTER THREE

The Necessity of the Sunnah in Order to Understand the Qur'ān and Examples of That

His saying:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا

“[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 38]

This is a good example of that, for the word “*thief*” mentioned in it is *mutlaq*, as is the word “*hand*”. So the spoken Sunnah makes clear the meaning of the first word, limiting it to the thief who steals a quarter of a *dīnār*. This is clear from the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Do not cut off the hand unless [the thief steals] a quarter of a *dīnār* or more.”¹²¹ The second word is explained by

¹²¹ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

his actions (ﷺ) and those of his Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*), along with the things of which he approved, for they used to cut off the hand of the thief at the wrist, as is known from the books of ḥadīth, while the spoken Sunnah makes it clear that the hand referred to in the verse of *tayammum*:

فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ

“wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 6]

Is that it also refers to the hand; and this is based on the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “*Tayammum* is one strike for the face and hands.”¹²²

And I present to you some other verses which it is impossible to understand correctly, in accordance with what Allāh meant, except by means of the Sunnah.

1. The saying of Allāh, the Most High:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ

وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided.”

[*al-An'ām* (6):82]

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) understood the saying of Allāh:

¹²² It is narrated by Aḥmad, Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others, on the authority of ‘Ammār Ibn Yāsir (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*)

يُظْلِمُ

“with injustice...”

In a general way, which included every type of wrongdoing, even minor ones. For this reason, the verse presented difficulties to them and they said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Who among us has not confused his belief with wrongdoing?’ He (ﷺ) replied: “This is not what is meant [by the verse]; it only refers to *shirk* (the association of partners with Allāh). Do you not hear the words of Luqmān?:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.”

[*Luqmān* (31):13]¹²³

2. The saying of Allāh, the Most High:

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ

فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ
 أَنْ يَفْعِلُ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنْ كَفَرُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ الْدِينَ الْحَقَّ وَتَكُونُونَ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer, [especially] if you fear that those who disbelieve may disrupt [or attack] you. Indeed, the disbelievers are ever to you a clear enemy.”

[*Al-Nisā'* (4):101]

The apparent meaning of this verse is that a condition of shortening the prayers on a journey is that one is in fear. For this reason,

¹²³ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

some of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ): ‘Why are allowed to shorten the prayers when we are now safe [from the disbelievers]?’ He (ﷺ) replied: “It is a charity that Allāh has bestowed on you, so accept His charity.”¹²⁴

3. The saying of Allāh, the Most High:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood”

[*Al-Mā'idah* (5): 3]

The spoken Sunnah makes it clear that dead locusts and fish and the blood in the liver and the spleen are lawful [to eat]. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Two types of animals which have died a natural death and two types of blood have been made permissible for us: The two which have died a natural death being the fish and the locust, and the two types of blood being the liver and the spleen.”¹²⁵

4. The saying of Allāh, the Most High:

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ

فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ
مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ
فَسَقًا أَهْلًا لِيَغْزِيَنَّ اللَّهُ بِهِ

“Say: ‘I do not find within that which was revealed

¹²⁴ It is narrated by Muslim

¹²⁵ It is narrated by Al-Bayhaqī and others, in both *marfū‘* and *mawqūf* forms. The *isnād* of the *mawqūf* narration is authentic, but has the ruling of a *marfū‘* narration, because a Companion (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) would not proffer his own opinion in the matter

to me[anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine—for indeed, it is impure—or it be [that slaughtered in] disobedience, dedicated to other than Allāh.”

[*Al-An‘ām* (6):145]

Then the Sunnah came and things were forbidden that are not mentioned in this verse, such as those described in the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Eating any fanged beast of prey and every bird with talons is unlawful.”¹²⁶ And on the subject there are also other *ahādīth* which forbid that, such as the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day of the Battle of Khaybar: “Indeed, Allāh and His Messenger forbid you [from eating the flesh of] domestic asses, for it is impure.”¹²⁷

5. The saying of Allāh, the Most High:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ
زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

“Say: ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of [i.e., from] Allāh which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?’”

[*Al-A‘rāf* (7): 32]

The Sunnah made it clear that there are also some kinds of adornment that are unlawful, for it has been confirmed from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he came out to his Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) one day and in one of his hands was silk, while in the other was some gold. He said: “These are unlawful to the males of my nation and

¹²⁶ It is narrated by Muslim

¹²⁷ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

permitted to the females.”¹²⁸

O my brothers! The importance of the Sunnah in matters of Islāmic legislation is clear to us from what has preceded, for if we look once more at the aforementioned examples—leaving aside others that we did not mention—we will be certain that there is no way to understand the Noble Qur’ān correctly without reference to the Sunnah.

In the first example, the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) understood the word “*wrongdoing*” mentioned in the verse in accordance with its apparent meaning; and although they were, according to Ibn Mas’ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*): ‘the best of people, with the most pious hearts, with the deepest knowledge and the least of them in hypocrisy,’ they still understood it wrongly; and had not the Prophet (ﷺ) corrected their error and guided them to the true meaning of the aforementioned “*with injustice...*”, which is associating partners with Allāh, we would have followed them in their error. But Allāh, the Most Blessed, and the Most High protected us from that through His Guidance to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Sunnah.

In the second example, were it not for the aforementioned ḥadīth, we would have remained in doubt—to say the least—regarding the shortening of the prayers when on a safe journey, in which the condition of fear—which is apparent from the verse—is not fulfilled. This was the initial understanding of some of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhum*) and it would have remained so, had they not seen the Prophet (ﷺ) shortening his prayers and shortened their prayers with him, though they were in safety.

¹²⁸ It is narrated by Al-Ḥākim, who declared it to be authentic. And the *ahādīth* bearing the same meaning are numerous and well known in the two authentic compilations of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim and others. And there are numerous other examples which are well known to the scholars of ḥadīth and *fiqh*.

In the third example, had it not been for the ḥadīth, we would have forbidden to ourselves the good foods that were made lawful to us: locusts, fish, liver and spleen.

In the fourth example, were it not for the *ahādīth* that we have mentioned [which explain the verse more fully], we would have declared lawful some things that Allāh has made unlawful to us through the words of His Prophet (ﷺ), such as carnivorous beasts and birds with talons.

