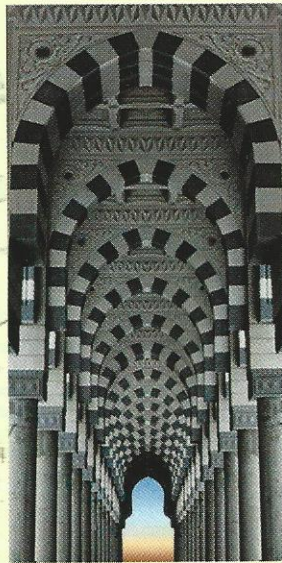


سبيل الرسول ﷺ

The Way of
PROPHET ﷺ
MUHAMMAD



سبيل الرسول
(صلى الله عليه و سلم)

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By:
Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq

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A Note from the Publisher

It is my pleasure to publish the English translation of one of the great works of Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq, who has authored and compiled many valuable religious books on various important topics.

This book 'The Way of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم' has acclaimed distinction because of his easy to follow style of presenting logical and documental text supported with relevant Verses of the Qur'an and *Ahadith* of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq has pointed out the right way for the Muslims to adopt and remain careful about that. It is the absolute fact that only the right way can lead us to success in this life and the life hereafter; and the right way is no more different from the one Allah has shown us through His Messsenger. No deviation in it, according to the wish of anyone can bear fruits. So we have to check again and again during our life that we are not deviated from that way in any belief, deed or act of worship.

By the help of this book, we become aware of all the matters which are not in accordance with the way of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and it becomes easy for us to not to follow any other except the Prophet and his Companions.

We must pray always that the help of Allah may remain with us to provide the guidance needed in this regard.

Abdul-Malik Mujahid
General Manager
DARUSSALAM

PREFACE

Allâh created Adam (عليه السلام) out of His power, placed him in Paradise and told him:

﴿يَتَّادِمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَعَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“And We said: ‘O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever you will; but come not near this Tree or you both will be of the wrongdoers.’ (Al-Baqarah, 2:35)

We learn from the above verse that Allah directed both Adam and Hawwa (Eve) (عليهما السلام) to eat as they desire in Paradise, enjoy life but to keep off a particular tree. They were directed not to approach this Tree and never to taste of its fruit.

However, Adam (عليه السلام) committed a lapse and, in forgetfulness he tasted of its fruit, as is described by Allah:

﴿فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِ نِيهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ○ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَئِنِ النَّصِيحِينَ ○ فَدَلَّنَهُمَا بِفُرُودٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ﴾

“Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both, in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts. He said: ‘Your Lord did not forbid you this Tree save you should become angels or become of the immortals’. And he (Satan) swore to them both (saying): ‘I am one of your sincere well-wishers,’ so he misled them with deception: Then when they tasted of the Tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame became manifest to them and they began to stick together the leaves of the Paradise over themselves. And their Lord called unto them: ‘Did I not forbid you that Tree, and tell you: Verily, Satan is an open enemy unto you?’”
(Al-‘Araf, 7:20-22)

When Adam, our ancestor, tasted of the prohibited Tree under the spell of Satan, he disobeyed his Lord,⁽¹⁾ and then Allah told him⁽²⁾:

﴿قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“Get down all of you from this place⁽³⁾ (the Paradise) then whenever there comes to you guidance from Me, and whoever follows My guidance, there shall be no fear on them nor shall they grieve.” *(Al-Baqarah, 2:38)*

As it is, our ancestor Adam was expelled from Paradise because of his single lapse. He was sent to the earth as a stranger on a journey. Consequently his whole progeny was

⁽¹⁾ *Surah Tâ-Hâ, (20:121).*

⁽²⁾ Blessed is Allah. He enabled Prophet Adam (عليه السلام) to seek forgiveness and pardoned him after teaching him the supplication.

⁽³⁾ Prophet Adam (عليه السلام) committed a lapse, as a result of which he had to leave Paradise. There are some moving couplets composed by Imam Shâfi‘i and Shaukâni on this incident.

also expelled. Thus our life in this world is that of exile whereas our real life is the life hereafter. The very Paradise is our home from which we have been driven away. And hence, from the prison of this world we have to return our home. It should be clearly realised that we are on a journey. Once we finish our journey, we have to return home.

Since we are on a journey, it is essential for us to select the best path for our journey with utmost care and accuracy, which may lead us directly to our destination. We cannot, however, choose this path on our own, as our knowledge is very limited in this regard.

Allâh has done us a great favour by sending us guidance from Himself so that we may lead our life in accordance with His guidance and return the home safely.⁽¹⁾ Allah says:

﴿فَأَمَّا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“Whoever follows My guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:38)

Thus it is clear, if we lead our life in accordance with Allâh’s guidance, we would follow the right way leading us to Paradise. Allâh’s guidance has been conveyed to man in the form of the Scriptures—the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms and other scrolls through His Messengers. Lastly, after the Christ, the same guidance, in the form of Qurâ’n, was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the Last

⁽¹⁾ In the words of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم): “This world is a prison for a believer.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*). What is meant is that Allah has driven us away from our home owing to our disobedience and placed in this prison. Those who lead life in this prison in accordance with Divine guidance, would not disobey Allah and would not approach the things forbidden by Allah, they would be released from the prison and returned to their home. They would reinherit it and lead an eternal life of peace and happiness there.

Messenger, the intercessor of the sinners, the mercy for the world and the best among the pious. Allâh says:

﴿كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّتِكَ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لَتَتَلَوُنَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ﴾

“Thus have We sent you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) to a community before whom other communities have passed away; in order that you might recite unto them what We have inspired to you.” (*Ar-R'ad*, 13:30)

As directed by Allâh, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) recited the Qur'ân to people and demonstrated how to follow its command. By his conduct he showed us the way. Had the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) followed the Qur'ân in his life and had he not demonstrated to us the way to abide by Divine commands, we could not find the way. Undoubtedly true guidance is only in the Qur'ân. Yet we stand in need of its demonstration, the model to be followed. This model is to be found only in the Prophet's conduct. Allâh says:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ﴾

“He who obeys the Messenger (Muhamma صلى الله عليه وسلم), has indeed obeyed Allâh.” (*An-Nisa*, 4:80)

Thus obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) constitutes the obedience to Allâh. Obviously Allâh is to be obeyed. However, obedience to Him can be achieved by following the Prophet's saying and deeds. Apart from sending down His guidance, Allâh has also directed us:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي﴾

“If you love Allâh, then follow me (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم)” (*Âl-Imrân*, 3:31).

Allâh asks man to follow His way. This is, however, possible only by following the Prophet's way. If we intend to lead a life

in consonance with the Qur'ân, we have to follow the Prophet's life. For example, Allâh commands us to establish *Salât* (prayer). It raises the question how to do so. The Qur'ân does not prescribe the rituals of *Salât*. We can learn these only with reference to the Prophet's practice. Allâh says:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ ﴾

“And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it...” (*Al-Hashr*, 59:7)

That is, practical details of Divine commands can be obtained from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). In the light of the above Divine command we have to perform *Salât* according to the Prophet's practice. If we offer *Salât* in a way other than his, this *Salât* will not be accepted. So it is clear that we have to follow the Prophet's way in order to achieve salvation. Allâh said to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

﴿ قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعِيَ وَسَبْحَنَ اللَّهُ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): ‘This is my way, I invite you unto Allâh with sure knowledge — I and whosoever follows me. And Glorified and Exalted is Allâh, and I am not of the *Mushrikun* (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh).’” (*Yusuf*, 12:108)

In the above verse, Allâh clearly directs the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he should ask people to follow his way. For he invites people to the way of Allâh. and thus in following the Prophet's way they would follow Allâh's way.

In this verse Allah also informs us that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is certain about his knowledge and role. His following of Allah's way and inviting people to the same is not merely

prompted by some guess, rather it is based on his sure knowledge and insight, as a result of Divine revelation. Whoever obeys him (Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) and follows his ways, he also gets insight and is guided by the Divine light. The obedience of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) enlightens the inner core of the heart.⁽¹⁾ That's why the Prophet's Companions were enlightened as a result of their obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They were blessed with guidance. The same blessing and enlightenment is bestowed on everyone who follows the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Furthermore, Glorified is Allâh. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) devoted his whole life in extirpating *Shirk* (polytheism) and preaching the doctrine of *Tauhid* (Monotheism).

He was not certainly "one of those who associate others with Allâh." He told his community, tribe and the whole world that he does not associate anyone with Allâh in his verbal, devotional and financial forms of religious service and that he is quit of polytheism.

The above quoted Qur'ânic verses direct one to follow the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) for it alone leads one to Paradise directly. It takes one to his place of origin. It is therefore imperative that we follow the path of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and reach our desired goal.

Muhammad Sadiq

January 1955

⁽¹⁾ Ashraf Ali Thânwî elucidates it as follows: "I am on guidance, me and my Companions." In *Tafsir Khâzin* it is stated: "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions were blessed with insight and light." (*Tafsir Khâzin* - commentary on *Surah Yusuf*). Same point is made in *Tafsir Madârik*: "The followers of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) enjoyed insight, authority and light of guidance." (*Tafsir Madârik*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) inviting people to the way of Allâh

﴿ قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ ﴾

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): ‘This is my way; I invite unto Allâh ...’ (*Yusuf*, 12:108)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) first himself followed the Qur’ânic guidance and then as part of the call of this guidance, invited everyone to follow it. By practising it first, he set the example and urged people to follow the same. He asked them to observe his way. In this sense he is in Islam the first monotheist, the first believer and the first Muslim, a point recognized by Allâh:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴾

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh alone, the Lord of all that exists. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.” (*Al-An‘am*, 6:162,163)

The above verse clarifies that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the first Muslim, the first to pledge obedience to Allâh. Given this, he is

the first to follow the Qur'ân. His practice preceded his call. As the guide, he called others to the right way. He is undoubtedly the only leader, guide and Imam of his *Ummah*. In line with Divine guidance, he alone set the way to the Hereafter. All Companions, Successors, their followers, *Hadith* scholars, jurisprudents, saints and pious persons attained proximity to Allâh by following only the Prophet's way. Obedience to him is a condition for one seeking to get salvation. His way ensures success and prosperity for his *Ummah*.

What is the Prophet's way?

The Prophet's way stands for his sayings, actions, *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, life, conduct, morals and manners. His sayings and his practice embody his way. The guidance provided by his *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, life, conduct, morals and manners point the way to Paradise. These indicate his right way and ensure one's entry into Paradise.

Fruits of accepting the Prophet's call

Narrated Jabir (رضي الله عنه):

جَاءَتْ مَلَائِكَةٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَهُوَ نَائِمٌ. فَقَالُوا: إِنَّ لِمَا نَحْبِبُكُمْ هَذَا مَثَلًا فَأَضْرِبُوا لَهُ مَثَلًا، قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: إِنَّهُ نَائِمٌ وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ نَائِمَةٌ وَالْقَلْبَ يَقْظَانُ، فَقَالُوا: «مِثْلُهُ كَمِثْلِ رَجُلٍ بَنَى دَارًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا مَادُبَةً وَبَعَثَ دَاعِيًا فَمَنْ أَجَابَ الدَّاعِيَ دَخَلَ الدَّارَ وَأَكَلَ مِنَ المَادُبَةِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يُجِبِ الدَّاعِيَ لَمْ يَدْخُلِ الدَّارَ وَلَمْ يَأْكُلْ مِنَ المَادُبَةِ» فَقَالُوا: أَوْلُوها لَهُ يُفَقِّهَهَا، قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: إِنَّهُ نَائِمٌ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ نَائِمَةٌ وَالْقَلْبَ يَقْظَانُ فَقَالُوا: «الدَّارُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَالدَّاعِيَ مُحَمَّدٌ ﷺ، فَمَنْ

أَطَاعَ مُحَمَّدًا فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَى مُحَمَّدًا فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ،
وَمُحَمَّدٌ فَرْقٌ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ» .

Angels visited the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) while he was asleep. They told one another: “There is a saying for this person (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and they related the same (so that it may reach the Prophet’s followers).” Some angels said: “Since he is asleep, it is pointless to relate the same”. To this some said: “While he is asleep, his heart remains awake (so it should be related).” Then they elaborated: “His similitude is that of one who built a house, managed for a feast there and sent a person to invite the people to the same. Then the one who accepted the invitation, would enter the house and have food. But the one who rejects his invitation would not enter the house and get no food”. Some angels asked its further clarification—so that he (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) may follow it. Someone observed: “He is asleep.” To this others replied: “He is asleep while his heart remains awake.” Then the angels said: “(In the above similitude) the house represents Paradise, the caller is Muhammad. One who accepts his call stands for the one who obeys Muhammad and thus obeys Allâh; and the one who rejects his call disobeys Muhammad and thus disobeys Allâh. Muhammad thus distinguishes between people in respect of truth and falsehood.” (*Bukhâri*)

Explanation: What the above-quoted *Hadith* means is that Allâh built a house i.e., Paradise, and arranged for provision therein. Then He sent down Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as Messenger among people, asking him to invite people to the provisions in Paradise. Accordingly he invited people to the same. Those who greeted his call, affirming sincerely that there

is no God but Allâh and Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is His Messenger, and led their life in obedience to him would enter the house, i.e., Paradise and enjoy Divine bounties by partaking provisions in Paradise. And those rejecting his call would not enter the house. Nor would they get any of the provisions of the house i.e., Paradise.

Allâh's feast

As already observed, the angels pointed out that those greeting the Prophet's call represent those obedient to him and to Allâh. In contrast, those not responding to his call are rebels to him and to Allâh. Moreover, those greeting his call are those who believe in his Messengership, follow his word and deed, hold him in utmost love and obey him at all cost. They are the ones who follow his way in response to his sayings.

It is worth noting that Allâh deputed angels to inform people through the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he invites them to Allâh. He urges fellow human beings to turn to Allâh. Those responding positively to him, believing in his Messengership, professing Monotheism and following him throughout their life would enjoy Allâh's provisions in His house. In other words, those accepting the Prophet's call in his life would be blessed with Allâh's feast in the Hereafter. Angels made it plain as well that those not responding to the Prophet's call rebel against him and against Allâh.

While it is obligatory on adherents of all other religions to accept the Prophet's call, it is imperative for the believers to accept all of the Prophet's *Ahadith* and *Sunnah*, without rejecting any. They must not neglect any of his commands, statements and calls. Moreover, they must realize that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone is to be followed in matters of

religion. They should not turn to anyone other than him. One reminding them of the Prophet's call, however, deserves to be followed. For the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone was blessed with revelation and with the Book and therefore he alone is the spokesperson for religion.

Muslims enjoined to respond to the Prophet's call

On the authority of Abu Sa'îd bin Al-Mu'alla (رضي الله عنه) it is reported in *Sahih (Bukhâri)* that while he was praying in mosque, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) called him. He did not, however, instantly respond. When he finished the prayer, he approached him pleading that he was praying. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him: Do you not know that Allâh has directed:

﴿أَسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ﴾

“Answer Allâh and (His) Messenger when he calls you.”

(*Al-Anfâl*, 8:24)

According to another *Hadith*, a similar incident happened to Ubai bin K'ab (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him the same Divine command: “Answer Allâh and (His) Messenger when he calls you” (*Al-Anfal*, 8:24). To this Ubai replied: “O Messenger of Allâh! Although I was aware of this command, I committed a mistake. I would not, Allâh willing, do the same again.”

Hanzalah bin Safwân (رضي الله عنه) had made love to his wife while there was issued the Prophet's proclamation for joining the battle of Uhud. He did not take the ritual bath lest he might be late in answering the Prophet's call. In the same state he joined the *Jihâd* and attained martyrdom. Angels bathed him. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked why it was so that

angels bathed him. The matter was referred to the martyr's wife who related the whole story.

The above reports about two Companions that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed them to discontinue the prayer for answering his call, and about Hanzalah who joined his call for *Jihâd* without any delay, prove that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is to be obeyed unconditionally. It is clear from the above-quoted Qur'ânic verse and *Hadith* reports that the Prophet's call should be answered instantly. Since he is no longer in our midst, his *Sunnah* deserves the same treatment in that his *Sunnah* and *Hadith* embody his call.

Penalty for not accepting his call

Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبِي» قِيلَ وَمَنْ أَبِي قَالَ: «مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي
دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبِي»

“All of my *Ummah* (followers) would enter Paradise, except those who did not answer my call.” The Companions asked: “Who is he who did not answer your call?” He clarified: “One who follows and obeys me would enter Paradise whereas one who disobeys me does not answer my call.” (*Bukhâri*)

Explanation: Obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) consists in responding to his call. Disobedience to him lies in the rejection of his call. Another important point in this context is that in a choice between the Prophet's word and the word of a scholar of his nation, if one deliberately prefers the latter, he belongs to the category of those who disobey and reject the Prophet's call.

Shah Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi's explanation

On the above-quoted *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah, Shah Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi observes: "Following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) represents holding fast to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*." The same point is made in another *Hadith*: "I leave behind in your midst two things. You would never fall into error as long as you strictly adhere to these—the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*."

Regarding the disobedient ones the Shah holds: "Whoever disobeys, practises heresy, follows his desires and whims is guilty of rebellion." Rebellion consists in disobedience and practising heresies. Muslims are well-advised to shun disobedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) they should observe with heart and mind his *Sunnah* and *Ahadith* and avoid heresies.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) pulls us out of fire

Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَثَلِي كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا، فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهَا، جَعَلَ الْفَرَاشُ وَهَذِهِ الدَّوَابُّ الَّتِي تَقَعُ فِي النَّارِ يَقَعْنَ فِيهَا، وَجَعَلَ يَحْجِزُهُنَّ وَيَغْلِبْنَهُ فَيَتَّقَمْنَ فِيهَا فَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِحُجْرِكُمْ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَقَعَمُونَ فِيهَا»

"My similitude is of the one who lit up a fire and when the fire lighted the surroundings, moths started falling into it. He then began to prevent these from falling into the fire, but instead of his efforts they kept on dropping in the fire. I (Prophet Muhammad) am like the one who

prevents you from fire while you persist on entering into it.” (*Bukhâri*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) publicly invited people to his way and to his call, asking them to follow him. He preached as much as possible. He related to them Divine commands and warned them of Hell-fire. Yet the unfortunate ones ran away from him and jumped headlong into the Hell; without paying any heed to his repeated calls they turned to Hell.

Muslims who recite the *Kalimah* of Islam should listen to only one call, that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They should turn deaf to all other calls which vie with his. The believers should ask their religious leaders to recite to them only the Prophet’s call.

Identification of the way to Paradise

Narrated Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (رضي الله عنه):

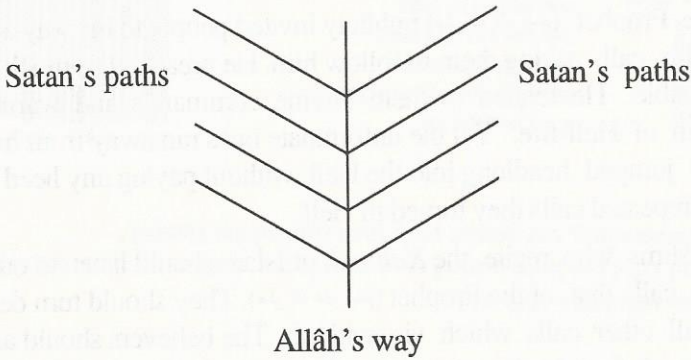
«خَطَّ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَطًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ: «هَذَا سَبِيلُ اللَّهِ» ثُمَّ خَطَّ خُطُوطًا عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ وَقَالَ «هَذِهِ سُبُلٌ، عَلَى كُلِّ سَبِيلٍ مِنْهَا شَيْطَانٌ يَدْعُوا إِلَيْهِ وَقَرَأَ ﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ﴾ الْآيَةَ».

Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) drew a straight line (for our comprehension) saying that it is the way to Allâh. Then he drew oblique lines on both the left and right of the straight line, saying that Satan prompts you to follow these. He recited part of the Qur’ânic verse: “This is My way, the straight one. So follow it...” (*Ahmad, Nasa’i and Dârimi*)

The Straight Path

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was a sincere well-wisher of his *Ummah*. He invited people by all means to goodness and

showed them the straight path. For example, he drew a straight line and couple of oblique lines on its sides:



According to another *Hadith*, Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«كُنَّا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَخَطَّ خَطًّا وَخَطَّ خَطَّيْنِ عَنِ يَمِينِهِ وَخَطَّ خَطَّيْنِ عَنِ يَسَارِهِ ثُمَّ وَضَعَ يَدَهُ فِي الْحَطِّ الْأَوْسَطِ فَقَالَ هَذَا سَبِيلُ اللَّهِ»

We were sitting in the company of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He drew a straight line and two others on its each side. Placing his hand on the straight one he remarked: “This is Allâh’s way; all others are not His.” (*Ibn Mâjah*)

Both the narrations make the same point: the middle straight line, according to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), represents Allâh’s way in that it leads a person to Him. It is the way of those who attain salvation—Messengers, the truthful ones, martyrs, and the pious ones. What sets it apart is that it is the way of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), leader of Messengers and Seal of Prophets. He followed this way, which is described at some length in the following *Hadith*:

Abdullah bin ‘Amr (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي كَمَا أَتَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ حَتَّىٰ
 إِنْ كَانَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَتَى أُمَّهُ عِلَاقِيَّةً لَكَانَ فِي أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ بَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً وَتَفَرَّقُوا أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ
 وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً» قَالُوا مَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟
 قَالَ: «مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي» .

“My *Ummah* (nation) would find itself in the times completely similar to that of the Israelites.⁽¹⁾ If someone from among those people would have openly approached his mother for unlawful acts, there would also be someone of my *Ummah* who would commit exactly the same crime. (The Israelites were afflicted with divisions and dissensions as a result of the mischief of their rabbis.) They were divided into seventy-two sects. My *Ummah* would be divided into seventy-three sects (owing to the mischief of misguided *Ulama*). Listen! All the sects would enter Hell, except one.” The Companions enquired

(1) Literally, ‘exactly in the same manner’. On being informed by Allah, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forewarns his *Ummah* that there would befall on it exactly the same calamity which had afflicted the Israelites. Like them they would suffer from the ill of sectarianism. The Muslim *Ummah* would stand divided into several sects like Jews. If the Israelites committed incest with their stepmothers, this *Ummah* would indulge in the same. In sum, sectarianism would ruin the *Ummah*. Moreover, it would fall into such an abyss of moral depravity that incest with stepmothers would be there. It would lead to the loss of both religion and morals. Sectarianism would strike a deathblow to religion whereas sexual promiscuity would obliterate moral norms. It should serve as a warning for the Muslim *Ummah*. It should be God-fearing, act sensibly and cautiously, and safeguard its religion and morals. It can maintain its religion by following only the Prophet’s way and refraining from sectarianism. By avoiding all excipients of immodesty it should keep its moral fabric intact.

into the identity of this sect. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied: “The way of myself and my Companions.” (*Mishkât*)

Those following the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions would attain salvation as their beliefs and deeds would be similar to those of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions.

The Saved Group

The following narration of Muâwiyah (رضي الله عنه) is reported in the *Hadith* collections of Ahmad and Abu Dâwud that Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«ثِنْتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَوَاحِدٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ وَإِنَّهُ سَيُخْرَجُ فِي أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ تَتَجَارَى بِهِمْ تِلْكَ الْأَهْوَاءُ كَمَا يَتَجَارَى الْكَلْبُ بِصَاحِبِهِ لَا يَبْقَى مِنْهُ عِرْقٌ وَلَا مَفْصَلٌ إِلَّا دَخَلَهُ» .

“Seventy-two sects would be in Hell while one in Paradise. This one would be *Al-Jamâ‘ah*.⁽¹⁾ There would emerge many groups from my *Ummah* and they would be overwhelmed with desires (i.e. their beliefs and actions tainted with heresy) as rabies overtakes one’s body affecting its each muscle and joint.” (*Abu Dâwud*)

Way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) identified the Saved Group as the one that would follow his way and of his Companions. As

⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) speaks of those who would achieve deliverance as *Al-Jamâ‘ah* bearing connotations of union, gathering and unity while sect denotes separation, disunity and disorder. May Allah save us against sectarianism.

already noted, the straight line drawn by him and branded as Allâh's way is the one pursued by him throughout his life. Same was the practice of his more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand Companions. In terms of the way of life, rituals, beliefs and actions one should obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions. Success lies in following only this way. The Saved Group would follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions in all matters—rituals, beliefs and actions.

The Straight Path is the path of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

One should better ask oneself at this juncture: Does *Sunnah* not stand for the practice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)? Does *Hadith* not signify his sayings and commands? Since his way, beliefs and actions constitute *Sunnah* and *Hadith*, should every Muslim not follow the same? Moreover, we know that the Companions followed only the same. As it is the case, should we not follow their practice which signifies obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)?

It must be remembered that the Prophet's way i.e., his *Sunnah* and *Hadith* stand for the straight line, as referred to in the above *Hadith*. Furthermore, it being Allâh's way ensures our salvation and the means for entering Paradise. All the Companions, Successors and their followers pursued the Prophet's way in observing *Hadith* and *Sunnah*. Let us pledge that we would follow only *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, nothing else. And we would dismiss the sayings of others which run counter to *Ahadith* and we would not accept any belief or action or practice which is not endorsed by *Hadith*.

Command to revive *Sunnah*

Religion is based on the sayings and actions of Allâh's ṭ. Messenger, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). If any of his sayings and actions is neglected or abandoned, it would impair Faith in the same measure. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has, therefore, commanded that his neglected and abandoned *Sunnah* be revived; and he promised a great reward for those who circulate and propagate his *Sunnah*. Bilâl bin Hâriṭh narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَنْ أَحْيَا سُنَّةً مِنْ سُنَّتِي قَدْ أُمِيتَتْ بَعْدِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلَ أُجُورِ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْقِصَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئاً»

“Whoever revives a *Sunnah* of mine which was neglected after me is entitled to the same reward which is due to those who practise it. And it would not render any loss to their reward.” (*Tirmidhi* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

O Muslim brethren! Revive the Prophet's *Sunnah*. Circulate and propagate these. Whoever follows these and gets reward, and equivalent reward would accrue to you. Revive the *Sunnah* which are part of *Salât* and have been abandoned. Its revival would make you eligible for the Prophet's glad tidings. Likewise, you should revive other *Sunnah* which are part of other forms of worship. It would help you achieve the status of one who revives *Sunnah*. In all walks of life draw on guidance from *Hadith* and *Sunnah*.

Leaving out *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in the Funeral prayer

As a consequence of blind-following, the majority of Muslims and their religious leaders do not recite *Surah*

Al-Fâtihah in the Funeral prayer, though the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has said:

«لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ»

“Without *Surah Al-Fâtihah* there is no *Salât*.”
(*Bukhari and Muslim*).

Without the recitation of *Surah Al-Fâtihah*, no *Salât* is valid, whether it is the *Fard*, *Sunnah*, *Nafl*, *Tahajjud*, *Ischrâq*, *Istikhârah*, *Kusuf*, *Khusuf*, ‘*Eid*, *Istisqa*, *Tasbih*, or the Funeral one. This *Surah* must be recited in each *Salât*. It is, therefore regrettable that those leading the *Salât* (prayer) have abandoned this practice and in following them the masses have forgotten it.

Let us see how the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) led the Funeral prayer. What is his practice regarding it? For we should follow the same in that his practice is life-giving. This is his call. In *Hisn Hasin* it is reported about the Funeral prayer:

«وَإِذَا صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ كَبَّرُ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ الْفَاتِحَةَ»

“When he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) offered it, he said *Takbir* and then recited *Surah Al-Fâtihah*.”

We have already taken note of the Qur’ânic verse which says: “Allâh asks the believers to answer the Prophet’s call.” Do we answer his call about reciting *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in the Funeral prayer? No! How can then we and the deceased be blessed with life which is contingent upon answering the Prophet’s call? The more we neglect his call, the farther we would be from our Faith. O Muslim brethren! You must recite *Surah Fâtihah* in the Funeral prayer in line with *Hadith*.

Narrated Ibn Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما):

«أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَرَأَ عَلَى الْجَنَازَةِ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ» .

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) recited *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah*, in the Funeral prayer (after the first *Takbir*). (*Ibn Mâjah*)

It is also narrated by Umm Sharik Ansâriyah:

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed to recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* in the Funeral prayer. (*Ibn Mâjah*)

Brothers in Islam! It is for you to note that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* in the Funeral prayer yet we have abandoned this practice. Having neglected it we have reverted to mere ritual *Fâtiḥah* for the dead. It is a real shame.

We have provided above an instance of our abandoning *Hadith*. Many other such practices are neglected by us as a result of our preference for scholar's command. It is imperative for us to revive *Ahadith* and spread these as much as possible. We should motivate Muslims to follow these so that it may enliven them. Allâh says:

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

“O you who believe! Answer Allâh and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life, and know that Allâh comes in between a person and his heart. And verily to Him you shall be gathered.” (*Al-Anfal*, 8:24)

Life-giving call of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

It is learnt from the above verse that the Prophet's call is a message of life for Muslims. Whoever answers it and

practises person and his heart. And verily to Him you shall be it, Allâh grants him life and spiritual purity. O Muslim brethren! Think! Numerous are benefits of following *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. For Allâh says that the Messenger would give you life.

Thus it is evident that the Prophet's call signifies our spiritual life, life of our heart and Faith. When we answer his call, practise *Sunnah* and *Hadith*, Allâh would bless us with the spiritual life which would help us in the Hereafter. This point is worth remembering.

Consequences of obstinacy

Since Allâh has asked us to answer the Prophet's call and act upon his *Hadith*, it is obligatory on every sincere and just Muslim to follow this Divine command and lead his life in accordance with the Prophet's model. In his beliefs, actions and all departments of life he should draw upon the Prophet's guidance. No one should act obstinately in answering this call. Nor should there be any laziness or laxity on this count. Seizing the opportunity one should immediately respond. We should answer positively and promptly to the Prophet's call. Our hearts are controlled by Allâh. In the beginning Allâh does not prevent one's heart from accepting the truth. But if we keep on neglecting this call, pay no heed to it and disregard these despite repeated reminders, Allâh would be displeased with such careless, lazy and disobedient slaves. As a result, He deprives them of all goodness and comes in between such a careless person and his heart as a barrier. His heart is sealed owing to his rejection. This point is eloquently made in the above-quoted Qur'ânic verse.

Once Allâh causes an obstacle between a person and his heart, such a wretched person cannot do anything. Will he ever be able to accept the truth and act good? Never so! What is meant is that Allâh plainly tells that those who do not answer or neglect or disobey the Prophet's call,⁽¹⁾ would find their hearts sealed as a consequence of their indifference, laziness, opposition, rejection and obstinacy. They would be denied the life which would have accrued to them for answering the call. For their ingratitude towards the bounty of the Prophet's call, they would be punished and shorn of a living heart. It would spell their death.

Muslim brethren! Be sure that the existence of the spiritual life is in answering the Prophet's call while its rejection brings about death. One who strictly abides by *Hadith* and draws on guidance from *Sunnah* attains eternal life.

In the Prophet's company

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي وَمَنْ أَحَبَّنِي كَانَ مَعِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ»

“One who holds my *Sunnah* dear, befriends me and such a person would be in my company in Paradise.”
(*Mishkât*).

The above *Hadith* proves that holding *Sunnah* and *Hadith* dear would result in gaining the Prophet's company in Paradise. You must therefore follow *Sunnah* and *Hadith* in that it is the way to salvation.

⁽¹⁾ This call embraces the whole range of the Prophet's words and practices.

Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) would have followed Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

Narrated Jâbir (رضي الله عنه):

«أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ أَتَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِنُسْخَةٍ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ، فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! هَذِهِ نُسْخَةٌ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ، فَسَكَتَ فَجَعَلَ يَقْرَأُ، وَوَجْهُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَتَغَيَّرُ، فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ ثَكِلَتْكَ الثَّوَاكِلُ مَا تَرَى بِوَجْهِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَنظَرَ عُمَرُ إِلَى وَجْهِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ غَضَبِ اللَّهِ وَغَضَبِ رَسُولِهِ، رَضِينَا بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَوْ بَدَأَ لَكُمْ مُوسَى فَاتَّبَعْتُمُوهُ وَتَرَكْتُمُونِي لَضَلَلْتُمْ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ وَلَوْ كَانَ مُوسَى حَيًّا وَادْرَكَ نُبُوَّتِي لَا تُبْعِنِي»

Umar (رضي الله عنه) brought a copy of the Torah to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying: “O Messenger of Allâh! Here is a copy of the Torah.” He, however, remained silent. Umar started reading it. The complexion of Allâh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) changed. Abu Bakr told Umar: “Fie!⁽¹⁾ Do not you see the face of Allâh’s Messenger?” (i.e., he has turned angry). Umar looked at the face of Allâh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and felt terrified. He said: “I seek refuge with Allâh against His anger and against His Messenger’s anger. We are pleased with Allâh as our Lord, Islam as our religion and Muhammad as His Prophet (we do not need any Messenger besides him).” Allâh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

(1) This particular Arabic expression is exclamatory. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) used the same in order to indicate the Prophet’s anger which was not noticed then by Umar (رضي الله عنه).

(وسلم) said: “By Him who holds my life in His Hand! Had Moses (عليه السلام) appeared in your midst today and you followed him instead of me, you would have been distracted from the right way. Listen! If Moses (عليه السلام) had been there today (i.e., in the days of my Messengership), he would have certainly followed my way.” (*Mishkât*)

Refusal of permission to consult the Torah

In view of the above-quoted *Hadith* Muslims should reflect on the point that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) became furious on observing a copy of the Torah in Umar’s hand, though the latter had not been studying it with the intention to lead his life in accordance with it. Rather he had come across it and was simply browsing it. What angered the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was Umar’s consultation of the Torah in the presence of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. Moreover, he expressed his anger lest others may turn to other works, unsound sayings of saints and story books in the manner of Umar (رضي الله عنه). For it would mark the interpolation of other works into the body of Islam.⁽¹⁾ It thus establishes beyond doubt that nothing is of Since permission was refused to consult even the Torah, it leaves no room for turning to anything, person or scholar other than the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. Let us remind ourselves that Islam consists only of the Qur’ân and in the

(1) Consultation of the Torah in the presence of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* value in matters of religion other than the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. was the cause of the Prophet’s anger. Since it was so, a deliberate disregard for *Hadith* and following the opinion of a member of his *Ummah* would make him all the more angry. So those guilty of it incur his anger. Immediately they should mend their ways and take to practising *Hadith*.

Prophet's practice of the Qur'ân. One who wants to practise Islam as a true Muslim should follow only the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) seeking the pardon

On observing the Prophet's displeasure, Umar (رضي الله عنه) sought refuge against it with Allâh, entreating: "I am pleased with Allâh as my Lord, Islam as religion and Muhammad as His Messenger. Throughout my life as a Muslim I would obey Allâh's Commands and follow His way prescribed by him (صلى الله عليه وسلم). I would not draw on anything other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and not regard it as part of religion."

O Muslim brethren! Do you affirm like Umar (رضي الله عنه) that you would follow only the Prophet's way, regard religion consisting only of the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and not follow sayings and actions of any scholar which is not sanctioned and is without any evidence? Since Umar (رضي الله عنه) sought pardon for incurring the Prophet's anger over his study of the Torah, should we not abandon everything other than the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* out of fear of the displeasure of Allâh and His Messenger? Should we not disregard sayings and practices of others which are not endorsed by *Sunnah*?

Objection about following Prophet Moses (عليه السلام)

We have noted earlier that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "By Him Who holds my life in His Hand! Had Moses (عليه السلام) appeared in your midst today, and had you followed him,⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ It does not belittle in any way Prophet Moses (عليه السلام). Nor was it Prophet Muhammad's intention to compare himself with Prophet

rather than me, you would have landed into error.” The message was loud and clear: If the Muslims would have obeyed him rather than Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), acted on his sayings and actions by neglecting the latter’s, they would have been distracted from the right way.

Muslim brethren! Think! It is not proper to turn to Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) in the presence of *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Given this what can be said about the books written in place of *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. These have almost overwhelmed the latter and Muslims are found rushing to them. Someone’s word is dearer to them than *Hadith*. Such people would undoubtedly incur Allâh’s and His Messenger’s anger. They should better give up all that is opposed to *Hadith* and lead their life in the light of the guidance provided by *Sunnah*.

Some instances of abandoning *Hadith*

Narrated Jâbir (رضي الله عنه):

«نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنْ يُجَصَّصَ الْقَبْرُ وَأَنْ يُبْنَى عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْ يُقْعَدَ عَلَيْهِ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade erecting structures, domes, minarets etc., at graves and acting as their custodians.” (*Mishkat*)

Moses (عليه السلام). What he instructs his followers is that earlier laws were specific to their respective periods. In Islam only his way, model, *Hadith* and *Sunnah* have to be followed in that these alone would bring salvation to one. In the presence of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* no other Messenger may be obeyed. In other words, by Allah’s leave he told his followers that everything else is to be abandoned for the sake of following *Hadith*.

