

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

By Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid Alam

5. The Jamā‘ah is One and it is the Saved Sect, those who Follow the Prophet (ﷺ) and His Companions (رضي الله عنهم)

‘Awf Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

افْتَرَقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَافْتَرَقَتِ
النَّصَارَى عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَإِحْدَى وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالَّذِي
نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَفْتَرِقَنَّ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَثِنْتَانِ
وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ الْجُمَاعَةُ

“The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One in whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell.” It was said: **“O Messenger of Allah, who are they?”** He said: **“The Jamā‘ah.”**³⁰

In the narration of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

³⁰ Ibn Mājah, no. 3992, graded *saheeh* by Imām Al-Albānī.

“That which I am upon and my Companions.”³¹

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

السَّوَادُ الْأَعْظَمُ

“[They are] the Main Body.”³²

Explanation:

The Jamā‘ah are the Sahābah and those who follow their methodology and their path, and they unite upon that. And whoever opposes their methodology is misguided and has split from the Jamā‘ah.

Imām Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn ‘Alī al-Barbahārī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ d. 329 H) stated in his treatise, *Sharhus-Sunnah*:

والأساس الذى تبني عليه الجماعة هم أصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ورحمهم
الله أجمعين وهم أهل السنة والجماعة فمن لم يأخذ عنهم فقد ضل وابتدع وكل
بدعة ضلالة والضلالة وأهلها فى النار

“The foundation upon which the *Jamā‘ah* is built are the Companions of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), may Allah’s mercy be upon them all—they are *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*. So, whoever does not take from them has gone astray and innovated, and every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance with its followers in in the Fire.”

‘Amr Ibn Maymoon al-Awdī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal came to us in the time of Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and love for him filled my heart. I closely accompanied him until I saw him buried in Syria. Then I closely accompanied the most knowledgeable person after him, and that was ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ood.

³¹ At-Tirmidhī, no. 2641, graded *hasan* by Imām Al-Albānī.

³² Ibn Abī ‘Āsim in *As-Sunnah*, no. 68.

One day, the prayer being delayed beyond its time [in the mosques] was mentioned in his presence. So, he said: ‘Pray it in your homes, and count the prayer along with them [in the mosque] as a *nafl* (voluntary) prayer.’ I said to him: ‘Then how are we with the Jamā‘ah?’ So, he answered: ‘O ‘Amr Ibn Maymoon! Most of the people oppose from the Jamā‘ah. Verily, the Jamā‘ah is that whatever agrees with the obedience of Allah, even if you are on your own.’”³³

It is also reported from Ibn Mas‘ood that he (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

الجماعة ما وافق الحق وَلَوْ كُنْتَ وَحْدَكَ

“The Jamā‘ah is whatever agrees with the truth even you are alone.”³⁴

Al-Imām Ishāq Ibn Rāhawaih (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ d. 238 H) stated: “If you ask the ignorant people about the Main Body (*as-Suwād al-A‘dham*), they will tell you that it refers to the majority of the people (*jamā‘atun-nās*). They do not know that the *Jamā‘ah* is the scholar who clings to the narrations of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and to his Path. So, whoever is with him, and follows him, is the *Jamā‘ah*.”³⁵

Imām ash-Shātībī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) stated: “So, look at this narration in clarification of the mistake of the one who thinks that the *Jamā‘ah* is the majority of the people even if there is not among them a scholar—this is the understanding of the common folk not the understanding of the scholars. So, let the feet of the one who is guided be firm against this error, so that he is not misguided from the Straight Path, and there is no guidance except by Allah.”³⁶

³³ *Sharh Usool I’tiqād Ahlis-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah* of Al-Lālikā’i, no. 160, and Al-Albānī graded it as *saheeh* in *Takhreej Mishkāt al-Masābih*, 1/61.

³⁴ Al-Albānī graded it as *saheeh* in *Takhreej Mishkāt al-Masābih*, 1/61.

³⁵ Reported by Abu Nu‘aym in *Hilyatul-Awliyā’*, 9/239.

³⁶ *Al-I’tisām*, 2/267.

Sticking to Path of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions is protection from splitting and misguidance. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) commanded in His Book:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“And be not like the pagans. Those who split up their religion and became sects, each sect rejoicing in that which is with it.” (Ar-Room: 31-32)

Imām al-Baghawī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “They are the people of bid‘ah and desires.”

Ibn al-Mubārak (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “The people of Truth do not differ among themselves.”

When the hadeeth of the splitting of the Ummah was mentioned to Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ), he defined the Saved Sect (*al-Firqatun-Nājiyah*) by saying:

إِنْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا أَصْحَابَ الْحَدِيثِ فَلَا أَدْرَى مَنْ هُمْ

“If they are not the People of Hadeeth, then I know not who they are!”³⁷

Al-Imām ‘Abdul-‘Azeez Ibn Bāz (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “The Saved Sect are those who are steadfast upon the religion of Allah, and they traverse the Methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Methodology of his Companions in establishing the Tawheed of Allah, and being pure and sincere to Allah in worship—they are obedient in following His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. They believe in Allah’s Names and Attributes in a manner that befits His Majesty without distorting their reality, without denying them, without enquiring how His Attributes are and without likening them to the

³⁷ Ibn Hajr graded the *sanad* as *saheeh* in *Fat’hul-Bārī*, 13/306, reported by Khateeb al-Baghdaḍī with his *sanad* in *Sharaf As’hābil-Hadeeth*

creation. So, they are *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, and they are *al-Fiqatun-Nājiyah* (the Saved Sect).”³⁸

³⁸ Noor ‘alad-Darb: *Man Hiya al-Fiqatun-Nājiyah*: <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/17457>