Likewise, in the fifth example, were it not for the *ahādīth*, we would have declared lawful some things that Allāh has made unlawful to us in the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), such as gold and silk. It was due to this that some of the *Salaf* said: 'The Sunnah rules on the Book [of Allāh].'

CHAPTER FOUR

The Misguidance of those Who Rely on the Qur'ān to the Exclusion of the Sunnah

Sadly, one finds some *tafsīr* scholars and writers who hold the view that the last two things that we mentioned, i.e., the eating of carnivorous beasts and the wearing of silk, are permissible, depending for this view on the Qur'ān alone.

Indeed, in the present day, there is a group who are known as *Qur'āniyūn* who interpret the Qur'ān based on their whims and their intellects, without seeking support for it from the authentic Sunnah. Instead, the Sunnah to them is subservient to their whims and so they confirm whatever agrees with their whims and reject what doesn't.

And it is as if the Prophet (ﷺ) was referring to them when he said in an authentic ḥadīth: “Let me not find one of you reclining on his couch when he hears something that I have commanded or

forbidden and he says: 'I do not know, whatever we found in Allāh's Book we followed.'¹²⁹ In another version narrated by someone else, it was reported that he (ﷺ) said: "Whatever we found in it that is unlawful; we declare it to be unlawful. Indeed, I was sent with the Qur'ān and something equivalent to it along with it." In a third version, it was reported that he (ﷺ) said: "Indeed, whatever the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has made unlawful is the same as what was made unlawful by Allāh."¹³⁰

Indeed, sad to say, one distinguished author has written a book on Islāmic Law and belief and in the foreword, he has stated that he has written the book and that it contains no references except the Qur'ān!

But this authentic ḥadīth proves conclusively that Islāmic Law is not only the Qur'ān; rather, it is both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. So if anyone adheres to only one of them and rejects the other, he has not adhered to either of them, because each of them orders us to hold fast to the other, as Allāh, the Most High says:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

"He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh"

[*al-Nisā'* (4):80]

and He says:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾

¹²⁹ It is narrated by Tirmidhi

¹³⁰ It is narrated by Ibn Mājah

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 65]

He also says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.”

[*al-Abḥāb* (33):36]

and He says:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

“And whatever the Messenger has given you—take; and what he has forbidden you—refrain from.”

[*al-Ḥashr* (59):7]

In connection to this verse, I am impressed by the narration that has been confirmed on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), in which it was stated that a woman came to him and said to him: ‘Are you the one who said: “Allāh has cursed those women

remove the facial hair from other women, those who have their facial hair removed and those who practise tattooing...?” He said: ‘Yes.’ She said: ‘I have read the Book of Allāh from beginning to end and I did not find what you say in it.’ He replied: “Did you not read in it:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

“And whatever the Messenger has given you—take; and what he has forbidden you—refrain from.”

[*al-Hasbr* (59):7]

She said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying: “Allāh has cursed those women remove the facial hair from other women...”¹³¹

¹³¹ It is narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

CHAPTER FIVE

Knowledge of the [Arabic] Language is not Sufficient to Understand the Qur'ān

It is plain from what has preceded that there is no basis for anyone—even a scholar of Arabic language and its *ādāb*¹³²—to understand the Noble Qur'ān without the help of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) in words and actions, for he will not be more knowledgeable in language than the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)—may Allāh be pleased with them all—in whose language the Qur'ān was revealed, when the language had not been marred by the errors of non-Arabs, slang and ungrammatical Arabic. In spite of this, they made mistakes in understanding the aforementioned verses when they relied on just their language.

Based on this, it is clear that when a person understands the Sunnah, he will understand the Qur'ān and derive rulings from it better than one who is ignorant of it. So what then may be said

¹³² *Ādāb*: Morals, etiquette, manners etc.

of one who does not depend on it and does not refer to it at all?

For this reason, one of the rules upon which scholars are agreed is that the Qur'ān should be explained by the Qur'ān itself and by the Sunnah,¹³³ then by the sayings of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*)... etc.

From this, the cause of the misguidance of the scholars of philosophical discourse—both past and present—becomes clear to us, along with their opposition to the *Salaf* (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) in their beliefs, not to mention their rulings. It is their remoteness from the Sunnah and lack of understanding of it, and their reliance on their intellects and their whims to make judgements regarding the verses of Allāh's Divine Attributes and others. And what is better than what has been stated in '*Sharḥ Al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah*': 'How can anyone talk about the fundamental principles of the Religion, when he has not studied the Qur'ān and Sunnah, but only studied the words of So-and-so? And if he claims that he is deriving it from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, he is not taking the explanation of the Book of Allāh from the *ahādīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), or even looking at it, nor is he looking at what the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) and the *Tābi'ūn* said about it.

These narrations have been transmitted to us by trustworthy people chosen by the scholars, for they did not just transmit the arrangement of the Qur'ān; rather, they transmitted its arrangement and its meaning. They did not learn the Qur'ān as children do; rather, they learnt it with its meanings. And anyone who does not

¹³³ We did not say, as it is commonly said by many scholars: 'The Qur'ān is explained by the Qur'ān, if there is no Sunnah [i.e., ḥadīth] then by the Sunnah [i.e., the narrations of the Companions (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) and the *Tābi'ūn*],' due to what will be made clear at the end of this treatise, when we deal with the ḥadīth of Mu'adh Ibn Jabal (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*).

follow their way is only speaking based on his own opinion—and whoever speaks based on his own opinion and on what he believes to be the Religion of Allāh, without deriving it from the Qur’ān is guilty of sin, even if it transpire that he is right. But whoever derives his understanding from the Qur’ān and Sunnah is rewarded, even if he commits an error. However, if he is correct, then his reward is multiplied.’¹³⁴

Then he said: ‘So complete submission to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), obedience to his commands and acceptance and belief in his words are obligatory, without contradiction based on invalid thoughts, which we term “logical” or are based on misunderstanding or doubt. Nor should we give preference to the opinions of men and the flotsam and jetsam of their minds. We must declare the Oneness of the One Who sent him, in all matters pertaining to worship, humility, obedience, repentance and dependence.’¹³⁵