Not to erect structures at graves

The above-quoted *Hadith* disallows Muslims that they erect structures at graves and act as their custodians. This is the command of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Are graves not being erected in contravention of this command? And it is done by those who claim to be the inheritors of his *Shariah*—the *Ulama* and saints. Millions of rupees are spent on erecting structures at saints' graves. Domes and minarets are constructed. Do these saints and their numerous disciples not deliberately brush aside the Prophet's command? Do such disciples who prefer the word of these saints to that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) not displease Allâh and His Messenger? Since no allowance is made for even the true Messenger of Allâh, Moses (عليه السلام), in *Shari'ah*, it is beyond comprehension how can the statements of others be followed while these are patently contrary to *Hadith*. This is the height of injustice and error. Muslim brethren! For Allâh's sake, devote yourself heart and soul to the Prophet's command and not listen to anyone against it.

Reciting *Surah Al-Fâtihah* behind the *Imâm*

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) emphasised that *Surah Al-Fâtihah* be recited in *Salât* (prayer). He even said:

«لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ»

“No *Salât* is valid without the recitation of *Surah Al-Fâtihah*.” (*Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

What is meant is that everyone whether *Imâm* or one praying behind him or one praying singly, and in *Fard* (obligatory)

or in *Nafil* (optional) prayer, one must recite this *Surah* in that a prayer without it is not valid.

One day the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) led *Fajr* prayer and at its conclusion he asked the Companions: “Do you recite behind the *Imâm*?” When they replied in affirmative, he said: “Do not recite anything beyond *Surah Al-Fâtihah*, for *Salât* is not valid without it.” (*Abu Dâwud, Tirmidhi, Nasa’i, Ibn Mâjah, Mâlik and Ahmad*).

The Prophet’s directive makes it binding that this *Surah* must be recited behind the *Imâm*. Without it one’s *Salât* would not be valid. Let us remind ourselves that it is the Prophet’s command. Yet many do not follow this directive. When asked to explain they say that their leader has forbidden them to do so. Even some learned persons, not to say of the commoners, contend that Imam Abu Hanifah forbids it⁽¹⁾ hence they do not recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* behind the *Imâm*. It is for anybody to

⁽¹⁾ We think highly of Imam Abu Hanifah and believe that he never presented his views as preferable to *Hadith*. All that is ascribed to the Imam is actually invented by his devotees. For the Imam declared that authentic *Hadith* was his stance. Since an authentic *Hadith* lays it down that *Surah Al-Fâtihah* be recited while praying behind *Imâm*, the same represents the view of Imam Abu Hanifah. The Imam absolved himself fully by stating: “Whenever you find my views contrary to *Hadith*, follow *Hadith* and cast away my views.”

What is implied is that if his view runs counter to *Hadith* for being not endorsed by it and one gets hold of *Hadith*, his view must be rejected and *Hadith* be practised. Glory is to Allah. What a great lover of *Hadith* the Imam was! However, his devotees cling to his views in utter disregard for *Hadith*. This is highly improper. These brethren must recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah*, in accordance with *Hadith*, while praying behind *Imâm*. So doing, not only would they adhere to *Hadith* but obey also the Imam in that he declared: “Authentic *Hadith* is my stance.” You should therefore act upon *Hadith*.

decide the matter with justice. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commands that *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* must be recited, for *Salât* cannot be valid without it. However, people, in total disregard for his command, follow the Imam's view that this *Surah* be not recited behind the *Imâm*. Those guilty⁽¹⁾ of this lapse should coolly reconsider their stance.

To raise one's finger in testimony

While praying, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in reciting 'I testify that there is no God but Allah' raised his finger so that the verbal testimony of Oneness be reflected by this physical gesture. More than one hundred thousand Companions observed this regular practice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Same was the conduct of *Hadith* and *Fiqh* scholars. However, some so-called religious figures incite Muslims not to do so. They have gone so far that there have erupted several fights among Muslims on this issue. To adduce our viewpoint, we cite below *Sunnah* about it:

Narrated Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنهما):

«كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُشِيرُ بِإِصْبَعِهِ إِذَا دَعَا»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to raise his finger while supplicating during his *Salât*.” (*Abu Dâwud* and *Nasa'i*).

(1) The three great *Mujtahid*—Imam Shâfi'i, Imam Mâlik and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (رحمه الله عليهم) directed to recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* behind the *Imâm*. Similarly Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni (رحمه الله عليه) also says in his book *Ghunyatuṭ-Ṭâlibin*: “It is obligatory to recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah*. It is a pillar of the *Salât*. *Salât* is not valid without it.” Thus it became obligatory to recite it for the *Imâm* and the ones behind him, both; just in the same way as is the *Wudu* obligatory for the *Imâm* and his followers both.

We thus note *Sunnah*. Since the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did so, it is beyond any doubt *Sunnah*. By his very practice he directed Muslims to do the same. Some, however, hold that it should not be done. Whom should we follow—the one whose Messengership we testify or some other fellow? Since this is the case, those who abandon the Prophet’s practice on someone’s prompting are guilty of a serious mistake.

To light lamps at graves

There is another command of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Narrated Ibn Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما):

«لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ زَائِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ وَالْمُتَّخِذِينَ عَلَيْهَا الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ»

“Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) cursed the women⁽¹⁾ who visit graves and those taking graves as places of worship and those lighting lamps at graves.” (*Abu Dâwud, Tirmidhi and Nasa’i*).

It needs our attention, for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has cursed those lighting lamps at graves. Yet a religious group, some *Ulama* and custodians of graves ask people to light lamps at graves, describing it as a virtuous act. Praised is Allâh! What is cursed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is paraded as a rewarding act by some so-called *Ulama* and saints. It is for anybody to guess as to what their end would be. O Muslim brethren! You must bow down to the Prophet’s command and answer and accept his call.

(1) The prohibition about visiting graves applies only to women, not men. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed: “O men! Visit graves for it reminds you of death.” (*Muslim*). This directive is to make one think about his own death, which would help him avoid evil and practise good. It does not permit, in any way, that one invoke the dead in crisis and seek their help in getting what one wants

Women visiting graves

According to the above *Hadith*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has cursed such women who visit graves. Given this, what can justify the multitude of women at *Urs*? Does it not betray an open defiance of the Prophet's command? Why do these recalcitrant people—the *Ulama* and saints inviting women at graves and the women responding to them—not feel afraid of disobeying the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)? O Muslim brethren! Listen to the Prophet's call and disregard all others. Your profession of Islam consists in obeying the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), leader of both the worlds, guide of everyone on land and sea.

To build mosques at graves

Cursed are also those, according to the above *Hadith*, who build mosques at graves. One meaning of it is that mosque be built near a grave. This is forbidden by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Other meaning is that whatever is done in the mosque such as standing, bowing, prostration, supplication, vow, offering and devotional retreat are conducted at graves. All these are the modes of worship. These acts are also forbidden to be performed at graves. Only the cursed ones behave in this fashion. Turning to the dead for fulfilling one's needs, which Allâh alone can manage, amounts to taking graves as a place of worship. However, thousands of people are engaged today in such acts. This happens notwithstanding the fact that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade that any of such acts be perpetrated at graves. It is downright regrettable that such people are incited by some so-called *Ulama* and leaders. They deliver sermons on the topic of seeking help from those in graves. People listen to them and disregard the Prophet's command. Only on the Day of

Judgement would they realise the consequences of their disobedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

This practice of abandoning *Hadith* at the behest of some *Ulama* and leaders is wide in its range, of which only a few instances are recounted above in order to help the naive persons to discern what they are doing and at whose behest.

Prophet Moses' way

We have taken note earlier of this remark of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم): “Had Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) been alive during my Messengership, he would have followed me.” This proves that he would have strictly abided by *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. He would not have listened to any member of the *Ummah* nor joined some sect. Nor would he have followed someone blindly. Rather, in the manner of the Companions, he would have observed the Prophet’s word and deed and pursued his way.

Muslim brethren! While Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) would not have been granted permission to follow anyone else but to obey Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), what would be your end if you followed the so-called religious figures and leaders by abandoning *Hadith* and *Sunnah*. Think again! You are not superior to Prophet Moses (عليه السلام). Since he is helpless in relation to *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, no one else’s statements can carry any weight. It is amazing that while we believe in other Messenger’s conformity to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) we abandon *Hadith* in preference to the views of *Ulama* and saints.

A moving address to the Companions

Narrated Irbâd bin Sâriyah (رضي الله عنه):

صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا بِوَجْهِهِ فَوَعظَنَا مَوْعِظَةً
 ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ وَوَجَلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ
 كَأَنَّ هَذِهِ مَوْعِظَةٌ مُودَعٌ فَأَوْصِنَا فَقَالَ: «أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ
 وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ كَانَ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدِي فَسِيرِي
 اخْتِلاَفًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ
 تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ
 مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ»

One day Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) led us in *Salât*. Then he turned to us and addressed us in a moving way. On listening to his advice our tears flowed and we were shaken in our hearts. Someone submitted: "O Messenger of Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم)! Your advice appears to have a ring of farewell. Give some more advice." He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "I advise to keep on fearing Allâh and listen to and obey (your leader), even he be a black slave. Those who outlive me would observe much difference in matters of religion (the worldly-minded persons and misguided *Ulama* would cause sectarianism and make the commoners follow them). Beware! You must then adhere to *Sunnah* and the way of the rightly-guided Caliphs. Hold fast to it (*Hadith*, *Sunnah* and the Companions' practice). Avoid heresies in religion. For each invented thing is heresy and each heresy is an error." (*Mishkât*)

Criteria of the Truth

The above *Hadith* stands out as the Prophet's moving and awesome sermon which is destined to provide guidance till the Last Day. It shows the path of truth and directs the seeker

of truth. Those following it can never be deceived. Nor can he ever forget his destination. According to the above *Hadith*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) foretold differences in religion, i.e., groupism and sectarianism, heresies, new rituals, trials, corruption and disunity. At this juncture only *Sunnah* would rescue Muslims and help them protect their Faith. The only criterion of truth in all differences, trials, corruption and dissension is *Hadith*. As to the practical form of *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, the Companions' way be followed, for the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions alone can bring about peace and security. This way takes us on to salvation. A Muslim be thus defined as one who holds *Sunnah* and the Companions' conduct on such matters as the final word. One should take Islam as religion and regard it as the criterion of truth.

Advice to shun heresies

In the above-quoted invaluable *Hadith* the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also advised: "Avoid new things (in matters of religion)." For the religion has been spelled out in full. Each and every issue has been covered by it. Muslims now stand in the bright light of guidance, leaving out nothing in darkness. They should not therefore invent things. Prompted by their selfish interests they should not coin new acts and new rituals in *Shari'ah*. For every invented thing, no matter whether it is paraded as an act of virtue, is heresy. And each heresy is error. One practising heresy would lose the right way. Distracted from the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and the Companions he would pursue the crooked path of Satan. He would be, in fact, led on by Satan.

Satan's leadership

As is evident from the above discussion, those abiding by *Sunnah* and *Hadith* would have Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as their leader and guide while Satan would be the leader and guide of those practising heresy. It is your duty to discern between *Sunnah* and heresy. Whatever is prescribed or recommended by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) constitutes *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Whatever is not practised or prescribed by him is error and heresy in that it has been invented by people and paraded as religion. The latter represents the leadership of Satan. It is sheer fire of Hell. Avoid it at all costs and shun it altogether.

The Prophet's exalted position

Narrated Abu Dhar Ghifâri (رضي الله عنه):

قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَيْفَ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّكَ نَبِيٌّ، حَتَّى اسْتَيْقَنْتَ؟ فَقَالَ «يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَتَانِي مَلَكَانِ وَأَنَا بَبْعُضِ بَطْحَاءِ مَكَّةَ فَوَقَعَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ الْآخَرُ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا لِصَاحِبِهِ: أَهُو هُوَ، قَالَ: نَعَمْ! قَالَ فَزَنَهُ بِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ أُمَّتِهِ فَوَزَنَتْ بِهِ فَوَزَنَتْهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ زَنَهُ بِعَشْرَةِ فَوَزَنَتْ بِهِمْ فَرَجَحْتُهُمْ ثُمَّ قَالَ زَنَهُ بِمِائَةِ فَوَزَنَتْ بِهِمْ فَرَجَحْتُهُمْ ثُمَّ قَالَ زَنَهُ بِأَلْفٍ فَوَزَنَتْ بِهِمْ فَرَجَحْتُهُمْ كَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَنْتَثِرُونَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ خِفَّةِ الْمِيزَانِ» قَالَ فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا لِصَاحِبِهِ: لَوْ وَزَنْتَهُ بِأُمَّتِهِ لَرَجَحَهَا»

I asked: “O Allah’s Messenger, how did you figure out that you are the Prophet?” He replied: “Listen! While I was in the valley of Makkah, two angels approached me; one of these descended while the other remained suspended between the earth and the heavens. One of them asked the other: ‘Is he that person?’ When he

replied in affirmative, he directed the other: ‘Weigh him’ (so that people may grasp his worth and disregard everything in preference to his word and deed). The balance was set with me in one scale and another person in the other. I was weighed with one person and I outweighed him. The angel then directed the other to weigh with ten persons. I was weighed thus and outweighed ten persons. He then directed that I be weighed with one hundred persons. I was weighed thus and outweighed them. He then said that I be weighed with one thousand persons. Again I was weighed and I outweighed. This time I, however, noticed that those one thousand persons, being too light in weight, fell on me. One angel told the other: ‘If you weigh him in relation to his whole *Ummah*, he would certainly outweigh it.’” (*Mishkât*)

The Prophet’s dominance over the *Ummah*

What is signified by his weighing at Divine directive by angels is to point out his status and position to his followers. Even the whole *Ummah* together, not to say of individuals, cannot vie with him both physically and spiritually. As a consequence, no statement of any person of the nation can withstand his *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Rather, the former is to be dismissed scornfully. As in the physical sense, so in the context of his beliefs and actions, the conduct of the whole *Ummah* carries no weight.

It is worthy to note that one who concedes that no one shares the Prophet’s status, that no one carries the same weight as him and yet he prefers someone’s statement to *Hadith* is

guilty of taking the former as superior to the latter. It betrays the falsehood of his claim. Remember! One who deliberately follows someone's views in opposition to the word and deed and *Sunnah* and *Hadith* of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), is disobedient and disrespectful. He invents a messengership parallel to that of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Though he would not admit it, but he is guilty of committing the same indirectly. Dear brethren! Recognize the exalted position of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and value it in the sense that others stand pale in comparison to him.

His superiority over the whole Muslim *Ummah*

Reflect again on the above-quoted *Hadith*. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) dominated when one, ten, hundred and even one thousand persons were pitted against him on the scale. On observing it the angel exclaimed: "If you put the whole *Ummah* against him, he would still dominate, outweighing even the entire *Ummah*." In other words, the sayings of others, as compared to him (صلى الله عليه وسلم), are absolutely worthless.

Since his Messengership is unrivalled, others' statements should not be given any consideration. What kind of Muslims they are and how dare they recite the creedal statement of Islam who prefer their leaders and saints to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and blindly act on things contrary to *Hadith*.

Delegating Messengership to others

As to the report about the Prophet's weighing, its explanation in *Shari'ah* terms of reference is that he is immeasurable. The

Ummah is directed not to do so. No one is to be pitted against him. Nor is the *Sunnah* and *Hadith* to be contested. Regrettably many nonentities are degrading him⁽¹⁾ and many are engaged in it.⁽²⁾ For they prefer someone's views to the Prophet's.⁽³⁾ They are dictated by their religious leaders while they reject *Sunnah*. Are they not guilty? They believe only theoretically in Prophethood but practically they delegate this role to some ordinary members of the *Ummah*.

Teachings of Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni has stated: "Take the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* as your guide. Study both with utmost attention and reflect on these. Beware! Act only on these and do not follow anyone's statement or speculation" (*Futuhul-Ghaib*).

Cited above is Sheikh Jilâni's directive that no one's view, practice, speculation and conduct is to be followed besides the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. He remarks further: "For us there is no Messenger except Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to seek guidance. For us there is no book other than the Qur'ân to be followed. Beware! If you turn to anything other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith* you would be ruined and killed. Your whims and desires and Satan would misguide you." (*Futuhul-Ghaib*).

Sheikh Jilâni exhorts, in the above quotation, to adhere to the Qur'ân and *Hadith* alone and any digression is branded as

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- (1) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the fountainhead of Divine guidance. Compared to him, all the Imams and *Mujtahid* appear pygmies.
 - (2) Acting upon others' views in preference to *Hadith* and promoting the former amount to comparing the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) with pygmies.
 - (3) Abandoning *Hadith* and preferring the views of members of his *Ummah* is the act of devaluing him.

error. This point is further elaborated by him: “Beware! Your safety resides in following only the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. You will face ruin and destruction in acting upon anything other than these. O my disciple! Remember! By adhering only to the Qur’ân and *Hadith* can you rise to greater heights.” (*Futuhul-Ghaib*)

Not to measure the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

Through his statements Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilânî (رحمه الله عليه) teaches Muslims not to draw on anything other than the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. For their actions, only the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* suffice. They should not accept anyone’s word. His teachings are therefore akin to the *Hadith* under discussion that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) be not measured against anyone. If he is in one scale, no one should figure in the other scale.

Sheikh Jilani’s statements

Below are recounted Sheikh Jilani’s statements on certain *Sunnah* related to *Salât*. He exhorts Muslims to observe these in order to attain greater heights and avoid disputes and misperceptions:

Sitting: “(O seeker of the truth!) You should sit for a while (before rising after the first or third *Raka’h* in *Salât*).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Raising the hands: “(O seeker of the truth!) Before going to perform *Ruku’* (bowing) and at its conclusion (you should raise the hands).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Fastening hands on the chest: “(O seeker of the truth!) Hands should be fastened above the navel (at chest in *Salât*).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Saying Ameen aloud: “(O seeker of the truth!) Say aloud ‘Ameen’ (in *Salât* in which the Qur’ân is recited aloud).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Positioning of the foot: “(O seeker of the truth!) Your left foot should be on the right side while in the final sitting posture.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Raising the finger: “(O seeker of the truth!) Raise your finger in testimony (while reciting: ‘I testify that there is no God but Allâh’).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

***Surah Al-Fâtihah* is compulsory in each and every *Salât*:** “(O seeker of the truth!) It is obligatory to recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in every *Salât* (be you the *Imâm* or praying behind him or singly). It is part of *Salât* (i.e., it is not valid without it).” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Note: The Sheikh holds it an obligatory act to recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in *Salât* binding on everyone, no matter whether he is leading the prayer or praying behind. It is as compulsory as *Wudu* is. Both the *Imâm* and the one praying behind him should perform *Wudu*. For without it *Salât* is not valid. Same holds true for *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in that *Salât* is not valid unless one recites it.

The Sheikh’s statement and its elucidation by Sheikh Ibrahim Siyalkoti

The above explanation of the Sheikh’s statement on the compulsory recitation of *Surah Al-Fâtihah* by both the *Imâm* and the one praying behind him is similar to the elucidation offered by Sheikh Ibrahim Siyalkoti. He maintains: “Most Sufis hold that *Surah Al-Fâtihah* be recited. We have referred to the opinion of Mulla Jiwan. Moreover, in his *Ghunyatut-*

Tâlibeen, Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni speaks of it as a component of *Salât*. Elsewhere he makes the same point: “The recitation of *Surah Al-Fâtihah* is compulsory and it is part of prayer, abandoning of which nullifies prayer.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Note: Our explanation is exactly similar to that of Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim Siyalkoti. He too regards the Sheikh as the one persuaded of the point that it be recited.

Twelve additional *Takbîr* (calls) in ‘Eid Prayer: “(O seeker of the truth!) Seven additional *Takbîr* (calls) in the first *Raka‘h* and five in the second *Raka‘h* of ‘Eid prayer should be made.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

To make a single *Iqâmah* (call) in Congregational Prayer: The following *Iqâmah* (call) should be made while offering *Salât* in congregation:

“Allâh is Great. Allâh is Great. I testify that Muhammad is His Messenger. Come to *Salât*. Come to goodness. The *Salât* is about to start. The *Salât* is about to start. Allâh is Great. Allah is Great. There is no God but Allâh.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Reciting *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in the Funeral Prayer: “(O seeker of the truth!) *Surah Al-Fâtihah* should be recited after the first [*Takbîr* (call) in the Funeral prayer].” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

To recite *Qunut* supplication while raising one’s hands: “(O seeker of the truth! The *Qunut* supplication should be recited after *Ruku‘* in the last *Raka‘h* of *Witr* prayer). One should do so while raising one’s hands and the hands should be then rubbed over the face.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibeen*)

Sheikh Jilâni has stressed the point that Muslims should observe *Sunnah*. Accordingly he directed his disciples to sit during prayer, raise their hands prior to and after *Ruku'*, fasten their hands above the navel, say *Ameen* aloud in prayers in which the Qur'ân is recited aloud, take out their left foot to the right in the final sitting, raise the finger in testimony, recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in each prayer, be it *Fard*, *Sunnah* or *Nafl* and whether praying as *Imâm* or behind or praying singly in that it is imperative to do so, make twelve *Takbîr* (calls) in 'Eid prayers, make a single *Iqâmah* in congregational prayer and recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* in the Funeral prayer.

How can the religious scholars who forbid you these *Sunnah* be sincere to you? What love and regard do they have for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and Sheikh Jilani? If they cannot practise these, why do they prevent others? O brethren in Islam! Think. Seek Allâh's Pleasure through obeying His Messenger. Allâh has made it obligatory on us to follow him hence obedience to him is our duty. Give up your prejudice. Do not measure anyone against him and do not prefer someone to the Prophet's word.

Do you not believe in what Sheikh Jilâni teaches you about observing *Sunnah*? He exhorts you in order to bring an end to differences and sectarianism. For if all Muslims follow *Sunnah* it would end all differences.

If you do not listen to the Sheikh and are guided by unsound views of others, it means that you hold the latter in greater esteem in terms of their learning, conduct, religious insights and sainthood. You decide yourself whom you should follow — Sheikh Jilâni or others? If you believe the former is much more exalted than the latter you should be directed by him and observe the above-mentioned *Sunnah*.

Ironically enough, some persons are found lavishly praising Sheikh Jilâni for his exalted spiritual position yet they do not practise his teaching. They praise him profusely yet condemn those who in line with his teachings observe the above-mentioned *Sunnah*. They do not allow such persons to pray in mosques. For it, in their opinion, pollutes mosque. They wash the mosque in such an eventuality. It is a strange form of paying tribute to Sheikh Jilâni.

Muslim brethren! Remember to adhere to what is endorsed by *Sunnah*. Act upon it without regard for someone's criticism. A Muslim, by definition, is one who foregoes his desires, intentions and views in preference for the Prophet's word and deed. He observes *Sunnah* without fearing any reproach. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) rightly said:

«لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ»

“None of you can be a perfect Muslim unless he subjects his desires to my teachings (i.e., *Shari'ah*).” (*Mishkât*)

Unless one is governed by *Shari'ah*, observes *Sunnah* by disregarding everything, his friends and group, he cannot be a perfect Muslim. It is possible only by observing *Hadith*.

Limits of Islam

Mâlik bin Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : «تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ رَسُولِهِ»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “I leave you behind in the midst of two things; as long as you adhere to these you would be never misguided. These (two things) are: Allâh's Book and *Sunnah* of His Messenger.” (*Mua'tta*)

What emerges from the above is that Islam is hedged in by the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. There is nothing besides these two which can stand for Islam. So the *Ulama* who guide you without reference to the Qur'ân and *Hadith* do not instruct you in Islam or *Shari'ah*. Those attending sermons should listen carefully whether the points made by the speaker are borne out by the Qur'ân and *Hadith* or not. If it is so, his sermon should be listened to with utmost regard and attention and it should be put into practice. However, if it is not so, one should leave such a meeting:

﴿فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

“...Then sit not you after the remembrance in the company of the wrong-doers.” (*Al-An'âm*, 6:68)

The speaker who draws on sources other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and misguides people by narrating to them baseless reports, acts against the Prophet's command:

«عَصُوا عَلَيَّهَا بِالتَّوَجُّدِ»

“Hold fast to my *Hadith* and *Sunnah*.” (*Mishkât*)

He asks us to act on and preach these. However, those drawing on other sources and distracting people from the path of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions is no doubt a great wrong-doer.

Sects in Islam

We have noted earlier about the right path leading one to Paradise in that the Prophet drew a straight line and then two others to both its sides. While pointing to the straight line he said that it was the way of Allâh while other lines represented the ways of Satan. Then he recited the following verse:

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السَّبِيلَ فَتُنْفَرُوا بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

“And verily this is My straight path, so follow it and follow not other paths, for they will separate you away from His path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious.”(Al-An‘âm, 6:153)

Meaning of the Straight Path

Allâh asks us to follow His way which consists in obeying His Messenger. As it is, it is possible only through actions. Allâh did not physically show His way in respect of prayer, fast, pilgrimage and the payment of *Zakat*.⁽¹⁾ Nor did He lead some social, economic and cultural life which would have shown us the actual role model. It must be realised that Allâh, the One and the Overpowering is our real Master and the Ruler of all rulers. He simply commands and it is the duty of His slaves to follow Him. For explaining the way of performing His Commands, He chose among His slaves some as His Messengers and revealed to them His Commands. Furthermore, He taught these Messengers how to perform these commands. He directed the nations to obey their Messengers hence the way of the Messengers signifies His way.

In the above-quoted verse Allâh’s way is akin to obedience to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) — his practice, *Hadith* and *Sunnah*.

“...so follow it...” again asks us to obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and to follow strictly in his footsteps—we must regard

⁽¹⁾ Allah is quit of such things. Rather, these are the duties of His slaves imposed on them by Him.

his word and deed as the way leading straight onto Paradise. If we reflect sincerely we would realize that there is only one straight path which lies in *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. His way takes us to Paradise and there is no way of salvation other than it. The word and deed of a member of his *Ummah* cannot be Allâh's way. Nor does it have any sanction in *Shari'ah*.

Crooked paths

“...and follow not other paths...” The instruction is clear enough—not to take to a path other than that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Allâh commands us not to follow the word and deed of any except that of His Messenger. For all other paths are crooked and would not take us to Allâh.

Muslims should carefully act in matters of religion. If it is the Prophet's directive or his practice, it is the straight path. However, if it is invented by some *Imâm* (religious scholar) or saint, it is doubtless a crooked path which must be shunned. Since Allâh commands us to act in this particular fashion, it is our bounden duty as Muslims to obey Him and follow only the Prophet's way. After much investigation we should obey him in all matters. Since it was harmful for us to pursue other paths, Allâh forbade these and warned against its dire consequences.

“... for they will separate you away from His path,” i.e., other paths would land you into error and away from the straightpath. These would cause sectarianism, groupism and other ills of division. Following these you would get divided and destroyed. Beware of other paths. Allâh, therefore, admonishes: “This He has ordained for you that you may become pious” and avoid Hell-fire. Misguidance, it emerges

from the above account, lies in following paths other than that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in matters of religion. Following others in deliberate preference to *Hadith* and *Sunnah* would ruin our Next Life.

If we want to find out which is Allâh's way which would draw us to Him and what are other paths; the answer lies in the fact that one who observes *Hadith* and *Sunnah* and observes the Prophet's way is on the straight path. Conversely, one who listens to others (Imâms, saints etc.) and observes their ways, follows other paths. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

“Whoever does what is not our practice, such an act is cursed (by Allâh).” (*Tirmidhi*)

It is thus clear from the above directive of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that if we want our actions acceptable to Allah and seek our salvation, we should practise only that which is prescribed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). If we do things not prescribed by him these would be rejected and would carry no weight on the Day of Judgement.

One who follows the Prophet's way pursues Allâh's way. And who acts contrary to it, is off the straight path and given to sectarianism. It must be realized clearly that all paths other than the Prophet's lead to sectarianism and groupism in Islam.

To follow faithfully the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

Narrated Anas (رضي الله عنه):

«جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَهْطٍ إِلَى أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا بِهَا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوبًا

فَقَالُوا: أَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَقَدْ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَا أَنَا فَأُصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ النَّهَارَ أَبَدًا وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ أَنَا أَعْتَزِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَنْزُوجُ فَجَاءَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِلَيْهِمْ فَقَالَ: أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأَخْشَاكُمْ لَهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ لِكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأَفْطِرُ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَنْزُوجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي»

Three persons called on the Prophet's wives in order to find out the mode of the Prophet's worship. When they were informed of the same, it was less than they expected. They told themselves that no one could stand up to him. For Allâh has forgiven all his sins. One of them said: "I would keep on praying all the night." The other one said: "I would fast all day and would never break it." The third one resolved: "I would be away from women and would never marry." When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) learnt this, he asked them to verify their resolutions. He then told them: "Beware! By Allâh! I fear Allâh more than you do and I am more God-fearing and pious than you are. Notwithstanding it, I fast and break it in the evening. I both pray and sleep at nights. I marry women as well. Beware! Whoever deviates from my way does not belong to me." (*Bukhâri and Muslim*)

Excess in Sunnah

It is worth noting that three Companions—‘Ali, Uthmân bin Maz‘un and Abdullah bin Rawâhah (رضي الله عنهم) called on the Prophet's wives and enquired into the mode of the Prophet's

worshipping. They were told about his acts of worship and remembrance of Allâh. They compared it with the quantum of their worship and felt apprehensive. For the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) notwithstanding his infallibility exerted himself in worshipping Allâh whereas they—sinful mortals—remembered Allâh little. After mutual consultation they vowed to pray continuously throughout the night, fast continuously and avoid women altogether. On learning it the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) summons them and cautions them that though he is most fearful of Allâh and most pious, he fasts and breaks it in evenings. He both prays and sleeps at night. Likewise, he marries women too. They were, therefore, not allowed to follow a way other than his. He sternly asked them not to deviate from his way. For any deviant would not belong to him. His way would be different from that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), hence it would be erroneous.

Muslim brethren! Note that although these Companions had vowed to engage in acts of worship, it betrayed excess in *Sunnah*. It was not acceptable to both Allâh and His Messenger. What is required is to follow him faithfully. Not even slight deviation is permissible. So those who abandon *Sunnah* and *Hadith* altogether and follow another way (the way of Imâm, *Faqih*, scholars etc.), how can their acts of worship be accepted? How would they appear before Allâh on the Last Day?

Not to observe perpetual fast

Abdullah bin Amr (رضي الله عنهما) used to fast every day and pray every night. When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) came to know it, he said: “Fast, break it and pray and sleep as well. (He prohibited him from perpetual fast and praying all over the

night). For your body has a right upon you. (One should not overstrain his body lest one may fall ill and destroy himself). And your eye has a right upon you. (i.e., he should sleep in order to comfort his eyes). And your wife has a right upon you. (i.e., you should lie with her, talk with her, entertain her and maintain sexual relations with her). Your guest has a right upon you. (You should entertain him, talk with him and eat with him. If you have a guest, you should not keep yourself confined to a separate room engaged in worship).” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then said: “O Abdullah! Listen! Whoever observes fast daily is just as the one who does not observe fast at all.” (*Bukhâri*). Perpetual fast is not acceptable. Allâh is not pleased with it and these are considered devoid of any virtue.

Virtue is established with reference to *Sunnah*. Whatever conforms to *Sunnah* is virtuous. Muslim brothers and sisters! You should assess all your religious acts whether these are in consonance with *Sunnah* or not. If it is so, you should know that Allâh is pleased with you and you have been preparing well for Paradise. However, if your religious acts are not in line with *Sunnah*, you would not get any reward. It is sheer wastage and you would be held accountable to Allâh.

An unacceptable Prayer

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي»

“Perform *Salât* exactly in the manner you saw me offering.”

Prayer should be totally in accordance with the Prophet’s prayer in every respect—its form, its rules and its

appearance. Only then would it be accepted and one would discharge his duty. However, if his model is not observed, Allâh would not entertain it and one would incur sin. Regarding the latter type of *Salât*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَنْ صَلَّى لَهَا لِعَبْرٍ وَقَتِهَا وَلَمْ يُسَيِّغْ وَضُوءَهَا وَلَمْ يُتِمَّ لَهَا خُشُوعَهَا ، وَلَا رُكُوعَهَا ، وَلَا سُجُودَهَا ، خَرَجَتْ وَهِيَ سَوْدَاءٌ مُظْلَمَةٌ تَقُولُ ضَيَّعَكَ اللَّهُ كَمَا ضَيَّعْتَنِي حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَتْ حَيْثُ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لُقِّتْ كَمَا يُلْفُ الثَّوْبُ الْخَلِيقُ ثُمَّ ضُرِبَ بِهَا وَجْهَهُ»

“One who deliberately offers *Salât* after its appointed time, performs *Wudu* improperly, fails to devote himself, carelessly performs the components of *Salât*, his prayer, at its conclusion, is adjudged unsuitable (devoid of all blessings). It tells the person: ‘The way you distorted me, may Allâh ruin you.’ Angels wrap it in rags and throw it back on the face of the person.” (*At-Tarhib wat-Tarhib*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to pray with full concentration and devotion. He would accomplish all its components with comfort and ease, sit in between the two *Sujud* (prostrations) and straighten his back after *Ruku‘* (bowing) and spend some time in this posture. Remember! One who does not pray in the Prophet’s manner, performs it hastily and casually, rushing all its components, his prayer is rejected outright. This useless, incomplete and erroneous prayer incurs upon him ruin, as is evident from the above *Hadith*. It is readily observable that Allâh accepts only such worship and rewards it accordingly which conforms to the Prophet’s way.

To recite *Kalimah* with seriousness

You recite *Kalimah* (the creedal statement of Islam)—“There is no God but Allâh and Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is His Messenger.” It has two parts: The first one being the affirmation of Allâh’s Oneness and the other a testimony to Muhammad’s Messengership with full conviction. We should recite it with seriousness. Only affirmation does not merely imply that we believe in Allâh and nothing beyond it. It should be recalled that polytheists down the ages, from the days of Prophet Adam (عليه السلام) to those of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did believe in Allâh. The Qur’ân states:

﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ﴾

“If you were to ask them: ‘Who sends down rain from the sky, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death?’ They will surely reply: ‘Allâh’ ...”. (*Al-‘Ankabut*, 29:63)

﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ﴾

“And if you ask them: ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth?’ They will surely say: ‘Allâh’ ...” (*Luqmân*, 31:25)

﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

“And if you ask them: ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth?’ They will surely say: ‘The All-Mighty, the All-Knowing created them’ ...” (*Surah Az-Zukhruf*, 43:9)

﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ﴾

“And if you ask them: ‘Who created them?’ They will surely say: ‘Allâh.’ How then are they turned away (from the worship of Allah Who created them)?” (*Surah Az-Zukhruf*, 43:87)

The above-quoted verses make it plain that the polytheists of Makkah did believe in Allâh. What then accounts for their hostility to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)? The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has asked them to believe only in the One True Allâh and forsake their idols such as Lat and Uzza.

Negation and Affirmation

As the Messenger, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) imparted to them the doctrine of Allâh’s Oneness. Accordingly he asked them to abandon all those to whom they devoted their worship and offerings; and whom they took as the all-powerful, omniscient and all-hearing, the associates in Divinity. Their affirmation of Allâh’s Oneness is contingent upon the forsaking of their polytheistic beliefs. Monotheism alone should be their belief.

What is striking is that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) first demanded of them their rejection of everyone other than Allâh. It was to be followed by their affirmation. Negation thus precedes affirmation. Unless all the idols taken from the animate and inanimate world of animals, stones and plants are rejected unequivocally, the affirmation of Allâh is meaningless. The Makkan polytheists avoided this negation. Without declaring that there is no god, they merely called upon Allâh and associated others in Allâh’s Self and His Attributes.

They set apart a portion of their produce for Allâh, made offerings to Him of their cattle yet they did the same for their idols, as is stated in the Qur’ân.

﴿ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرِزْقِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا ﴾

“And they assign to Allâh a share of the tilth and cattle which He has created, and they say, ‘This is for Allâh according to their claim, and this is for our (Allâh’s so-called) partners’...” (*Al-An‘âm*, 6:136)

They used to designate a portion for Allâh of the agricultural produce—grain, fruits and vegetables—and animals such as camel, cow, sheep and goat created by Allâh. And another portion for whom they took as near Allâh and as partners with Him. Allâh denounces this practice of theirs by saying:

﴿ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴾

“Evil is the way they judge!” (*Al-An‘âm*, 6:136)

Pilgrimage by polytheist

They used to perform pilgrimage in the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and used to recite this chant in the Arafât plain: ‘O Allâh! We are here. We are here. You have no associate except those of whom You are the Master. You are their Master and of the things whose authority You have delegated to them.’ (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*). According to Abdullah bin Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما), when they reached the point of uttering, ‘You have no associate’, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked them to stop there and not to continue with the other part of it.

Belief regarding intercession

For twenty-three years the Makkan polytheists opposed the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), for they made affirmation without negation. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم), however, asked them to reject

everything first before they affirmed Allâh. They used to affirm Allâh without disowning others. Despite his insistence they did not forsake the way of their ancestors. They did believe in Allâh and served Him according to their customs, gave in charity in His Name, made offerings to Him, performed pilgrimage for His sake, and remembered him; yet they did not disown His associates. They never believed that others have no share in His Divinity. Rather they held that certain idols had been delegated authority by Allâh and that they respond to calls, prevail upon Allâh, avert Divine calamities, intercede with Allâh on their behalf⁽¹⁾ and are capable of bringing their devotees near to Allâh.⁽²⁾ Being near to Allâh they can help others attain the same status and no one can gain access to Allâh without their recommendation, means and intercession.

