

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Class Notes – Lesson 77

[صِفَاتُ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ]

ثُمَّ مِنْ طَرِيقَةِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ: اتَّبَاعُ آثَارِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَاطِنًا وَظَاهِرًا، وَاتِّبَاعُ سَبِيلِ السَّابِقِينَ الْأَوَّلِينَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ، وَاتِّبَاعُ وَصِيَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ حَيْثُ قَالَ: «عَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا، وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ؛ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ».

[THE ATTRIBUTES OF AHLUS-SUNNAH WAL-JAMA'AH]

The path of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is to follow the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ inwardly and outwardly, it is to follow the way of the forerunners: the Muhajirun and the Ansaar, and it is to follow the Prophet's ﷺ legacy when he said: Hold fast to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Khulafaa' after me. Hold fast to it with the molar teeth. Beware of newly invented matters because every innovation is misguidance.

[صِفَاتُ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ]

[THE ATTRIBUTES OF AHLUS-SUNNAH WAL-JAMA'AH]

- After the Sheikh mentioned the methodology of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah in the matters of Aqeedah (creed and ideology), he followed it up in this part of the treatise (and the next as well) by mentioning their practical methodology.

ثُمَّ مِنْ طَرِيقَةِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ: اتَّبَاعُ آثَارِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَاطِنًا وَظَاهِرًا

The path of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is to follow the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ inwardly and outwardly

- From the practical methodology of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is that they follow the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ. This means they walk his path and follow his way in their hearts and in their actions. This is unlike the hypocrites who follow him outwardly but not inwardly.
- The footsteps (athaar) of the Prophet ﷺ are his Sunnah, which is what has been narrated from him and passed down from his sayings, actions, and approvals. This includes the narrations of the Prophet ﷺ in creed, worship, manners and calling to Allah. It does not mean his physical traces

(which can also mean *athaar*) like the places where he sat or slept and so on, because following such things may lead to falling into *shirk*.

- (بَاطِنًا وَظَاهِرًا) – **'Inwardly and outwardly.'** Outwardly, meaning what is apparent to the people, such as prayer (with its standing, sitting, bowing and prostration), charity, Hajj and fasting. These are the actions of the limbs and are apparent. Inwardly, meaning what is concealed within, like *tawakkul* (reliance), *khawf* (fear), *raja'a* (hope), *inaabah* (returning) and *mahabba* (love). These are the actions of the heart which no one is privy to except Allah.

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ السَّابِقِينَ الْأَوَّلِينَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ

It is to follow the way of the forerunners: the Muhajirun and the Ansaar.

- Also, from the practical methodology of *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* is that they follow the early forerunners from the *Muhajiroon* and the *Ansaar*. They were called *al-Sabiqoon* (forerunners), because they preceded those who came after them in doing righteous deeds. They were called *al-Awaleen* (early) because they were the earliest generation of this *Ummah*.
- Following their path is the methodology of *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* because Allah gave them special knowledge and understanding. They witnessed the revelation, heard its explanation and took directly from the Prophet ﷺ without any intermediary. Therefore, they are closer to being correct and more deserving to be followed after the Prophet ﷺ.
- The further people are from the period of prophethood, the further they are from the truth, and the nearer they are to the period of prophethood the nearer they are to the truth. This is why disagreements among the *Ummah* were more after the time of the *Sahabah* and *Tabi'een* and were minimal during their time.
- The statements of the *Sahabah* should be followed if there is nothing from the Prophet ﷺ, because their way is safer, more knowledgeable and wiser. We do not say that they are men, and we are men, thereby equating the statements of Abubakr ؓ, Umar ؓ, Uthman ؓ and Ali ؓ to any regular man who came later in the *Ummah* of the Prophet ﷺ!

وَاتَّبِعْ وَصِيَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ حَيْثُ قَالَ: «عَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا، وَعَصُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالتَّوَّاجِدِ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ؛ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ»

And it is to follow the Prophet's ﷺ legacy when he said: Hold fast to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Khulafaa' after me. Hold fast to it with the molar teeth.

Beware of newly invented matters because every innovation is misguidance.

- Also, from the practical methodology of *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* is that they follow the advice of the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the *hadith*. The Sheikh's intention in including this *hadith* is to show that *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* follow the way of the *Khulafaa'* specifically, after following the way of the *Sahabah* generally.
- In the *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ joined his *Sunnah* with the *Sunnah* of the *Khulafaa' al-Rashideen*. This shows that what they legislated should never be turned away from, unless it goes against the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ in which case they are excused because of their *ijtihad*.
- (الرَّاشِدِينَ) – **'Rightly Guided.'** They were given this title because they knew the truth and followed it. This is what a *rashid* is.

- (تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ) – ‘**Hold fast to it with the molar teeth.**’ This is a way of expressing the strong clinging to the *Sunnah* they should have. It is like they are firmly biting something with their molar teeth.
- (وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُخَدَّنَاتِ الْأُمُورِ) – ‘**Beware of newly invented matters.**’ Meaning, newly invented matters in the religion. As for the newly invented matters of this world, then they are not included in this *hadith*, because the general principle is that worldly matters are permissible unless there is evidence to prove their impermissibility. However, in the matters of the religion the general principle is that everything is impermissible, unless there is evidence to prove their permissibility.
- (فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ) – ‘**Because every innovation is a misguidance.**’ Linguistically, a *bida’h* (innovation) is something which has no previous example. Islamically, it is something for which there is no evidence from the *Shari’ah*. Therefore, anyone who introduces something and attributes it to the religion of Islam, while there is no proof for it, then they have invented a *bida’h* and a misguidance, whether in belief, speech, or actions.

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized the prohibition with a general statement – *all* (كُلِّ). Therefore, those who divide *bida’h* into categories in an attempt to justify them, are refuted by this single word which uproots all innovations and newly invented matters from their core!

- Innovations in the religion have several evil implications. They include:
 1. They defame the *Shari’ah*, implying that it is imperfect.
 2. They belie Allah’s statement:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ﴾

This day I have perfected for you your religion. [al-Ma’idah: 3]

3. They defame the Muslims who did not practice this innovation. That is, the religion of those who lived before the introduction of the innovation is incomplete!
4. They distract from the *Sunnah*, as some of the *Salaf* said: ‘*People will not innovate an innovation, except that they demolish its like from the Sunnah*’.
5. They lead to separation. The innovators think that they are upon the truth, while the people of the truth rightfully label them as misguided. Consequently, the hearts become divided.

Review questions

1. What was the Sheikh’s intention in including this part of the treatise?
2. What does the *athaar* of the Prophet ﷺ refer to? What does it not refer to?
3. Why do *Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama’ah* follow the way of the *Sahabah* generally, and the way of the *Khulafaa’ al-Rashideen* specifically?
4. What general statement of the Prophet ﷺ obliterates all innovations in the religion from their core?
5. What are some of the evil implications of newly invented matters in the religion?