In summary, we may say that it is an obligation upon all Muslims not to differentiate between the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, regarding the obligation to act upon both of them and to establish lawmaking based on both of them. For this is their guarantee that they will not deviate to left or right and that they will not return to misguidance, as made clear by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in his saying: “I have left two things with you, as long as you hold to them, you will not go astray. They are the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet.”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ See ‘*Sharḥ Al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah*’ (p. 212—fourth edition)

¹³⁵ See ‘*Sharḥ Al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah*’ (p. 217—fourth edition)

¹³⁶ It is narrated by Mālik in the form of a report and by Al-Ḥākim in a mawsūl form, with a chain of narrators graded ḥasan by scholars

CHAPTER SIX

Important Note

Having said this, I can now say:

The Sunnah, which carries such importance in the matters of legislation, is only the Sunnah that is confirmed to have emanated from the Prophet (ﷺ), from knowledge-based sources and authentic chains of narrators that are well known to the scholars of ḥadīth and rijāl.¹³⁷ They are not those found in various books of *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, *Targhib* and *Tarhib*,¹³⁸ *Al-Raqā'iq*¹³⁹ and *Mawā'iz*¹⁴⁰ and other subjects, for these books contain numerous weak and fabricated *aḥādīth*, some of which Islām is innocent, such as the ḥadīth of Hārūt and Mārūt and the story of the Satanic verses. I have written a special treatise regarding the invalidity of them and they have been printed.¹⁴¹ I have given the *takbrīj* of a great

¹³⁷ *Rijāl*: ḥadīth narrators.

¹³⁸ *Targhib* and *Tarhib*: Incitement [to do good] and instilling fear [against doing evil].

¹³⁹ Softening of the hearts.

¹⁴⁰ *Mawā'iz*: Exhortations.

¹⁴¹ Its name is '*Nasb Al-Majāniq Fi Nasf Qissab Al-Gharāniq*', published by Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī.

number of them in my large book: *'Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah wa'l-Mawḍū'ah wa Athārūha al-Sayyi'ah fi'l-Ummah'* and until now, they number approximately four thousand *aḥādīth*¹⁴² and they include *aḥādīth* that are either weak or fabricated, but only five hundred have been printed so far!

Therefore, it is obligatory for the people of knowledge—especially those who spread their jurisprudence and their legal verdicts among the people—that they do not hastily cite *aḥādīth* as evidence until they are certain that they have been proven to be authentic, for the books of Islāmic Jurisprudence to which they commonly refer are filled with weak and rejected *aḥādīth* and some that are completely without basis, as is well known to the scholars.

I had started a project, which is important, in my opinion, and extremely beneficial to those who work in the field of Islāmic Jurisprudence and I called it: *'Al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah wa'l-Mawḍū'ah Fi Ummabatil-Kutub Al-Fiqḥiyyah'* (The Weak and Fabricated *Aḥādīth* in the Major Books of Islāmic Jurisprudence), by which I mean these works:

1. *'Al-Hidāyah'*, which is a work of Ḥanafī Jurisprudence, by Al-Marghīnānī.
2. *'Al-Mudawwanah'*, which is a work of Mālikī Jurisprudence, by Ibn Al-Qāsim.
3. *'Sharḥ al-Wajīz'*, which is a work of Shāfi'ī Jurisprudence, by Al-Rafi'ī.
4. *'Al-Mughnī'*, which is a work of Ḥanbali Jurisprudence, by Ibn Qudāmah.
5. *'Bidāyah Al-Mujtāhid'*, which is a work of comparative Jurisprudence, by Ibn Rushd Al-Andalusī.

¹⁴² As of now, they number five thousand and I hope that Allāh will grant that its publication will be soon.

But, unfortunately, I was unable to complete it, because the Kuwaiti magazine: '*Al-Wa'i Al-Islāmi*', which welcomed it and promised to publish it when they had reviewed it, did not do so.

And though that opportunity failed to materialise, I hope that another chance will present itself to me, if Allāh, the Most High wills, to present to my brothers who work in the field of Islāmic Jurisprudence a precise, knowledge-based programme to assist them and make it easy for them to follow a path that will lead to knowledge of the rankings of *ahādīth*, by referring to the sources that must be referred to, those being the books of ḥadīth. These books make clear their particular characteristics and merits, and what may be relied on in them.

And Allāh, the Most High is the Owner of Success.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Weakness of the Ḥadīth of Mu‘ādh regarding Opinion and what is Rejected from it

Before I complete this discussion of mine, I must draw the attention of my brothers who are here today to this well-known ḥadīth, which is seldom omitted from the books of *Usūl Al-Fiqh* (Principles of Islāmic Jurisprudence). This is because of its weakness from the point of view of its *isnād* and its contradiction to what I have spoken of in this discussion, i.e., that it is not permissible to differentiate in matters of legislation between the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah and that it is obligatory to accept them both. The ḥadīth in question is that of Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), in which it is stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him, when he sent him to Yemen: “By what will you judge?” He replied: ‘By the Book of Allāh.’ He (ﷺ) said: “And if you do not find [the answer in it]?” [I shall act] in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) asked: “[What will you do] if you do

not find any guidance in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and in the Book of Allāh?" He replied: 'I shall do my best to form an opinion and I shall spare no effort.' The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) then patted him on the breast and said: "Praise be to Allāh, Who has guided the messenger of the Messenger of Allāh to find something which the Messenger of Allāh loves."

As for the weakness of its isnād, this is not a suitable time or place to discuss it; I have explained that in such detail as has not previously been done in the aforementioned book: '*Al-Silsilah*'¹⁴³ I will content myself now with stating that the Commander of the Faithful in ḥadīth, Imām Al-Bukhārī (may Allāh have mercy on him) said of it: 'The ḥadīth is *munkar* (rejected).' Having mentioned this, it is possible for me begin explaining the contradiction contained in it, of which I spoke earlier:

This ḥadīth of Mu'ādh (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) establishes a manner of ruling for the judge based on three stages. It is not permissible for him to search for a ruling based on his opinion until he has failed to find it in the Sunnah, nor is it permissible for him to search for it in the Sunnah until he has failed to find it in the Qur'ān; and with regard to opinion, that is the correct course, according to all scholars, which is the reason they say: 'If a tradition has been reported, then opinion is invalid.' However, with regard to the Sunnah, it is not correct, because the Sunnah rules on the Book of Allāh and is an explanation of it. Therefore, it is necessary for him to search for the ruling in the Sunnah, even though he believes it to be present in the Book of Allāh, due to what we have stated. So the status of the Sunnah with regard to the Qur'ān is unlike the status of opinion with regard to the Sunnah. No! I repeat, no!