It explains why they affirmed without negating their gods. For they believed in His associates and partners. Their affirmation of the One True Allâh would have nullified these false gods. They, therefore, did not recite *Kalimah* in the sense the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked them to do. Muslims should reflect whether they grasp fully the meaning of *Kalimah* as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has taught them.

Polytheistic beliefs of some Muslims

Some Muslims, no doubt, say: ‘There is no God but Allâh.’ They do reject verbally everyone other than Allâh and affirm Him. What is worth exploring is whether they practise the

(1) . “They say: ‘These are our intercessors with Allah’.” (*Yunus*, 10:18).

(2) They say: “We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah.” (*Az-Zumar*, 39:3).

same belief that no one shares Allâh's Divinity; no one is part of His Divinity; no one has power over Divine treasures and functions; there is no intercessor or one to respond to the call; there is no one to avert calamities, help one in crisis, grant healing and remove affliction; no one has a share in verbal, physical and financial modes of worship to Him and no one else is Omniscient, All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

If the answer to all these is in the affirmative, it is perfectly legitimate to say: 'There is no God but Allâh.' His affirmation is genuine and such a Muslim is a true monotheist. However, if some Muslims hold that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the incarnation of Allâh⁽¹⁾ and statements to this effect are made at *Urs* that the same Being who occupies the Throne appeared as Muhammad Mustafa in Al-Madinah, such persons cannot be regarded as monotheists. Their affirmation is false. What is deplorable is that such statements are also made in large gatherings of Muslims as: 'O the Saint of saints, Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni! Remove my problems as you helped those whom Allâh had punished'.

It is the belief of the very Muslims that those whom Allâh afflicts are saved and helped by the Sheikh. Yet they have the audacity to utter: 'There is no god'. According to their belief, the Sheikh is a greater god than Allâh, enjoying more power than Him. For he rescues those whom Allâh destroys.⁽²⁾ The

(1) Christians regarded Jesus as Son of God, Hindus took Krishna as His incarnation i.e. God appeared in the form of Krishna. Some Muslims contend that Allah made His appearance as Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Is there any difference in the contention of these three groups? What a pity that Muslims have disfigured the concept of Monotheism.

(2) Reference is to a baseless story about Sheikh Jilâni. It is said that he rescued a person who had been drowned twelve years ago. The complete story is as follows: A woman had a son and as his marriage

Makkans refused to recite *Kalimah* for they took others as partners with Allâh. Yet these Muslims, notwithstanding taking others as gods besides Allâh, do recite *Kalimah*. Does it not amount antithesis to it? Even the Makkan polytheists did not profess such an odious belief that someone could vie with Allâh. Rather they held: ‘O Allâh! You are the Master of those whom we take as associates. You are their Master and of the things whose authority you have delegated to them’ (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*).

procession was crossing a river, there was a sudden tide that drowned everyone on board, including the bridegroom. For twelve years the mother kept on crying. Eventually she approached the Sheikh. Taking pity on her he reassured her: “O mother! Do not cry. Go and prepare a feast for me on the eleventh of the month. Your son would come alive.” She did his bidding and her son who was lying drowned for twelve years came alive from the river.

The so-called religious figures now insist that those interested in protecting their life, belongings and children should make offerings to the Sheikh on the eleventh of every month. Alas! For the sake of earning their bread they fabricated a totally false story and made such offerings popular among Muslims. This is despite the fact that no one in Baghdad, the birth place of the Sheikh, is aware of this practice. Nor is it followed in any other part of the world.

In our part of the world (the Indian Subcontinent), however, people are too particular about this offering lest the Sheikh may be displeased with them which may bring about some calamity. Let it be clarified that it is all right to give in charity in Allah’s Name for gaining reward for the dead. However, an offering to someone other than Allah out of the belief that its non-observance would entail some calamity and its observance would result in happiness, is patently contrary to Faith. It is akin to taking someone as lord, partner in Allah’s Power and Authority. Supernatural powers of saints are, no doubt, possible but to fabricate a report as the above-mentioned one, which never happened, is falsehood. Islam does not allow any falsehood.

These Makkan polytheists conceded Allâh's Power over their false gods and over the things allegedly under their control. However, the devotees of Sheikh Jilâni hold that he rescues those whom Allâh destroys. In other words, Allâh is not the Master of Sheikh Jilâni. Had He been so, He would have accomplished what He intended; no one could ward off His Intention. What a surprising faith of a Muslim it is that Sheikh Jilâni rescues those whom Allâh intends to destroy; these are the Muslims who recite *Kalimah* but don't know what the *Kalimah* means.

Sheikh Jilâni is invoked out of the belief that he responds, no matter how far the caller is. This is a downright fallacious belief, without any basis and without any sanction in *Shari'ah*. The Qur'ân declares:

﴿ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴾

“Nor are alike the living and the dead. Verily, Allâh makes whom he will hear, but you cannot make hear those who are in graves.” (*Fâtir*, 35:22)

The above verse proves that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) cannot make the dead hear. Since he cannot do so, no other one is capable of the same. It is therefore pointless to invoke the dead who are in graves. Such an act is contrary to the Qur'ânic verse. For Allâh says:

﴿ أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُم مَخْرَجًا
الْأَرْضِ أَهْلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

“Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one,(1) when he calls Him, and Who removes

(1) The above verse unmistakably states that no one other than Allah hears our call or helps us in some supernatural fashion

the evil,(1) and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generation. Is there any God with Allâh? Little is that you remember!” (*An-Naml*, 27:62)

Allâh states in the above verse that He hears the call of the distressed ones and removes the evil. Given this, how ignorant and wicked are those who turn to Sheikh Jilâni. They are absolutely unaware of the Qur’ânic teaching and commit blatant disobedience to Allâh. For it is obvious that only Allâh removes the evil. No one besides Him can do so. However, the ignorant ones call upon the Sheikh to help them. O Muslims! Think how far you have digressed from the Qur’ân and how brazenly you defy the Qur’ân. Those inciting you to seek help from the dead, act absolutely against the Qur’ân. Do you not hold your belief in Monotheism dear? Are you not concerned about protecting your Faith?

The above-quoted verse queries: ‘Is there any God with Allâh?’ Is there any to hear the call of the distressed and to remove the evil? One thus learns that invoking someone other than Allâh in distress amounts to taking him as partner with Allâh. Thus those guilty of invoking the Sheikh set him up as a God with Allâh.(2) Since this is the case, their affirmation that there is no God but Allâh is meaningless. For they practically do what they do not profess. It is not something trivial. The position of the Makkan polytheists was, at least, tenable in that for associating others with Allâh they did not recite the creedal statement of Islam. But in the case of such Muslim the crime is compound—of taking others as God with Allâh and affirming that there is no

(1) It is evident from the above verse that Allah alone can avert a calamity. No one else can make or mar one’s fate or grant healing.

(2) Taking someone as lord besides Allah is polytheism which entails a severe punishment, so severe that even its mention makes one’s hair raise on its ends. Allah would never pardon the sin of polytheism.

God but Allâh. How outrageous it is. It is to be recorded painfully that these Muslim brethren do not follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in even reciting *Kalimah*.

For another group, ‘Ali is the object of utmost regard. They openly consider him capable of everything while only Allâh is Capable of everything.

Someone sought the proof of Allâh’s existence from ‘Ali. He replied: “I recognised my Lord through the nonfulfillment of my plans. For I intended on numerous occasions to do this or that but I did not succeed. I therefore learnt that there is some Supreme Power Who is none other than Allâh the Almighty, the Overpowering One.” As to the Muslims, they verbally recite *Kalimah* but take a fellow human being capable of everything, forgetting that this person (‘Ali) was assassinated by a wicked man while the victim was totally unaware.

To allot Allâh’s share

﴿ وَجَعَلُوا لِمَنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا ﴾

“Yet they (polytheists) assign to some of His slaves a share with Him...” (Az-Zukhruf, 43:15)

The disbelievers branded angels as Allâh’s daughters. Since children represent part of the parents, the Qur’ân recounts their disbelief in that they made angels as part of Allâh in taking them as His daughters. It stands for association in His Self. Christians and Jews committed the same crime by holding Jesus and Ezra respectively as Allâh’s son. This again betrays disbelief. Muslims should shun such statements of disbelief. Allâh has related these in order to caution Muslims against these and take admonition. However, some Muslims publicly state that Allâh created Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) out

of His Light and that he is part of His Light.⁽¹⁾ In other words Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) represents the light separated from Allâh's Light. According to this slander, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is part of Allâh. And in this capacity he is to be taken as His associate. Given this, he is a god. Think for yourself. How can a person having such a faith in the Prophet declare there is no God but Allâh?

O Muslim brethren! Act sensibly. Such views are contrary and rebellious to the Qur'ân. For Allâh's sake study the Qur'ân, understand it and mend your beliefs and deeds accordingly.

In summing up, *Kalimah* should be recited with a proper understanding, in the manner it has been explained and taught by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Affirm Allâh by negating all others. By reciting it there should be no trace of the idea of partnership with Allâh in your action or belief regarding His Self and His Attributes. Only then can your Belief be justified. If you profess polytheistic beliefs, worship others besides Allâh, spend in the way of Allâh and of others: your recitation of *Kalimah* would be a mere ritual, a lie or a form of self-deception. It would not be fair to Allâh, the Messenger and the Qur'ân. For it amounts to saying 'there is no God but Allâh' but taking many as gods with Him. In this case such profession of Faith is fruitless. It would not constitute proper faith in Allâh.

⁽¹⁾ It is sheer disbelief to contend that Allah created Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) of His own light. Allah clarifies: "Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) from amongst yourselves..." (*At-Taubah*, 9:128). Thus his human descent and being the progeny of Adam is something evident. Even Adam was created of dust. Given this, it is downright fallacious to hold that a human being, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was fashioned out of Divine light itself. He being one of the children of Adam and a Messenger was the light for the whole world.

Allamah Iqbal, a great religious poet, says: “Don’t be among those who deceive Allâh by prostrating before Him; and His Prohet by sending *Salât* on him.

Deceiving Allâh and His Prophet consists in polytheism in the doctrines of Monotheism and Prophethood. It betrays associating others in worship to Allâh and obedience to the Messenger in the face of declaring that ‘there is no God but Allâh and that Muhammad is His Messenger.’ You should carefully read this Qur’ânic verse:

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

“And most of them believe not in Allâh except that they attribute partners unto Him” (*Yusuf*, 12:106).

Many believe in Allâh and commit polytheism as well. They are polytheistic believers that profess Monotheism tainted with polytheism. O brethren! Do remember that Allâh asks us to be monotheistic believers. The Makkans were polytheistic believers. Allâh sent down the Qur’ân to purge them of polytheism and appointed Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) for this task. O Muslim brethren! Be monotheistic believers so as to justify your recitation of *Kalimah*.

A monotheistic believer attains the highest place imaginable, his destination is the proximity to the Lord of the Mighty Throne. This world is not his destination nor the zenith in the heavens. He is not at ease anywhere. For the whole world is tainted with duality. The sun, the moon, the stars and the sky represent a magic. In relation to Allâh everything is false. A monotheistic believer first strikes at everything with his negation and then he affirms the Oneness of Allâh. For Allâh alone is the truth and this is the believer’s destination.

One's deeds going to waste

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا ءَعْمَالَكُمْ﴾

“O believers! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger and render not vain your deeds.” (*Muhammad*, 47:33)

Allâh asks us to obey Him in that He is the Master to be obeyed. This command is addressed to both Messengers and ordinary human beings. However, there should be a way for a nation to follow; regarding it Allâh says: “Obey the Messenger (for obeying Allâh one should follow the Messenger).” In fulfilling all the obligations one owes to Allâh — Monotheism, prayer, fast, pilgrimage, and charity — rather in practising the Qur’ân, the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) must be followed. It is further observed that the failure to do so would render one’s deeds vain. By acting in a way other than that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) one’s deeds would go to waste. Likewise, if one acts according to his whims, opinions or views of others, one’s deeds would go to waste. One would not get any reward for such actions. What is thus established beyond doubt is that an action done in way other than the one Divinely prescribed is not accepted by Allâh.

To waste *Sunnah* in *Fajr* Prayer

An instance in point is *Sunnah* in *Fajr* Prayer. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says:

«إِذَا أَقِيمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَا صَلَاةَ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةُ»

“When the congregation rises to pray, no prayer is valid except the obligatory one.” (*Muslim*).

However, those who offer *Sunnah* prayer while the obligatory one is on, do not obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). His above

statement rules out any prayer at that time. It illustrates how an action done in spite of the Prophet's command goes to waste.

Prayer going to waste

Another illustration of the above point is as follows: It is narrated by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that someone entered the mosque while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was sitting in a corner. The visitor offered prayer (he did it hastily without paying attention to the components of prayer). He then went to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and greeted him. He told him: "Peace be upon you! Recite the prayer again. You certainly did not offer it." Accordingly he recited it again (in the earlier fashion). The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) again told him the same. After offering prayer three or four times in the same manner he requested the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم): "O Messenger of Allâh! Teach me how to pray." He told him that whenever he intended to pray he should properly perform *Wudu*, pronounce the *Iqâmah* while facing *Qiblah*, recite from the Qur'ân as much as he could afford, do *Ruku'* with ease and comfort, then rise after *Ruku'*, perform *Sajdah* with poise, then sit for a while after *Sajdah*, offer the second *Sajdah*, then sit again and rise for the other *Raka'h*. Earlier he performed the components of prayer too hastily, without pausing properly between the two *Sajdah*. Nor did he stand for a while after *Ruku'*. In short, he did not pray in accordance with the Prophet's way. So he was repeatedly asked by him to pray, for, his prayer in its inadequate form could not be counted.

It thus proves that prayer offered in an other than Prophet's way goes to waste. We have noted earlier that it is rejected altogether. And the prayer tells the person: 'May Allâh ruin you in the way you distorted me.' In such case, one only incurs sin, instead of the reward for discharging his duty.

Hajj by a single woman

Some women set out singly on performing pilgrimage. On this point the Prophet's directive is:

«وَلَا تُسَافِرِ الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَّا مَعَ ذِي مَحْرَمٍ فَقَامَ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! ﷺ
إِنَّ امْرَأَتِي خَرَجَتْ حَاجَةً وَإِنِّي أَكْتُبْتُ فِي غَزْوَةٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا، قَالَ:
«انْطَلِقِي مَعَ امْرَأَتِكَ»

“No woman should undertake the journey unless she is accompanied by a *Mahram* (a male relative with whom a woman's marriage is forbidden).” On hearing it someone submitted: “O Messenger of Allâh! My wife has proceeded for pilgrimage while I have registered myself for the battle.” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him: “Accompany your wife for pilgrimage.” (*Bukhâri and Muslim*).

The directive is clear: no woman can go alone for pilgrimage. Nor can she travel with one who is not her *Mahram*. She can accompany only a *Mahram* (i.e., a relative with whom her marriage is forbidden owing to kinship or foster relationship). It is better to go with husband and if it is not possible she should accompany her father, paternal or maternal uncle, brother and nephew. If she goes for pilgrimage singly or with one who is not her *Mahram*, she would be deemed a sinner for disobeying the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

The above-quoted *Hadith* is worthy of reflection. There is someone already enrolled for participation in a battle and is ready for *Jihâd* meanwhile his wife sets out for pilgrimage, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commands him to accompany his wife, rather than participate in *Jihâd*. He did so in order to restrain the woman from travelling singly or with a non-*Mahram*. Today we find some women going for pilgrimage singly. However, it

is not some virtuous act. It amounts to wasting both money and the travails of journey. For it represents disobedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Let us remind ourselves that our actions should be consistent with *Hadith* and *Sunnah*. Fulfilling duties to Allâh in an other than Prophet's way is fruitless. Beware! Never act deliberately against *Sunnah* and never accept anything in preference to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*.

Religious differences among the Muslim *Ummah*

Having embraced the belief in Allâh's Oneness and in the Messengership of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), a Muslim becomes part of the universal brotherhood of Islam. For him it is obligatory to obey only Allâh and as part of this duty to obey the Messenger. Following someone other than these two is not part of religion. All Muslims are obliged to draw on the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. If Muslims do so sincerely, it would not cause any difference in matters of religion. They would always enjoy unity, solidarity, mutual love and brotherhood.

This was the conduct of the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They renewed their Faith with the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. Never did they turn to any other source. Little wonder then that they embodied unity, love and brotherhood. Their mutual love was strong; and religious differences or sectarianism did not mar their life. They knew how to practise the Qur'ân in accordance with *Sunnah*.

Three better periods

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has informed us of the three better periods—of the Companions, of their successors and of their

followers. Those in these periods were on the right path in matters of religion. For they draw only on the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. No other way existed then. They were not inundated with books written by fellow Muslims which are full of personal opinions and speculations. Nor did they blindly imitate some religious scholar. Everyone was guided by his own insight through the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. They put even their life at stake for the sake of Allâh and His Messenger.

The Companions were *Ahlus-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith*

With reference to *Hadith* we have already brought home the ills of sectarianism. Do remember that all Muslims represent a universal brotherhood that does not admit any sectarianism. Divisions result only in loss whereas unity brings about greater strength. It is common knowledge that dissensions and sectarianism destroy the nation. Allâh therefore condemns division and sectarianism and exhorts us to build up the nation.

﴿ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا ﴾

“And hold fast, all of you together to the Rope of Allâh and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allâh’s Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that by His Grace, you became brethren...” (*Âl-‘Imrân*, 3:103)

Allâh’s Rope

Allâh asks us to hold fast together His Rope, i.e., Islam. We are asked to unite ourselves as a nation. According to this

command, all Muslims having faith in the Qur'ân should be united in that Allâh's Rope signifies the Qur'ân, *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. All of us are bound to hold fast to it and abandon everything else. Such Muslims are truly *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. Their commitment to *Hadith* and *Sunnah* entitles them to this appellation and their gathering together renders them as a *Jamâ'ah*.

It is further advised: "Be not divided among yourselves." Sectarianism and internal divisions are condemned. They should hold fast to Allâh's Rope alone, nothing else. Otherwise it would cause sectarianism.

Allâh's support for the *Jamâ'ah*

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says:

«يَدُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَةِ»

"Allâh supports the *Jamâ'ah*." (*Mishkât*)

The Companions being a well-knit community enjoyed Allâh's support. They exhibited great mutual love and sacrifice for one another out of utmost mutual sincerity. They were bound only to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. It characterized their life. As a result, they were blessed with Allâh's support. In an otherwise situation they could not secure Allâh's support, help, inspiration to do good, and protection. One who does not enjoy Divine support is seized by Satan. It ensues sectarianism, divisions, enmity and mutual recrimination. It destroys in both the worlds. Allâh therefore cautions against internal division.

The above-quoted verse makes an additional observation: "Remember Allâh's favour on you, for you were enemies

one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that by His Grace you became brethren.” In the days before the advent of Islam their life was plagued by sectarianism and internecine feuds. Islam blessed their life as a Divine favour. With their acceptance of Islam they held fast only to Allâh’s Rope—the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and grew into a *Jamâ’ah*.

What is meant by ‘joining the hearts together’ is their unity. Opposed to it is the condition of the disbelievers:

﴿ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ﴾

“... and their hearts are divided...” (*Al-Hashr*, 59:14)

This point is made again in another verse:

﴿ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ ﴾

“And obey Allâh and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose your courage and your strength departs...” (*Al-Anfal*, 8:46)

To lose courage

It has been commanded that we obey Allâh and His Messenger and hold fast to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. We are further told not to dispute with one another or be divided among ourselves. It reiterates the point made earlier—that believers should not be divided.

It is common knowledge that differences give rise to bad blood and disunity. Such a situation arises when we give up Allâh’s Rope. The Qur’ân warns of its consequence: “...lest you lose courage...” Sectarianism weakens the *Jamâ’ah*. In unity there is strength and in disunity sheer weakness. Allâh therefore exhorts Muslims not to have mutual differences

and not to give up His Rope. United on the Qur'ân and *Hadith* they should confront everyone. Otherwise they would suffer from disunity and concomitant weakness and lose. Moreover, they would lose their courage and strength. They will no longer enjoy hold over others, reducing them to mere rubble.

In sum, sectarianism would cause their destruction whereas their united stand on the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* ensures life and strength.

Ahlus-Sunnah and Ahlul-Hadith

Those who abide by *Sunnah* and *Hadith* are known as *Ahlus-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith* respectively. Actually the two are synonymous. Since the Companions and their successors and followers lived by *Sunnah* and *Hadith*, they were accorded this appellation. It must be remembered that this title does not signify some sect, rather it is an honourable appellation which had gained currency in view of the strict following of *Hadith* by the Companions and their pious followers in the first century H, as reported in *Sahih Muslim*:

“Imam Muhammad bin Sirin⁽¹⁾ tells that no question was initially asked about the chain of authorities. However, as heresies made their appearance in opposition to *Sunnah*, enquiries were made about the

⁽¹⁾ Imam Muhammad bin Sirin is an outstanding Successor to Companions. He was fortunate enough to see Abu Hurairah, Anas bin Mâlik, Abdullah bin ‘Umar, Hasan and ‘Aishah and narrated *Ahâdith* on their authority. He was born in 33H during the caliphate of Uthmân and died at the age of seventy-seven years in 110H in Basrah. He spent his whole life in the service of *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. May Allah bless him.

narrators in order to ascertain the persons adhering to *Sunnah* and their reports were accepted while of those practising heresy were rejected.”⁽¹⁾ (*Sahih Muslim*)

We thus learn that the title *Ahlu-Sunnah* had become popular in the first century H in contradistinction to the people practising heresy. A distinction was made even then between *Sunnah* and heresy. Since *Sunnah* is opposed to heresy, it must be fully realized that one following heresy cannot belong to *Ahlu-Sunnah*. If he makes such a claim, it is a contradiction in terms. For the two being contrary to each other cannot be reconciled.

A serious misunderstanding

It is evident from Imam Ibn Sirin’s above report that those living by *Sunnah* were known in the first century H as *Ahlu-Sunnah*. Given this there is no substance in the assertion that Hanafi, Shâfi‘i, Mâliki and Hanbali are *Ahlu-Sunnah* and those not following any of these four Imams are not *Ahlu-Sunnah*. For these followers of the four Imams did not exist in the first century H. It is because of the simple fact that all the four Imams (may Allâh have mercy on them) were born at a date later than the title *Ahlu-Sunnah* had been in vogue.

It is worthy to note that Imam Abu Hanifah⁽²⁾ was born in 80H and died in 150H, Imam Mâlik⁽³⁾ was born in 90H and

(1) Imam Ibn Sirin also said: “This (*Hadith*) is the knowledge about religion. Check properly its source. While obtaining this knowledge ensure that some practitioner of heresy or a polytheist may not pass to you something contrary to *Hadith*.”

(2) Born in Kufah and died in the Baghdad prison.

(3) Born in Al-Madinah and died and buried there.

died in 179H, Imam Shâfi‘i⁽¹⁾ was born in 150H and died in 204H, while Imam Ahmad⁽²⁾ was born in 164H and died in 241H.

The four Schools of Thought

The followers of these four Imams have established these four schools. Moreover, they contend that one who does not abide by any of these four Imams is not of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. We have recorded above the period of each Imam which makes it plain beyond any shadow of doubt that these four schools were non-existent in the glorious period of the Companions, and their successors and followers. As they did not exist, imitation of them was simply out of the question. If one is denied the category of *Ahlu-Sunnah* for his lack of conformity to one of the four Imams, it implies that even the Companions, and their successors and followers too were not *Ahlu-Sunnah*. We know for certain that they did not imitate someone, rather they were non-conformists. Whom did the rightly-guided Caliphs imitate? Whose followers the Companions were, who number more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand? Who from among the millions of their successors and followers imitated someone? Frankly speaking, none of them was an imitator. Since these pious persons did not imitate someone and yet were known as *Ahlu-Sunnah*, why those not following today any of the four Imams are branded as the ones outside the fold of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah*.

(1) Born in Palestine and buried in Cairo.

(2) Born and died in Baghdad.

Identification of the three periods

Students of the religious books, *Hadith* and history know that Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) passed away in 11H. His last Companion Abu Tufail died in 110H. Hence the Prophet's period lasted till 11H. And of his Companions till 110H. According to *Fath Al-Bâri*, the period of the Successors and the Followers lasted till 180H and 220H respectively. Therefore these three periods together continued, at the most, till 220H. It is not on record that anyone practised *Taqleed* (blind-following, imitation, conformity) up to this period. Even by the third century H it was something unheard of. Given this, the contention that non-conformists are not *Ahlu-Sunnah* holds no water. Were the best of the Muslim *Ummah* up to the third century H outside *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* for being non-conformists? This is not true, rather they were genuine *Ahlu-Sunnah*. It should be realized well that those living by *Sunnah* alone are known as *Ahlu-Sunnah*. As it is, *Sunnah* originated with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which was followed by the Companions and thus they acquired the title of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. Same holds for their successors and followers and their entitlement to this appellation. Their being Hanafi, Shâfa'î, Mâlîki or Hanbali did not arise. *Ahlu-Sunnah* are there since the days of *Sunnah* itself. Given this, it is fraudulent to suggest that those who follow any of the four Imâm are *Ahlu-Sunnah*. Let it be realized that only those who live by *Sunnah* deserve this appellation, be he the Companion, his follower, a *Mujtahid*, a *Hadith* scholar, a *Fiqh* scholar, a leader (*Imâm*) or his disciple, the rich or the poor, and of any date. As long as one practises *Sunnah*, he belongs to the fold of *Ahlu-Sunnah*.

To identify *AhluS-Sunnah*

قِيلَ وَمَنْ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ الْيَوْمَ وَأَصْحَابِي»

The Companions asked: “O Messenger of Allâh! Who belongs to the fold of *AhluS-Sunnah*?” He replied: “Those who follow what I and my Companions practise today.”. (*Al-Milal wan-Nahl*)

Obviously the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions were governed only by the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, hence only those who follow Qur’ân and *Hadith* are *AhluS-Sunnah*.

Ali (رضي الله عنه) was asked about the identity of *AhluS-Sunnah*. He replied: “They are the ones who hold fast to Allâh and His Messenger, though they may be few in number.” (*Kanzul-Ummâl*)

In other words, *AhluS-Sunnah* are those who practise *Sunnah*:

“Undoubtedly people in the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were *AhluS-Sunnah*.” (*Kanzul-Ummâl*)

What truth then is in the contention of those who hold that the conformist Hanafî alone are *AhluS-Sunnah*, for in the days when conformity and Hanafi school were non-existent everyone belonged to *AhluS-Sunnah*? According to Imâm Sha‘bi:

“You would be destroyed when you take to reasoning and abandoning *Sunnah*.” (*Kitâbul-E‘tisâm*)

Shah Waliullah advises the same:

“My first and foremost advise is: Hold fast to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*. The Saved Group is the one that abides by the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* in both the faith and (practice the way of Companions and their successors).” (*Hujjatullâhil-Bâlighah*).

These clarifications make it plain that only such people are *Ahlu-s-Sunnah* who live by the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. It is wrong to believe that only the conformist Hanafi are *Ahlu-s-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. For both conformity (*Taqleed*) and Hanafi school were not there in the days of the Companions.

Note: Those following their Imam in the light of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* subject to the provision that they would prefer *Hadith* to the view of the Imam, if it is proved, they are *Ahlu-s-Sunnah* and such following is not disputed.

The start of the Blind-Following

That the pious in the early period were *Ahlu-s-Sunnah* is an established fact. They did not imitate an individual, as noted earlier. Let us now find out how blind-following set in. In the words of Qâzi Thanauallah Pânipati:

“*Ahlu-s-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* were divided into the present schools in the fourth or fifth century H.”
(*Tafsir Mazhari*).

The scholarly figure of Qazi Panipati needs no introduction. For him, blind-following started in the fourth or fifth century H⁽¹⁾ with the division of Muslims into four schools. Prior to this no one imitated some individual. Since there was no conformist at that time, people then can be referred to only as *Ahlu-s-Sunnah* who were non-conformists.

(1) Thanauallah Amritasari states: “Let us accept Shah Waliullah as the arbiter on the issue of blind-following and be content with his study of early Muslims. The Shah records in *Hujjatullah* that blind following of some individual was non-existent in the first three centuries; it was founded only in the fourth century H.

Shah Waliullah and the four Schools

Shah Waliullah is widely acclaimed as an outstanding scholar. His studies are held in esteem universally. He says:

“People in the fourth century H did not imitate a particular individual.” (*Hujjatullâhil-Bâlighah*)

We learn from him that blind-following was not there even in the fourth century H; it started only in the fifth century H.

Note: The conformists should not be enraged. They should objectively see that conformity (blind-following) did not exist in the first four hundred years of Islam. As the religion had been perfected, no one knew what conformity was. It was invented only after the fourth century H and paraded as an important issue before the *Ummah*. It was accorded the status of being a compulsory or obligatory thing. Can an invented thing in religion be so important? Let us see what the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says on this point:

«مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

“Who invents something in religion which is not part of it, his contention is unacceptable.” (*Bukhâri*)

What the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbids, is paraded as an obligatory thing. Rather it is regarded as a prerequisite for being *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. There is not any substance in the claim that only the followers of the four Imams are *Ahlu-Sunnah* while those living by only *Hadith* and *Sunnah* are not.

On the authority of Imam Izzuddin bin Abdus-Salâm, Shah Waliullah rejects blind-following:

“Before the appearance of these schools and biased blind-followers, all Muslims used to enquire about

religious matters from any religious scholar and acted on his advice. They were not bound to some particular school or scholars. Regrettably, the blind-followers of our times regard their respective Imams as if they are some Messengers sent down to them.⁽¹⁾ This notwithstanding the fact that the view of Imams may be contrary to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*, yet they do not give up blind-following. It represents error and distraction from truth resulted from preference given to blind-following, which no sane person would like to do so.”
(*Iqdul-Jeed*)

Our pious ancestors consulted any religious scholar who came their way. They were not confined to some particular school. Later on, however, people opted for definite schools and clung to conformity. This betrays their moving away from truth. Reference is to the blind-following against which they pay no heed even to *Hadith* which is recited to them many times. They would act on someone's view. As it is, it denotes moving away from truth and falling into error.

(1) The Prophet's word constitutes in itself a clinching argument which must be accepted unquestioningly. A view of someone other than him must be validated by the Qur'ân and *Hadith* before one acts upon it. A conformist, however, imitates his Imam blindly. If he prefers his word to *Hadith*, he takes him as the Messenger.

In works on *Fiqh*, blind-following is defined as the acceptance of someone's word without a basis. This blurs the distinction between one who is a Messenger and one who is not. Reference here is to the biased and stubborn follower who deliberately abandons *Hadith* and prefers someone's word. As to the one who practises conditional following in the sense that he would abide by *Hadith* once he finds that one's view is contrary to *Hadith*, such following is not reprehensible.

Definition of Blind-Following

Reference has been made to blind-following in the above account. Let us explain this concept as it features in works on *Fiqh*:

“A blind-follower is guided by Imam. Neither he makes his own study nor can he reflect upon the views of his Imam.” (*Mussalamuth-Thubut Mujtabâi*)

It means that he follows only him whom he imitates. He is not authorised to study the views of the Imam. For if he does so, he turns into a non-conformist. He is supposed to follow him blindly and act accordingly:

“Conformity consists in belief in the views of a non-Messenger (Imam) without proof.” (*Jami‘ul-Jawâmi‘*)

“It is desirable rather obligatory to abide by the Imam’s decree, without ascertaining his source.” (*Shâmi*)

In other words, one should not seek to find out the source of Imam’s view. His word alone suffices:

“May our Lord’s curses as many as the sand particles, be on him who rejects the view of Imam Abu Hanifah.” (*Shâmi*)

It is strange that one who refuses to follow Imam Abu Hanifah’s view without study is cursed as many times as the number of sand particles. What is to be done in case one points to the fact such and such a view of the Imam is in contrast to *Hadith*? It is part of the ethics of conformity that the Imam’s view should not be scrutinized. One should blindly imitate otherwise one stands showered with curses. According to Mulla Ali Qâri Hanafi:

“Conformity consists in accepting the view of the Imam without argument.” (*Sharh Qasidah Amâli*)

“The argument for a conformist is only the view of the Imam. He should simply state that the judgement is such and such for being the view of my Imam Abu Hanifah. And whatever be his view is valid for me.” (*Taudih Tabwih*)

The above account defines blind-following. A blind-follower has to adhere to the view of his Imam throughout his life and take it as the final word and part of religion, without enquiring into his source. For it is against conformity. As a result of this blind imitation when some of our brothers are told about some *Hadith* they pay no heed to it, rather they stick to the view of the Imam. May Allâh grant them the ability to prefer *Hadith* to the views of others, follow *Fiqh* which is in line with *Hadith* and forsake such views which are opposed to *Hadith*.

The view of the Imam suffices for his followers. His word in itself constitutes an incontestable argument. He needs not look to the Qur’ân or *Hadith* whereas these are the sources of religion. For a conformist, however, the Imam’s opinion is more than sufficient and this is what constitutes conformity.

O brethren! An argument is valid only when it is endorsed by the Word of Allâh and of His Messenger. The word of someone else does not enjoy this status in matters of religion. Were someone to contend that the independent opinion of a *Mujtahid* is worth obeying too, it should be realised that *Ijtihâd* is applicable in cases in which one is not able to draw guidance from the Qur’ân or *Hadith*. Or else there is no justification for *Ijtihâd*.

“Conformity means following an Imam unquestioningly.” (*Muslim*)

“A conformist is not led by some argument.” (*Talwih*).

For him the Imam’s view suffices and he tends to be indifferent to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

“No decree is to be pronounced in matters of religion. Only Imam Abu Hanifah’s view is to be followed.”
(*Durr Mukhtâr*)

A conformist is obliged to abide by the Imam’s opinion and *Ulama* too, should be guided by the Imam’s word.⁽¹⁾ For, this alone is more than sufficient, having nothing to do with the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

This is the reality about conformity which does not admit the Qur’ân, *Hadith* or reason. It should be clear by now that conformity stands for blindly following a non-Messenger without reference to any *Shari’ah* basis. His word is accorded the same status which is due to *Shari’ah* ruling.

While shopping we take every possible care to get the best quality and subject the commodity to utmost scanning. It is the height of absurdity, however, to imitate an Imam blindly in matters of religion, without any argument. The Imam is followed blindly and his word is taken as final. Do we not stand in need of scrutiny in matters of religion? For our fate depends on these, particularly our salvation in the Hereafter. We are careful enough in worldly matters, for example in checking short-change. But we pursue blindly in matters of religion. It is not a sane act. What is worse, such blind imitation is taken to mean *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah*, though even a slight inattention to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* drives us away from the fold of *Ahlu-Sunnah*.

¹⁽¹⁾ One cannot be both a scholar and a follower. For by its very definition, blind-following presupposes ignorance. Knowledge and blind-following are contrary to each other which cannot be reconciled.

Ahlu-Sunnah obviously denote those living by *Sunnah*. We have already noted the definition of blind-following. Given this, how can blind-followers be legitimately described as *Ahlu-Sunnah*? For, they act on opinions other than *Hadith*. How can one claim to observe *Sunnah* while he acts on a view opposed to *Hadith*? It is downright outrageous to prefer the Imam's view to *Hadith* and to act on the former yet lay claim to be *Ahlu-Sunnah*.

Views of *Ulama* about Blind-Following

Reproduced below are the opinions of devout *Ulama* on blind-following. These should be studied carefully and blind-following should be avoided. As already stated, it lies in the biased acceptance of someone's view, preferring it to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

On being faced with a choice between the Prophet's command and its opposite view of an individual, can you prefer the latter? Never! Can such a person be reckoned among *Ahlu-Sunnah* if he prefers the latter? No! Blind conformity, therefore, is reprehensible. Below are some opinions about it. On reading these one should not be displeased with the author. Rather, it should evoke gratitude for we, out of sincerity, intend to take you away from the darkness of blind-following to the brightness of knowledge. We wish to draw you closer to the Prophet (ﷺ). We condemn blind-following, not the conditional following of someone.

Sheikh Sa'di's statement

Sheikh Sa'di stated:

“It is error to worship out of conformity. Blessed is the person who is conscious of his objective.”

A person should traverse in the light of reason. Worship symbolises a journey on to the path of the Hereafter. Such a traveller should, therefore, employ reason and knowledge. This journey should be undertaken in the light of the Prophet's teachings. All matters of religion should be pursued with reference to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. For blind conformity on this count might land one into error. Allâh says:

﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“...And whosoever does not judge by what Allâh has revealed, such are disbelievers.” (*Al-Mâidah*, 5:44).

Faith is to be followed in accordance with the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. The believers should pay utmost heed. *Ulama* should not pass of their views as religious rulings nor should the masses be their blind-followers:

﴿وَلَيْنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ﴾

“...And if you (O Muhammad) were to follow their desires after what you have received of knowledge (i.e., the Qur’ân) then you would have against Allâh neither any protector nor any helper.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:120).

