

FORTY HADĪTH IN CLARIFICATION OF THE MADHHAB OF THE SALAF—THAT IS THE MADHHAB OF AHLUL-HADĪTH

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3. The Best Understanding of the Proofs is With the Sahābah

قَالَ الْعِرْبَاضُ صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا فَوَعظَنَا مَوْعِظَةً بَلِيغَةً ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ وَوَجَلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَأَنَّ هَذِهِ مَوْعِظَةُ مُودِّعٍ فَمَاذَا تَعْهَدُ إِلَيْنَا فَقَالَ أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدِي فَسِيرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الْمُهَدِّينَ الرَّاشِدِينَ تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ

Al-‘Irbād Ibn Sāriyah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) led us in Prayer one day, then he turned to us and gave us a powerful exhortation that caused our eyes to shed tears and our to tremble. Some said: ‘O Allah’s Messenger! This felt like a farewell exhortation so with what do you instruct us?’ So, he replied: **“I enjoin you to fear Allah, and to hear and obey the one in charge of your affairs, even if it is an Abyssinian slave. Indeed, whoever among you lives after me will see much differing and controversy, so upon you is to cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me—hold on to it tightly, and bite onto it with your molar teeth—and beware of the newly introduced matters for verily every introduced matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance.”**²⁰

In a narration, he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

²⁰ Abu Dawood no. 4607, graded *saheeh* by Imām al-Albānī (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ).

قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنْهَارُهَا لَا يَزِغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلَّا هَالِكٌ مَن يَعِشُ
مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ
الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهَدِّينَ عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالتَّوَاجِدِ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا
فَإِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُ كَالْجَمَلِ الْأَنْفِ حَيْثُمَا قِيدَ انْقَادَ

“I have left you upon clear proof, its night is like its day, and no one strays from it except that he is destroyed—and whoever from you lives for long will see much differing and controversy, so upon you is to cling to what you know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Caliphs. Bite onto it with your molar teeth. And upon you is to be obedient even if [the one in authority] is an Abyssinian slave for indeed the true believer is like a camel with a ring in its nose, wherever it is led it follows.”²¹

Explanation:

So, the Prophet (ﷺ) left us upon that which is clear and apparent without any darkness, all of it is bright—and no one deviates from his Path except that he is destroyed—and the deviations come about by innovations that are introduced into the Religion, and that is why he severely warned against *bid‘ah* to the extent that he (ﷺ) stated:

وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

“The worst of all affairs are those newly introduced [into the Religion], and every newly introduced matter is a *bid‘ah*, and every *bid‘ah* is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.”²²

²¹ Ibn Mājah no. 43, graded *saheeh* by Imām al-Albānī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ).

²² An-Nasā’ī no. 1578, *saheeh*.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) commanded the Muslims to cling to his Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Caliphs (رضي الله عنهم): and they are Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī (رضي الله عنهم).

In fact, following the Sahābah (رضي الله عنهم) as a whole has been obligated by Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) in His Book:

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۖ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ
فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

“So, if they (mankind) believe the same as what you (Companions) believe, then they have been rightly guided—but if they turn away, they are surely in opposition, and Allāh will be sufficient for you against them. He is the Hearing, the Knowing.” (Al-Baqarah: 137)

He (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) also stated:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَدَّمُونَ وَالْأَنْصَارُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَنِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣٠﴾

“And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhājīroon and the Ansār—and those who followed them precisely, Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.” (At-Tawbah: 100)

It is the belief and ‘aqeedah of the Sahābah whom the hypocrites refused to follow for which Allah rebuked them severely:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

“And when it is said to the hypocrites: ‘Believe as the people (Ansār and Muhajiroon) have believed.’ They say: ‘Shall we believe as the fools have believed?’ Verily, they are the fools, but they know not.” (Al-Baqarah: 13)

Furthermore, when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) spoke of the splitting of the Ummah into seventy-three sects, and that all of them will enter the Fire except for one, he was asked: ‘Which is that one?’ So, he replied:

مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

“That which I and my Companions are upon.”²³

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) also makes clear in His Book that whoever follows a way or a methodology that is different to that of the Sahābah, Allah will punish them with the Fire:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِ ۚ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after right-guidance has been shown to him, and then he follows other than the path of the believers (i.e., the Sahābah), We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell, and what an evil destination.” (An-Nisā’: 115)

In conclusion, the Religion is understood as the Sahābah understood it because they were present at the time of the Revelation, and it is their Methodology that the Ummah is obligated to follow just as Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) stated at the beginning of his *Usool as-Sunnah*:

أصول السنة عندنا التمسك بما كان عليه أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم والافتداء بهم

²³ At-Tirmidhī no. 2641, graded *hasan* by Imām al-Albānī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ).

“The foundations of the Sunnah with us are: Holding fast to what the Companions of Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) were upon—and taking them as the example to be followed.”

And, in this affair that the all the sects went astray.