¹⁴³It is no. #885 in the above mentioned book, '*Al-Silsilah*' and it is hoped that the volume containing it will be published soon, *in sha' Allāh*.

Rather, the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah must be considered a single source, with no difference at all between them, as indicated by the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “They will not diverge until they meet me at the Pool [of *al-Kawthar*].”¹⁴⁴ So the aforementioned division of them is not correct, because it necessitates their separation, which is invalid, according to what we explained previously.

It is to this that I wanted to draw attention; if I am right, it is from Allāh and if I have erred, then it from me. I ask Allāh, the Most High protect me from error and from everything that displeases Him. And our final declaration is: All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.

¹⁴⁴ It is narrated by Tirmidhī

APPENDIX ONE

Statements of the Imāms to Adhere to the Sunnah and Leaving their Views Contradictory to it

It is beneficial to mention here the quotes that I have come across, as I hope they will remind people who blindly follow the Imāms, and even blindly follow those who are less in rank than these Imāms¹⁴ and cling to their views as if they were divine—though Allāh, Most High said,

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

“(People!) Follow (the Message) which has been revealed to you by your Lord and follow no patrons

¹⁴This type of *taqlid* [i.e. blind following] is what Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī referred to when he said: “Only a fool or a fundamentalist would do *taqlid*”. This statement was reported by Ibn ‘Ābidīn in *Rasm al-Muftī* (1/32) from the collection of his Essays.

(as you assume them to be), apart from Allāh. How little heed you pay to admonition”

[*al-A'raf* (7): 3]

i. Abū Ḥanīfah

The Companions and students of Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit (may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him) narrated from his different statements that all revolve around the obligation of accepting the ḥadīth and not following the views that contradict the Sunnah.

- i. When a ḥadīth is authentic, then that is my *madhhab*.¹⁵
- ii. It is unlawful for any person to accept my view without knowing the source from where we got them.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibn 'Ābidīn in *al-Ḥāshiyah* (1/63), in his essay *Rasm al-Muḥḥī* (1/4), from the collection of the essays of Ibn 'Ābidīn, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fulānī in *Ḥyāqīḥ al-Ḥimām* (p. 62) and others. Ibn 'Ābidīn quoted from *Sharḥ al-Ḥidāyah* by Ibn al-Shāḥnah al-Kabīr, the Shaykh of Ibn al-Hammām, as follows: “If the ḥadīth is ṣāḥiḥ and appeared to oppose the view of the *Madhhab*, one should act upon the ḥadīth and adhere to it as that does not negate one's adherence to the *Ḥanafī Madhhab*. This is because it is proven authentic that Abū Ḥanīfah said: If the ḥadīth is ṣāḥiḥ, then it shall be the view I adopt. This statement was narrated by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and others as the statement of Abū Ḥanīfah and other Imāms.” I say: This shows the perfection of knowledge and piety of these scholars as they admitted they have not comprehended all the Sunnah, which is what Imām al-Shāfi'ī also said as shall be quoted afterwards. That being the case, it is possible that they may adopt a view contravening an act of Sunnah that they did not know of, therefore they ordered us to cling to the Sunnah and consider it their *Madhhab*. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon all of them.

¹⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *al-Intiqā' fī Fuḍū'il al-Thalāthab al-ʿimmah al-Fuqahā'* (p. 145), Ibn al-Qayyim in *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in* (2/309), Ibn 'Ābidīn in *al-Ḥāshiyah on al-Baḥr al-Ra'iq* (6/293) and *Rasm al-Muḥḥī* (p. 29 and 32), al-Sha'rānī in *al-Miḥrān* (1/55), Ibn Ma'in in *al-Tārikh* (6/77/1) through ṣāḥiḥ isnād from Zafar. Similar statements were reported from some of his main students including Zafar, Abū Yūsuf, 'Āfiyah Ibn Yazīd as stated in *al-Ḥyāqīḥ* (p. 52), and Ibn al-Qayyim (2/344) affirmed that Abū Yūsuf said that statement, and in *al-Ta'līq 'alā al-Ḥyāqīḥ* (p. 65). I say: If this is what they say to those who do not know their evidence, what would they say about those who know the evidence is

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- iii. It is forbidden to use my views to issue verdicts without knowing my evidence
- iv. It is forbidden to use my views to issue verdicts without knowing my evidence for we are nothing but humans; we say something today that we may retract tomorrow.
- v. O Ya'qūb (i.e. Abū Yūsuf), Woe to you! Do not write all that you hear from me because I may adopt a view today but abandon it tomorrow! And, may conclude a view tomorrow but abandon it the day after tomorrow.¹⁷

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established against them and yet insist on adopting rulings contravening the evidence? It is worthy to ponder upon their statement because such statement alone is enough to demolish the blind following trend, which made some staunch *Muqallid* to deny that such statement was ever said by Abū Ḥanīfah when he was challenged with a ruling he issued that he did not know the evidence used by Abū Ḥanīfah to conclude it.

¹⁷ This is because it is often that the Imām Abū Ḥanīfah concluded his rulings based on *qiyās* (analogy) but afterwards a stronger analogy appeared to him or he heard a ḥadīth so he changes his view and left his former position. Al-Sha'rāni said in *al-Mizān* (1/62): "I and every person who is fair and just in his judgement about Hanīfah, may Allāh be pleased with him, believe that had he lived until the day when all divine texts of religion were recorded and after all the Ḥuffāz travelled and collected all these texts, and then he got his hands on them, he would have abandoned every issue he derived based on analogy and he would have not opted for analogy except in few cases just as it is the case with others.

However, since religious material and evidences were dispersed in different areas and towns during his time, he had to depend heavily on analogy compared to the other Imāms. This is because when he did not find textual evidences concerning the issues he investigated, he had to use analogy unlike other scholars who travelled collecting *ahādīth* from many countries. This is in brief the reason why he depended on *qiyās* often and it is what I said regarding the *Madhhabs* of others."