Allâh makes it plain that one should not follow others once the Qur’ân and *Hadith* are there. Arguments should decide all matters, whereas conformity by its very definition requires that one’s Imam is to be obeyed without argument. It is stated:

“A *Mujtahid* may take recourse to the four sources of argument (the Qur’ân, *Hadith*, consensus and reasoning). A conformist, however, should have nothing to do with these.” (*Taudih*).

For a conformist the Qur’ân and *Hadith* are irrelevant. Nor is he concerned with study. Blindly he should follow the *Mujtahid* in matters of religion and *Shari’ah*.

Statement of the great scholar Room

In a succinct couplet, the eminent scholar Room says:

“Though your mental faculty intends to soar high, your blind conformity has made you devoid of all courage.”
(*Masnawi*).

Man employs reason for study which unfolds for him knowledge and this, in turn, accrues to him success in both worldly and religious domains. In contrast, blind conformity is synonymous with ignorance which brings about decline and fall in both worldly and religious domains.

“One who prefers blind conformity to *Hadith* without undertaking any study rejects, in a sense, *Shari‘ah*.”

The great scholar Room brands him so, for he follows one’s personal opinion in preference to *Hadith*. And since he does so, it amounts to rejecting *Shari‘ah*. The conformists should seriously consider whether they are not forsaking or rejecting some *Hadith* in preference to someone’s view. It is deplorable that these blind conformists describe themselves as *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah*. How irrational it is in view of his preference for the view of an individual over *Hadith*.

“One who gives up conformity looks at everything in the light of Divine refulgence (guidance).” (*Masnawi*)’

Conformity by its definition implies ignorance whereas argument stands for light in contrast to the darkness caused by the lack of argument. So one who abandons conformity gets out of darkness and is blessed with the light of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. The scholar Room makes this very point that a blind-follower, owing to his ignorance, is steeped in darkness. By abandoning conformity he, however, gains

access to the world of knowledge and draws light from the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. He is guided by Divine light. An ignorant person therefore remains in darkness whereas a non-conformist enjoys knowledge and light.

“There is a world of difference between a conformist and a scholar. For the latter’s voice is as endearing as David’s (Dâwud’s) melody whereas a conformist has an ugly voice.” (*Masnawi*)

A scholar relies for his Faith on the Qur'ân and *Hadith* while a conformist on baseless reports.

“Conformity is an obstacle to all goodness; it is absolutely worthless, though it has an impressive appearance.” (*Masnawi*)

“If you learn it by abandoning conformity, you would take an angelic attribute.” (*Masnawi*).

For conformity is sheer ignorance whereas scholarship is synonymous with knowledge. When one abandons conformity and learns the Qur'ân and *Hadith*, its radiance would bestow on him angelic qualities. Sultan Bâhu rightly observes:

“One who enters the monastic order without attaining knowledge and takes to the path of Divine gnosis dies in the state of disbelief.”

Sheikh Sa‘di’s pithy statement is proverbial:

“An ignorant person cannot recognise Allâh.”

Since he does not know religion, how can he recognise Allâh, His Self and His Attributes, His Commands, and meaning of the Qur'ân. This is a serious disadvantage of conformity that it rests on ignorance. Efforts should be made to help all men and

women to gain knowledge enabling them to move away from darkness of conformity into light and pursue religion aided by their own vision.

Given this, it is shocking that some *Ulama* emphasize conformity. In other words, they exhort the masses to remain ignorant. Allâmah Ibn Qaiyim states:

“It is incontrovertible that knowledge does not characterize conformity. And a conformist cannot be taken as a scholar.” (*A‘lâmul-Muwaqî‘in*)

Asking people to practise conformity amounts to keeping them ignorant.

“Conformity is our real malaise. It is a liability which we mistake as our asset.” (*Masnawi*)

“Knowledge obtained through study is appreciated by Allâh. Therefore it has always a thriving market.” (*Masnawi*)

“O conformist! Do not seek superiority over a scholar. For he is the mainspring of heavenly light.” (*Masnawi*)

“A conformist in the company of his leader is like a deaf person who understands only the sign language.” (*Masnawi*)

“A conformist is always vulnerable to the accursed Satan.” (*Masnawi*).

O brethren in Islam! The Qur’ân and *Hadith* stand out as light of guidance. Whoever is blessed with it is safe and secure. For he would cover his journey in its light. One not enjoying this light faces a dark path. And there is always the danger of attack by Satan in this darkness. The scholar Room

brings home the same point that one should strive to be a scholar, rather than a blind-follower and not act in ignorance:

“Though a conformist may cite numerous reports in support of his stance, none of these has any substance.”
(*Masnawi*)

These are worthless for the lack of substance. In contrast, something supported by the Qur’ân and *Hadith* is as weighty as an impassable and unshakable mountain.

May Allâh have mercy on the eminent scholar Room for teaching Muslims such an excellent lesson that they should not pursue their path in the state of ignorance. On the contrary, they should take every step in the light of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. He refutes blind conformity to the point of striking a deadly blow against it.

Sheikh Thanauallah Amritsari’s statement

We, *Ahlul-Hadith*, can recognize conformity only in the light of its definition. Literally it means imitating someone blindly. In terminological parlance it is defined thus:

“To accept unquestioningly the views of a non-Messenger, constitutes conformity.” (*Musallam Ath-Thubut*)

Included in its definition is the idea that a conformist is unaware of arguments. This is what is known as general conformity. Conforming to an individual resides in accepting unquestioningly the view of a certain Imam in all cases. As a result, conformity stands for ignorance. Since a conformist is bound by conformity, he would not gain knowledge. In an otherwise case, he would give up what he is obliged to do.

Conformity necessarily gives rise to ignorance. As a result, *Shari'ah* sciences cannot be learnt. Knowledge is antithetical to conformity. It is in common knowledge that what prevents an obligatory duty is unlawful.

Sheikh Thanauallah defines conformity in terms of ignorance and following religion without any study. You should decide which path of religion you would like to pursue—of the Qur'ân and *Hadith* or the one without any basis. The former represents non-conformism and the latter conformity. Gaining knowledge would render you as a non-conformist while ignorance would keep you restricted to conformity. This should give you a fair idea of the real aspects of blind-following. It is up to you to make a choice. As a consequence of blind-following, Muslims are found today far away from religion, the majority of Muslims being ignorant of religion. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) exhorts:

«طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ»

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim male and female.” (*Ibn Mâjah*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asks us to gain knowledge in order to facilitate our pursuit of religion yet a group of *Ulama* insists that blind-following is compulsory for Muslims. In other words, they should remain ignorant and follow religion without making any study or acquiring knowledge. O brethren! Decide for yourself what is better—knowledge or ignorance? Darkness or light? Sheikh Thanauallah further observes:

“Had Faith been synonymous with conformity (i.e., an obligatory or important duty), Imam Râzi and other *Ulama* would not have remarked: ‘Conformity does not suffice for religion.’”

Nor would have Sheikh Sa‘di and Khawajah Hâfiz Shirâzi condemned it. Let us now turn to another important figure for explaining the true nature of conformity. Reference is to the renowned scholar Room who uses such strong language against blind-following and its adherents that it cannot be reproduced in full. Only a couple of his mild observations are cited.

Sheikh Ibrahim Sialkoti’s statement

We know well that in the days of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) no person could be obeyed. For he was the model par excellence and no one could stand up to him. Likewise, after his passing away, nothing vies with the Qur’ân and *Hadith* in that no one’s views, reasoning or interpretation can be compared with it. Room illustrates the same point in one of his couplets. Its paraphrase is as follows:

“If the direction of prayer is not known and it is dark all around, *Shari‘ah* lets one to pray in the direction which he deems the right one in view of signs. His prayer would be accepted. However, if it is daylight and one can ascertain directions or one is in Makkah, facing the Ka‘bah, it is not permissible to speculate on the direction of prayer.”

Shari‘ah, no doubt, allows *Ijtihâd* (exercise of judgement) and acting upon it. However, this provision is operative only in the absence of clear instructions, as is evident from Muâdh’s submission to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). However, it is not lawful to resort to one’s own interpretation in the face of Prophetic guidance.

The Sheikh speaks of the golden period of the Companions, and their successors and followers and that they never acted

on speculation. An account of the *Ulama* up to the third century H occurs in *Tadhkiratul-Huffâz*. Blind-following started in this period and by the fourth century separate schools of jurisprudence were in place. And it became a common practice for people to stick to a particular school. Therefore, Shah Waliullah observes:

“Members of the Muslim *Ummah* did not deliberately practise conformity to a particular school before the fourth century.”

The Maulâna brings home the point that *Ijtihâd*, speculation or one’s interpretation is uncalled for, if there exists a relevant Qur’ânic verse or *Hadith*. Blind-following began as a practice in the third century H and separate schools in the fourth century. Given this, it is beyond doubt that the devout people prior to the third century H were simply unaware of both blind-following and distinct schools. They abided by only the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

Allamah Ibn Hazm’s statement

“Shun blind-following in that it is an error. A blind-follower is undoubtedly on a deadly path.”

One who prefers an Imam’s view to *Hadith* in *Shari’ah* sense, no doubt, pursues a deadly path.

According to Shah Waliullah, Following is of two types

Shah Waliullah regards following as both necessary and unlawful. It is necessary for the ignorant ones and forbidden if in preference to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. He states:

“It should be clearly realised that there are two types of conformity to an Imam—necessary (subject to conditions) and unlawful. As to the former, the report should be followed if it is supported by argument. If someone knows little about the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*, he cannot himself infer conclusions and follow the path. He should therefore seek guidance from a jurispudent and enquire of him what the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said on a particular issue and he should follow the same. It is, however, subject to the condition that the Imam’s version is drawn from the primary sources or inferred from these. For in all these cases the ultimate source is the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This methodology is endorsed by all sections of the nation. This explains when conditional following is necessary. An ignorant person should practise it, provided the Imam’s view is in consonance with *Sunnah*. Such a person should always seek to draw guidance from *Sunnah*. If he comes across a *Hadith* in opposition to the Imam’s view, he should prefer the former and abandon the latter. The leading Imams make the same point. Imam Shâfi‘i advises: ‘When there is an authentic *Hadith*, my view would follow it. If you find my views contrary to *Hadith*, you should follow *Hadith* and forsake my views.’ Imam Mâlik says: ‘One may accept or reject anyone’s views, except the Prophet’s.’ Imam Abu Hanifah holds: ‘Who is not aware of the basis of my view should not pronounce judgement in relation to it.’ Imam Ahmad states: ‘Do not imitate me or Mâlik or anyone. Follow in matters of religion the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*.’

The other form of following which is forbidden is that one holds the view about a jurispudent that he has

attained perfection or is infallible. A biased blind-follower is the one who comes across *Hadith* in opposition to someone's view yet he adheres to the latter in the belief that as someone's follower he is bound to him. Although he recognizes the soundness of *Hadith* that runs counter to the view of his Imam yet he does not give up and persists in his following. Such a belief is false, without any basis. No one in earlier days behaved in this fashion." (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

It is worthy of note that Shah Waliullah regards following as something necessary for an ignorant person, provided that he would give up his Imam's view if he comes across *Hadith* contrary to it. He, however, brands such blind-following as forbidden which makes one persist in the same even in the face of a sound *Hadith* which refutes the view of his Imam. For such a belief is false and worthless.

To forsake someone's views in preference to *Hadith*

Shah Waliullah emphasizes that in the presence of *Hadith* the Imam's view which is based on speculation should be given up. He writes:

"If we get authentic *Hadith* it is binding on us to follow it, as is commanded by Allah. And if this *Hadith* is against our school of jurisprudence yet we pay no heed to it and stick to the Imam's view, it would constitute on our part a great wrong-doing. We would not be able to proffer any excuse on the Last Day when all of us would appear before the Lord of the worlds." (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

It is learnt from the above that such a person is a wrong-doer who does not give up the opinion of an individual in preference to *Hadith* and that he would not succeed in employing any pretext on the Last Day before Allah. As noted, it is applicable only in the case of an ignorant person who may, owing to his ignorance, seek guidance from an Imam. Yet it should be subject to the condition that if the Imam's view runs counter to *Hadith*, he would immediately give up the former and follow the latter. Such conditional following is indisputable.

Not to follow one's opinion in preference to *Hadith*

If a point is explained well by a clear, authentic *Hadith* and a person sticks to someone's opinion, Shah Waliullah says of him:

“There is no justification in this case opposing *Hadith*. Only covert hypocrisy and overt foolishness can account for it.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

Compare one's views with the *Hadith*

Shah Waliullah stresses that one's views must be compared with *Hadith*. If these are in line with *Hadith* one may follow these. However, if these are against *Hadith*, one must abandon these:

“The detailed *Fiqh* rulings should be examined with reference to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Whatever is in accordance with the Qur'ân and *Hadith* may be accepted and whatever is not must be shunned. The

Muslim nation cannot afford to neglect the job of examining the views of Imams in relation to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*." (*Wasiyat Nâmah*)

The Companions' conduct

Shah Waliullah has stated:

"It is established beyond doubt that whenever the Companions and their successors received some *Hadith* they started immediately acting upon it. They would not turn to anything else." (*Insâf*)

Since the Companions and their successors accepted *Hadith* unconditionally, they did not impose condition that they would follow it if it is endorsed by so-and-so, the practice of such conditions today is deplorable.

Shah Waliullah did not endorse blind-conformity. He did not approve that educated persons take something blindly; rather he condemned it:

"Conformists cling to imitation. Conformity has slowly seeped into their hearts whilst they were unaware of it." (*Insâf*)

Clearly it means that one should not blindly follow someone's views. One should study the matter, accept only such which are in line with the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and reject those which are in conflict with these.

Refutation of Blind-Following

Refuting blind-following, Shah Waliullah states:

"Only covert hypocrisy or overt foolishness accounts for one's opposition to *Hadith*." (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

Furthermore he observes:

“Another relevant point is alluded to by Sheikh Izzuddin bin Abdus-Salam: It is strange that some blind-followers concede the weakness in their Imam’s position, which cannot be explained away, yet they continue imitating him. What is clearly sought by the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* in preference to their Imam’s views is neglected by them. They resort to pretexts for neglecting the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* and invent far-fetched justification.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

We thus learn that there are such die-hard blind-followers who prefer the views of their Imam to *Hadith*, and cling to blind-following rather than *Hadith*. Such conformity is forbidden. May Allah save Muslims against it. O Muslim brethren! Do remember to follow each and every matter of religion with reference to its basis in the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and act upon it.

Unconditional Following of the commoners is also forbidden

According to Shah Waliullah:

“One who is ignorant and follows one of the Imams out of the belief that he would hardly make any mistake and that he is sound in his views, and he decides not to differ with him even if there is a ground to do so; such a person is one about whom Adi bin Hâtim (رضي الله عنه) is reported in the *Hadith* collection of Tirmidhi that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to recite the Qur’ânic verse:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُءُوبَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ ﴾

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah...” (*At-Taubah*, 9:31)

Although they did not worship them, they blindly followed them regarding what is lawful or unlawful.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

What emerges from it is that an ordinary person may seek guidance from a scholar, subject to the condition that on being told that it is against *Hadith* he would forsake it and act only on *Hadith*. However, if he obeys the Imam even on being told that the Imam’s view is in divergence with *Hadith* and pays no heed to *Hadith*, he takes the Imam as lord besides Allah.

Shah Abdul-Aziz’s statement

Elucidating the Qur’ânic verse:

﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Then do not set up rivals unto Allâh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped).” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:22)

Shah Abdul-Aziz wrote:

“Whoever takes to conformity and does not give it up even after learning its divergence from Divine command, he associates his Imam with Allah. Any act of conformity in preference to *Hadith* amounts to polytheism. Every brother should therefore carefully assess whether he is guilty of such conformity which prompts him consciously following a view contrary to *Hadith*.” (*Tafsir Azizi*)

Shah Ismail's statement

“I do not know how conformity to a certain person⁽¹⁾ gained currency, though one had the opportunity to draw on reports related on the authority of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). These reports make it plain that if the views of the Imam are contrary to *Hadith* yet if one does not give up his conformity to the Imam, his conduct is tainted with polytheism. It illustrates the report cited by Tirmidhi on the authority of Adi bin Hâtim (رضي الله عنه) that he asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to elucidate the Qur'ânic verse which states that Jews and Christians took their rabbis and monks lords besides Allah. In reply the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him: “They followed what was prescribed as lawful and unlawful by them.”” (*Tanwirul-‘Ainain*)

Sheikh Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi's statement

“Some stern Hanafi are so much devoted to their school of jurisprudence and their *Fiqh* rulings that even if they find *Hadith* contrary to it, they do not give up the views of the Imam (while they abandon *Hadith*). Such are ignorant persons” (*Tareeq Muhammadi*).

O readers! Such blind-following is forbidden. It is the height of audacity and ignorance to choose the word of an individual in preference to *Hadith*. Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi condemns this form of following.

⁽¹⁾ It condemns imitating some individual.

Allah did not ask us to become Hanafi or Shâfi‘i

Miyan Syed Nazeer Hussain, a great scholar, writes in his acclaimed work, *Mi‘yârul-Haq*:

“Shah Waliullah states in his monograph, *Risâlah Qaul Sadid* that it should be realised that Allah has not asked any of His servants to become a Hanafî, Shâfi‘i, Mâlîki or Hanbali. Rather, He has made it obligatory on everyone to obey Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and to believe in all that is brought by him (i.e., the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*).”

May Allah bless Shah Waliullah for his apt observation that Allah asks us to obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone. We are not obliged to become Hanafi, Shâfi‘i, Mâlîki or Hanbali. Then why do *Ulama* insist that an Imam be followed and one should become Hanafi, Shâfi‘i, Mâlîki or Hanbali? Rather they should stress only on obedience to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*. As *Ahlu-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith* we should abide by the commands of Allah and His Messenger. Educated Muslims should not blindly conform to the views of individuals, rather they should act only on *Hadith*.

Mulla Ali Qâri’s statement

“It is in common knowledge that Allah does not oblige one to be Hanafi, Mâlîki, Shâfi‘i or Hanbali. He,

however, asks us to follow *Hadith* if we are learned and to follow *Ulama* if we are ignorant” (*Mi‘yârul-Haq*).⁽¹⁾

Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi’s religious verdict

Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi, a distinguished Hanafi scholar pronounces:

“It is not a condition for a Muslim to be a Hanafi, etc.”
(*Majmu‘ah Fatâwa*)

It is evident from the above verdict that being Hanafi, etc. is not one of the conditions for becoming a Muslim. Since in the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) Muslims were not known as Hanafi or Shâfi‘i, why is it necessary today to acquire such a title?

Why not be known as Muhammadi

If we like to be associated with someone why should not we be known as Muhammadi (the followers of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم))? As compared to be known as Hanafi, Shâfi‘i, Mâliki or Hanbali, the association with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is much more desirable and it should be preferred to all others.

O brethren in Islam! Your Messenger is Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) whose obedience is binding upon you, as decreed by Allah in the Qur’ân. You are obliged also to live

⁽¹⁾ The ignorant commoners should formulate their queries thus: ‘What is the command of Allah and His Messenger regarding this issue? Kindly answer it with reference to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. May Allah have mercy on you’. The answer should then be followed by the ignorant.

by *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. By Allah's leave he would intercede for you on the Day of Judgement. You should therefore give up conformity to others and follow his way. Be members of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*.

O brethren! It is for you to ponder that you feel ashamed of your association with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) while you take pride in being Hanafi (the follower of Imam Abu Hanifah). Why is it so? Imam Abu Hanifah never asked you to be his follower; he abided by *Hadith*. You too should directly follow *Hadith*.

An example of conformity by the Jews

Shah Waliullah wrote describing the state of Jews' conformity:

“Should you like to see an example of the conduct of Jews, look at the misguided *Ulama* who are given to worldliness and are full of conformity. Having abandoned the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* they blindly follow a certain Imam while they neglect the infallible legislator Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Like the Jews they are content with absurd justification of the word of their Imam which they tend to sanctify with inauthentic *Hadith*.” (*Fauzul-Kabir*)

Meaning of Shah Waliullah's statement

As to Shah Waliullah's reference to the conduct of Jews, he speaks of the misguided *Ulama* who are lost in worldly pursuits. It appears that he mentions such misguided *Ulama* who cling to blind conformity. We thus learn that some members of the Muslim nation behave like the Jews. By

describing the evil ways of the conformists, the Shah strikes similitude between them and the Jews.

To avoid the conformity of the Jews

It is clear from the above quotation of Shah Waliullah that such *Ulama* who, of their worldliness, abandon *Hadith* and prefer someone's views and act upon the views in preference to the Prophet's; they follow in the footsteps of the Jews for their predilection for conformity as opposed to abiding by the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. If one would like to observe the conduct of the Jews he should better see such *Ulama* who are indifferent to the clear directives of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. For the Shah such *Ulama* are misguided ones. For they are content with this world, even at the expense of losing religion. However, they are guilty of inciting the public to follow them blindly. They relate to the commoners baseless stories⁽¹⁾ and worsen their Faith, for their word is taken seriously by them. These worldly religious figures make their disciples follow them blindly for their selfish ends. They exploit them. Same was the conduct of the rabbis who cheated the commoners. Allah says about them:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبًا لَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا يَدْعُونَ إِلَهَ﴾

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah...”

(*Al-Taubah*, 9:31).

Elaborating this verse the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) remarked:

⁽¹⁾ “And there are among them (Jews) unlettered people, who knew not the Book, but they trust upon false desires and they but guess.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:78).

«إِنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَعْبُدُونَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا أَحَلَّوْا لَهُمْ شَيْئًا اسْتَحَلُّوْهُ وَإِذَا حَرَّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا حَرَّمُوْهُ»

“They did not worship their rabbis and their monks. However, they believed in what was declared lawful or unlawful by them, though without any sanction.”
(*Tirmidhi*)

Allah charges them in the above verse, with taking their rabbis and their monks as their lords besides Allah. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explained this point with reference to their blind acceptance of their pronouncements about lawful and unlawful things. They never examined their rulings in the light of the Torah or the Gospel. In other words, they blindly followed them.

O Muslim brethren! Draw lesson from the above verse and its elucidation by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Do not imitate your religious scholars blindly. Do not act upon their rulings without scrutinizing these. Verify things in that if their views are in line with *Hadith* these must be obeyed. However, if they are contrary to *Hadith*, spurn them. Do not take such *Ulama* as sincere to you who make you blindly follow them by recounting to you baseless stories. *Sunnah* offers the light which should guide you. If you belong to *Ahlu-Sunnah* and practise conformity, it is likely that you might follow some unsubstantiated view of theirs opposed to *Hadith* and your following the same would land you into error. Allah regards the practice of accepting unsound views of *Ulama* in the context of lawful and unlawful things as taking them as lords besides Allah. It is done in order to caution people and to tell them to follow someone carefully in matters of religion.

Being Hanafi or Shâfi'i represents only teacher-disciple relationship

Some religious figures of early days are referred to as Hanafi or Shâfi'i not in the sense that they were some blind-followers. Ignorance is the very prerequisite of conformity whereas they were outstanding scholars of the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Given this, they cannot be branded as blind-followers. This appellation as used of them indicates simply the teacher-disciple relationship. Students of Imam Abu Hanifah came to be known as Hanafi and those of Imam Shâfi'i as Shâfi'i. It simply signified what an Alig or Deobandi represents, i.e., the fact that someone is a student of the Aligarh Muslim University or Dar-ul-Uloom, Deoband respectively.

Conformity is not some religious issue. For it does not occur in the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Nor did it exist in the golden period of the Companions and their successors and followers. It was invented only in the fourth century Hijri. Since then it has gained currency, rendering people speechless and making them follow their Imam without any basis.

By definition a blind-follower is an ignorant person. For he has no personal opinion or independent judgement. He cannot undertake a study nor can he enquire about the basis of a certain point. Throughout his life he leads a pathetic life which he cannot help. In view of the same the great Urdu poet Iqbal holds that suicide is better than such blind-following which hinders one's faculties of thinking, understanding, reflection and seeking knowledge. For it keeps one ignorant all along his life. Since suicide is forbidden in Islam, blind-following then becomes more forbidden than it.

Muslims are thus told that they should not remain ignorant. Rather they should acquire knowledge, learn the Qur'ân and

Hadith and act accordingly. They should not merely follow their worldly *Ulama* (religious scholars). They should seek a way out in the light of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and live by these. They should not pursue blind-conformity.

Need for arguments

Reasoning demands arguments whereas conformity calls for blind-following. A conformist need not use reason and ask for argument. He is obliged to follow his Imam blindly and remain throughout his life in the state of ignorance.

Conditional conformity is justified

A commoner is ignorant. Whenever in need of guidance he must ask a religious scholar. Being ignorant he does not know, so the scholar should guide him, out of fear of Allah, towards the Commands of Allah and His Prophet. The guidance should be drawn from the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and the ignorant person should act on it. This, however, should be subject to the condition that if the very issue of religion is proved contrary to *Hadith* later, he would abandon it and follow *Hadith*. It explains what kind of conformity an ignorant person should practise. This point is not called into question by anyone. For Allah asks us to consult a scholar if we do not know something. Conformity, nonetheless, presupposes ignorance. So only an ignorant, not knowledgeable, person can practise conformity.

Conformity to an individual

Sheikh Ibn Hammâm, an outstanding Hanafi, states:

“There is no ground, whatever for conformity to an individual.” (*Fathul-Qadir*)

Mulla Ali Qâri says:

“One who rejects *Hadith* is a disbeliever.”
(*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

Implicit in it is the idea that one acts on a view contrary to *Hadith* and rejects *Hadith* out of his prejudice.

When asked how far he followed Imam Abu Hanifah in matters of religion, Imam Abu Yusuf replied:

“Imam Abu Hanifah was a religious teacher. We accepted all that was good from him and rejected all that was not good.” (*Tareeq Muhammadi*).

It is evident that Imam Abu Yusuf was not his blind-follower. In selecting between good and bad things from him the Imam made a study. And one who undertakes such a study is a scholar, not a mere blind-follower.

Imam Abu Hanifah’s prohibition against Blind-Following

The leading Imams never asked that they be followed blindly and others should act on their views without basis in *Shari‘ah*. Imam Abu Hanifah says:

“It is forbidden to pronounce a *Fatwa* on the basis of my view unless one knows the basis of my view.”
(*Mizân Sha‘râni*).

If the Imam’s view is sanctioned by the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, it may serve as the basis of a ruling and should be acted upon. Otherwise it is not so. So those knowledgeable persons who take the Imam’s views as part of religion without a basis do

not even follow the Imam. For he himself prohibits the same. May Allah shower His mercy on the Imam for his truthful observation:

“If my opinion is contrary to the Qur’ân, abandon it.”
When people asked him what to do if it was against *Hadith*, he told them to forsake his opinion. He was again asked what to do if it was against the sayings of the Companions. He replied to give up his opinion even then.” (*Raudatul-‘Ulama*)

Imam Abu Hanifah again observes:

“Whenever my opinion runs counter to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, follow the former and forsake my opinion.”
(*Mizâan Sha‘râni*)

This golden saying of the Imam is worth remembering:

“My stance is what is sound *Hadith*.” (*‘Iqdul-Jeed*)

It emerges that he was a follower of *Hadith*. His words make the same point. One also learns that he abided by *Hadith*.

The Imam did not direct that he be followed blindly nor he had such an opinion about his views. He did not invent some Hanafi *Madhhab*. On the contrary, he repeatedly stresses that the Qur’ân, *Sunnah* and *Hadith* be followed. He defined himself as one of the *Ahlul-Hadith*. Yet the Hanafis pay no heed to him. O brethren! Listen to Allah,⁽¹⁾ act on the Prophet’s teachings and pay heed to Imam Abu Hanifah’s advice.⁽²⁾

(1) Allah asks them to produce some authority. It leaves no room for blind following. For believing in something without a basis constitutes blind following.

(2) Imam Abu Hanifah’s position is: ‘Authentic *Hadith* is my stance’. Given this, Hanafis should also abide by *Hadith*, as is the Imam’s

Why do you conform to an individual while it is not commanded by Allâh or the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) or Imam Abu Hanifah? You prefer someone's views to *Hadith* and abandon *Hadith*, and you still take pride in being *Ahlu-Sunnah*. This is the way of biased and stubborn conformists. However, those who prefer *Hadith* to everything else really belong to *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*.

Imam Abu Hanifah has stated:

“All that is borne out by *Hadith* is worth following.”
(*Zafarul-Amâni*)

O brethren! In accordance with this directive of the Imam prefer what is endorsed by *Hadith* to everything else. Do not contend that it is something contrary to your school and reject it. For the Imam asks that *Hadith* be followed:

“It is related by Sheikh Muhyuddin in his *Futuhât Makkiyah* with reference to Imam Abu Hanifah that the latter said: Avoid personal opinion in matters of religion. Make it a point to adhere to *Sunnah*. For one who defies *Sunnah* is misguided.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

Think! Imam Abu Hanifah emphasizes that *Sunnah* be followed. We also elaborate the same point that *Hadith* and *Sunnah* be followed.

It is stated in the book *Mizân Sha'râni*:

“Someone in Kufah brought a copy of the Book of Daniel. On noting this Imam Abu Hanifah and others were enraged, intent on killing him. They told him: ‘Is

directive. If they persist in blind following, rather than adhering to *Hadith*, they are guilty of disobeying their Imam.

there any source of religion other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith*?" (Haqeeqatul-Fiqh)

O brethren! Adhere to the Qur'ân and *Hadith* alone and act only on these. It is for you to reflect that the Imam could not bear that someone may consult a work other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

According to *Tuhfatul-Akhyâr fi Bayânil-Abrâr*:

Imam Abu Hanifah said: "Do not imitate me or Imam Mâlik or anyone else. Follow in matters of religion their sources, i.e., the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*."
(*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

Remember! The Imam categorically asks you not to follow him blindly but to act on the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's prohibition against Blind-Following

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal stated:

"Never follow me blindly or Imam Mâlik or Imam Shâfi'i or Imam Awzâ'i or Imam Thawri. Listen! You should draw on the sources (the Qur'ân and *Hadith*) which they used." (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

Since the Imam unequivocally tells that he or anyone else be not followed blindly, the conformists should give up blind conformity and act only on the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*.

"Imam Ahmad used to say that no one enjoys any authority other than Allah and His Messenger." (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

On being presented with *Hadith* no one should turn to the

view of one's Imam. One should be frightened to do so. Imam Ahmad says:

“Do not entrust your religion to someone by way of blindly following him. Listen! Follow only that which reaches you through the Companions and their successors.” (A *lâmul-Muwaqqi'in*)

In other words, act only on *Hadith* and do not follow anyone. This was the message of the leading Imams.

Imam Shâfi'i's prohibition against Blind-Following

Imam Shâfi'i said:

“When I tell you something and there is a saying of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) against it, the latter is preferable and do not follow me.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

Imam Shâfi'i used to say:

“As you get hold of authentic *Hadith*, know that it is my viewpoint as well. If you find my view contrary to *Hadith*, make it a point to follow *Hadith* and reject my view outright.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

“It is established regarding Imam Shâfi'i that he prohibited conformity both to himself and to others.” (*Iqdul-Jeed*)

He said:

“One who seeks knowledge of the matters and issues of religion without scrutiny is like the one who picks up fuel in the woods in the darkness of the night, without

realizing that it contains a snake which would bite him.”
(A *‘lâmul-Muwaqqi‘in*)

It is thus clear from Imam Shâfi‘i’s views that one should directly draw upon the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, and not imitate someone blindly.

Imam Mâlik’s prohibition against Blind-Following

According to Imam Mâlik:

“There is no one perfect in the world and hence, what is good from him is accepted and bad rejected. The only exception, however, is Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) whose each and every word is true, sound, correct and worth believing. Throughout one’s life one should not miss a single teaching of his.” (*‘Iqdul-Jeed*)

The message is that one should take the views of everyone to scrutiny, for no one other than the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is infallible. Hence everyone should be obeyed with reference to some argument. Blind-following is to be shunned. Imam Mâlik says:

“I am just a human being. Sometimes I am in the right, sometimes not. Reject such views of mine which are discordant with the Quran and *Hadith*.”. (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

He asks people not to indulge in blind conformity to him rather they should discern that what is in disagreement with the Qur’ân and *Hadith* should be spurned and what is in line with these should be accepted.

May Allah bestow His innumerable mercy on the four Imams for their explicit prohibition against conformity to

them. They repeatedly state that what is discordant in their views with *Hadith* be rejected downright. Conformists are therefore requested to give up conformity, as sought by the Imams. For the Imams forbid blind conformity to themselves and ask that one must draw directly on the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

Prohibition of *Imams* and *Ulama* against Blind-Following

In his work *Kitâbur-Radd 'ala man Akhlada ilal-Ard*, Jalaluddin As-Sayuti states:

“Imam Mâlik, Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Shâfi‘i never permitted that they be followed blindly by anyone. Undoubtedly they forbade and made no allowance for anyone on this count.” (*Miy'ârul-Haq*)

The leading Imams (may Allah have mercy on them) have prohibited everyone against imitating them. Muslim brethren should follow the advice of the Imams.

“All leading Imams asked their disciples to abide by the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and instructed them to reject their views if these were found contrary to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

It is clearly stated in *Hujjatullâhil-Bâlighah* that all jurisprudents have forbidden conformity to them or to anyone else. In his *Futuhât Makkiyah* Ibn 'Arabi writes:

“I leave behind for you this advice: If you are a scholar, it is forbidden for you to act on something without a basis sanctioned by Allah (i.e., what is against the Qur'ân and *Hadith*). Forbidden for you is conformity to others while you are capable of gaining knowledge.

Should you be an ignorant person, be a conformist yet avoid following a particular school (i.e., imitating a certain individual). Rather act in the way Allah has commanded you to do — ‘Ask of those who know, if you know not.’ And those who know are such *Ulama* who know the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. So as the need be, seek their guidance and act accordingly. For Allah says that there is no constraint in matters of religion. If the scholar tells you to do such and such in view of the command of Allah and His Messenger, follow it. However, do not follow him if he tells you his own opinion. Ask another scholar about the command of Allah and His Messenger.” (*Mi’yârul-Haq*)

Qazi Thanauallah Panipati holds:

“If one clings to a particular school, except that of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in the belief that he is right and only that school, not of any other Imam, is to be followed, such a person is misguided and ignorant.” (*Mi’yârul-Haq*)

Ismâ‘il Shaheed states in his book *Tanwirul-‘Ainain*:

“I do not know how imitating an individual gained currency, though one had the ability and access to reports on the authority of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which are clearly opposed to the view of the Imam. If the conformist still does not give up the word of his Imam, he suffers from a streak of polytheism.” (*Mi’yârul-Haq*)

Such blind-following is forbidden which is pursued even in the face of *Hadith*. May Allah protect every Muslim against it. Shah Ismâ‘il Shaheed continues further in his work:

“It is evident from the *Hadith* (narrated by ‘Adi bin Hâtim) that if someone imitates a particular person, though arguments based on the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* are opposed to his views; and interprets these as to conform to those views: there is a possibility that such a person is afflicted with Christianity and polytheism.”
(*Mi’yârul-Haq*)

The Shah condemns outright such blind-following which is pursued in opposition to *Hadith* by branding it synonymous with Christianity and polytheism.

In his *Futuhât Makkiyah*, Ibn ‘Arabi says:

“Once one gets hold of authentic *Hadith* while the view of an Imam is contrary to it, one should not forsake the former, rather the latter should be rejected. It is not lawful to prefer the view of an Imam to the view of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. For one guilty of it goes too far in error and moves out of Allah’s religion.” (*Mi’yârul-Haq*)

Thus it is clear that a biased and die-hard blind-follower who does not give up the word of his Imam in preference to *Hadith*, in the opinion of Ibn ‘Arabi, is a misguided person, outside the fold of religion.

In his *Sharh ‘Ainul-‘Ilm*, Mulla Ali Qâri states:

“It is common knowledge Allah did not compel one into becoming Hanafi, Mâlîki, Shâfi‘i or Hanbali. He, however, asks him to adhere to *Hadith*; and to follow a scholar, if he is an ignorant person.”

In his *Tafsir Ahmadi*, Mulla Jeewan writes:

“It is permissible for a conformist to move from one school to another, as is borne out by the views of many

scholars. And it is permissible to follow another school regarding a point, as is the practice of Sufis.”
(*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

In other words, if a Hanafi follows Shâfi‘i schools in terms of saying *Ameen* aloud, raising his hand and reciting *Surah Al-Fâtihah* while praying behind an *Imâm*, it is all right and does not impair one’s allegiance to Hanafi school. It also emerges from Mulla Jeewan’s statement that it is not necessary to follow a particular school. The same point is reiterated by Imam Sh‘arâni in his *Mizân Kubra*:

“Imam Ibn Abdul-Birr tells that no Imam is on record telling his disciples to cling to a particular school.”
(*Mi‘yârul-Haq*)

It occurs in *A‘lâmul-Muwaqqi‘in*:

“Nothing is obligatory except what has been declared so by Allah and His Messenger. Allah and His Messenger have not made it obligatory on anyone to adhere to a particular Imam in such a way that he should follow him blindly and not others.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

Shah Shaheed expresses the view in *Tanwirul-‘Ainain*:

“Much excess has been committed by people in the matter of conformity. They have gone to lengths to compel themselves into following a particular person. They have abandoned *Ijtihâd* even in a point and forbidden conformity, except the one related to their Imam. This is what has ruined Shiites. So these people too are on the path of self-destruction.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

That is, a biased conformist is prone to following only what is prescribed by his Imam, without paying heed to other

Imams. For example, a Hanafi does not recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* while praying behind an *Imâm*. If he is told that the other three leading Imams recommend it, he does not listen to it. He thus rejects the other three Imams while *Ahlul-Hadith* follow all the four Imams and hold them in great esteem. They hold all the Imams, jurisprudents, *Mujtahideen* and *Auliya* in high regards and accept all their views which are in accord with the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and reject those which are inconsistent with these. All Muslims should follow the same practice. They should not cling to a particular school but practise religion in the light of Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Allah commands us not to turn to someone's word, speculation, interpretation and *Ijtihâd* in preference to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

Explaining the verse:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَتَهُمْ أَرْكَابًا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ﴾

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah.” (*At-Taubah*, 9:31).