Abu'l Ḥasanāt al-Luchnawī quoted large portion of this statement in *al-Nāfi' al-Kabir* (p. 135) and made some comments that support and clarify it. I say: Since this is the excuse of Abū Ḥanīfah for adopting views that contradict authentic ḥadīths unintentionally, which is a valid excuse no doubt because Allāh does not ordain on people what is beyond their powers—then no one is allowed to defame him or condemn him as some ignorant people do. Rather, people need to show him respect because he is Imām of the Imāms of Muslim through whom Allāh Preserved the religion to reach us today, and so he is rewarded whether his concluded views are correct or not. Furthermore, it is wrong for his followers to clinch to his views that have later turned out to be contradicting authentic ḥadīth because in such case these views are no longer part of his *Madhhab* as

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- vi. If I ever say something that contradicts the book of Allāh and the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ), then leave my statement.¹⁸

ii. Mālik Ibn Anas

- i. I am a human; I say things that are correct and I err. Thus, investigate my view; all that which conforms to the Qur’ān and Sunnah, accept it, and all that which does not conform to the Qur’ān and Sunnah, reject it.¹⁹
- ii. The views of people are accepted and rejected except those of the Prophet (ﷺ).²⁰

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you could notice in his statements. This reflects how these type of people and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah stand on different sides. “O our Lord! Protect us and our brethren who took precedence over us in (accepting) the faith and let no rancor or spite occupy our hearts against those who believe.”

¹⁸ Al-Fulānī in *al-‘Īyqāṣ* (p.50) wherein he attributed it to Imām Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan then commented: “This statement and the likes of such statement is not addressing the Mujtāhid who does not need opinions of others, but rather it is addressing the *Muqallid*.” I say, this is why al-Sha’rānī said in *al-Miṣṣan* (1/26): “If you ask: what should I do with all these *ahādīth* that have been proved to be authentic after the death of my Imām and he did not adopt them? The answer is: You should accept and act upon these *ahādīth* because if he had these *ahādīth* and he deemed authentic, he would have ordered you to do so. This is because all the Imāms are captives in the hand of religion. Thus, whoever does that will encompass the good with his both hands and whoever says: I do not accept a ḥadīth that my Imām did not act upon, they miss immense goodness just like how it is the case with most of those who adhere to *madhābībs* out of *taqlid*. While, it befits more that people act upon every authentic ḥadīth to carry out (from) the will of their Imāms because we believe that if they lived and had access to these *ahādīth* that are proven authentic, they would have acted upon them and deserted the views where they used analogy to conclude and only statement that did not depend on authentic evidence.”

¹⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Jāmi‘* (2/32) and Ibn Hazm in *Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (6/149) and al-Fulānī (p. 72)

²⁰ This is famous statement that is attributed to Imām Mālik, particularly by later Maliki scholars, which is a statement that Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥādī verified in *Irshād al-Sālik* (1/227) that it was said by Imām Mālik. It is reported by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Jāmi‘* (2/91), Ibn Hazm in *Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (6/145 and 179) from the words of al-Ḥakam Ibn ‘Utaybah and Mujāhid, Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī reported it in his *al-Fatāwā* (1/148) from the words of Ibn

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- iii. Ibn Wahb said: I heard Mālik responding to a question regarding the ruling on cleansing between the toes during ablution saying: it is not required. I stayed with him until people left then said to him: I find the act to be Sunnah. He asked: on what basis? I replied: al-Layth ibn Sa'd, Ibn Lahī'ah, 'Amr Ibn al-Hārith narrated to me that Yazīd Ibn 'Amr al-Mā'āfirī narrated from Abū 'Abdul-Rahmān al-Ḥubulī that al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād al-Qurashī said: "I saw the Messenger of Allāh rubbing the area between his toes with his little finger." Mālik responded: This is a good ḥadīth that I have not heard of before now. Then, I heard him directing people to cleanse between their toes [during ablution] whenever they asked him about it.²¹

iii. al-Shāfi'ī

The reported quotes of Imām al-Shāfi'ī concerning this topic are more in number and better,²² and his followers who act upon his directions are more than others. Some of his statements are:

- i. There is no one except that he misses or fails to notice an act of Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); hence if I say or deduce something that opposes the statement of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then

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'Abbās and he expressed his amazement of the beauty of such words then said: This line was said by Ibn 'Abbās then Mujāhid took it from him then Imām Malik, may Allāh be pleased with him, took it from them and became known to be said by him." I say, then Imām Aḥmad took it from them i.e. Abū Dāwūd said in *Masā'il* (p. 276): "I heard Aḥmad say: "The views of people are accepted and rejected except those of the Prophet (ﷺ)"

²¹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in the introduction to *al-Jarḥ wa'l-Ta'dil* (p. 31-32), and Bayhaqī reported the complete version in his *Sunan* (1/81).

²² Ibn Ḥazm said (6/118): "The Jurists whom people follow their *Madhhab* defied *taqlid* and forbade their students to blindly follow them, i.e. al-Shāfi'ī was the the most prominent scholar in this regard for he, may Allāh bestows His Mercy upon him, reached a level of accepting and adhering to authentic texts and reports that no other scholar reached, and he declared that he is against to be followed in everything he said, may Allāh increase his reward and make him a source of benefit for he was indeed a reason that led to immense goodness."

- the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) will be the statement I accept and endorse.²³
- ii. Muslims are in agreement that when a person knows of a Sunnah reported from the Prophet (ﷺ), it is unlawful for him to leave it favoring someone else's view.²⁴
 - iii. If you find anything in my book that contravenes the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then take the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and leave what I have said. In another report: ...then follow the Sunnah and pay no attention to any other view.²⁵
 - iv. If the ḥadīth is authentic, then it is the view I adopt.²⁶

²³ Ḥākim through a connected chain of narrators from him up to al-Shāfi'ī; as in *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asākir (15/1/3), *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in* of Ibn al-Qayyim (2/363 and 364), and *al-'Iyqāz* (p. 100)

²⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim (2/361) and al-Fulānī (p. 68)