Imam Fakhruddin Râzi stated:

Many exegetes hold that the Jews and Christians had not taken their rabbis and monks in the sense of god. Rather they obeyed them in respect of commands. It is reported that Adi bin Hâtim (رضي الله عنه), a former Christian, visited the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) at a time when the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was reciting the above-quoted Qur'ânic verse. ‘Adi bin Hâtim said: “We did not worship them.” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him: “Did you not take it as lawful what was declared so by them whereas it was pronounced unlawful by Allah?”

Did you not consider it as unlawful as held by them while it was prescribed lawful by Allah?" Adi responded in affirmative. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told him that it signified their worship of them.

Reference is to taking the views of someone as religious commands and accepting their pronouncements on something as unlawful or lawful. O brethren! Remember! We are here in this world only for once, never to return. You should then better follow Allah and His Messenger. Who would reward you for following a non-Messenger? Allah has promised reward for only those who obey Him and His Messenger.

Shah Abdul-Aziz explaining the Qur'anic verse:

﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Do not ascribe partners to Allah while you know.”
(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:22)

in his *Tafsir Fathul-Aziz* states:

Let it be known that worshipping someone other than Allah is patent disbelief and polytheism. Likewise, obedience to someone else is disbelief, if one obeys someone without finding out the truth of his commands, and especially when one knows that obedience to him is contrary to Divine command. If one still does not give up, it constitutes a form of polytheism which is condemned in another Qur'anic verse:

﴿اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُءُوسَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ﴾

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lord besides Allah...”
(*At-Taubah*, 9:31).

Elucidating the verse:

﴿وَلَكِنْ أَتَّبَعْتُمْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allâh), then indeed you will be one of the *Zâlimun*.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:145)

that such people are wrong-doers who follow the wish of others even after the knowledge has reached them, he writes:

“It is known by this verse that conformity is forbidden once one learns that arguments are against it. For it is synonymous with following one’s desires after the knowledge has reached him.”

In explicating another Qur’ânic verse:

﴿وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ﴾

“... they follow only conjectures.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:78)

he stated:

“Every scholar is obliged to act in proportion to the knowledge he possesses and he should avoid falsehood and tampering with the Book. For the ignorant it is important not to be content with imitation and speculation, rather he should strive to gain conviction.”

Qazi Thanauallah Panipati, while commenting upon the verse:

﴿وَلَا يَتَّخِذْ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ﴾

“... Do not take some as lord besides Allah ...”

(*Âl-Imrân*, 3:64)

writes in *Tafsir Mazhari*:

“Once it becomes clear to someone that there is an authentic *Hadith* contrary to Imam Abu Hanifah’s

ruling (to say) but from among the four, any other Imam's ruling on that point is in accordance with the *Hadith*, then it is obligatory on him to follow that *Hadith* and not to persist in the teaching of his Imam, otherwise 'to take someone as lords besides Allah' will hold good for him."

May Allah bless Qazi Thanauallah with His mercy for his denunciation of blind-following. Now to illustrate the manner in which one can act according to his advice, take the example of reciting *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* behind *Imâm* in the *Salât*. Since there are *Ahadith* on record asking that *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* be recited while praying behind an *Imâm* and these are authentic, unabrogated *Ahadith* but Imam Abu Hanifah's ruling is contrary to it and the other three Imams' rulings are in accordance with these *Ahadith*, then the Hanafis should not stick to their position. They must recite *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah* in the *Salât* behind an *Imâm*. Likewise, there are many other points which need attention. If *Ulama* give up prejudice and blind imitation, Muslims can stand today united.

Imam Shaukâni points out in his *Al-Qaulul-Mufid*:

"It is obvious to every scholar that none of the Companions, and their successors and followers was a conformist. Nor was ascribed to the religion known after the name of some Imam. The ignorant used to seek *Shari'ah* guidance, endorsed by the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, from scholars who instructed them in the same. They followed sound tradition and would not make their independent rulings." (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

According to *Mizân Sha'râni*:

Umar bin Khattâb (رضي الله عنه) said: "By Him Who controls my life, Allah did not cause a Messenger to

death or discontinue revelation until He made the whole *Ummah* no longer in need of their speculations.”

The Prophet’s death and cessation of Revelation is the clear proof for it that religion has been perfected, and the Muslim *Ummah* has become independent of someone’s views. O Muslim brethren! Hold fast to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* and act only on these in that these alone constitute religion.

It is stated in *Dârimi*:

Ibn Mighwal reports that he was told by Imam Sha‘bi: “You should accept what these jurists teach you on the authority of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and dismiss all that which is their personal opinion.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

May Allah be glorified! How much Imam Sha‘bi holds *Hadith* dear to him in that he advises that all the views contrary to *Hadith* be dismissed outright. He thus condemns blind-following. Obviously, our love for and obedience to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) demands that we reject all that is opposed to *Hadith*.

On the authority of Abdullah bin ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) it is reported in *Hujjatullâhil-Bâlighah*:

He used to say: “Do you not fear Allah’s punishment in that you be swallowed up by the earth. For you contend that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says this and this while someone says like this.” (*Haqeeqatul-Fiqh*)

These pious souls did not tolerate that anything be said against *Hadith* and considered it as an excitant for Divine punishment. Today also Muslim brethren should not put up with someone’s views in contrast to *Hadith*.

You should bear it well in mind that Allah or His Messenger has not asked you to indulge in conformity. Nor did conformity exist in the days of the Companions, and their successors and followers. The leading Imams, too, do not prescribe it. Rather they repeatedly prohibited it, as noted earlier. Muslim brethren should avoid blind conformity and act directly on *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Their deeds and beliefs should issue from the same, for this is the Command of Allah and His Messenger. Same point is made by the four Imams that *Hadith* be adhered to. May Allah show mercy to all of them.

Four Prayer Mats (*Musalla*) in the House of Allah

Conformity came into vogue in the fourth century H which resulted in the birth of schools. Then there developed sectarian differences. Hanafis and Shâfi'is became so hostile to each other that they would not pray behind each other. In 665H four Qazi representing each of the four schools were appointed in Egypt. Sultan Farah bin Barquq introduced four prayer mats in the House of Allah. While one *Imâm* led the prayers, other devotees would just sit there on the three prayer mats, without praying. Instead of joining prayer and standing at the Station of Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) altogether, this sectarianism divided them. May Allah bless Sultan Ibn Saud who, when granted rulership by Allah, extirpated this heresy in 1343H from the House of Allah. Now only one *Imâm* leads the prayer.

The so-called people of *Sunnah* and *Jamâ'ah*

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni says:

“The way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is known as *Sunnah* and the Companions’ united stance as *Jamâ'ah*.”

So *AhluS-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* are those who follow the Prophet’s way in the manner of the Companions. This is a blessed appellation. One wishes all Muslims become truly *AhluS-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. For it would put an end to all the differences and promote great unity. Alas! Those who presently call themselves as *AhluS-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* are loath to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Rather they feel enraged at those who adhere to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. They are given to polytheistic beliefs, deeds, practices and rituals. *AhluS-Sunnah* today are those who use musical instruments and perform many Hindu rituals in wedding parties. They are the ones who, like non-Muslims, perform death rituals,⁽¹⁾ such as on

(1) Hindus hold a ritual on the fourth day, and thirteenth day of one’s death and death anniversary. While performing these rituals they offer quality clothes, pots and food to a clergyman who recites part of their scriptural words and takes these away. Since Muslims have converted from Hinduism, they imitate the latter in holding the above-mentioned rituals. However, these do not have any sanction in *Sunnah*. Nor were these even performed by the Companions and their successors and followers. Nor were these held at the death of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his wives, his daughters and sons, his Companions who numbered more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand and their wives. Never did the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) ask that these be done. Not only in the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, rather no mention of these is found in works on *Fiqh*. On the contrary, *Fiqh* scholars speak of these as acts of heresy (for example in *Talkhisus-Sunan*, *Fatawa Bazzâziyah*, *Sharhul-Minhâj*, etc.). However, one may give alms and charity, without

the third, tenth and fortieth days of death and its anniversary. They hold *Qawwâli* parties, vow in the name of others than Allah,⁽¹⁾ erect structures on graves,⁽²⁾ call on others beside Allah⁽³⁾ in crisis, light lamps at graves⁽⁴⁾ make offerings to others besides Allah on certain dates,⁽⁵⁾ prostrate and hold fairs at graves,⁽⁶⁾ organise *Urs*,⁽⁷⁾ take to mentor-discipleship on a

making it specific to certain time-place consideration, in the Name of Allah and it may bring in reward. Once charity and alms are clothed in heresy, it divests these of goodness and reward. Every heresy is error and each takes one to the Hell-fire.

- (1) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says: “He commits polytheism who vows in the name of someone other than Allah.” (*Tirmidhi*)
- (2) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade erecting structures at the graves. (*Muslim*)
- (3) “...So invoke not anyone along with Allah.” (*Al-Jinn*, 72:18).
- (4) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) cursed those who light lamps at graves. (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)
- (5) Making an offering to someone other than Allah on the eleventh, and also every other such offering is forbidden. As it is, it is a monetary mode of worship and every worship is exclusively due to Allah. This is the position of Hanafi school. Hanafi brethren should therefore give attention to it. “It is a point of consensus among the whole nation that an offering to someone beside Allah is forbidden.” (*Bahrur-Râ’iq*)

“Offerings to someone other than Allah are forbidden and the thing set apart for this purpose is also forbidden.” (*Fatawa Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi*). It is recorded in *Raddul-Mukhtâr*: “Beware! There are many who make offerings for the dead and for seeking the pleasure of saints, offer money and other articles at their graves. In the opinion of all scholars of Hanafi school it is both false and forbidden.”

O Hanafî brethren! This is the ruling of Hanafi school on this point. For Allah’s sake follow the same. May Allah have mercy on the *Fiqh* scholars who spoke the truth and declared it for the masses.

- (6) Qais bin Sa’d (رضي الله عنه) sought the Prophet’s permission for prostration out of esteem. He replied: “Beware! Do not prostrate before me. Were

commercial basis by exploiting the disciples, act as custodians of graves⁽¹⁾ and subsist on offerings made at graves. *Ahlu-Sunnah* today are those who recite a buffer prayer after Friday prayer,⁽²⁾ forbid others from reciting *Ameen* aloud,⁽³⁾ raising the hands; and the finger as testimony⁽⁴⁾ during prayers.⁽⁵⁾

I to issue such a command, I would have asked women to prostrate before their husbands.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*). What is proved is that it is forbidden to prostrate before anyone except Allah. It betrays polytheism.

(7) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) instructs: “Do not take my grave as a place of congregation (i.e., do not hold annual fair or *Urs* there).” (*Nasa’i*). O brethren who call yourself *Ahlu-Sunnah*! How can you be of *Ahlu-Sunnah* while you conduct *Urs* in violation of the Prophet’s command. No *Urs* has even been held at his grave. Think about it and mend your ways.

(1) *Hadith* and *Fiqh* do not sanction that one should act as custodians of graves and take its offerings as means of one’s subsistence. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) condemned it saying: “Do not take to sitting at graves.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*). The command is in absolute terms hence acting as its custodians is all the more reprehensible.

(2) It is narrated by Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنهما) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to offer two *Rak’ah Sunnah* prayer at home after Friday prayer. (*Bukhari* and *Muslim*). But those who offer buffer (precautionary) prayer after it, how can they claim to be *Ahlu-Sunnah*.

(3) Wâ’il bin Hujr (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “I heard the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) reciting the last verse of *Surah Al-Fâtiḥah*, followed by saying *Ameen* aloud.” (*Tirmidhi*, *Dârimi* and *Ibn Mâjah*). This establishes the *Sunnah* that one should recite aloud *Ameen* while praying behind an *Imâm*. How can those who defy this *Sunnah* be called *Ahlu-Sunnah*! This *Sunnah* is referred to by Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni: “Recite aloud *Ameen* in prayers in which the Qur’ân is recited aloud.” (*Ghunyatuṭ-Tâlibin*).

(4) Abu Humaid Sâ’idi related to ten Companions how the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to pray. In the course of his report he stated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) raised his hands while bowing down for *Ruku’*

They imitate blindly a certain individual Imam and follow him without any basis while forsaking *Sunnah*.⁽¹⁾ Though they call themselves as *Ahlus-Sunnah*, they take the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to be someone as the Omnipresent, All-Seeing⁽²⁾ and the Knower of the Unseen.⁽³⁾ They make offerings invoking

and repeated the same at the conclusion of *Ruku'*. Having finished two *Rak'ah* he raised his hands. The ten Companions affirmed: "You have spoken the truth. He used to pray exactly in the same manner." (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*). It establishes the raising of hands in prayer as *Sunnah*. It is pity that those who stop others from observing this *Sunnah* are known as *Ahlus-Sunnah*. Corroborating this *Sunnah*, Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni remarks: "Raise your hands at the first call and both at the beginning and conclusion of *Ruku'*." (*Ghunyatul-Tâlibin*)

(5) "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would raise his right index finger in testimony." (*Muslim*). What a pity that those who dissuade others from doing so are known as *Ahlus-Sunnah*. The malaise may be traced back to blind-following. O Muslim brethren! Devote yourselves to *Sunnah* and *Hadith* and practise these in that this alone would make you true *Ahlus-Sunnah*.

(1) Those who give up others views in preference to *Sunnah* and *Hadith* are doubtless true *Ahlus-Sunnah*.

(2) Allah tells: "...He is with you (with His Knowledge) wherever you may be..." (*Al-Hadid*, 57:4). Allah alone is Omnipresent and All-Seeing. Nothing escapes His Knowledge. Taking someone besides Allah as Omnipresent and All-Seeing amounts to associating someone with Allah.

(3) Allah proclaims: "Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah..." (*An-Naml*, 27:65). Moreover, He directs His Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to declare that the Messenger is unaware of the Unseen (*Al-Anam*, 6:50). Knowledge of the Unseen is exclusive to Allah. To believe that Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) too possesses this knowledge amounts to considering him as equal with Allah. Such a belief cannot be entertained by *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. Nor is it permissible in Hanafi school: "Hanafi scholars unequivocally regard him as disbeliever who thinks that the Prophet

Imam Hussain in the month of Muharram⁽¹⁾ and take food material such as wheat, salt, sweets and bread to the grave.⁽²⁾ These *Ahlu-Sunnah* recite *Adhân* at graves after burial⁽³⁾ and regularly recite formula in honour of Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni.⁽⁴⁾

In sum, the people who act against the doctrine of Monotheism and *Sunnah* are known as *Ahlu-Sunnah*. This is the height of injustice. Regrettably they do not realise that in view of their conduct they cannot be regarded as *Ahlu-Sunnah*. Actually they are traditional *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*, i.e., nominal ones. They would be entitled to immense regard and reward if they are genuine *Ahlu-Sunnah*. May Allah turn them into real *Ahlu-Sunnah* and inspire them to adhere to the faith and practice of His beloved Messenger.

(صلى الله عليه وسلم) possesses knowledge of the Unseen. For it is contrary to the Qur'ânic verse: 'Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah' (*An-Naml*, 27:65). One thus learns that such a notion is considered as disbelief in Hanafi school. O Hanafi brethren! Be honest in following your *Fiqh* rulings.

- (1) Offerings are a monetary mode of worship which is due to Allah alone, not to someone other than Him.
- (2) Neither the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), nor the Companions and their successors and followers ever performed these rituals. It is lawful to pray for bringing reward to someone. It should be, however, free from all heresies.
- (3) To recite *Adhan* at graves represents additions in matters of religion. For the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) buried many, yet he never did so or directed for it. Nor did any of the one hundred and twenty-five thousand Companions do so.
- (4) While faced with a crisis one must invoke Allah only: "... so invoke not anyone along with Allah." (*Al-Jinn*, 72:18). "Say (O Muhammad): I invoke only my Lord (Allah alone), and I associate none as partners along with Him." (*Al-Jinn*, 72:20).

It must be remembered that the Prophet's way constitutes *Sunnah* and the united stance of the Companions as *Al-Jamâ'ah*. Those who pursue the Prophet's way and follow the Companions' united stance are *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. It should be clearly realised.

Guard me against my Blind-Followers

Imam Abu Hanifah (may Allah bless him greatly) never asked that he be imitated or his views be accepted without basis, as noted earlier. Rather he has forbidden that he should be followed blindly. People, however, have taken to following him blindly and ascribed many views to him. It is deemed obligatory to believe and follow these. The Imam says:

“It is forbidden to issue a religious verdict on the basis of my view unless one knows the basis of my view.”
(*Mizân Sha'râni*)

In other words, he asks not to follow him blindly. Yet Hanafis insist on conformity to him. They are not prepared to renounce it notwithstanding his repeated directives. They say: “We are your blind-followers. We shall follow you without any basis. If you forbid us thousand times following you blindly, we shall not stop doing so.” Why do they disobey the Imam?

The Imam did not author the works which comprise Hanafi *Fiqh*. These were written hundreds of years later. However, their contents are attributed to the Imam. Imam Abu Hanifah was born in 80H and died in 150H at the age of seventy years (may Allah have mercy on him).

Let us now see when the *Fiqh* works were written:

Title of the <i>Fiqh</i> book	Compiled in which Century (Hijri)	How long after Imam Abu Hanifah it was compiled
<i>Quduri</i>	5th H.	Three hundred years
<i>Hidâyah</i>	6th H	Four hundred years
<i>Qadi Khan</i>	6th H	Four hundred years
<i>Maniyah</i>	7th H	Five hundred years
<i>Tahtâwi</i>	8th H	Six hundred years
<i>Sharh Waqâyah</i>	8th H	Six hundred years
<i>Nihâyah</i>	8th H	Six hundred years
<i>Kanz</i>	8th H	Six hundred years
<i>Jami 'ur-Rumuz</i>	8th H	Six hundred years
<i>Fatawa Bazzâziyah</i>	9th H	Seven hundred years
<i>Fathul-Qadeer</i>	9th H	Seven hundred years
<i>Khulâsah Kaydani</i>	9th H	Seven hundred years
<i>Chilpi</i>	10th H	Eight hundred years
<i>Bahrur-Râ'iq</i>	10th H	Eight hundred years
<i>Tanwirul-Absâr</i>	10th H	Eight hundred years
<i>Dhakhirah</i>	10th H	Eight hundred years
<i>Durr Mukhtâr</i>	11th H	Nine hundred years
<i>Fatawa Alamgiri</i>	12th H	One thousand years

All the *Fiqh* issues in these books are related on the authority of Imam Abu Hanifah. Unlike the works on *Ahadith*, these do not contain a chain of narrators to adduce that all these rulings are by the Imam himself. Yet the followers are asked to abide by the same, telling them: "As many curses as the particles of sand on one who does not accept the view of Imam Abu Hanifah."

Only the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was sinless

It must be borne in mind that only Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is infallible in that Allah guarantees so.

﴿ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴾

“And he does not speak of his own desire. It is only the revelation that is revealed.” (*An-Najm*, 53:3,4)

What it proves is that revelation lies in his word and deed. And this constitutes religion itself which one must believe in and act on for it is free from imperfection.

Abdullah bin ‘Amr (رضي الله عنهما) narrated:

I asked: “O Messenger of Allah! Should I record all that I hear from you?” He replied in affirmative. I then submitted: “Should I write all that you say in the state of anger and pleasure?” He again replied in affirmative, adding that all that comes out from his mouth is truth. (*Jâmi‘ul-‘Ilm*)

Infallibility belongs to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone.. Truth characterizes his word, whatever be the situation. For Allah speaks of his word as revelation.

According to a narration in the *Hadith* collection of Dârimi:

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told Abdullah bin Amr (رضي الله عنهما): “By Him Who holds my life in His hand, truth is always spoken by me. So write it down all that I say.”

Allah says regarding the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

﴿ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴾

“But no, by your Lord, they cannot have Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.” (*An-Nisa*, 4:65)

Allah stresses that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) be obeyed unconditionally. Those feeling constrained against his judgement are spoken of as those without Faith. This exalted status is exclusive to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). No member of his *Ummah* can ever attain this position.

One who rejects the Prophet’s decision is branded as unfaithful by the Qur’ân. It is therefore an exaggeration to contend that one who rejects the view of a member of his *Ummah* is a cursed person.

Drinking wine was a common practice in Arabia. The Qur’ân forbade it and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) cursed a person guilty of it. However, those addicted to drinking, by employing their wealth, found pretexts in that they secured verdicts declaring that wine made of wheat, barley, honey and maize is lawful,⁽¹⁾ though of grapes is the forbidden variety. You decide for yourself whether such verdicts can be acceptable. Especially while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) declares, as is narrated by Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنهما):

«لَعَنَ اللهُ الحَمْرَ وَشَارِبَهَا، وَسَاقِيَهَا، وَبَائِعَهَا وَمُبْتَاعَهَا، وَعَاصِرَهَا
وَمُعْتَصِرَهَا، وَحَامِلَهَا وَالْمَحْمُولَةَ إِلَيْهِ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that Allah’s curse is on wine and on the one who drinks it, offers it, sells it, buys it, brews it, makes it brewed, transports it and

⁽¹⁾ *Hidâyah, Kitâb-ul-Ashrabah.*

carries it to one and on the one to whom carried.” (*Abu Dâwud* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

Drinking is strictly forbidden in that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade all its varieties. He said:

«إِنَّ مِنَ الْحِنْطَةِ خَمْرًا، وَمِنَ الشَّعِيرِ خَمْرًا، وَمِنَ التَّمْرِ خَمْرًا، وَمِنَ الزَّبِيبِ خَمْرًا وَمِنَ الْعَسَلِ خَمْرًا»

“Undoubtedly, wine made of wheat, barley, dates, dried grapes and honey is equally forbidden.”

(*Tirmidhi* and *Abu Dâwud*)

We thus learn that wine of each and every variety is forbidden. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) laid down penalty for all its forms.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) enforced punishment on those convicted of drinking.” (*Bukhârî* and *Muslim*)

So in the light of *Ahadith* it is something strictly forbidden and no verdict of a member of his *Ummah* can allow drinking under any circumstance.

Some wealthy persons, however, secured verdicts to the effect that such drinking⁽¹⁾ is forbidden which is intoxicating. In other words, drinking a certain quantity of wine, which does not intoxicate one, is permitted. Such a verdict runs patently counter to *Shari'ah*. Jabir (رضي الله عنه) narrated: The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَا أَسْكَرَ كَثِيرُهُ فَقَلِيلُهُ حَرَامٌ»

“Something, which intoxicates you if consumed in a large quantity, is forbidden even if taken in a small quantity.” (*Tirmidhi*, *Abu Dâwud* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

(1) *Hidâyah, Kitâb-ul-Ashrabah.*

What is forbidden in its totality is forbidden in its part as well; both the practices are equally invalid—consuming a whole bottle of wine or tasting a drop of it. For no one’s view, which is opposed to the Prophet’s, can be accepted; it must be rejected outright.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is Allah’s Messenger who was granted the Qur’ân by Him for guidance of people in matters of religion. By practising the Qur’ân, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) showed the *Ummah* the way to Paradise. Allah commands us to obey him and follow all that he tells us (in matters of religion). In other words, Allah asks us to obey him unconditionally. He commands us:

﴿وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ﴾

“... obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and render not your deeds vain.” (*Muhammad*, 47:33).

It is therefore incumbent on every Muslim to abide by him unquestioningly and not to turn to the views of members of his *Ummah* which are contrary to his.

Those who ascribe their false notions to religious leaders and the Imams should mend their way. Were the Imam to appear today and observe all anti-*Hadith* practices attributed to him, he would certainly exclaim: “Save me from my blind-followers.”

Disagreement with *Ahadith*

Allah sent down the Qur’ân and asked people to accept all that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) teaches them:

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ﴾

“... And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it...” (*Al-Hashr*, 59:7)

The Qur'ân is to be followed in the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). For Allah says:

﴿ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا سَلِيمًا ﴾

“But no, by your Lord, they cannot have Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.” (*An-Nisa*, 4:65)

Allah makes it plain in the above-quoted verse that until Muslims obey unconditionally the Prophet's commands and *Ahâdith* and surrender to him entirely, devote themselves heart and soul to *Ahâdith*, they cannot become Muslim.

Given this, such Muslims who follow a particular Imam, rather than the Prophet (and spend their life in imitating blindly the views, opinions and conjectures of the Imam, no matter whether these be discordant with *Ahâdith*, they should better reconsider their claim to Faith in the light of the above verse which states: “... No, by your Lord, they cannot have Faith ...” By declaring that Muslims must accept what the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) judges, Allah has appointed him the judge of the whole Muslim *Ummah*. However, blind-followers have assigned this role to their respective Imams. Allah commands us to live by *Hadith* whereas they stake even their life at the views of their Imam. Allah asks us to pursue the highway of *Sunnah* but they followed the side road of one's conjectures and speculations. Such conformists should repent and take Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as his guide. They should subject all views and speculations to *Hadith*.

Cited below are some passages from the acclaimed work on *Fiqh* --- *Hidâyah* which are discordant with *Hadith* so that

Muslim brethren should give up views contrary to *Hadith* and devote themselves fully to the Prophet's directives. For Allah asks us to obey only the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

A pot defiled by a dog

The Prophet's command: According to Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed:

«إِذَا شَرِبَ الْكَلْبُ فِي إِنَاءٍ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلْيَغْسِلْهُ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ»

“Wash the pot seven times if dog drinks of it.”
(*Bukhâri and Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “When dog drinks of a pot, wash it thrice.” (*Hidâyah*, Book of *At-Tahârah*)

Here is an unsubstantiated view that runs contrary to an Agreed upon *Hadith* figuring in the *Hadith* collections of Bukhâri and Muslim. O brethren! It is for you to ponder.

Offering *Salât* at the roof of Ka‘bah

The Prophet's prohibition: Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated:

«نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ فَوْقَ ظَهْرِ بَيْتِ اللَّهِ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prohibited that one may offer *Salât* at the roof of Ka‘bah.” (*Tirmidhi*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “It is permissible to offer *Salât* at the roof of Ka‘bah.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter: *Salât fil-Ka‘bah*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prohibits but it is deemed permissible in *Fiqh*. How is it so? How can something prohibited by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) be ever a permissible act? This amounts to committing excess against *Hadith*.

Women leading *Salât*

The Prophet's permission: It is reported in *Abu Dâwud*, Chapter *Imâmat-un-Nisa*:

عَنْ أُمِّ وَرَقَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - «وَأَمَرَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنْ تَتَوَّمَّ أَهْلَ دَارِهَا»

“He had permitted Umm Warqah to lead prayer for her family.”

And is reported in *Mustadrak*, Chapter *Imâmatul-Mirât*:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا «أَنَّهَا تَوَّمَّ النِّسَاءَ وَتَقُومُ وَسَطَهُنَّ»

“Aishah would stand in the middle of row and lead women in prayer.”

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “It is undesirable that only women offer *Salât* in congregation.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Al-Imâmat*)

O brethren! While the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) allows women to pray in congregation and her leading the prayer, the same are held as undesirable in *Fiqh*. Such rivalry with *Hadith* is indeed outrageous. It is deplorable to brand something undesirable which is permitted by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Practically it is considered as something forbidden by Hanafi that woman may lead prayer.

A minor leading prayer

The Prophet's permission: It is reported in *Sahih Bukhari*:

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ سَلَمَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: «فَقَدَّمُونِي بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَنَا ابْنُ

سِتِّ أَوْ سَبْعٍ»

“Amr bin Salmah led prayer while he was six or seven years old.”

People took ‘Amr bin Salmah as leader in prayer and offered prayers behind him and this was in the Prophet’s knowledge. Had it been something unlawful, he would have prohibited or a Divine command would have been sent down to him instructing that a minor could not lead the prayer. Since there is nothing against this practice on the part of Allah and His Messenger, it in itself bears out its lawfulness.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “It is not lawful for men to pray behind a woman or a minor.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Al-Imâmat*).

‘Amr bin Salmah, a seven-year-old child,⁽¹⁾ led prayer during the lifetime of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) while the Qur’ân was being revealed and many prayed behind him. Neither Allah nor His Messenger forbade it. According to *Fiqh*, however, it is something unlawful. Who is there to pronounce such a judgement? Only the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) being the last Messenger was authorised to declare things as lawful or unlawful; it is not the prerogative of a member of his *Ummah*.

Gifts

The Prophet’s directive: Ibn Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ «الْعَائِدُ فِي هَبْتِهِ كَالْكَلْبِ يَعُودُ فِي قَيْتِهِ»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “One who takes back his gift is like the dog who eats his own vomit.” (*Bukhâri*)

⁽¹⁾ That a minor may lead prayers is not something obligatory. One need not necessarily take him as *Imâm*. It is more of an allowance that if a minor is a good memorizer and reciter of the Qur’ân he may lead prayers. In Ramadân people may pray behind him. This permission is, however, refused by Hanafî school in the days other than Ramadân which pronounces that it is not lawful. Though it is proved that people prayed behind a seven-year-old child in the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “When one gives something to a stranger, he is at liberty to reclaim it.” (*Hidâyah*, Book of *Al-Hibah*)

O brethren! Ponder over the point that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbids that something given as gift be taken back and he employs the parable of a dog for the same, yet it is something permitted in *Fiqh* and no argument is advanced in support of it. It is regrettable that a *Hadith* reported by Bukhâri is contested.⁽¹⁾

Congregational *Istisqa* prayer

The *Sunnah*: Abdullah bin Zaid (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِالنَّاسِ إِلَى الْمُصَلَّى يَسْتَسْقِي فَصَلَّى بِهِمْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ جَهْرَ فِيهِمَا بِالْقِرَاءَةِ وَاسْتَقْبَلَ الْقِبْلَةَ يَدْعُو وَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ وَحَوْلَ رِدْآءِهِ حِينَ اسْتَقْبَلَ الْقِبْلَةَ

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) went out with his Companions for *Istisqa* prayer to the prayer ground and led two *Raka’h* prayer aloud. He turned cloak inside out while facing *Qiblah*.” (*Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Imam Abu Hanifah says that it is not part of *Sunnah* to have congregational *Istisqa* prayer.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Al-Istisqa*)

⁽¹⁾ Those *Fiqh* rulings which are in accord with *Hadith* must be adhered to. However, those which are discordant should be given up. This is the prerequisite of Faith. For no one can dare say that *Fiqh* is Divinely inspired. As compared to it, both the Qur’ân and *Hadith* have their explicit and implicit origin respectively in Revelation. Both are Divinely inspired. One must obey both Allah and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Once again here is something to reflect upon. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) led congregational *Istisqa* prayer but according to Hanafi *Fiqh* it is not part of *Sunnah*. How can a view which is contrary to Hadith cited by Bukhâri and Muslim be accepted?

Prayer for the dead *in absentia*

The Prophet's practice: Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ نَعَى لِلنَّاسِ النَّجَاشِيَّ الْيَوْمَ مَاتَ فِيهِ، وَخَرَجَ بِهِمْ إِلَى الْمُصَلَّى فَصَفَّ بِهِمْ وَكَبَّرَ أَرْبَعَ تَكْبِيرَاتٍ»

“The day King Negus died, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed the Companions of the same (through revelation that Negus had died in Ethiopia). Then he took them to prayer ground, put them into rows and led Funeral prayer with four calls.” (*Bukhâri and Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Funeral prayer *in absentia* is not permissible.” (*Durr Mukhtâr, Chapter Salâatul-Janâi'z*)

According to the above-quoted *Hadith* the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did lead Funeral prayer *in absentia* for King Negus, hence it is something lawful. But it is dubbed as unlawful in *Fiqh*. Accordingly, Hanafis do not offer Funeral prayer *in absentia*. They should abandon such conduct which is contrary to *Hadith* and follow only the Prophet's practice.

Single Call (*Takbir*) for Congregational prayer

The Prophet's directive: It is reported:

«أَمَرَ بِلَالٌ أَنْ يَشْفَعَ الْأَذَانَ وَأَنْ يُرْتَرَ الْإِقَامَةُ إِلَّا الْإِقَامَةَ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed Bilâl to recite twice the formula for *Adhân* and once for *Iqâmah*, except

the part ‘The prayer is about to start.’” (*Bukhâri and Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Both in *Adhân* and the call (*Iqâmah*) the formula for call should be offered twice.” (*Hidâyah, Chapter Al-Adhân*)

According to *Hadith*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) instructed Bilâl (and through Bilâl رضي الله عنه the whole *Ummah* of his) that the call (*Iqâmah*) for prayer be made only once. However, in Hanafi *Fiqh* it is obligatory to recite the formula twice. Accordingly the same practice has been followed throughout centuries in the country. No Hanafi ever recites a single call, nor would he ever do the same. On the contrary, serious quarrels do take place in mosques on this issue.(1) These brothers should make single call (*Iqâmah*), as is evident from the *Hadith* reported in *Bukhâri*. It should be realised that such an act, that stops you from following a unanimously Agreed upon *Hadith* should be shunned.

Leading in the prayers

As to the issue who should lead the prayers, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) instructs:

(1) As to the contention that two calls (recitation of *Iqâmah* twice) are also mentioned in report, that refers to the particular form of *Adhân* in which *Tarji'* is made, which they never follow. They ignore authentic reports about a single call. All along his life Bilâl made a single call. With the thought of the Last Day in their mind they should try to justify their utter disregard for the unanimously Agreed upon *Hadith* reported by both *Bukhâri* and *Muslim*, according to which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded Bilâl to make a single call. Why do these brethren not derive any guidance from it? Why do they neglect the obvious? Why do not they follow the Prophet's command to Bilâl?

«يُؤَمُّ الْقَوْمَ أَقْرَاهُمْ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، فَإِنْ كَانُوا فِي الْقِرَاءَةِ سَوَاءً فَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالسُّنَّةِ، فَإِنْ كَانُوا فِي السُّنَّةِ سَوَاءً فَأَقْدَمُهُمْ هِجْرَةً، فَإِنْ كَانُوا فِي الْهِجْرَةِ سَوَاءً فَأَقْدَمُهُمْ سِنًا»

“One who knows the most of the recitation of the Qur’ân should lead prayer. If all are equal in this respect, one who knows the most of *Sunnah* should lead prayer. Again, if all are equal on this count, one who migrated first should lead prayer. If all are the same in this regard, the one senior most in age should lead prayer.” (*Muslim*)

What is worth noting is that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) lays down four criteria for this job. These are so all-embracing that the person most suited for leading the prayer can always be easily found. It resolves this issue for all times. Any further discussion on it by way of adding or deleting certain condition is something interfering with religion.

To resolve the differences in the light of the Prophet’s command

While delivering a sermon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) observed:

“Allah has made pilgrimage obligatory on you.” On this Aqra’ bin Hâbis said: “O Messenger of Allah! Is it to be performed every year?” He said: “If I had replied in affirmative, it would have been so.⁽¹⁾ Listen! It is obligatory only once in life.” (*Bulugh Al-Marâm*)

⁽¹⁾ For Allah says: “Nor does he (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) speak of (his own) desires. It is only an inspiration that is inspired.” (*An-Najm*, 53:3,4). What the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commands is, in fact, Divine

Divergence of *Fiqh*: The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) declared that Allah had made pilgrimage an obligatory duty for Muslims. Someone made an uncalled query. To this he replied that if he had answered the query in affirmative, it would have made it an annual duty. The Prophet's instruction is: Once I relate to you a command you should remain silent. Once I stop, you should also stop and engage in following my command. You should not elaborate on it unnecessarily.

Let us now turn to the main point. The above *Hadith* prescribes four conditions for leading prayer. The Muslim *Ummah* should follow these, without committing any excess against these. Since the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has resolved the matter once and for all, the *Ummah* should not take any further steps. No alteration should be made in it. Let us see how it has been altered in *Fiqh*:

“The most deserving of leading prayer is the one who knows most of *Sunnah*. If all are equal on this count, he should be the one who knows most of the Qur’ân. Again if all equal in this respect, the most pious among them should lead prayer. If all are the same in this regard, the one senior most in age is entitled to lead prayer.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Al-Imâmat*)

On examining the four conditions prescribed in the *Hadith* and in *Fiqh*, it emerges that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) accords this position first to the one who recites most of the Qur’ân whereas in *Fiqh* this place goes to the one who knows most about *Sunnah*. The Prophet's command thus stands altered.

command. Had Allah decided to make pilgrimage an annual duty on everyone, He would have directed him to answer in the affirmative. Since it was not His Will, He did not make him say so. Undoubtedly *Hadith* is Divine Revelation.