²⁵ Al-Harawī in *al-Dhamm al-Kalām* (3/47/1), al-Khaṭīb in *al-Ijtihāj bi al-Shāfi'ī* (8/2), Ibn 'Asākir (15/9/1), al-Nawawī in *al-Majmū'* (1/63), Ibn al-Qayyim (2/361), al-Fulānī (p. 100). The other report is recorded by Abū Nu'aym in *al-Hilyah* (9/107) and Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (3/284—section *al-Ibsān*) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād

²⁶ Al-Nawawī in *al-Majmū'*, al-Sha'rānī (1/57) in which he said this report is recorded by Ḥākim and Bayhaqī, al-Fulānī (p. 107), al-Sha'rānī said: "Ibn Ḥazm said: It means that if the ḥadīth is proven authentic according to him or any other Imām". I say: The following statement of his gives explicit meaning concerning this matter. Nawawī, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, said in brief: "Our Companions applied this principle in the issues of *Tathwīb* (calling to prayer in addition to the *adhān*), the ending of the state of *Ihrām* due to sickness, and other cases as known in the books of the *Madhhab*. Some of the jurists who reported this verdict based on the ḥadīth, from our companions, are: Abū Ya'qūb al-Buwīṭī, Abū' Qāsim al-Dārikī, and from the scholars of ḥadīth, from our companions, are: Imām Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī and others. A group of our companions used to act upon the ḥadīth if they came across a ḥadīth that contravenes the view of al-Shāfi'ī and say: The *Madhhab* of al-Shāfi'ī is what conforms to the ḥadīth. Shaykh Ibn al-Ṣalāh said: If any Shāfi'ī scholar finds a ḥadīth that contravenes his *Madhhab* should investigate it independently, if he acquired all the tools that qualify him for *Ijtihād*, or to do *Ijtihād* in that particular issue. However, if he did not have all the required tools and it was too difficult for him to research the issue and could not find an answer explaining the view, he can act upon it if this view was accepted by another absolute *Mujtahid* and he will in such a case, be excused for leaving the view of his Imām. And this statement is good and required. And Allāh knows best." I say: There is another aspect to this subject that Ibn al-Ṣalāh did not mention, namely: if a person did not find any other scholar

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- v. You know about the ḥadīth and narrators better than I do; thus if the ḥadīth is authentic, inform me of it, whether it is from Kufah, Basrah or *Shām*, so that I may take the view of the ḥadīth, as long as it is authentic.²⁷
- vi. Every ḥadīth that scholars of ḥadīth deem authentic and found to oppose what I have said, then I hereby state that I abandon this view in my life and after my death.²⁸
- vii. If you ever find me say something whereas it has been proven authentic that the Prophet (ﷺ) said otherwise, then know that my mind has lost it.²⁹

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acting upon the ḥadīth, what should a person do in such case? The answer to this was given by Taqī al-Dīn al Subki in his article “The meaning of the statement of al-Shāfi‘i: if the ḥadīth is ṣaḥīḥ....” (p. 102, vol.3): “I find it more appropriate to act upon the ḥadīth, and let one imagine himself standing before the Prophet (ﷺ) and listening to the ḥadīth directly from him! Would he dare not to accept it?! No, by Allāh! Everyone is obligated to act according to his level of understanding”. The full details of this topic is found in Ibn al-Qayyim, *I‘lām al-Muwaqqi‘in* (2/302 and 370), and the book of al-Fulānī (full title): *‘Iqāz Ḥimām Uli al-Aḥsār li al-Iqtidā bisayyidi al-Muhājirin wa al-Anṣār, wa Taḥābiruhum ‘an al-Ibtidā’ al-Shāfi‘i fi al-Qur’ān wa al-Aḥsār, min Taqlid al-Madhāhib ma’a al-Hamīyah wa al-‘Aṣābiyah bayna fuqahā’ al-‘Aṣār*, which is a unique book that should be studied thoroughly by everyone who loves the truth.

²⁷ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in *al-Ādāb al-Shāfi‘i* (p. 94-95), Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Ḥilyah* (9/106), al-Khaṭīb in *al-Ihtijāj bi al-Shāfi‘i* (8/1), Ibn ‘Asākir (15/9/1), Ibn ‘Abd Al Barr in *Al Intiqā’* (p. 75), Ibn Al Jawzī in *Manāqib al-Imām Ahmad* (p. 499), al-Harawī (2/47/2) from three different routes through ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hanbal from his father that al-Shāfi‘ī said such and such. Thus, this is authentically reported and that is why Ibn al-Qayyim confirmed it in *I‘lām al-Muwaqqi‘in* (2/325) and al-Fulānī in *al-‘Iyqāz* (p. 152) then said: “The reason why al-Shāfi‘ī was excessively acting upon ḥadīth is because he collected the knowledge of Shām, Hijāz, Yemen and Irāq. He acted upon all the reports that he concluded to be authentic without being biased and without trying to show any special favours to any scholar from any region as he only followed the truth that appeared to him whereas some people before him used to suffice with the views adopted in the country they reside in and did not endeavor to find the truth. I ask Allāh to forgive us all.”

²⁸ Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Ḥilyah* (9/107), al-Harawī (47/1), Ibn Qayyim in *I‘lām al-Muwaqqi‘in* (2/363) and al-Fulānī (p. 104).

²⁹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in *al-Ādāb al-Shāfi‘i* (p. 93), Abū’l Qāsim al-Samarqandī in *al-‘Amālī* and its abridged version by Abū Hafs al-Mu‘addid (243/1), Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Ḥilyah* (9/106), Ibn ‘Asākir (15/10/1) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

- viii. All that I said but it turned out that the Prophet (ﷺ) said in an authentic report is opposite to what I said, then the ḥadīth of the Prophet should be followed and do not follow me.³⁰
- ix. Every ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the view I adopt even if you do not hear it from me.³¹

iv. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal

Imām Aḥmad is the Imām who adheres to the Sunnah the most and who collected the largest number of the traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, he used to dislike authoring books including personal opinions and rulings based on the original rulings.³²

- i. Do not [blindly] adopt my views or the views of Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, al-Awzāʿī or al-Thawrī, but rather take from where they took [their knowledge].³³
- ii. Do not [blindly] adopt the views concerning your religion from any of those people. Take all that has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. As for the views of the people after the *tābiʿīn*, you have the choice [to take or leave].
- iii. Follow [i.e. adhering to the Sunnah] is that a person follows all that is reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. As for the views of those who came after the *tābiʿīn*, a man has a choice [to adhere to them or not].³⁴
- iv. The views of al-Awzāʿī, the views of Mālik, the views of Abū Ḥanīfah are all opinions whose strength is equal in my view. The evidence is established only through reports.³⁵
- v. Whoever rejects the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) is a person on the edge of doom.³⁶

³⁰ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in *al-Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī* (p. 93), Abū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir (15/9/2) with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

³¹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim in *al-Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī* (p. 93-94)

³² Ibn al-Jawzī in *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad* (p. 192)

³³ Al-Fulānī in *al-ʿIyāqāʿ* (p.113) and Ibn Qayyim in *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn* (2/302)

³⁴ Abū Dāwūd in *Masāʾil Imām Aḥmad* (p. 276 and 277).