In the Prophet's list of priorities the next place is for the scholar of *Sunnah* while in *Fiqh* it is for the one who recites the Qur'ân. According to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the third place is for the one who migrated first. In *Fiqh*, however, this place is annexed by the pious person. Once again there is alteration in the Prophet's directive. There is no change, however, in the fourth condition.

You decide who is entitled to alter the Prophet's command. Since no one is authorized to do so, why do some of our brothers prefer their *Fiqh* ruling to *Hadith*?

Moreover, it does not stop at altering the Prophet's command. In *Durr Mukhtâr* there occur certain additions:

1. The person who deserves most to lead prayer is the one who knows most of the rules regarding prayer.
2. Next, one who recites the Qur'ân best.
3. Next, one who is most pious.
4. Next, one who is senior most in age.
5. Next, one who is best in manners.
6. Next, one who has the most beautiful face.
7. Next, one who is of the best descent.
8. Next, one who is best dressed.
9. Should all be equal in all these features, lot be drawn.
10. Or, people are free to select one whom they prefer.

(*Tanwirul-Absâr*)

It is to be noted whereas *Hadith* mentions only four conditions, these have been changed into ten. More surprisingly, the compiler of *Durr Mukhtâr* specifies a few more. He writes:

(The person best suited for leading the prayer is:)

11. The one with the brightest face.
12. Next, one with the noblest descent.

13. Next, one with the most melodious voice.
14. Next, one with the most beautiful wife.
15. Next, one with the most riches.
16. Next, one with the biggest head and small organ.
17. Next, one with the highest position.
18. Next, a resident is preferable to a traveller.
19. Next, a born free is preferable to a freed slave.
20. Next, one with *Wudu* is preferable to the one with *Tayammum* and the one having taken bath to one with *Tayammum*.
21. If the matter still remains unresolved, the majority should select an *Imâm* of its choice.

(Tareeq Muhammadi)

Readers! You have already noted the *Hadith* in which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sets out only four conditions. *Fiqh* scholars extended these to ten and further to even twenty-one. Allah says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

“O believers! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (*Al-Hujurat*, 49:1)

Allah asks us not to hasten in matters of consequence in the Prophet’s presence. It is for you to think, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentions only four conditions regarding him who should lead the prayer; *Fiqh* scholars have, however, extended it to twenty-one. Does this not amount to go forward in his presence? The *Qur’ân* asks us to fear Allah. So these brothers should better give up all that is contrary to *Hadith* out of fear of Allah. They should be content with the Prophet’s directive, not alter it or set up another structure.

Praying at the earliest

The Prophet's saying: Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنهما) narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «أَمَّنِي جِبْرَائِيلُ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ مَرَّتَيْنِ فَصَلَّى بِي الظُّهْرَ حِينَ زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ وَكَانَتْ قَدْرَ الشِّرَاكِ وَصَلَّى بِي الْعَصْرَ حِينَ صَارَ ظِلُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِثْلَهُ»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told: "Jibrael led prayer⁽¹⁾ for me in Ka'bah twice. He offered *Zuhr* prayer while it was past midnoon. And he led 'Asr prayer while shadow of everything became its equal." (*Abu Dâwud* and *Tirmidhi*)

We learn on the authority of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that when something is equal to its shadow it is the earliest time for 'Asr prayer and the expiry time for *Zuhr* prayer. It marks the expiry of *Zuhr* time and beginning of 'Asr time. However, there is a contrary ruling in Hanafî *Fiqh*.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: According to Hanafî *Fiqh*: "When the shadow of something is double in size, it is the expiry time of *Zuhr* prayer and the beginning time for 'Asr prayer." (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Al-Mawâqit*)

Brethren! You note here while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) recommends that *Zuhr* time is over when the shadow of something becomes its equal and it is the beginning of 'Asr

⁽¹⁾ As Jibrael conveyed Revelation, his leading prayers is synonymous with bringing Revelation. The command to pray is a Qur'ânic command. However, the exact form and timings of prayer were conveyed by him through implicit Revelation. Accordingly the Prophet instructed: "Pray as I do." (*Bukhâri*). Jibrael's leading of prayers sanctified its form and timings.

time, however, it is not so according to Imam Abu Hanifah, as is related by the compiler of *Hidâyah*, *Zuhr* time is not over and 'Asr time does not begin. The Prophet's statement is thus called into question. It is a pity that Hanafis abide by their Imam's ruling, not by *Hadith*. In no Hanafi mosque do they pray 'Asr at its earliest time. In other words, they do not follow the Prophet's directive on this count but stick to Imam Abu Hanifah's. That is why they pray 'Asr very late when the sunlight turns pale.⁽¹⁾ They do it in the face of the Prophet's saying:

«أَفْضَلُ الْأَعْمَالِ الصَّلَاةُ فِي أَوَّلِ وَقْتِهَا»

“It is an excellent deed to pray at its earliest time.”
(*Bukhâri*)

Yet these brethren never pray at the earliest. They pay no heed to the Prophet's word but would act only on their *Fiqh*. It is only out of sincerity for them that we would like to ask them as to what their reply would be when Allah would interrogate them why they preferred a scholars view to *Hadith* of His true Messenger. Why did they alter the Prophet's command in the light of their Imam's ruling? What would their reply be when asked why they always prayed late out of their blind conformity?

(1) Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “A hypocrite performs 'Asr prayer (very late); he waits till it is almost sunset and the sunlight turns pale. He performs it hastily and remembers Allah little.” (*Muslim*). It is worthy of note that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) describes it as a hypocrite's prayer if 'Asr is prayed very late. The hypocrites used to do so. It is deplorable that some Muslim brethren too deliberately delay it and offer it very late. They should be fearful of doing so.

To combine prayers

The Prophet's command: It is narrated by Ibn 'Abbâs

(رضي الله عنهما):

«كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الظُّهْرِ وَالْعَصْرِ إِذَا كَانَ عَلَى ظَهْرِ سَيْرٍ وَيَجْمَعُ بَيْنَ الْمَغْرِبِ وَالْعِشَاءِ»

“While travelling, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to combine *Zuhr* and ‘*Asr*; and *Maghrib* and ‘*Isha* prayers.”

(*Bukhâri*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was a mercy for the mankind. He was there to help relieve the shackles of peoples.⁽¹⁾ He made life comfortable for everyone. One of the relevant points in this context is his practice of combining prayers. While travelling he used to combine prayers—*Zuhr* with ‘*Asr* and *Maghrib* with ‘*Isha*. He did so while on pilgrimage and on other journeys also. His practice is a facility for everyone that one may offer prayers together, in the journey. However, this provision is rejected in Hanafi *Fiqh*.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Prayers should not be combined except when one is on pilgrimage journey.” (*Sharh Waqâyah*, Book of *As-Salât*)

The allowance made by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is overruled by Hanafi *Fiqh*. How sad it is that the Prophet provides a facility which is denied to the nation by *Fiqh*.

(1) “... and he (Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) releases them from their heavy burdens and from the fetters that were upon them...” (*Al-A'raf*, 7:157).

Distinction between the prayer of a Male and a Female

Relevant *Hadith*: There is a general ruling of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) about prayer:

«صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي»

“Pray (O males and females) in the manner I do.”
(*Bukhâri*)

There is no distinction between the prayer of a male and a female. Rather everyone is asked to follow the Prophet’s model. Abu Humaid Sâ’idi (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِذَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ حَتَّى يُحَادِيَ بِهِمَا مَنْكِبَيْهِ»

“When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would begin the *Salât*, he raised both his hands up to the shoulder.”
(*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*, Chapter *Sifatus-Salât*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: The Prophet’s above-mentioned practice is a model for everyone, males and females. The distinction made in *Fiqh* works is to be observed: “Males should raise hands to the level of their ear (i.e., the thumb should be as high as the ear lobe).” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Sifatus-Salât*)

Males are directed to raise hands up to their ear lobe, not up to their shoulders. Never does a Hanafi raise his hands up to his shoulders. They spend their whole life doing the same. They never follow the relevant *Hadith*. Let us now turn to their ruling about females: “Females should raise their hands up to their shoulders.” (*Hidâyah*). They regard it permissible for females and unlawful for males. Why is this distinction between males and females? If a male raises his hands up to his shoulders they resent it. What right do the followers of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) have to alter *Shari’ah*? Since the Prophet

(صلى الله عليه وسلم) has not prescribed any distinction in the *Salât* of a male and a female, why should the followers of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) do so?

As to fastening the hands, the Prophet's practice was as follows: Wail bin Hujr (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ الْيُمْنَى عَلَى يَدِهِ الْيُسْرَى عَلَى صَدْرِهِ»

“I prayed behind the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He put his right hand over the left one and fastened them on his chest.” (*Bulugh Al-Marâm*)

This practice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) makes it binding on all the male and female members of his *Ummah* to fasten their hands at this particular position. Now see how *Fiqh* has interpolated: “Males should fasten their hands below the navel.” (The Books of *Fiqh*)

O readers! Here is a ruling contrary to *Hadith*, asking males to fasten their hands at the navel. However, females are asked to do so at their breast, not at the navel. Who authorised the members of the *Ummah* to decide so? How could they devise one way of prayer for males and another for females? Why should not all males and females raise their hands up to the shoulder and fasten them at the chest, as dictated by *Hadith* and *Sunnah*?

Single *Witr* prayer

The Prophet's directive: The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says:

“One wishing to perform three *Rak'ah* of *Witr* prayer may do so, and one offering a single *Rak'ah* of *Witr* prayer may do so.” (*Abu Dâwud, Nasa'i and Ibn Mâjah*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“There is a single *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer late in the night.” (*Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: It is directed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to offer a single *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer, one may therefore do so. However, *Fiqh* disallows it as is mentioned: “There are three *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *As-Salât*)

All Hanafi brethren perform three *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer, never a single one. Instead of following *Hadith* they always adhere to *Fiqh* ruling. It raises the question how can the members of the *Ummah* be authorized to annul the Prophet’s command about a single *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer. They should have better laid it down that one is free to offer three or one *Rak‘ah* of *Witr* prayer.

Sitting during prayer

The Prophet’s practice: It is narrated:

«فَإِذَا كَانَ فِي وَتْرٍ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ لَمْ يَنْهَضْ حَتَّى يَسْتَوِيَ قَاعِدًا»

“When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) finished the first or third *Rak‘ah*, he rose after sitting comfortably (after performing the second *Sajdah*).” (*Bukhâri*)

It should be clear that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would sit properly in the first or third *Rak‘ah* after having performed the second *Sajdah*. Let us now look at *Fiqh* ruling.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Stand straight on your toes and do not sit.” (*Hidâyah*, Chapter *Sifat-us-Salât*)

In accordance with the *Hidâyah* ruling, all Hanafi brethren never sit after these *Rak‘ah* in prayer. Why do not they adhere to the Prophet’s directive and rather give it up in preference for the Imam’s ruling? O Muslim brethren! Sit as directed by

the blessed *Hadith*. All the four Imams too, ask you to abide by *Hadith*.

The Issue of *Tayammum*

To strike once is in *Hadith*: It is narrated:

«ضَرَبَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِكَفَيْهِ الْأَرْضَ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِمَا ثُمَّ مَسَحَ بِهِمَا وَجْهَهُ وَكَفَيْهِ»

“While performing *Tayammum*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) struck both his hands at dust. Then blowing it, he rubbed these against his face and up to the wrist.”
(*Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “One should strike twice in *Tayammum*.”
(*Hidâyah*, Chapter *At-Tayammum*)

Never do the Hanafi brethren strike at dust only once, while striking once is clearly proved by the *Hadith* mentioned above.

To wipe over the head-dress

The Prophet’s practice: It is narrated by Mughirah bin Shu‘bah (رضي الله عنه):

«أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ تَوَضَّأَ فَمَسَحَ بِنَاصِيَتِهِ وَعَلَى الْعِمَامَةِ وَعَلَى الْحُقَيْنِ»

“While performing *Wudu*⁽¹⁾ the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) wiped over the hair above the forehead, over the head-dress and over the socks.” (*Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: We know from the above *Hadith* that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did wipe over his head-dress.

⁽¹⁾ If one is bare-headed, he should perform *Mash* of the entire head in that both the hands be rolled over from the hair on the front to the end. According to *Sahih Muslim*, these should be extended up to the nape. Then this action should be repeated in reverse.

However, it is forbidden by Hanafi *Fiqh*. Rather, it is decreed: “It is not lawful to wipe over one’s head-dress.” (*Hidâyah*, Book of *At-Tahârah*)

While the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) practised it, *Fiqh* ruling is that it is something unlawful. Who are these authorities to declare it unlawful and on what basis?

To make vinegar out of wine

Forbidden by *Hadith*: Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ سُئِلَ عَنِ الْحَمْرِ يَتَّخَذُ خَلًّا فَقَالَ: «لَا»

When someone asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) whether to make vinegar of wine he forbade it, saying “Never do so.” (*Muslim*)

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “Once vinegar is made of wine it becomes lawful. If it happened of its own or because of adding something (it becomes lawful). It is not undesirable to make vinegar of wine.” (*Hidâyah*, Book of *Al-Ashrabah*)

The Prophet rules it out that vinegar be made of wine. However, Hanafi *Fiqh* allows the same. It is for you to see the consequence of opposing *Hadith*. There is the famous saying of Imam Abu Hanifah: “Authentic *Hâdith* is my stance (guiding principle).” While it is reported in Muslims’s collection of authentic *Ahadith* that it is unlawful to make vinegar of wine, every Muslim should believe in the same in view of this *Hadith*.

Selling and purchasing a dog

Forbidden by *Hadith*: Abi Mas‘ud (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ نَهَى عَنْ تَمَنِ الْكَلْبِ وَمَهْرِ الْبَيْعِيِّ وَحُلُوانِ الْكَاهِنِ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has forbidden that payment be made for the price of dog, wages of a prostitute and *hulwan*⁽¹⁾ of a soothsayer.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*, the Book of *Buyu*)

The above *Hadith* disallows trading in dog. However, Hanafi *Fiqh* allows the same.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “It is permissible to sell and purchase dog.” (*Hidâyah*, Book of *Buyu*)

O my brethren! Forsake blind conformity and hold trading in dog unlawful in the light of the above *Hadith*. Do remember that the Qur’ân asks you to obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Offering *Fard* prayer behind one offering *Nafl* prayer

Permission in *Hadith*: Jabir (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

“Mu’âdh bin Jabal would pray ‘*Isha* prayer behind the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), go back home and would then lead his people in prayer.” (*Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

It emerges from the above that it is perfectly all right to offer *Fard* (obligatory) prayer behind one who offers *Nafl* (optional) and has already offered his obligatory prayer earlier. It is for

⁽¹⁾ Literally ‘*hulwân*’ stands both the wages and sweets for the soothsayer. Shah Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, therefore, states in *Sharh Mishkât* that this expression covers both the shades of meaning—wages and sweets. (*Ash’atul-Lamât*, vol. 3, page 5). According to *Mazâhir Haq (Sharh Mishkât)*, vol. 3, page 80, a soothsayer is one who foretells the future while the Arabic expression ‘*hulwân*’ refers to some sweet or clothes given for receiving such knowledge of the future. Hâfiz Muhammad too, defines it as sweets given to a soothsayer. (*Zeenatul-Islam*, vol. 2, page 80).

convenience of the nation. However, *Fiqh* ruling of Hanafi school disallows it.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “One performing obligatory prayer cannot pray behind one offering optional prayer.” (The Books of *Fiqh*)

It is to be noted that while the above cited *Hadith* allows it, as is evident from the narration about Mu‘âdh bin Jabal, but some of our brothers disallow it. Why is it so? O brethren! Think about it. Does it not amount to opposing *Hadith*?

Significance of components of *Salât*

As an obligation in *Hadith*: According to *Hadith* recounted in *Mishkâtul-Masâbih* with reference to *Sahih Bukhâri* someone offered prayer three or four times in the Prophet’s presence. Each time he told him: “Do it again. Repeat the prayer for you have not performed it.” Finally he submitted: “O Messenger of Allah! Kindly teach it to me.” He then pointed out to the lapses in his prayer which had nullified it. He directed him to perform *Wudu* properly, stand facing the direction of prayer, make the call and recite the Qur’ân. He then ordered him: “Perform *Ruku’* at ease. After accomplishing it, raise your head and stand straight. Then prostrate till you feel at ease. Then raise the head again and sit comfortably and perform the other prostration.”

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked that person to repeat prayer for he had been performing its components too hastily (a practice fairly common at present). The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked him to devote himself to each component — bowing, standing up, sitting, prostration, sitting between the two prostrations and the final prostration. One thus learns from his directive that

all these components are obligatory parts of prayer and unless these are performed with poise one's prayer is not valid. Let us see *Fiqh* rulings about these components of prayer.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: "It is not obligatory to stand straight after *Ruku'*." "Likewise, it is not an obligatory act to sit between two prostrations." "It is also not obligatory to perform *Ruku'* and prostrations with poise." (*Hidâyah*)

What is worth reflecting is while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asks that *Ruku'* be performed well and one should stand straight after it, the compiler of *Hidâyah*, ascribing the view to Imam Abu Hanifah, contends that it is not obligatory to do so. The Prophet directs to do bowing and prostration with poise but the same is contested by the compiler of *Hidâyah*. Similarly, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) tells that one should sit properly between two prostrations. Once again, *Hidâyah* states on the authority of Imam Abu Hanifah⁽¹⁾ that it is not an obligatory act.

A point to ponder

While keeping in mind the Prophet's honour and the obligatory duty of obedience to him Hanafi brethren should answer why they prefer their Imam's word to *Hadith* regarding such components of prayer as standing after *Ruku'* with poise. They have abandoned the practice of standing straight after *Ruku'*. They do not even recite the Prophetic

⁽¹⁾ It is not our contention that Imam Abu Hanifah was opposed to *Hadith*. He is set up as a rival by his own devotees. They invent points contrary to *Hadith* and ascribe these to the Imam. In our opinion he was a great lover and follower of *Hadith*. This explains his statement that if any of his views is found discordant with *Hadith*, it should be rejected. Moreover, he proclaimed: 'Authentic *Hadith* is my stance.'

supplication: “*Hamdan kathiran taiyiban mubârankan fih ---* Great praise and immense blessings be,” while standing in this posture. Nor do they sit comfortably between two prostrations. Likewise they do not recite the supplication of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sitting comfortably in between two prostrations: “O Allah, pardon me, have mercy on me, guide me and grant me peace and sustenance.” This they do in the face of fact that he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had asked a certain person to repeat his prayer for having neglected these components. He told the man: “You did not offer prayer.” Yet you people abandon these four obligatory acts in preference for your Imam’s ruling. When Allah would ask you on the Last Day as to what your model was in praying, what would be your reply? Dear brethren! Do remember Allah would accept only such deeds which are in accord with *Sunnah* and with the Prophet’s word. In contrast, deeds performed without reference to him would not at all prove rewarding. One would not get any reward for these. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about prayer:

«صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي»

“Perform it (exactly) in the manner I pray.” (*Bukhâri*).

You should therefore pray, taking these four acts as obligatory, with full poise and forsake such practices which are not borne out by *Hadith*. This is the prerequisite of your love for and obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

To offer *Sunnah* Prayer while the Congregation is in place

The Prophet’s prohibition: Abu Hurairah (رضى الله عنه) narrated:

«قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ «إِذَا أُفِيئِمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَا صَلَاةَ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةُ»

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that while the congregation for the obligatory prayer is in place, no other prayer than it can be performed.” (*Muslim*)

The above *Hadith* proves that when the congregation for the obligatory prayer is in place, no other prayer should be offered. Such a prayer will be simply invalid. According to *Fiqh*, however, one can pray it. Here are relevant *Fiqh* rulings.

Divergence of *Fiqh*: “While *Fajr* prayer is being performed and a person enters who has not offered two *Raka’h* of *Sunnah* prayer and he might fear that he would miss one *Raka’h* of the *Fard* prayer but join the other *Raka’h*, he should move aside and offer two *Raka’h* of *Sunnah* prayer near the gate of the mosque.” (*Hidâyah*)

It is for us to think while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbids that no prayer be offered while the congregation is in place in that it is invalid to pray then, the *Fiqh* ruling is that one offer *Sunnah* prayer if he may join the second *Raka’h* of the *Fard* prayer. In other words, *Sunnah* prayer must be offered, even at the expense of missing a *Raka’h* of the *Fard* prayer.

Throughout the country today many borthers offer *Sunnah* prayer while the *Fajr* prayer is being performed. When the above *Hadith* is related to them, they pay no heed and in conformity to *Fiqh* ruling they recite *Sunnah* prayer. In other words, they disobey the Prophet owing to their blind conformity.

O my brethren! Fear Allah. You offer *Sunnah* prayer while obeying the Imam and suppressing the Prophet’s command. How would Allah reward you for your acts of preferring *Fiqh* to *Hadith*, when these will be presented before Him? The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would be displeased and Imam Abu

Hanifah would exclaim: “O Lord! I had not left behind some book comprising my views for them to act upon and to invent Hanafi school. O Allah! You are witness to my statement: ‘My view is that which is based on authentic *Hadith*’. As to those who took me as the great Imam, imitated me and invented views contrary to *Hadith* while attributing these to me, You better deal with them. I am quit of them.”

Those deliberately forsaking *Hadith* and acting upon the supposed views of Imams should rather fear Allah’s displeasure. Is it ever possible that the Imam would ask them to act against *Hadith*? The plethora of views which runs counter to *Hadith* and religion has been fabricated by later generations. You should not blindly follow the same. Do not follow anything against *Hadith* nor adhere to someone. Rather, you should act in the light of your study and not cite the practice of your ancestors as an excuse. Nor should you refer to the rulings of religious scholars on this count. Everyone is to be followed subject to the endorsement by *Hadith*. This alone ensures peace and safety.

The Curse of *Halâlah*

One guilty of it is an accursed person: ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمُحْلِلَ وَالْمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ»

“The Prophet cursed both the parties to *Halâlah*.”
(*Dârimi* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

A woman who is duly divorced three times cannot remarry her former husband. She is, however, free to marry someone after her *‘Iddah*. If that person divorces her for any reason after a period of, say, six months or two, three or four years

or dies, that woman may remarry, if she wishes, her former husband after the period of *'Iddah*. There is no compulsion or restriction on her. This is a permissible form of marrying the former husband.

However, a way out has been contrived which is known as *Halâlah*. It works thus: the divorced woman is married only for a single night on the condition that the person would divorce her after having sexual intercourse with her. This is done in order to make that woman once again eligible for marriage to her former husband. But such a person who does it and who participates in it are cursed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

One of them is the one who marries the woman only for a single night with the intention to divorce her the next morning after having sexual intercourse with her so that she may remarry her former husband.

It must be remembered that Allah has sent down our religion. It is the sole prerogative of Allah or of His Messenger through Revelation to declare something lawful or unlawful. No member of the *Ummah* is authorised to make something as lawful or unlawful in matters of Islamic religion. Allah says:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ﴾

“They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allâh...” (*At-Taubah*, 9:31)

When ‘Adi (رضي الله عنه) embraced Islam, he asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) of the meaning of the above verse how the Jews and Christians took their rabbis and monks as lords. To this he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied:

“When they (rabbis and monks) declared something lawful on their own, it was accepted so by people. And when they branded something as unlawful, upon their whims, people accepted the same.” (*Tirmidhi*)

What is meant by the Jews and Christians taking their rabbis and monks as lords is that they abided by what they pronounced as lawful or unlawful.

If one ogles a young girl on the street it is taken as an offence and if the offender does not give it up, he is duly punished for the same. However, when parents, in line with Divine command and *Sunnah*, marry their daughter to someone to a stranger, their union becomes a blessed act. What transforms this is that it is done in accord with Divine command and *Sunnah* of His true Messenger. The same act which was indecent, for it was not based on Divine command, becomes an act of virtue, blessing and social welfare for its orientation towards obedience to Allah and *Sunnah*. In other words, only Allah and His Messenger enjoy the power to declare things as lawful or unlawful.

Halâlah is a contrivance, which enables the husband to marry the woman whom he divorces thrice in a single sitting. And for this purpose he marries her to someone for a night which would make her available for remarriage. This is a blatant defiance of the Prophet’s command and a brazenly indecent act. This explains why the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has cursed both the parties to this act.

However, there are some jurists who strike at the fundamentals of Islam in holding that:

“If a person doing *Halâlah* divorces the woman after having sexual intercourse with her, she may remarry her former husband.” (*Hidâyah*)

This is in spite of the Prophet's directive:

«لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمُحْلِلَ وَالْمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ»

“One who does *Halâlah* and one for whom it is carried out, both of them are accursed persons.” (*Dârimi* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

Islam being the mercy for the mankind has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who too, is a mercy for the mankind. The Qur'ân prescribes the following procedure for divorce, should it become inevitable: the woman be divorced thrice successively in three months and the husband has a right to revoke it in the first two months. If he does not avail himself of this opportunity in the first two months, the third divorce in the third month marks a total separation between the couple. As reported in *Mishkâtul-Masâbih*, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) therefore brands three divorces in a sitting as a mockery of the Qur'ân and he expresses great displeasure over it.

However, if someone behaves foolishly in this matter and divorces thrice in a single sitting, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed that it be reckoned as a single divorce. Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنهما) narrated:

«كَانَ الطَّلَاقُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَبِي بَكْرٍ وَسُنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ خِلَافَةِ
عُمَرَ طَلَاقُ الثَّلَاثِ وَاحِدَةً»

“In the Prophet's lifetime and throughout the whole period of Abu Bakr's Caliphate and the first two years of Umar's, the three divorces in a sitting were taken as a single divorce.” (*Bukhâri*)

It is something to be reflected upon. As three divorces at a time constitute a single one, it may be easily revoked in the

light of the Prophet's command. Given this what is the need for inventing the pretext of *Halâlah*?

Moreover, you should shun this invented form for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), according to the *Hadith* of *Ibn Mâjah*, has cursed both the persons involved in it — one who does it and one for whom it is carried out.

We have been approached by more than forty persons who stated that they had divorced thrice in one sitting and that they had intended to revoke their act. But they were told by *Ulama* to commit first *Halâlah*, to be followed by remarriage. However, their conscience did not allow them to indulge in such a bizarre act. We related to them the above *Hadith* and helped them retain their conjugal love by pointing to them that three divorces constitute a single, revokable divorce. They appreciated the favour of Islam and sent blessings upon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

O brethren! We therefore repeatedly ask you to give up blind conformity and follow only such views of the members of the *Ummah* which conform to *Hadith*. Abandon such views that are contrary to *Hadith*. Therefore, forsake the practice of *Halâlah* and disown all that is opposed to *Hadith*. Be guided by argument and following the Prophet's way discharge your responsibilities.

***Fiqh* in accordance with *Hadith*
is perfectly legitimate**

We illustrated above some samples of *Fiqh* rulings that are opposed to *Hadith*. On a close study one may come across numerous other *Fiqh* rulings which are contrary to *Hadith*. We should not, therefore, accord *Fiqh* the status which is due to

the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Rather, we should not accept such *Fiqh* rulings which are not in accord with *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Those rulings which are born out by *Sunnah* and *Hadith* should, however, be strictly followed. The same criterion is to be applied to the writings, compilations, speculations and opinions of individual members of the *Ummah*. For no one in the *Ummah* excepting Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is beyond criticism. No one else is infallible.

We are not, in the least, biased against *Fiqh* works or their compilers. We have tremendous regard for religious scholars and pray that Allah shower His mercy on them. However, we are not willing to consider them as infallible, a privilege enjoyed only by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Nor do we regard them on a equal footing with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who as blessed with Revelation. They, in our opinion, are subject to acts of omission and commission hence we do not blindly accept their deeds and sayings and their opinions and speculations. We would not like to follow these without examining in the light of *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. For the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone provides the clinching argument in matters of religion. We are obliged to follow unquestioningly only his word and deed.

Consequence of being indifferent to the Prophet's judgement

According to a report in *Tafsir Mu'alim al-Tanzeel*, there once erupted a quarrel between a Jew and a hypocrite Muslim. The latter told him to call on Ka'b bin Ashraf, a rabbi, to resolve their dispute while the Jew insisted on referring the matter to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Both of them eventually visited the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who upon hearing the case decided it in favour of the Jew. However, the hypocrite Muslim resented the decision and asked the Jew to refer the case to ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). Accordingly, he called upon ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). The Jew related to him the whole case, adding that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had already adjudged it in his favour. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) asked the hypocrite to verify the Jew’s version. As he affirmed, Umar (رضي الله عنه) killed the hypocrite, saying: “This is the end of the one who is not happy with the Prophet’s judgement.”

Murder charge against ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه)

The relatives of the slain person pressed murder charge against ‘Umar and lodged the case with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that ‘Umar was guilty of killing a fellow Muslim. On the one hand, there were the relatives of the slain person as claimant and on the other hand ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) as the defendant. In between them Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was the judge to give his verdict. Meanwhile, Jibrael brought the following revelation:

﴿ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴾

“And when it is said to them: ‘Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger,’ you (O Muhammad) see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion.”
(*An-Nisa*, 4:61)

The charge was that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) had killed a fellow Muslim. Allah clarified that he was a hypocrite, not a Muslim in that his hypocrisy lay in his dissatisfaction with what was revealed by Allah—the Qur’ân and His

Messenger. He deviated from the Prophet's judgement and rejected *Hadith*.

O Muslim brethren! Think! Allah brands such a person in this verse as a hypocrite, though he used to pray, fast and was known like others as a Muslim. He did not agree to the Prophet's decision. He neglected the Prophet's command and turned to a member of the Muslim *Ummah*. For this act he was condemned as a hypocrite. Allah adjudged that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) had not killed a fellow Muslim, but a hypocrite. As to his relatives the Qur'an remarked:

﴿ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابْتَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ يَمَّا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ
يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا أَحْسَنًا وَتَوَفِيًّا ﴾

"How then, when a catastrophe befalls them because of what their hands have sent forth, they come to you, swearing by Allah: 'We meant no more than goodwill and conciliation'." (*An-Nisa*, 4:62)

The relatives of the slain person told the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that they had not approached 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) with an appeal in connection with the order of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), but that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) may effect a compromise between all of them. Allah says:

﴿ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا ﴾

"They (hypocrites) are those of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts, so turn aside from them but admonish them, and speak to them an effective word to reach their inner-selves." (*An-Nisa*, 4:63)

Those who prefer someone's viewsto *Hadith*

As to their contention that they had gone there for compromise, it was a lie. They were hypocrites, devoid of their Faith in that they did not like the Prophet's judgement and his *Hadith*. They turned away from it and acted upon something other than *Hadith*. Allah knows well their hypocrisy. Their charge against 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) is invalid. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is asked not to entertain them and drive them away for their crime of rejecting *Hadith*. They are to be shunned for their dissatisfaction with the Prophet's judgement. Though they claim to be Muslims, they do not obey his command. They preferred 'Umar's view to the Prophet's command. Since they turn away from his decision in aversion, they are undoubtedly hypocrites who are devoid of Faith.

“By your Lord, they can have no Faith”

﴿ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴾

“But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.” (*An-Nisa*, 4:65)

These persons—who profess the creedal statement of Islam, claim to be Muslim, offer prayers, perform pilgrimage, pay *Zakat*, observe fast, and offer additional prayers cannot become true believers unless they appoint the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) their

judge, arbitrator and mediator in their disputes, both worldly and religious, and surrender themselves whole-souled to his decisions, *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. They cannot become Muslim notwithstanding their repeated verbal assertions to this effect. They may recite: ‘Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger’ but if they deviate from *Sunnah*, grow indifferent to it and prefer others views to *Hadith*, they cannot have Faith. It is stated with reference to an oath in the Name of Allah that they cannot become Muslim.

Warning against such people

Muslims should tremble with fear on reading the above verse that Allah dubbed the one as a hypocrite who preferred ‘Umar’s view to the Prophet’s judgement. It is altogether a point that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) killed this person who wanted to follow his view, rather than the Prophet’s command. As it is, the Prophet’s judgement constituted *Hadith*. To seek ‘Umar’s opinion in the face of it amounted to preferring someone’s views to *Hadith*. What would be the end of such people who follow others’ view in preference to *Hadith*? They deliberately reject the Prophet’s decision and prefer their Imam’s word. Does this conduct not belong to the category of those ‘who turn away from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in aversion’. Are such people not condemned by the Divine statement: “But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith.”

Imam Abu Hanifah Nu‘mân bin Thâbit

A brief account: Imam Abu Hanifah was born in 80H in Kufah during the reign of Caliph Abdul-Malik bin Marwân bin Al-Hakam. His grandfather Zarti had embraced Islam during

the Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Tâlib. His father Thâbit was a born Muslim. He was a weaver⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him). His family ran a big silken weaving industry which was his family profession for generations. Initially he too was engaged in this profession. He was brought up on lawful earnings and nothing unlawful was ever consumed by him.

His education: When Allah wants someone to undertake something He makes him inclined towards it. There was a sudden change in his outlook and he turned to education. His memory was phenomenal and he assimilated the learning marvellously. Actually he was blessed with Divine help. He (جل جلاله) intended that Imam Abu Hanifah grow as a scholar of great distinction.

At the time of his birth some Companions were still alive: Anas bin Mâlik in Basra, Abdullah bin Ubai Aufa in Kufah, Sahl bin Sâ'idi in Al-Madinah and Abu Tufail (رضي الله عنهم) in Makkah. He, however, did not cite any report on their authority.⁽²⁾ For when

(1) The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) observes: "The best income is the one earned by one's own hands. Allah's Messenger Dâwud (عليه السلام) earned his bread by manual work." (*Bukhâri*). He used to manufacture coats of arms which he sold. One thus learns that handicraft is the practice of Messengers.

²⁽²⁾ Imam Abu Hanifah did not draw on any Companion for reports. It is worth noting that the last Companion in Kufah, Abdullah bin Abi Aufa died in 86H whereas the Imam was born in 80H. He was then only six years old hence he could not directly consult him. The last surviving Companion Abu Tufail died in Makkah in 100H. Far from benefiting from him, the Imam never met him. Shibli states clearly in his *Seerat An-Nu'mân*: 'Had the Imam taken even a single report from the Companions, his main disciples would have emphasized it'. Same point is made in *Târikh Ibn Khalkân* that the Imam never met a Companion nor he drew on them. While the Imam is a towering figure in terms of his piety, erudition and special standing, it is highly

he matured in his learning all the Companions had already died. He is therefore indebted to the successors of the Companions for his erudition. He gained knowledge of *Fiqh* from Hammâd bin Abi Sulaimân, and of *Hadith* from ‘Ata bin Abi Rabah, Abu Ishâq, Muhammad bin Munkadar, Hishâm bin ‘Urwah and Nâfi‘- the slave of ‘Umar, and others. That he learnt *Hadith* from Imam Mâlik is also on record.

He was known for his excellent conduct, insights into religion, sound mind, staggering memory and faculty of reasoning. With Divine help he attained the heights of knowledge. His contemporaries would turn to him for solving complicated issues. For his great scholarship he was conferred with the title of ‘Imam Azam’ (the Great Leader). Most notable among his students are Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Imam Zafar.

His pleasant manners: He was a devout, God-fearing and pious person, always fearful of Allah. He was ever-engaged in Allah’s remembrance and would speak little. By temperament he was a forbearing, good-mannered, pleasant, modest, practising person with angelic qualities. Piety and God-fearingness characterized his conduct. So was his honesty impeccable.

His piety: He was constantly offered worldly positions which he declined. The Caliph Abu Ja‘far Mansur took him from Kufah to Baghdad and offered him the position of judge which he refused to accept. He even vowed not to accept it. The Caliph

improper to fabricate baseless stories out of reverence for him. It is said about the Imam that on observing him ‘Ali supplicated in his favour. This is a sheer lie. For ‘Ali had died in 40H while the Imam was born full forty years later in 80H. What pity! What fantastic stories are invented in order to blow up proportions of his greatness.

vowed too, that he would make him accept this position. The Caliph's attendant Rabi' bin Yunus told him: "O Nu'mân bin Thâbit! Think about it. The Caliph has vowed to thrust this position on you." He replied: "O Rabi' bin Yunus! He is more capable of breaking his vow and paying the expiation." On hearing it the Caliph arrested him and repeatedly offered him the same position. Each time he, however, declined. He told the Caliph: "Fear Allah! Entrust this job to some suitable person. There are many in your court who are suited for it. Even if you make me drown I would not accept it. For I do not deserve it." The Caliph charged him with telling a lie in that he was perfectly suited for it. He replied: "You have decided in my favour. This renders me ineligible for the job, for a liar cannot be a judge."

Next, the ruler of Iraq offered him the position of judge of Kufah, which he duly declined. Yazid bin 'Amr, the ruler, grew so furious that he punished him every day, by striking him ten times with a cane. He was subjected to a total of one hundred and ten canes yet he did not accept it.

This might give you an idea how pious, devout and God-fearing person Imam Abu Hanifah was. He always feared Allah. Can it be ever expected of him that he fabricated reports contrary to *Hadith* and made his own speculations? Never!

His last advice: His last advice was:

"One who fails to follow the basis of my view⁽¹⁾ should not pronounce judgement with reference to it."
(*Tafsir Mazhari*).

⁽¹⁾ By definition, blind-following means the acceptance of an Imam's views without any argument. Imam Abu Hanifah, however, held that it was forbidden to issue verdicts on the basis of his views which are

In other words, he insisted that his views be not accepted unquestioningly nor verdicts be issued on their basis.

His stance: He said: “Once a *Hadith* is proved as an authentic one, know that it is my guiding principle.” He thus declared unmistakably that he was one of *Ahlul-Hadith*. It is borne out by his own words that *Hadith* was his guiding principle.

Someone asked Sufyân bin ‘Uyainah how he became one of *Ahlul-Hadith*. He replied that Imam Abu Hanifah had made him so. (*Hadâ’iqul-Hanafiyah*)

His directive to forsake his opinion if it is contrary to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*: Imam Abu Hanifah says:

“Abandon my view if it is opposed to the Qur’ân.”
When asked what to do if his view is discordant with *Hadith*? He replied: “Abandon it as well.” On being asked again what to do if it was against the statement of the Companions, he directed them to give up his view even then. (*Raudatul-Ulama*)

The Imam followed only the stance of *Hadith*. He followed the way of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, of the Prophet and Companions. All Hanafî brethren should therefore follow in the footsteps of the Imam by pursuing the way of the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and not act upon unsubstantiated views. For it is not the way of the Imam.

not supported by some argument. The brethren should, therefore, adhere to only such views of his which are borne out by some argument. As to those biased and stubborn people who cling to even those views which have no basis, they should mend their ways in line with the Imam’s directive. Otherwise they would be counted as those disobedient to the Imam.

To act on argument

“If you get an argument from the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, act on it and base your pronouncements on the same.”
(*Durr Mukhtâr*)

Think. The Imam stresses that in the presence of the Qur’ân and Hadith one must follow only these. Hanafi brethren should then do the same in that it alone signifies their obedience to the Imam.

To issue a religious verdict without a sound argument is forbidden

Imam Abu Hanifah states: ‘One who does not know the basis of my view (as based on the Qur’ân and *Hadith*) should not issue verdicts with reference to it’
(*Mizân Sha’râni*).

One learns from the above that his views, unless endorsed by a sound argument, are not to be followed. Nor should these form the basis for further rulings. However, if his view is corroborated by a sound argument culled from the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, it is to be acted upon and preached. O brethren! Are you listening to his statement? Now you should not blindly follow the Imam for it would constitute disobedience to him.

Directive to Qâdi Abu Yusuf: The Imam directed his student Qâdi Abu Yusuf:

“Do not elaborate on my report. By Allah I do not know whether I have elucidated the points correctly or incorrectly.” (*Târikh Baghdâd*)

In the absence of Hadith the Imam has presented his independent judgement. He insists that in such cases his view

should not be further elaborated. For he is likely to have erred in his judgement. May Allah have mercy on the Imam for his cautious approach to matters of religion:

“O people! Avoid speculations in matters of religion. Abide by *Hadith*. If you fail to adhere to *Sunnah*, you would fall into error.” (*Futuhât*)

Hadith and the opinion of individuals: According to the Imam:

“In my opinion an inauthentic *Hadith* is more important than views of individuals.” (*‘Uqudul-Jawâhir*)

It points to the Imam’s love for *Hadith*. For he prefers an inauthentic *Hadith* to opinions of individuals. He is truly devoted to *Hadith*. How far they are from the truth who prefer individuals’ opinions to *Hadith*. We would particularly submit it to the scholars that they should exhort people to abide by *Hadith* and rely on the six standard collections of *Hadith*, rather than works on *Fiqh*.

Supremacy of Hadith: Imam Abu Hanifah states:

“Whatever is borne out by *Hadith* is supreme and must be respected.” (*Zafrul-Amâni*).

Upon hearing this statement of the Imam, it is obligatory on every brother to proclaim that he abides by only *Hadith* and that he is devoted heart and soul to *Hadith*. And he would act only on *Hadith*, not seek the opinion of individuals. For once one possesses *Hadith*, it renders other’s opinion irrelevant.

Imam Abu Hanifah’s conduct: In *Târikh Baghdâd* by Imam Khateeb it is recorded:

“When one presented an issue before Imam Abu Hanifah and there was a relevant authentic *Hadith*,

he acted upon the same or else he turned to the example of Companions and their successors.”

Does it not prove that the Imam was guided by *Hadith* alone? For he preferred it and the example of Companions. Given this, how can one contend that he professes Hanafi school? O brethren! Think how did it come into picture? The Imam declares *Hadith* as his stance and avoids inventing a school of his own. Rather he insists that *Hadith* be followed. So your concern too should be *Hadith* and you should be content with the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*.

In his *Majmu’ah Fatâwa*, Abdul-Haiy Lakhnawi clarifies that being Hanafi etc. is not some condition for becoming Muslim. Since it is not a prerequisite for being a Muslim, it makes it clear that one may be a genuine Muslim without following being a conformist. The Companions and their successors and followers were not Hanafi, Shâfi’i etc. They enjoyed proximity with Allah and lived by the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* alone.

Fabricated issues

In the light of above clarifications it is evident that Imam Abu Hanifah abided by the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. Given this, is it at all possible that his view be discordant with *Hadith* or that he deliberately differed with *Hadith*? Never so! As to the numerous *Fiqh* issues which run counter to *Hadith*, it appears these are not originally of the Imam rather these have been fabricated by persons at a later date. These have been, however, attributed to the Imam. May Allah bestow immense mercy on the Imam for having taken only *Hadith* as his guiding principle. In the presence of *Hadith* he rejected his

view as something utterly worthless. He spelled out his rulings with utmost caution and emphasized that should his view be proved contrary to *Hadith*, it should be at once rejected and *Hadith* alone be followed.

It is a great pity that some scholars force views contrary to *Hadith* into *Fiqh* works and ascribe these to the Imam. Moreover, they ask people to practise blind conformity with regard to the same. When it is demonstrated that such and such ruling runs counter to *Hadith* they instruct their followers to cling to the ruling otherwise they would turn into nonconformists. May Allah forgive us. They consider it obedience to the Imam to cling to the supposed view of the Imam while deliberately forsaking *Hadith*. The Imam openly stated that if his view was proved discordant with *Hadith* it should be given up and only *Hadith* be followed.

The period of the compilation of *Hidâyah*

Sahih Bukhâri is regarded next to the Qur'ân in authenticity. Likewise, Hanafis look upon *Hidâyah*. The work itself states that it is similar to the Qur'ân. Contained in it are many views contrary to *Hadith* which are ascribed to Imam Abu Hanifah, though this book was written several centuries after the Imam's death. Ali bin Abu Bakr is the compiler of this work who bore the appellations of Burhanuddin and Abul-Hasan. He was born on Monday, 8th Rajab 511H. He was a native of Marghniyan and died on Tuesday, 14th Dhul Hijjah 593H. He lies buried in Samarqand.

He commenced compilation of *Hidâyah* in 573H while the Imam had passed away in 150H. *Hidâyah* thus came into being four hundred and twenty-three years after the Imam's

death. There is no chain of narrators in this work, as one finds in works on *Hadith*. Therefore there is no proof to the effect whether the Imam had expressed a particular view. Views are recorded without any reference, for example, it states: "Wine made of wheat, barley, honey and maize is, in Imam Abu Hanifah's opinion, lawful and one who drinks of it should not be subjected to Islamic penal laws, even if that person gets intoxicated."

Imam Abu Hanifah is not to be blamed

That the above act is lawful has been ascribed to the Imam four hundred fifty years after his death. Likewise, numerous other views and rulings discordant with *Hadith* have been falsely attributed to him. We declare that the Imam is quit of all these. Yet it is alleged that nonconformists do not respect him. It is ironical that those seeking to clear his name are branded as disrespectful and those slandering him by ascribing to him what he never said are taken as his disciples. It calls for justice.

O brethren! Avoid blind-following and pay heed to this statement of the Imam: "Authentic *Hadith* is my stance." You should therefore abide by *Hadith* and be of *Ahlul-Hadith* for the Imam practised the same.

Our detailed account of the conformity and *Fiqh* issues is intended to persuade the blind-followers to free themselves of the shackles of blind-following and take to the path of obeying the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) alone. They should follow only the Prophet's way, shun sectarianism, and devote themselves to *Hadith* and *Sunnah* as the essence of religion. For Allah commands us to follow the same path by telling us that one

who obeys him obeys Allah. Only the one following the Prophet's path abides by Allah's Command.

Imam Abu Hanifah did not author any book

May Allah confer His numerous mercies on the Imam in that he never authored a book out of fear of Allah. He did not leave behind a book, to be taken as the basis of a new school or sect by people. Imam Râzi makes the same point that no work of the Imam is extant (*Seerat Nu'mân* by Shibli Nu'mâni). Shibli further states that it is hard to ascribe the works associated with the Imam to him.⁽¹⁾ In our opinion no work of his exists today (*Seerat Nu'mân*).

Since there is no work of the Imam it is worth exploring how this school came into existence and why it is necessary to follow the same. The point assumes greater urgency in view of statement by Hanafi scholars themselves that being Hanafi is not a condition for becoming Muslim (*Majmu'ah Fatâwa Abdul-Haiy*).

Since Hanafi scholars too concede that Allah has not prescribed that one become Hanafi or Shâfi'i, who is entitled to pronounce so? Does it not betray committing excess in religion? Those Muslims who lived three to four hundred years before the formation of the four schools did not belong

⁽¹⁾ Some regard *Musnad* as a work authored by Imam Abu Hanifah, which is not correct. It is actually *Musnad Khawârizmi* compiled in the seventh century H whereas the Imam had passed away in the second century H. It cannot be possibly his work. In *Bostânul-Muhaddithin*, Shah Abdul-Aziz therefore states: '*Musnad* which is popularly attributed to the Imam was compiled by Abul-Muwaiyid Muhammad bin Mahmud Al-Khawârizmi in 674H.

to either of these. Yet who can contest their credentials to faith? No one can do so. Rather, they were devout, pious and godly people.

It is regrettable that what Imam Abu Hanifah feared has come true in that a school has been ascribed to him. A whole range of *Fiqh* rulings are attributed to him. O Muslim brethren! Act directly on the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and lead life as *Ahlus-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith* and maintain mutual love and unity.

The Imam's death

At the age of seventy years this great scholar, a paragon of virtues such as excellent conduct and piety passed away. He breathed his last in Baghdad prison in 150H. Fifty thousand Muslims attended his burial. For twenty days people kept on praying and supplicating for his forgiveness. O Allah! May always bless him with mercy and inspire Hanafi brethren to abide by *Hadith*, as directed by the Imam himself. Make them members of *Ahlul-Hadith*.

To follow *Fiqh* discerningly

Both the Qur'ân and authentic *Hadith* represent Revelation, free from imperfection. As to the views of individuals these may be both correct or incorrect. Imam Mâlik rightly observes:

“There is no one in the world whose all views are totally sound or unsound. Whatever is good in him is to be accepted and bad be rejected. The only exception is Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) whose all statements are wholly correct, truthful and sound which have to be accepted in their entirety.” (*Insâf*).

Fiqh is not based on revelation hence it is not to be accepted in the manner of the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Rather it is to be scrutinized in that whatever of it is in line with the Qur'ân and *Hadith* is to be accepted and the rest be rejected. What follows is the recounting of some *Fiqh* rulings.

Shibli Nu'mâni is a great scholar. In his much acclaimed work *Seerat Nu'mân* he discusses the issue, lying at the heart of Hanafi school, that faith and practice are two distinct entities. And in order to substantiate the Hanafi position, he parades something as a Qur'anic verse which does not feature in the Qur'ân at all:

“من يؤمن بالله فيعمل صالحاً: There has come *Harf Ta'qeeb* which decides this matter.” (*Seerat Nu'mân*)

Should you like, you may cross-check it with someone who has memorized the Qur'ân.

It is inexplicable how Shibli, such an outstanding scholar, committed this grave mistake. What is worse is that his predecessors have not rectified this mistake. *Hidâyah*, the famous work on *Fiqh*, is described as something similar to the Qur'ân; a *Hadith* is cited in the chapter *Al-Imâmat* of its Book of *Salât* to the effect:

“Whoever, prays behind a pious scholar in congregation would get the same reward as accruing to one who prayed behind the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).”

There is no such *Hadith*. It is falsely attributed to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Here is another fabricated *Hadith*:

“Adam takes pride in me. I take pride in a member of my *Ummah* whose name is Nu'mân, popularly known as Abu Hanifah. He is the light for my *Ummah*.” (*Durr Mukhtâr*)

It is to be noted that it is no *Hadith* at all, rather a calumny against him.

Moreover, in the chapter 'Compensation and Expiation' the author of *Hidâyah* cites the *Hadith* of the Expiation of the Bedouin, and interpolates into it a statement of his own: ولا يجزى احد بعدك (*Natâ'ijut-Taqleed*). *Hadith* is thus subjected to addition and interpolation. It is the height of audacity.

Taudih Tabwih is a major Hanafi work on *Fiqh* in the Hanafi school. Included in it is the following fabricated report:

“The Prophet warned that many persons, after his passing away, would fabricate *Hadith* and circulate the same. So whenever *Hadith* is related to you, compare it against the Qur'ân.”

Once again, it is deplorable that this slanderous report features in works on *Fiqh* with the additional remark that Imam Bukhâri cites the same in his *Hadith* collection. As a matter of fact, it does not appear in Bukhâri's work. It proves that *Fiqh* works, no doubt, abound in inaccuracies.

Another instance is the presentation of the following fabricated *hadith* as a sound one in *Usul Shâshi*, another prestigious text book of Hanafi *Fiqh*:

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “People would relate, after my death, many fabricated *Ahâdith*. Whenever *Hadith* is narrated before you, you should check it against the Qur'ân. Accept it if it is in line with the Qur'ân otherwise reject it.” (*Usul Shashi*)

It is further stated that if someone objects to the authenticity of the above *hadith*, it should be countered thus:

“Imam Muhammad bin Ismâ'il Bukhâri has cited it in his collection and he is a great *Hadith* scholar. This is

the justification of its soundness. Since Bukhâri cites it, no attention be paid to any criticism. The same point is made in *Sharh Usul Buzuri*.” (*Usul Shâshi*)

It is a wonder that such a great *Fiqh* scholar relates that the above *hadith* figures in Bukhari’s collection. It, however, does not appear there. Moreover, it is as such a fabricated *hadith*.

It again proves that works on *Fiqh* do suffer from mistakes.

Nurul-Anwâr is another celebrated work on *Fiqh*, it states:

“If a *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah and Anas runs counter to the Imam’s speculation, the former is to be dismissed and the latter be accepted.”

Here is the principle of Hanafi *Fiqh* as featuring in *Nurul-Anwâr*. What a pity! It is downright deplorable to contend that Companions such as Abu Hurairah and Anas were not versed in *Fiqh*.

This is a remark about another Companion, Wâbisah bin Ma‘bad:

“If a Companion be unfair and unknown as Wâbisah bin Ma‘bad...” (*Nurul-Anwâr*).

It is the height of temerity to refer to a Companion in such terms as unfair and unknown. Included in Husâmi is the statement:

“Wabisah bin Ma‘bad and Salmah bin Mahbaq are unknown.”

This points to the scant regard for Companions.

The above instances suffice to illustrate our point. Numerous other similar reports are found in works on *Fiqh* which we do

not deem suitable to reproduce, for it is not our intention to cause discord. Nor do we seek to reproach our Hanafi brethren. Our point is that *Fiqh* be not followed blindly. It is marred by mistakes for it is, after all, the product of the human mind which is fallible. The only infallible person is Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) hence his word is final. It does not stand in need of scrutiny. Such points of *Fiqh* which fit in with the Qur'ân and *Hadith* deserve to be treated with utmost regard; the rest be spurned.

Sectarianism

We noted earlier the warning about the appearance of sects in the Muslim nation, excepting one group that would follow the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and of the Companions. All others would be in error while only the group, as already discussed, following *Sunnah* and *Hadith* would be the Saved Group.

It must be remembered that groups abiding by the Qur'ân and *Hadith* do not represent sects or misguidance. Sects are such groups who draw on sources other than the Qur'ân and *Hadith* for their faith and practice. They abuse names of great personalities, ascribe their own views to them and indulge in blind conformity. Those who deliberately abandon *Hadith* follow only their own Imams too, constitute sects.

About sectarianism, as observed above, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) remarked:

«... وَإِنَّهُ سَيَخْرُجُ فِي أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ تَتَجَارَىٰ بِهِمْ تِلْكَ الْأَهْوَاءُ كَمَا تَتَجَارَىٰ الْكَلْبُ بِصَاحِبِهِ لَا يَبْقَىٰ مِنْهُ عِرْقٌ وَلَا مَفْصِلٌ إِلَّا دَخَلَهُ»

“Undoubtedly sects would arise in my *Ummah*. They would be permeated with polytheistic and heretical

beliefs and practices like an epidemic that overwhelms one.” (*Ahmad and Abu Dâwud*)

Implicit in it is the idea that the un-Islamic beliefs and actions of these sects would seep them so thoroughly as rabies germs afflict each and every nerve of the human body. It is common knowledge that one afflicted with rabies eventually dies of hydrophobia. Likewise, these sects would be under the spell of their peculiar beliefs and actions and would run away from the true knowledge of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. Ultimately they would be destroyed in utter error and misguidance. They would be so much lost into their peculiar doctrines, practices, deeds and ways that would pay no heed to *Hadith*, no matter how often they are related to them. Rather, they would be utterly averse to these and act in a hostile way. Sectarianism would have wholly overtaken them. By rejecting the perfect message of the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* they would be guilty of self-destruction.

Has the Prophet’s prophecy not come true in its entirety? Do these sects not act in a ribald fashion? Do not they turn in aversion to *Hadith* owing to their sectarian interests? Do they not exhibit hostility to *Sunnah*? Are they not indifferent to the elixir of Islam? Each sect is willing to destroy itself but it does not mend its ways? This is the very affliction which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had foretold. Are we not witness to those who run away from *Sunnah* and *Hadith*? There are people who turn violent when the Qur’anic verses condemning polytheistic beliefs are rehearsed to them. Moreover, have they not divided the nation on the basis of their own views which have nothing to do with the Qur’ân and *Hadith*?

Beware! Every sect that acts against *Hadith* and the way of the Companions, and that prefers its own ways to the commands of Allah and His Messenger is certainly in error. It is a

misguided sect. We should protect our Faith against the pernicious beliefs and practices of such sects.

All followers of *Sunnah* are of one religion

Islam offers the message of unity for the mankind. It strikes at the roots of differences and dissensions. People who had been disunited for centuries with one another were brought together in the fraternity of Islam. Its teachings are permeated with mutual love and fraternity and remove divisions and differences. Under its banner were united Muslims of the world with their common belief in Monotheism and Messengership. Prophet Muhmmad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who conveyed Muslims the message of peace and unity instructed them in this lesson of unity:

«تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ رَسُولِهِ»

“O people! Listen, I leave behind among you two things. As long as you hold fast to them, you would be never misguided (Remember these two things are) Allah’s Book and *Sunnah*.” (*Mu’atta*)

This emphatic advice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) clarifies that the single Saved Group is characterized by its adherence to these two sources. This group would enjoy Divine help. As to its most outstanding feature, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) declared: “It would follow the way of mine and my Companions.” He emphasized that we join this group:

«وَمَنْ شَدَّ شَدًّا فِي النَّارِ»

“Whoever parts company (with the group that lives by the Qur’ân and *Hadith*) would be hurled alone in Hell-fire.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

It is then evident that one must continue to join this group that follows *Hadith*. Colour, race, nationality, country or any other consideration does not characterize this group. It would not idolize someone. Nor would it be restricted to a particular class or section. Its practices would not be novel or invented ones. It would not discover some new ways in its pursuit of Islam. Nor would it found some new sect. It would not stand apart from others. Nor would it select and circulate its own peculiar individualistic views, practices, ways and guiding principles. Rather, it would act solely upon the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and invite everyone to follow the same path. You should not therefore lose sight of the right way and by practising the Qur'ân and *Hadith* you should join this group. Everyone who abides by the Qur'ân and *Hadith* is your brother in Faith, no matter who he is and to what place he belongs.

The Meanings of *Ahlul-Hadith*

In the parlance of *Hadith* scholars, *Hadith* means the Prophet's command, his practice and his endorsement of something. Moreover, Allah's Word, the Qur'ân is also known by the same epithet (*Hadith*), as is evident from the Qur'ân itself:

﴿اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ﴾

“Allah has sent down the best *Hadith* (statement)...”
(*Az-Zumar*, 39:23)

﴿فَيَأَيُّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“Then in what *Hadith* (statement) after this (the Qur'ân) will they believe?” (*Al-Mursalât*, 77:50)

﴿فَيَأَيُّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَءَايَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“...Then in which *Hadith* (speech) after Allah and His signs will they believe?” (*Al-Jâthiyah*, 45:6)

﴿ أَفَإِنَّ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ تَعْجَبُونَ ﴾

“Do you then wonder at this *Hadith* (recital i.e., the Qur’ân)?” (*An-Najm*, 53:59)

﴿ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴾

“Let them then produce a *Hadith* (recital) like unto it (the Qur’ân) if they are truthful.” (*At-Tur*, 52:34)

﴿ أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ ﴾

“Is it such a *Hadith* (talk i.e., this Qur’ân) that you deny?” (*Al-Wâqi‘ah*, 56:81)

In all the above verses the expression ‘*Hadith*’ signifies the Qur’ân itself. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) too, said:

« . . . خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ »

“Of all the *Hadith* (speeches) the best one is the Book of Allah.”

Allah further defines it:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴾

“...And who is truer in *Hadith* (statement) than Allah?” (*An-Nisa* 4:87)

The whole Qur’ân thus represents Allah’s *Hadith* (speeches and statements) which nothing can surpass. The Qur’ân employs the same expression ‘*Hadith*’ for the statements of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

﴿ وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا ﴾

“And remember when the Prophet disclosed a *Hadith* (matter) in confidence to one of his wives...” (*At-Tahrim*, 66:3)

The word '*Hadith*' in this expression is used in the context of the Prophet's statement.

One therefore learns that '*Hadith*' stands for the speech of both Allah and His Messenger. And both are to be followed and believed in. This is what signifies the command of Allah and of His Messenger. These are the clinching arguments which cannot be contested or superseded. Obedience to Allah and to His Messenger consists in abiding by their statements as well. Others have their statements too, yet these are not decisive in matters of religion. The final decision rests with the Qur'ân and *Hadith* alone.

So one who is indifferent to the statements, views, conjectures and speculations of others and lives only by the statements of Allah and His Messenger; teaches, preaches, spreads and practises the same is of *Ahlul-Hadith*. For adherence to the best *Hadith* (i.e., the Qur'ân) and *Hadith* of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) one enjoys the coveted title of being one of *Ahlul-Hadith* and *Ahlu-Sunnah*.

***Ahlul-Hadith* is not a new sect**

Let it be realised that *Ahlul-Hadith* is not some sect; for it is not named after some individual of the *Ummah*. Nor is it linked to colour, race, country, nationality or personality. Nothing other than the statements of Allah and of His Messenger enjoys any sanction in it. For them the only command is that of Allah and the only way is that of Allah's Messenger. In their beliefs Islam comprises only the Quran and *Hadith*. They hold that since the days of the Companions to this day Muslims are bound only to acting upon the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

Beginning of *Ahlul-Hadith*

No sect can be founded if people follow only the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Nor can it result in the creation of a new group. For it spells equality and no one is bound to conform to a certain individual. Moreover, on the basis of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, *Ahlul-Hadith* resist in religion all that is alien to it. They do everything possible to restore and maintain purity in Faith and remove all that is extraneous. By demolishing idolatry they uphold Monotheism. In order to protect their interests the misguided people blame that *Ahlul-Hadith* is a fairly new group that does not deserve any attention. They are further accused of being irreverent towards religious personalities.⁽¹⁾

Can someone ever contend that the sun and the moon are a recent phenomenon? No one can ever hold such a view for the sun and the moon have been there since the day of creation, since the beginning of day and night itself. Likewise, since the day Allah sent down the best *Hadith*, i.e., the Qur'ân and since the advent of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), *Ahlul-Hadith* have been there. *Ahlul-Hadith* represent those who believe in and practice *Hadith*. Since this is the case, they are contemporaneous with the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. As these have been in existence since the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), *Ahlul-Hadith* have been there since that time.⁽²⁾ This point should be grasped well by the elite and the lay.

(1) May Allah curse those who are disrespectful towards saints and religious figures. This is only a lie hurled against the votaries of truth in order to antagonise the masses against the preachers of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* and consequently pay no heed to them. It is done also for protecting the vested interests of professionals.

(2) All the religious groups and sects which are named after Imams, *Mujtahid* and saints certainly made their appearance after the days of

The Companions were *Ahlul-Hadith*

It is common knowledge that the Companions professed and practised *Hadith*. Is it not in your knowledge that *Hâdith* collections contain thousands of *Ahadith* which are narrated by no one other than the Companions? Since Companions recorded and transmitted *Ahâdith*, what else can they be described other than as *Ahlul-Hadith*? Literally *Ahlul-Hadith* may be defined as those who are people of *Hadith*, those who learn, teach, transmit and practise it. Numerous religious matters such as prayer, fast, pilgrimage, *Zakat*, charity, alms and other issues related to both religious and this worldly life are prescribed by *Ahadith*. So those who maintain a strong link with *Ahadith*, preach Islam through *Hadith* and practise the same are the people of *Hadith*.

Journey from Al-Madinah to Damascus for the sake of a single *Hadith*

Kathir bin Sa'd reports that he was sitting in a mosque in Damascus with Abi Darda (رضي الله عنه) that someone came to him from Al-Madinah and told him: "O Abu Darda! I have journeyed all along to see only you. A *Hadith* has reached me which you have related on the Prophet's authority. (I want to hear from you direct. So kindly recite it to me in detail)." Abu Darda (رضي الله عنه) replied: "(Oh yes! Here is *Hadith*). I certainly heard the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying:

«مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا مِنْ طُرُقِ الْجَنَّةِ»

the Qur'ân and the Messengership. No one can dare deny that the blind followers came to the scene at a very late stage. Undeniably they did not exist before the third or fourth centuries H.

وَأَنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لَطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ
 مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْحَيْتَانُ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ
 الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ وَإِنَّ
 الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا وَإِنَّمَا
 وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ»

“Whoever follows a path for seeking knowledge (of religion), Allah makes him walk one of the paths of Paradise.⁽¹⁾ And surely angels (of mercy) open their wings for the pleasure of such a student. (This much for a student. As to the scholar who practises this knowledge) and for the scholars seek forgiveness those in the heavens (angels) and those on the earth (men and jinn) and fish in water. A scholar is as superior to a worshipper as the full moonlight is to stars. *Ulama* are doubtless successors to Messengers. Messengers did not leave behind money in the form of dirham and dinar (currency units); they left behind only knowledge. Whoever seeks knowledge secures a perfect share.”
 (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Mâjah and Dârimi)

For just a single *Hadith* a person travelled all the way from Al-Madinah to Damascus. One thus learns that these persons were fully devoted to *Hadith*.⁽²⁾ They behaved so for they knew that religion was wholly dependent upon it. It must be

(1) The path pursued by a seeker of knowledge is akin to following the way to Paradise. This pursuit leads one to Paradise. A step taken on this route marks a step forward in the direction of Paradise. Praised be the students of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

(2) The Qur’ân is, no doubt, the real basis. However, one cannot follow it without its elucidation by *Hadith*. For practising the Qur’ân presence of *Hadith* is indispensable.

clearly realized that the Companions were *Ahlul-Hadith* and *Ahlus-Sunnah*.

Sunnah and Hadith

Sunnah denotes Prophet Muhammad's way, habits, customs and conduct. *Hadith* is the verbal description of the same. In other words, *Hadith* informs us about his habits, customs and way and his whole life. May Allah have immense blessings on the Companions who have carefully recorded all *Ahadith* and reported the same with utmost caution and sense of responsibility. May Allah bless also the scholars of *Hadith* who have collected *Ahadith* in books, facilitating us in learning the religion. In their absence nothing could be found out about the Prophet's way. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) instructs us: "I leave behind with two things: Allah's Book and my *Sunnah*." The implication is that his practice of the Qur'ân is also there for guidance. *Sunnah* represents how the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) practised the Qur'ân in daily life. It shows us the way how to perform Allah's Commands. We learn about it from *Ahadith*. It points to the significance of the discipline of *Hadith* and how important it is to transmit and spread *Hadith*. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) therefore observed:

«نُضِرَ اللَّهُ أُمَّرَاءَ أَسْمَعَ مِنَّا شَيْئاً فَبَلَّغَهُ كَمَا سَمِعَهُ»

"May Allah grant him prosperity who upon hearing something from me transmits it to others." (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) supplicates prosperity for the transmitters of *Ahadith*. It is because of his supplication that they enjoy prosperity and Faith. To have your share in his supplication you should also devote yourself to *Ahadith*, study

and transmit these. These should be extensively spread and taken as one's way of life, school of thought and stance which would accrue one prosperity.

The Companion's adherence to *Ahlul-Hadith*

Khatib Baghdadi has been a renowned scholar of *Hadith*. This fifth century scholar, who passed away in 463H, cites the following report in his famous work *Sharf Ashâbil-Hadith*:

When Abu Sa'id Khudri (رضي الله عنه), a Companion, would see young students he would say: "(O young men!) Be you blessed with the Prophet's word regarding you. He asked us to make room for you in our academic gatherings and help you learn *Ahadith*. You are our successors. After us you would be *Ahlul-Hadith*."

'You are our successors and you are *Ahlul-Hadith*' — this was the address by Abu Sa'id Khudri (رضي الله عنه), a leading Companion. It tells that he described himself as one of *Ahlul-Hadith* and he accordingly spoke of the students of *Hadith* as his successors and of *Ahlul-Hadith*. He used the expression of 'successors' in plural form which indicates that not only he but all Companions were conferred the honourable title of *Ahlul-Hadith* and would bestow the same title on young students and their successors. He spoke of them as *Ahlul-Hadith* after them. He himself was of *Ahlul-Hadith* and addressed his successors by the same title.

When did *Ahlul-Hadith* come into being?

As to the contention of some that *Ahlul-Hadith* have appeared on the scene recently they should, without any bias,

tell as to when the Prophet's Companion Abu Sa'id Khudri (رضي الله عنه) was born? For he describes both himself and his students as *Ahlul-Hadith*.

We have noted earlier that it is recorded in a standard Hanafi work *Hadâ'iqul-Hanafiyah* that someone asked Sufyân bin 'Uyainah⁽¹⁾ as to how he turned into one of *Ahlul-Hadith*. He replied that Imam Abu Hanifah made him *Ahlul-Hadith*. How can one explain away his report? Was Sufyân born only yesterday? For he states that he was made one of *Ahlul-Hadith* by Imam Abu Hanifah. Let it be known that the Imam was born in 80H who made Sufyân one of *Ahlul-Hadith*.

The Imam himself states: "My stance is based on authentic *Hadith*." (*Shâmi*). In other words, he is of *Ahlul-Hadith*. Was the Imam too, born only yesterday, who speaks of *Hadith* as his stance?

Imam Tirmidhi narrates on the authority of Qurrah bin Iyas that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) declared:

"A group among my *Ummah* would be always Successful. Whoever deserts it would not be able to harm it till the Last Day."

It is followed by citing the statement of Imam Ali bin Madini, Imam Bukhari's teacher, by Tirmidhi as to which this Successful Group is:

"Imam Muhammad bin Ismâ'il Bukhârî relates that his teacher Ali bin Madini said that this Successful Group is *Ahlul-Hadith*."

⁽¹⁾ Sufyân bin 'Uyainah was a native of Kufah, who later moved over to Makkah. He was born in 107H and died in 198H. He was a leading scholar of *Hadith*.

Are Imam Bukhâri and his teacher 'Ali Al-Madini recent figures? They too used the term '*Ahlul-Hadith*'. Regarding the Hadith about the Successful Group Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal.⁽¹⁾ says:

“If it does not stand for *Ahlul-Hadith*, I am not aware as to which group it refers.” (*Fathul-Bâri*)

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was there more than eleven centuries earlier. He too speaks of *Ahlul-Hadith*. Is this a recent phenomenon?

In *Muqaddamah* of Ibn Khaldun the author states in his chapter on *Fiqh* that in the post-Companions period, *Fiqh* followed two ways: one was of those with independent opinion and speculation which was followed by people of Iraq and the other of *Ahlul-Hadith*, natives of Hijaz. Ibn Khaldun describes natives of Hijaz as *Ahlul-Hadith*. Is this also a recent thing? There occurs a report in *Shâmi* that in the days of Qadi Abu Bakr Juzjâni, a Hanafi asked the hand of the daughter of an *Ahlul-Hadith* in marriage, which was refused by him. He, however, agreed to oblige him if he abandoned Hanafi stance and recite *Surah Al-Fâtihah* while praying behind the *Imâm* and raise hands in *Ruku'*. He asked him to follow also other practices of *Ahlul-Hadith*. The Hanafi acceded to his request and that person gave her daughter in marriage to him.

According to the above report, *Ahlul-Hadith* existed very much in the third century. How biased and unjust are those who contend that *Ahlul-Hadith* represent a new, recent sect. From the above clarifications it is evident that the Companions were *Ahlul-Hadith* and that they have been there since then. And they predate everyone. They have been flourishing from the days of

(1) Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was born in 168H and died in 241H.

the Qur'ân and *Hadith* when Hanafis and Shâfi'is were unheard of.

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni too mentions *Ahlul-Hadith*:

“One of the signs of those practising heresies is that they speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith*.” (*Ghunyatur-Tâlibin*)

Taftazâni, in his *Talwih*, observes:

“This is followed by the generality of *Ahlul-Hadith* and Shâfi'is.”

Reference to *Ahlul-Hadith* occurs in works on *Fiqh*. It should be therefore recognized that *Ahlul-Hadith* have been there since the days of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

O Muslim brethren! Avoid those who create dissension. Shun sectarianism. Be *Ahlul-Hadith*. Those who make you averse to *Hadith* are not sincere to you. Think for yourself that they do not have love for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and they, therefore, keep Muslims away from *Hadith*. O brethren! See to reason! Reflect on the matter and act upon *Hadith*. This would help you taste Faith.

A *Hadith* scholar, Abu Bakr bin Abu Dâwud Sajjâtâni states:

While I was collecting *Ahadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah in Sajistan, I saw him in a dream.⁽¹⁾ I told him:

⁽¹⁾ This dream of Abu Bakr bin Dâwud has been recounted above in support of *Ahlul-Hadith*. Since the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has stressed that his *Sunnah* be adhered to and transmitted widely, Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) did follow this directive of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) hence he was of *Ahlul-Hadith*. It proves that the above dream was true. We have therefore related it. It must be, however, clarified that this dream is not mentioned as an argument in itself. No dream that runs counter to the Qur'ân and *Hadith* can be either true or be adduced as an argument. For example, an authentic *Hadith* is on record: “No prayer

“I love you greatly.” He replied: “(Why not it be so).
For I was of *Ahlul-Hadith*.” (*Isâbah*)

O Muslim brethren! Think! There were more than one hundred and twenty-four thousand Companions. All of them transmitted and practised *Hadith*. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed everyone: “Transmit to everyone my word, even it be a single *Hadith*.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

Since Companions narrated and transmitted *Ahadith*, were all of them not *Ahlul-Hadith*? Was *Hadith* not their stance? It was so, for all *Ahadith* are narrated by Companions. Their job was to study, teach, report and transmit *Hadith*. Given this they were doubtless *Ahlul-Hadith*. Are we not prepared to forsake everything else in order to follow in the footsteps of Companions and be *Ahlul-Hadith*? We are definitely *Ahlul-Hadith* and would live by the same all along our life.

You should ask yourself whether you enjoy being known as Hanafi or as *Ahlul-Hadith*,⁽¹⁾ i.e., one of those who believe in and practise *Ahadith*. If someone does not follow Hanafi school, can he be described as someone being not a Muslim? This position is absolutely untenable. For Companions and

is valid without *Surah Al-Fâtihah*.” (*Bukhari and Muslim*). Were one to contend that he saw a saint in a dream, exhorting him not to recite the *Surah*, it cannot be accepted for being discordant with *Hadith*.

(1) A Hanafi is bound to follow the views of Imam Abu Hanifah whereas a member of *Ahlul-Hadith* has to obey *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. The former indicates a relationship with a fallible member of the Muslim nation whereas the latter links himself with the infallible Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the mercy for the worlds. And Allah has obliged us to obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He would be the intercessor, by Allah’s leave, on the Day of Judgement. You should reflect on it and decide whether you are Hanafi or Muhammadi *Ahlul-Hadith*.

their successors and followers did not refer to themselves as Hanafi yet they are taken as excellent Muslims and as a model for the whole Muslim nation. Were someone to deny *Hadith* he would not be considered a Muslim. One thus learns that being Hanafi, Shâfi‘i, Mâliki or Hanbali is not part of Divine command. Nor were these schools prescribed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The religion Islam, however, comprises the best of *Hadith* (the Qur’ân) and the Prophet’s *Hadith*.