³⁵ Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in *al-Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿIlm* (2/149)

³⁶ Ibn al-Jawzī in *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad* (p. 182)

The above mentioned statements demonstrate the persistent clinging of the famous Imāms, may Allāh be pleased with them, to the *ahādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ), and their commanding against being followed blindly. These statements are explicit and clear enough that they cannot be argued or interpreted. Thus, when a person holds fast to the authentic Sunnah, even if that means leaving some of the views of the Imāms, he is not deemed as opposing their *Madhhab*. Rather, he is deemed a person who adheres to their method and their ways and clings to that which is known not to break. That being said, he who leaves the established Sunnah just because the established Sunnah opposes their views has indeed disobeyed the Imāms and contravened their methods, shown in the previous quotes. Allāh says:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا سَلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 65]

and

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ
أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

“So, let those who go against His command beware, let some calamity should befall them or they receive some painful punishment”

[*al-Nūr* (24): 63]

Hāfiẓ Ibn Rajab, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, said: “It is obligatory upon whoever knows and understands the commands of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to deliver this command to all Muslims and advise them and order them to follow the Prophet’s command, even if that means opposing the view of a renowned scholar. This is because the command of Allāh’s messenger (ﷺ) deserves to be glorified and complied with more than any opposing opinion said by a high ranked person that people look up to. This is why the companions and the succeeding generations refuted every person opposing an authentic Sunnah, and may in some cases be harsh in their refutation;³⁷ not because they disliked

³⁷ I say: Even if those who they refuted were their fathers or their scholars. Al-Taḥāwī recorded in *Sharḥ Ma‘ānī al-Aḥbār* (1/372) and Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad* (3/1317) through a good chain of narrators that Sālim Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar said: “I was sitting with Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy>Allāhu ‘anhumā*) in the *Masjid*. Then, a man from the people of *Shām* approached him and asked him about the ruling on *al-Tamattu’* [i.e. performing ‘Umrah during the *Ḥajj* season, and on the Day of *Tarwīyyah* the pilgrim gets into the state of *Iḥram* for *Ḥajj*] so Ibn ‘Umar said: It is a good thing to do. The man said: But, your father used to forbid people to do it! Ibn ‘Umar replied: Woe to you! If my father forbade it then know that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did it and ordered people to do it, so will you take the view of my father or abide by the command of the Messenger of Allāh? The man replied: I will comply with the order of the Prophet (ﷺ). Upon that, Ibn ‘Umar told the man to leave.” The story in its meaning was recorded by Aḥmad (no. 5700), Tirmidhī (2/82) who graded it authentic. Ibn ‘Asākir recorded (7/51/1) in his *al-Tārikh* that Ibn Abī Dhī‘b said: Sa’d Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Abdul Raḥmān Ibn ‘Awf judged in a case against a man according to the view of Rabī‘ah Ibn Abī ‘Abdul-Raḥmān. So, I advised him that the judgement of the Messenger of Allāh (saw) about this case is different to what he judged! So, Sa’d said to Rabī‘ah: This is Ibn Abī Dhī‘b and I deem him a trustworthy person and he just narrated to me a ḥadīth that oppose the judgment I have issued! So, what should I do? Rabī‘ah said: You endeavored sufficiently and issued your ruling accordingly! Hence, keep it as is. Sa’d replied: I wonder at this! I endorse the judgment of Sa’d and do not endorse the judgement of the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ)! I shall reject the judgment of Sa’d, the son of his mother, and only endorse the judgement of the Messenger of Allāh! Upon that, Sa’d requested to bring him the document in which was his judgment so he tore it apart and changed his verdict according to the ḥadīth and so his judgement was for the favour of the man.

the opponent scholar, whom in fact they loved and glorified, but because their love of the Messenger (ﷺ) is greater and dearer to them, and his command is more superior than the command of every other creature. Thus, when the command of the Messenger (ﷺ) opposes the command of anyone else, his command takes precedence even if the opposing view is adopted by a [scholar] who people look up to and glorify, who is in such a case forgiven for the mistake [as he erred unintentionally].³⁸ In fact, the said scholar who adopted a view contravening the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) will not dislike people to desert his views if it turns out that they oppose the command of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)."³⁹

How could they dislike that people follow the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) in such cases when they ordered people to leave their own views when the ḥadīth is established against their views and also obligate their followers to abandon the views that contravene the Sunnah? In fact, al-Shāfi'ī ordered his Companions to ascribe the rulings found in the authentic Sunnah and adopt them even if he did not do take it, or he acted upon its opposite. This is why the renowned verifier, Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, may Allāh bestow his mercy upon him, collected in one large volume the different issues that each Imām of the four Imāms disregarded of the authentic ḥadīth. He said in the beginning of his book: "Ascribing these rulings to the *Mujtabid* Imāms is unlawful and jurists who follow them need to know about these rulings so that they do not ascribe to them what they did not say."⁴⁰

³⁸ I say: he will be rewarded based on the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): "When the judge endeavors and issues his verdict accordingly, and his verdict was correct he will receive two rewards and if his judgement was wrong, he will receive one reward". Recorded by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others.

³⁹ He mentioned it in his commentary on *ʿIqāṣ Himām* (p. 93)

⁴⁰ Al-Fulānī in *al-ʿĪqāṣ* (p. 99).

Section One:

Scholars who abandoned the views of the Imāms
they follow to adhere to the Sunnah

Given the reasons I highlighted in the previous section, the scholars who followed the Imāms who were

ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ

“A large part of them (will hail) from the early (believers); while a few (of them will hail) from the later ones”

[*al-Wāqi‘ah* (56): 13-14]

do not follow all the views of their Imāms. In fact, some of them abandoned many of the views adopted by their Imām after they realised such views contravene the authentic Sunnah. For example, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan and Abū Yūsuf, may Allāh bestows His Mercy upon them, opposed one third of the views adopted by their teacher, Abū Ḥanīfah, which is evident in the books of *Fiqh*.⁴¹ The same was with the case of Imām al-Muzanī and other followers of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, and if I wanted to give examples on this behavior, the book will become too lengthy and will not conform to our intention to write about this subject briefly. However, I will just mention two examples about the subject matter:

1. Imām Muḥammad said in *al-Muwatta‘a* (p. 158): “As for Abū Ḥanīfah was with the opinion that prayer should not be prayed in the case of *al-Istisqā’* (i.e. beseeching Allāh for rain). However, the view I endorse is that the Imām [leading the prayer] should pray two units then supplicate while wearing his garment upside down...”
2. Iṣām Ibn Yūsuf al-Balkhī, one of the Companions of Imām

⁴¹ This was transmitted by Ibn ‘Abidīn in *al-Ḥāshiyah* (1/62) and al-Lucknawī stated in *al-Nāfi‘ al-Kabīr* (p. 93) that this was reported from the way of al-Ghazālī.

Muḥammad who was also one of those who constantly remained in the company of Abū Yūsuf, used to often issue edicts different than those of Abū Ḥanīfah because he did not know what evidence Imām Abū Ḥanīfah relied on; hence he used to issue edicts based on the evidence he found. For example, he used to raise his hands when bowing and when rising from it, which is the practice proven in *Mutawātir Sunnah*, though his three teachers [i.e. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan and Abū Yūsuf] were against it, and this is the behavior that every Muslim should be upon as per the directions of the four Imāms and other scholars as mentioned previously.

In summary, I hope none of those who follow the views of scholars who condemn the methodology of this book, results in veiling him from benefiting from the Prophetic Sunnah on the grounds that such views oppose the *Madhhab* he follows. If this is the case, I hope this person remembers the statements of the Imāms that I quoted above which assert the obligation to act upon the Sunnah and abandon their opposing views. Furthermore, it is worthy to mention that condemning the methodology of this book is actually denouncing the Imām he follows because the methodology of this book is based on their methodologies as explained previously. Thus, whoever turns away from following their guidance in this regard will be in a great danger as that necessitates rejecting the Sunnah, all the while, we are ordered to consult the Sunnah and depend on it when we differ on any matter. Allāh, Most High, said:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
 حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
 فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿١٥﴾

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concern-

ing that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

[*al-Nisā'* (4): 65]

I ask Allāh, Most High, to make us among those whom He mentioned in the verse:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ
يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَّقُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

“The only response of the believers, when they are summoned before Allāh and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, is that they say, ‘We hear and obey.’ It is they who will attain their goal. And those who obey Allāh and His Messenger and hold Allāh in awe and take Him as a shield [for protection] it is they who shall be triumphant.”

[*al-Nūr* (24): 51-52]

INDEX OF ARABIC WORDS

Bid'ah: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.

Da'if: weak; the ḥadīth that is neither ṣaḥīḥ nor ḥasan because it fails to meet one of their requirements. It is of varying degrees of severity, the most severe of which being mawḍū', fabricated.

Ḥadīth: A text attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) describing his actions, words, descriptions and tacit approvals. It consists of two portions, the body of the text (*matn*) and the *isnād*. Rarely the term is also used to refer to a text attributed to a Companion or a *Tābi'ī*.

Ḥāfiẓ: pl. *ḥuffāẓ*. Ḥadīth Master, commonly referred to one who has memorised at least 100,000 ḥadīths.

Ḥasan: good, fair. A ḥadīth whose *isnād* is continuously linked of just, morally upright narrators but whose precision (*dabt*) falls short of the requirements of the ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) and no hidden defect (*'illab*). A ḥadīth can

be ḥasan in and of itself, or contain a defect but still be ruled to be so due to supporting evidences.

Isnād: support. The chain of authorities on which a narration is based, linking the end narrator of a narration to the one it is attributed to, be it the Prophet (ﷺ) or anyone else, narrator by narrator.

Ittibā': following, technically referring to following the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Majhūl: unknown. A reference to a narrator from whom only one narrator narrates (*majhūl al-'ain*) or whose state of precision (*dabt*) is unknown (*majhūl al-hāl*), such a narrator makes the *isnād ḍa'if*.

Matrūk: abandoned. A narrator who is accused of lying, or makes many mistakes, or makes mistakes in aḥādīth that are agreed upon, or narrates from famous narrators that which those narrators do not know.

Munqati': that ḥadīth from which the narrator just before the Companion has been omitted from its *isnād*.

Mursak: disconnected. A ḥadīth whereby a *Tābi'i* narrates directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion. In the view of the majority of Scholars it is a sub-category of *ḍa'if*.

Sābiḥ: correct, authentic. A ḥadīth which has a continuously linked *isnād*, of just, morally upright and precise narrators; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) or hidden defect (*'illab*). Hence five conditions have to be met: the *isnād* being continuously linked;

the justice (*‘adl*) of the narrator; the precision (*dabt*) of the narrator; its not being *shādh*; and its not containing an *‘illab*. The ḥadīth can be ṣaḥīḥ in and of itself, or it can contain a defect but still be ruled to be ṣaḥīḥ due to supporting evidences.

Salaf: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi‘ūn* and the *Tab‘ Tābi‘ūn* due to the ḥadīth, “The best of people are my generation, then the one that follows, then the one that follows.”

Shādh: irregular, odd. A ḥadīth narrated by a trustworthy and precise narrator that contradicts the narrative of other narrators or the narration of one more trustworthy and precise than him, provided that a reconciliation is not possible.

Sunnah: way, path. The actions, words, descriptions, commands, prohibitions and tacit approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Tābi‘ūn: The generation following that of the Companions.

Tab‘ Tābi‘ūn: The generation following that of the *Tābi‘ūn*.

Tawḥīd: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.