Those who reject *Hadith* are not Muslims

A person who rejects *Hadith* is worthless, notwithstanding his claim to practise the Qur’ân. For the Qur’ân itself directs us:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ ﴾

“...And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it...” (*Al-Hashr*, 59:7)

It clarifies that one learns how to act upon the Qur’ân from the Prophet’s practice. And this is exactly what constitutes *Hadith*. Without *Hadith* one cannot practise the Qur’ân. So one who rejects *Hadith* i.e., the practice of the Qur’ân, is not a Muslim. It is a pity that such people regard the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) no more than as a courier who merely delivers a letter or message. And he has nothing to do with the contents of the letter in terms of reciting or reading it. Taking the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in this sense they think that he merely handed over the Qur’ân and that it is the job of the Muslim *Ummah* to decipher, follow and practise this message. They profess this belief in the face of Allah’s proclamation:

﴿ لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ﴾

“Indeed Allah has conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent amongst them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His verses (the Qur’ân), and purifying them (from sins) and instructing them the Book and wisdom.” (Âl-‘Imrân, 3:164)

In the light of the above verse, it is clear that Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) opened the Divine message, read it, and recited it to others. He instructed them in it in the best possible manner. Through its instructions he purified them of the impurity of polytheism and other evils. By practising what he preached he acted upon the Qur’ân and through his own example conveyed the Qur’ân to people. The command “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger” therefore means that one may obey Allah through obeying the Messenger. Likewise another Qur’ânic directive “One who obeys the Messenger obeys Allah” declares unequivocally that one obedient to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) obeys Allah. Obedience to Allah consists in following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). It should be therefore clearly realized that the Prophet’s practice of the Qur’ân (i.e., *Sunnah* and *Hadith*) have to be followed. One who acts upon the Qur’ân in line with *Hadith* would win favour with Allah. Acts performed in a way other than it would not be acceptable. This underscores the importance of *Hadith*.

Call to join *Ahlul-Hadith*

It should not be, however, construed that we invite you to join *Ahlul-Hadith* as an independent, new sect. Let it be clearly understood that Islam not only forbids sectarianism but it is a curse which we have condemned in earlier pages.

As a universal community all Muslims are, in principle, *Ahlul-Hadith*. Everyone who takes the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as Allah's Messenger and regards obedience to him as a duty is one of *Ahlul-Hadith*. We, therefore, would like to see you believing in, practising and preaching *Hadith*. We want you to become wholly devoted to *Hadith*, making it operative in all departments of human activity. Your prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, *Zakat*, alms giving, acts of charity; all beliefs; and actions ranging from walking, moving, eating, drinking, life and death, marriage; social, cultural, economic and moral life, and values from your adult age till your last breath be based on *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. It would confer upon you the honoured appellation of *Ahlul-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith*.

How painful it is to observe that we take pride in our association with numerous labels, places, Imams, saints and personalities and we publicly declare the same. Yet we feel shy of ascribing ourselves to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), leader of both the worlds, of Arabia and outside, guide of both men and jinn and the leader of the whole universe. Why do we feel shy of our association with him or his *Sunnah* and we do not like to be known as Muhammadi or *Ahlul-Hadith*? How far have we moved away from him who would intercede for us on the Day of Judgement? Or have we been put in this position by our *Ulama* and leaders and by the Imams and by those given to idolising individuals.

On being asked as to who is our Messenger, we should instantly say Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). For Allah has obliged us to obey him. We are asked to obey him and abide by his *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Since this is the case, what does prevent us from our devotion to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*? Let us state it courageously and with moral fervour that we are *Ahlul-Hadith*

in terms of our faith and practice, not as members of some sect.

Since our Messenger is Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and Allah asks us to obey him alone in that all others are merely members of his *Ummah*, be they Companions, and their successors and followers, *Fiqh* scholars, saints and other religious figures. All of them are simply exponents of *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has directed them to transmit, spread and preach *Hadith*. Such persons are therefore *Ahlul-Hadith*. Those who believe in *Hadith* and act upon it belong to the same category. There is no way other than *Hadith* and *Sunnah* in that one's beliefs or actions cannot be sound without it. No way other than it is the straight one. Given this, we should take the Qur'ân and *Hadith* as our guiding principles.

The Prophet's supplication in favour of *Ahlul-Hadith*

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) supplicated: "O Allah! Have mercy on my successors." When the Companions requested him to identify as to who his successors are, he said: "People of future generations who would narrate my *Hadith* and impart the same to others."
(*Sharf Ashâbil-Hadith*)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) thus speaks of the following as his successors: those who learn, teach, narrate, explain and spread *Hadith*. Glory be to Allah! What an exalted position of *Ahlul-Hadith*! Moreover, he prayed to Allah in their favour for Divine mercy on them. As it is, this supplication is for *Ahlul-Hadith*. He clearly identified his successors as the ones who narrate his *Hadith*. So all those who teach, report and preach

Hadith share this supplication of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as he prayed specifically in their favour. *Ahlul-Hadith* stand blessed in view of the Prophet's supplication.

They would adhere to the Truth till the Last Day

As already noted, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) foretold about the division of his *Ummah* into seventy-three sects, like the Children of Israel who had been divided into seventy-two sects. And that all of them would be hurled into Hell, except one group that would attain salvation. He said about this group:

«لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُمْ إِلَى أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ»

“A group of my *Ummah* would be always successful and in the right. Its opponents would not be able to harm it till the Last Day.” (*Tirmidhi*)

Jews suffered destruction owing to their sectarianism. None of its sects adhered to the truth. Their rabbis drove them to error. However, in the Muslim community while seventy-two groups, as foretold by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would be deviated, one group would keep on professing the truth till the Last Day and would enjoy success. By holding fast to Monotheism it would uphold *Sunnah* and *Hadith* and protect Muslims against the error of the misguided sects. It would promote only the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and none would succeed in obliterating it. Till the blowing of the Trumpet by the Angel Israfil it would continue following the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions. The Prophet's statement clarifies that unlike Jews the whole Muslim *Ummah* would

not land into error. Rather a group would always stand for the truth and keep on preaching it till the Last Day.

Now let us recognise this group honestly in the light of the Prophet's clue: He said that it would follow his way and of his Companions. This establishes that this Saved Group would pursue the way of Companions. For Companions lived by only *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. By giving up our bias let us identify this group which claims to follow only the way of the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Without indulging in blind conformity it draws directly upon *Hadith* in the manner of Companions and acts upon the same. In line with the Prophet's statements this is the Saved Group that would abide by the truth till the Last Day.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, as already mentioned, says:

“If *Ahlul-Hadith* are not the group that would always stand for the truth, I do not know to which other group it refers.” (*Sharf Ashâbil-Hadith*)

There occur also the following observations in Khatib Baghdadi's *Sharf Ashâbil-Hadith*:

According to Imam Yazid bin Hârun: “*Ahlul-Hadith* is meant by the group that would adhere to the truth till the Last Day.”

Imam Sufyân Thawri observes: “*Ahlul-Hadith* are the custodians of religion on the earth.”

For Qadi 'Ayaz: “The group abiding by the truth till the Last Day is the one that follows the stance of *Ahlul-Hadith*.”

According to Imam Ibnul-Mubâarak: “In my opinion reference is to *Ahlul-Hadith*.” Imam Ahmad bin Sanan endorses the same point.

In the words of Imam Bukhâri: “As to the group regarding which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that it would be in the right, it is *Ahlul-Hadith*.”

Ali bin Madini, Imam Bukhâri's teacher, states: "The Successful Group always professing the truth is *Ahlul-Hadith*."⁽¹⁾

By recounting the above statements we intend to bring home the point to you that the group following the way of the Prophet and Companions and standing for the truth till the Last Day is none other than *Ahlul-Hadith*. You should therefore also be of *Ahlul-Hadith* in both your beliefs and practices. You should give up all other means and join the Prophet's way. In the presence of *Hadith* you should not turn to anything else. You should recant loyalty to all others in preference to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and free yourselves of all shackles. You should put an end to all sectarianism⁽²⁾ in that you are fully aware that there is no God other than Allah and that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is His Messenger.

What it signifies is that only Allah is to be worshipped and Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) be obeyed. Pure worship of Allah is to be carried out strictly in accordance with the Prophet's way. Allah is to be obeyed in obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and no one's way be considered. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ»

(1) Our repeated reference to *Ahlul-Hadith* should not give rise to the idea that our objective is to call you to some new sect. *Ahlul-Hadith* is not some new sect. It stands only for those who act upon *Hadith*. Like Companions we would like to see abiding by *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. It would release you from fetters and help follow *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Let it be realised that all sects came into being after the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). *Sunnah* and *Hadith* are not, however, some later day developments. Nor did its followers appear at a later date.

(2) Reference is to the links owing to blind following of certain individuals in both beliefs and actions.

“Of all the words the best one is of Allah and of all the ways the best one is of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).”

No word excels Allah’s hence only the Qur’ân is to be followed. It is incumbent upon us to lead our life in line with Divine law. For Allah alone rules over the human life in that He is the Provider and the Eternal ruler. As to what should be the way of obeying Allah’s Commands, the best way is that of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). No other way is better than his for practising the Qur’ân.

Since we know that no way is better than his, and that Allah has not allowed us to take to a way other than his, one who follows a different way certainly indulges in sectarianism. He does not follow the Prophet’s way. Only those acting upon *Hadith* can follow his way. For there is a world of difference between *Hadith* and the opinions of the members of Muslim *Ummah*. O Muslim brethren! Why do you go about worthless thing while neglecting the invaluable one?

Their position on the Day of Judgement

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ جَاءَ أَصْحَابُ الْحَدِيثِ مَا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَمَعَهُمُ الْمَحَابِرُ فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ أَنْتُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْحَدِيثِ كُنْتُمْ تَصَلُّونَ عَلَيَّ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ».

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “*Ahlul-Hadith* would appear before Allah on the Day of Judgement with their writing material (which they used for writing *Ahadith*). Allah would tell them: ‘You are *Ahlul-Hadith*. You used to send blessings upon My Messenger (while writing down, reading and narrating *Ahadith*). Go and enter Paradise’.” (*Jawâhirul-Usul*)

«اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ»

“O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his household as You blessed Ibrahim and his household. Verily you are the Praiseworthy, the Exalted.”

O Muslim brethren and sisters! Act upon *Hadith*, study these and hold these dearer than your own lives. Live by these and lead your life like the genuine *Ahlul-Hadith*. Lead a pure and wholesome life. Partake lawful things, eat and drink these, speak the truth and illumine your faith and practice with the light of *Hadith*. Being *Ahlul-Hadith* always follow the Prophet’s way. Remember! You cannot get such guidance and such illuminated path anywhere else.

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilânî’s proclamation of the Truth

“*Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah* are *Ahlul-Hadith*”

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilânî needs no introduction. His piety, erudition and religiosity is recognized by everyone. He is an equally respected figure for both Hanafis and *Ahlul-Hadith*. Regarding the Saved and the Successful Group that follows the way of the Prophet and his Companions, he says in his acclaimed work, which deserves to be studied by giving up all stubbornness and bias:

“The Saved Group (for its adherence to the truth) is *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah*.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*)

Absolving this group of the charge of sectarianism he further states:

“*Ahlu-Sunnah* constitute a single group.”⁽¹⁾

His assessment is extremely honest and truthful. Moreover, it is exactly by the standards of *Hadith* that *Ahlu-Sunnah* form a single group which is above sectarianism. Like Companions they comprise a single group. Explaining further this single group he points to its other feature:

“They are *Ahlul-Hadith*.”⁽²⁾ (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*).

O readers! It is worth noting that Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni identifies *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* with only *Ahlul-Hadith*. He does not mention in this context any of the sects that appeared three centuries later. For him the Saved Group of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* is only *Ahlul-Hadith*.

By using their moral courage, all Muslim brothers should adopt *Hadith* as their stance, as is stated by the Sheikh. They should join *Ahlu-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith*, following the way of Companions. Those having great regard for the Sheikh and taking him as an outstanding saint should follow his directive. They should believe not only in his exalted status but also practise his advice that the Saved Group is *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*. And *Ahlu-Sunnah* is a single group which is *Ahlul-Hadith*.

⁽¹⁾ Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni speaks of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* as the Successful Group. He does not mention any sect of the post-Companions period in this regard. Moreover, he identifies the features of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*: ‘The Prophet’s way is *Sunnah* whereas the united stance of the Companions signifies *Jamâ'ah*. So *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* are those who follow the Prophet’s way and of the Companions, and abide by the Qur’ân and *Hadith* in the manner of the Companions’.

⁽²⁾ It proves that Sheikh Jilani was of *Ahlul-Hadith*. For he describes *Ahlu-Sunnah* as *Ahlul-Hadith*.

O those having faith in the Sheikh's saintliness! You should never slight *Ahlul-Hadith*. For *Hadith* is not something trivial; it represents the saying of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the leader of both the worlds. It is our bounden duty to hold these in esteem and act upon the same. As directed by the Sheikh, all of you⁽¹⁾ should be of *Ahlul-Hadith*. You should follow the dictates of justice out of fear of Allah.

Identifying the maintainers of heresy in the light of the Sheikh's statement

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni says:

“Remember! The maintainers of heresy have certain features which set them apart.”

And he specifies the same:

“It is their sign that they speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith*.”
(*Ghunyatur-Tâlibin*)

The Sheikh employs the expression ‘*Ahlul-Athar*’ in the above, which is synonymous with *Ahlul-Hadith*. In his Persian translation of the Sheikh's work, Abdul-Hakim Siyalkoti, therefore, renders it as ‘*Ahlul-Hadith*.’

Heretics who speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith*

Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni makes a very truthful and courageous observation. Without the fear of reproach he

⁽¹⁾ A true and sincere disciple is the one who follows the views, which are supported by argument, of his mentor. Since Sheikh Jilâni refers to only *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Ahlul-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah*, it is the bounden duty of all the devotees and disciples of the Sheikh to listen to their mentor and take to the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and of the Companions. We make this appeal out of our utmost sincerity and with depths of our heart.

declares that those who speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith* are the ones who practise heretical acts. It is their distinguishing mark.

O those who speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith*! Pay heed to the point that the Shah brands such people as practitioners of heretical acts. You should not therefore behave so in future. Far from condemning those devoted to Monotheism, *Sunnah* and *Hadith* you should love them and treat them well. For they follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in the manner of Companions and hold all religious figures and saints of the whole Muslim *Ummah* in esteem.

Let it also be remembered that it is a very significant point of the Sheikh that those who abuse *Ahlul-Hadith* are the ones who practise heretical acts. You should also carefully study this statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) about such people:

«لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ لَصَاحِبٍ بِدْعَةٍ صَوْمًا وَلَا صَلَاةً وَلَا صَدَقَةً وَلَا حَجًّا وَلَا عُمْرَةً
وَلَا جِهَادًا وَيُخْرَجُ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ كَمَا تَخْرُجُ الشَّعْرَةُ مِنَ الْعَجِينِ»

“Allah does not accept fasting, prayer, *Zakat*, alms, pilgrimage, *Umrah* or *Jihâd* of a practitioner of heretical acts. Such a person stands outside the fold of Islam like a hair is removed from kneaded flour.” (*Ibn Mâjah*)

O readers! You may have noted that a practitioner of heretical acts is someone accursed before Allah. That is why none of his actions are acceptable. You should therefore make a point not to indulge in heretical acts.⁽¹⁾ Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni identifies a feature of such people that they speak ill of *Ahlul-*

⁽¹⁾ The Prophet says: “Whoever invents a thing in our *Shari'ah*, it is something cursed.” (*Bukhârî*). Heresy is thus something invented in matters of *Shari'ah* by members of the *Ummah*. You should be cautious as not to take a fabricated thing as part of the religion and not to act upon it. For Allah does not accept any act of heresy.

Hadith. He is absolutely right in his remark: Only the practitioners of heretical acts can afford to abuse those who abide by *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. It is only they who are engaged in opposing and being averse to the Prophet's words and practices i.e., *Hadith* and *Sunnah* and in removing these and in fighting against those who follow the same. We request such brethren to give up this practice. Far from being hostile to *Ahlul-Hadith* they should pay heed to the above observation of such a leading religious figure. They should, at least, be frightened of incurring his displeasure.

Criticism by the worldly *Ulama*

When *Ahlul-Hadith* elucidate the teachings of the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and as part of their mission of preaching they refute heresies and expose their absurdities and baselessness, the worldly *Ulama* get concerned about their interests and unlawful earnings. They incite the naive commoners against *Ahlul-Hadith*, branding them as the ones who are disrespectful to saints and religious figures hence no heed be paid to them. Consequently, the simple-minded masses hate *Ahlul-Hadith*. We submit to Muslim brethren out of utmost sincerity and love not to be misled by such so-called scholars; and refrain from criticizing *Ahlul-Hadith* at their instigation. For their material interests they criticize *Ahlul-Hadith* and provoke you into doing the same. You should ask yourself as to what is their crime? *Ahlul-Hadith* do have great regard for all saints and religious figures of the nation. Yet they believe that obedience is due only to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They regard only him as the exemplar for the nation and his word as the final one.

O Muslim brethren! Think, the Sheikh warns you against criticizing *Ahlul-Hadith* and tells you that it is the sign of

the practitioners of heretical acts. You should not therefore fall under their spell. Avoid this stimulant and do not consume the dose given by them.

May Allah grant such *Ulama* the ability to exhort Muslims to practise unity, mutual love and understanding. May they bring all Muslims closer to one another and preach them unity and fraternity. For this is the fundamental message of Islam.

Condition of Jewish rabbis who fanned sectarianism

Jewish rabbis used to misguide the commoners by prescribing for them their own personal opinions as religious commands which culminated in the birth of several sects. Moreover, they related false stories to the Jews. They were responsible for the infighting among Jews, as the Qur'ân tells:

﴿ وَ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِي وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴾

“And there are among them (Jews) unlettered people, who know not the Book, but they trust upon false desires and they but guess.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:78)

As one learns from the above, the illiterate Jews who did not know about the Torah, were imparted false stories related to them by their rabbis. Their faith was dependent upon it. And their rabbis concealed the commands of the Torah and teachings of Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) while instructed them in their own opinions and devoured unlawful earnings. Allah recounts this conduct of theirs in the following verse:

﴿ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾

“Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say; ‘This is from Allah’, to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:79)

For extorting unlawful money the rabbis invented matters of religion and told them that it was the command of the Torah itself. They had invented such things in order to make money and passed off their own views as the law. By sanctifying offerings with reference to the Law they cheated people and told that it was from Allah. This conduct of theirs, of parading their own views as religion and the law, is condemned by Allah in the above verse: ‘Woe is for them’. It ordains their destruction, ruin and hurling into the Hell. This applies to all such scholars who invent falsehood and misguide the ignorant into believing that it is Divine command. Why do they commit such acts and cheat people in matters of religion? ‘They do so to purchase with it a little price’. These rabbis accumulated money by this business which lay in robbing the commoners by cheating and misguiding them. The Qur’ân refers to it as ‘little price’. For, had they adhered to true religion, Allah would have showered on them rewards in the Hereafter and bounties in Paradise. As compared to it, one’s earning in this world, no matter how much, is certainly little. This was the conduct of the rabbis that in utter neglect of the Torah and Prophet Moses’s teachings, they prescribed their own views for the ignorant ones and earned money. Allah says: ‘Woe for them what their hands have written and woe for them for what they earn thereby (i.e., ruin, destruction and Hell-fire).’

Hell awaits those who conceal true religion and prescribe their own views as matters of religion for people. This invented

religion and its resultant material profits would serve as the fuel for Hell-fire.

O simple-minded Muslims! This was the conduct of Jewish rabbis. Allah provides the following eye-opening account for

us: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ ۖ وَالْعَذَابُ بِالْمَعْفُورَةِ ۖ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ﴾

“Verily, those who conceal what Allah has sent down, of the Book, and purchase a small gain therewith (of worldly things), they eat into their bellies nothing but fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor purify them, and theirs will be a painful torment. Those are they who have purchased error at the price of guidance, and torment at the price of forgiveness. So how bold they are to the Fire.” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:174, 175)

You have already noted the conduct of Jewish rabbis who altered the Mosaic Law for amassing worldly gain and cheated people in matters of religion. Allah declares regarding such persons that so doing they are eating fire into their bellies. In other words, their cheating and earning unlawful money in matters of religion is nothing but fire—Hell-fire. Allah would not speak to them on the Day of Judgement. Nor would He purify them of the evil of their cheating and deception. Rather, He would make them taste tormenting punishment.

Allah would punish those rabbis for their having divided people into several sects and for their commercialization of religion. They invented rules of this game, by pronouncing

their own religious rulings, and caused sectarian fighting and earned worldly gains and fame. They made such points which have nothing to do with the Torah or Prophet Moses's pious life.

Warning to Prophet Muhammad's followers

There are simple-minded illiterate people in all times and all places who may be cheated and exploited. Allah revealed the following verse in order to warn simple Muslims against worldly *Ulama*:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لِيَآكُفُونَ
 أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَطْلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾

“O believers! Verily there are many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder them from the way of Allah...” (*At-Taubah*, 9:34).

Unequivocally the above verse informs that many of the religious leaders exploit unsuspecting people in matters of religion and rob them of their wealth. By resorting to sheer falsehood and deception such unscrupulous *Ulama* devour others' wealth and by asking them to indulge in polytheism and heresy they hinder them from Allah's way. Likewise, by asking them to act upon their personal opinions they ruin their Afterlife. It then emerges that there are many religious figures and saints who are simply black sheep.

Allah describes in the above mentioned verses, the conduct of worldly *Ulama*. Let us now study the Prophet's account of them. Ali (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُوْشِكُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى مِنَ
 الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَّا اسْمُهُ وَلَا يَبْقَى مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا رَسْمُهُ مَسَاجِدُهُمْ عَامِرَةٌ وَهِيَ
 خَرَابٌ مِنَ الْهُدَى عُلَمَاءُهُمْ شَرٌّ مِنْ تَحْتَ أَدِيمِ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ عِنْدِهِمْ
 تَخْرُجُ الْفِتْنَةُ وَفِيهِمْ تَعُودٌ»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “There would a period in the history of my nation when Islam would exist only in name and the Qur’ân as a mere ritual. Mosques would be, no doubt, crowded (with illumination, decoration and people) yet guidance (the Qur’ân and *Hadith* teaching and modes of worship prescribed by *Sunnah*) would not be there. The *Ulama* then would be the worst creature on earth. They would cause (dissension, division and heresies) mischief which would be widespread.”

(*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

O brethren in Islam! Reconsider the above *Hadith* and think whether the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has not dubbed the worldly *Ulama* who cause mischief, as the worst creature on earth. Since it is the case, there are such *Ulama* who are many in number. They earn their bread by circulating their own opinions in matters of religion, cheat people through rites involving heresies and polytheism and hinder them from Allah’s way. They incite mutual differences among Muslims and cause mischief and disunity.

Let it be remembered that disunity and sectarianism raise their head among Muslims when a way other than that of the Qur’ân and *Hadith* is pursued, when others’ views are preferred to those of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), others’ statements supersede *Ahadith*, and religious figures assert their own interpretation; false and unsubstantial stories gain ground and the truth is garbled by falsehood, coercion is employed in matters of religion and naive people are made to stand up

against those who uphold *Hadith*, the ignorant and the devious ones assume positions of authority. Allah and His Messenger have warned us against such conditions, in the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

The pious *Ulama* – a mercy for people

Whereas the worldly *Ulama* are a curse for the nation, the pious ones are totally a source of mercy and blessing for people. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says:

«فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَدْنَاكُمْ»

“A pious scholar (who is truthful and practises what he preaches) is a superior to a worshipper as is my superiority over an inferior of you.” (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

He further states:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الثَّمَلَةَ فِي جُحْرِهَا وَحَتَّى الْحُوتَ لِيُصَلُّوا عَلَى مُعَلِّمِ النَّاسِ الْخَيْرِ»

“Verily, Allah, His angels, those in the heavens and the earth, including even the ant and the fish make supplication for those who teach good (the Qur'ân and *Hadith*) to others.” (*Tirmidhi*)

One thus learns that a good, truthful, righteous, honest scholar who elucidates the Qur'ân and *Hadith* and is of unblemished character holds a very exalted position. No one else can attain the heights which the inheritor and custodian of *Shari'ah* enjoys. Glory is to Allah! Allah and His angels send blessings on such pious *Ulama* and ants and fish make supplications in their favour, seeking their forgiveness and security. What an immense blessing such *Ulama* are for the nation! They are

doubtless friends of Allah. About such pious *Ulama* the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) tells:

«إِنَّ خَيْرَ الْخَيْرِ خِيَارُ الْعُلَمَاءِ»

“The best of the best are *Ulama*.” (Dârimi)

No one excels such *Ulama* in goodness. Muslims should consider them as a source of blessing for them. They should not fail, in the least, in paying them their due regards and consider their company as a great blessing and favour.

***Ahlul-Hadith* bear a single name**

The worldly *Ulama* given to monetary benefits abuse *Ahlul-Hadith* and incite the masses against them. We have already taken note of Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni’s comment that those who speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith* are practitioners of heretical acts. His further observation deserves to be studied with attention:

“(O my disciples! Listen!) Faithless and atheist sect is characterized by the point that it (mischievously) calls *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Hashwiyah*. They do not want people to follow *Hadith*. The sign of the Qadariyah sect is that they (mischievously) refer to *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Mujbirah*. The Jahmiyah sect stands out for its (mischievous) reference to *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Mushabbah*. The Râfidah sect (mischievously) speak of *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Nâsibah*.

(Listen)! All these slanders of the false sects against *Ahlul-Hadith* are absolutely baseless. It is only out of their bigotry and bias. Out of their jealousy and hostility they slander against *Ahlul-Hadith*. (Remember well!) *Ahlul-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah* have a single name and that is *Ahlul-Hadith*.

Whatever names given to heresies these groups may ascribe to *Ahlul-Hadith*, it makes no difference. (Listen). The Makkan disbelievers had invented many names for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) yet it did not harm him. The disbelievers used to speak of him as a magician, poet, mad person, one under the spell of magic and soothsayer. However, for Allah, His angels, men and jinn and the whole creation he bore no other name. He was only the Messenger and Prophet. He was absolutely free from all such insinuations.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*)

Heretics indulge in calling names against *Ahlul-Hadith*

You have taken note of the Sheikh’s remark that the practioners of heretical acts are full of jealousy and hostility against *Ahlul-Hadith* and prompted by the same they indulge in calling mischievous names, notwithstanding the fact that this group has a single name – *Ahlul-Hadith* who are truly *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah*.

Those speaking ill of *Ahlul-Hadith* should ponder over the point which Sheikh Jilâni makes: the Prophet’s enemies could not do him any harm though they called him a magician, poet, mad person, and one under the spell of magic. In the same fashion those calling names of *Ahlul-Hadith* cannot do anything against them. The enemies of *Ahlul-Hadith*, according to the Sheikh’s analogy, follow the footsteps of the Makkan disbelievers. Moreover, one learns that it is the way of the practitioners of heretical acts that they call names and heap offensive titles on *Ahlul-Hadith*. So all those who refer to them as Wahabi, Najdi, atheists and other offensive names are

practitioners of heretical acts, as specified by the Sheikh. For he is on record saying: "It is a feature of practioners of heretical acts that they speak ill of *Ahlul-Hadith*." (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*)

Offensive names like Wahabi, Najdi, atheist etc.

Ahlul-Hadith live by only the Qur'ân and *Hadith* out of their own conviction, not out of conformity to someone. It is therefore both irrational and unjust to associate them coercively with Abdul-Wahhab and refer to them as Wahabis. Same holds true for their ascription to some figure in Najd and speak of them contemptuously as Najdis. This is bad manners. Imam Abu Hanifah was a native of Kufah. Given this, can Hanafis be called Kufis? Since these followers of a native of Kufi are not known by this relationship, how can those who do not follow an individual and have no link with Najd be described as Najdis. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says:

«تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُم بِهِمَا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ رَسُولِهِ»

"I leave behind with you two things. As long as you adhere fast to these, you would never land into error. (These two things are) Allah's Book and *Sunnah* of His Messenger." (*Mishkâtul-Masâbih*)

In accordance with the above directive of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) *Ahlul-Hadith* stand for adherence to the two things left behind by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم): the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Is it just to speak of them as atheists? How right Sheikh Jilâni is in his observation: "The name calling and slandering committed by practitioners of heretical acts against *Ahlul-Hadith* proceed from their jealousy and hostility." It is expected that a decent Muslim who holds Sheikh Jilâni in great esteem would not henceforth speak of *Ahlul-Hadith* as

Wahabi, Najdi or atheist. Rather he would lovingly describe them as *Ahlul-Hadith*, and out of his love for *Hadith* of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) he would also like to be known himself as *Ahlul-Hadith*.

O Muslim brethren! Listen again! Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni says: “There is no name of those who practise *Sunnah* and *Hadith* other than a single one — *Ahlul-Hadith*.”

Sheikh Jilâni’s creed

The Sheikh states:

“Take only the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* as your guide and study both carefully and with reflection. Act only upon these two and beware! Do not follow the views of members of the *Ummah*.” (*Futuhul-Ghaib*)

The Sheikh emphatically declares that only the Qur’ân and *Hadith* be taken as the guide in matters of religion and that one must follow only these. One must not listen to others. It establishes that the Sheikh’s stance was the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. He was not a blind follower of someone and had nothing to do with conformity. He would not listen to anyone without a sound argument. As a matter of fact, he was of *Ahlul-Athar*, i.e., *Ahlul-Hadith*. It has been noted earlier that he spoke of *Ahlul-Hadith* as *Ahlul-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah*. It cannot then be possible that he himself was not of *Ahlul-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Hadith*. Since this is the case, his devotees should, for the sake of justice, take only the Qur’ân and *Hadith* as their guide, as the Sheikh directs them. By freeing themselves of all shackles they should therefore adhere to Qur’ân and *Hadith*. The Sheikh makes another invaluable advice:

“O my disciples! Act only upon the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and pay no heed to anything beside these.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*)

Undoubtedly the Sheikh was of *Ahlul-Hadith* who drew directly upon the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. He was so much committed to this belief that he asked his disciples to pay no attention to anything other than the Qur’ân and *Hadith*. Furthermore, he exhorts them:

“It is obligatory on each and every disciple and devotee of mine that he adhere fast to the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and act only upon these. He should obey what these ask and refrain from what these forbid. In all matters he should be governed by these. For these are the means with which one may gain access to Allah, the Lord of all honour and glory.” (*Ghunyatut-Tâlibin*)

What is worthy of attention is that the Sheikh refers Muslims to only the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and speaks of these as the means for meeting Allah. O those who take the Sheikh as a great saint! You should move towards Allah, guided by the two means which are specified by the Sheikh and be indifferent to everything other than the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*.

Way of the seekers of the Truth

O believers in the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)! Follow such ways of the seekers of the truth which are approved by him. Be guided by *Hadith* so that you no longer need the views of others. You should become indifferent to everything else besides *Sunnah*. Others should appear totally unsuitable and utterly inadequate.

O Muslims! Believe in his Messengership in such a way that there is no semblance of equality between him and members

of the *Ummah*. Follow *Hadith* and *Sunnah* to the extent that others become pale and non-existent. In your obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) you should transcend everything. So doing you would perform well your obligation and you would become a true Muslim.

Why are not you moved by these ideals? What has made you negligent and heedless? Why are you being overtaken by other forces. If you want to vitalize your Faith and enjoy its real taste, you should turn completely to *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Enrich your Faith with the message and guidance of *Hadith*.

Divisions and dissensions in religion

In *Surah Al-Anbiya*, Allah has recounted accounts of several Messengers and their nations, how they deserted their Messengers and took to other paths and caused differences and dissensions in religion. For opening the eyes of Muslim nation, Allah warns:

﴿وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كَيْفَ إِتَّخَذُوا أَلْسِنَارَ جَعُونَ﴾

“But they have broken up and differed as regards their religion among themselves. They all shall return to Us.” (*Al-Anbiya*, 21:93)

Reference in the above verse is to earlier nations that have divided their religion and having turned into numerous sects and pursued different paths. Deserting their Messengers they adopted sectarianism. Allah says that they would, however, return to Him. All these sects would appear before Him.

Allah would ask these persons who divide religion why they abandoned the way of Messengers and followed other paths?

Why did they establish sects and invented their own religion besides the way of Allah?

O Muslim brethren! This question would be posed to all the nations. You would be also questioned as to why you preferred ways other than that of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)? Why did you break into several sects? Why did you divide yourself into groups and parties? Why did you introduce alien practices into the universal religion of Islam? Why did you establish several schools named after certain individuals of the *Ummah*? These wrongdoers would be asked why they preferred someone's view to the Prophet's? Why did you cite the opinions of so-and-so in the presence of the Prophet's directive?

Those who depend for guidance on others and act as their puppets would be asked to specify their Messenger and what creedal statement they professed? Whom did they listen to? Why did they mix up falsehood with the genuine Islamic teaching? Why did they accept worthless things, in the presence of invaluable ones? Though claiming to be Muslim they pledged obedience to others and practised blind conformity. Why did they lower down themselves to such levels? Why did not they see reason? Who would help them on that Day?

O those taking ways opposed to that of the Prophet! Think again. What would be your answer to Allah on the Day of Judgement? When the truth would be manifest, what would be the fate of those who acted contrary to *Sunnah*? No leader or scholar would be there to help you on that Day. Sects would vanish. It is therefore in order to adhere fast today to the Prophet's guidance and abandon all other unsubstantial means and ways.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has no concern with the sectarianists

Allah declares in the Qur'ân:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ﴾

“Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you (O Muhammad) have no concern with them in the least...” (Al-An‘am, 6:159)

This verse makes it clear beyond the shadow of doubt that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) does not have anything to do with sects. O those given to sectarianism! Better repent and establish your link with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) both in faith and practice.

Plight of the misguided ones on the Day of Judgement

﴿ وَيَوْمَ يَعْصُ الظَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا
○ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فَلَانًا حَلِيلًا ﴾

“And (remember) the Day when the wrong-doer will bite at his hands, he will say: Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger (Muhammad). Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend.” (Al-Furqân, 25:27, 28)

An account of the plight of wrongdoer on the Judgement Day is captured in the above verse. He would be deeply repentant and remorseful and would bite his own hands. He would say to himself: ‘Would that I had pursued the Prophet’s way in my life. Would that I had followed in his footsteps and acted in accordance with *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. Today I have been seized by Allah for having failed to follow the Prophet’s way.

I am being chained, prosecuted with a full charge sheet. Doubtless I am guilty and my crime lies in adopting ways other than the Prophet's. I did wrong myself. Allah had sent His true Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the world in order to show the right way by practising the Qur'ân. He undoubtedly did so. Woe to me that I did not follow the same way. I turned indifferent to his way and of the Companions. I committed a monstrous wrong. Today I have to incur punishment for the same. Today I have no intercessor or sponsor or supporter. I cannot resort to bribery or fall back upon someone's help, support, friendship. There is no helper, defender or rescuer.

'Oh! Woe to me that those the paths of whom I followed, those whom I took as my leader, whom I imitated blindly, whom I devoted myself to, to whom I pledged my wealth, life and children, in whom I believed and obeyed unquestioningly, whom I served myself, none of them is in sight today. What a tragedy! My saint, masters, leaders, religious figures, custodians of shrines and those known as friends of Allah have vanished into thin air today, though they had me obeyed them. Where have they disappeared after putting me on wrong paths?

'Woe to me that I took so-and-so as my protector and friend. This is the height of my misfortune. Why did I take them as my friend, my protector? Why did I follow their ways?'

O Muslim brethren! You can see for yourself how one would regret on the Judgement Day who fails to abide by the Prophet's way, *Sunnah* and *Hadith*. He would cry at the top of his voice, express his guilt and remorse, bite his hands and give vent to his miserable plight. Reconsider your position again. Whose way should you follow? Which path should you take? Our conscience demands that out of our belief in the

Messengership we must follow the way of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) leader of both the worlds, head of Arabs and non-Arabs and Allah’s Last and Final Messenger.

Religion of Makkan polytheists

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزَلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ﴾

“And they worship besides Allah others for which He has sent down no authority, and of which they have no knowledge, and for the wrongdoers⁽¹⁾ there is no helper.”
(*Al-Hajj*, 22:71)

The Makkan polytheists worshipped those⁽²⁾ for which Allah had not sent down any sanction. They blindly follow their ancestors. The Qur’ân, therefore, states:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا﴾

“When it is said to them: ‘Follow what Allah has sent down.’ They say: ‘Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following’...” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:170)

The only argument which the polytheists advanced for their religion was that they had found their fathers doing so. The

(1) Allah dubs such people as wrongdoers who follow religion without reason and entertain beliefs that are not sanctioned by explicit or implicit Revelation. Such are wrongdoers who would get no helper against Divine penalty on the Day of Judgement. It should frighten the blind followers living by conventional religion that is contrary to *Hadith*.

(2) Muslims should look for sound basis for all acts. They should perform religious duties which have a sanction in *Shari’ah* and give up all else. The above-quoted verse makes this point abundantly clear.

Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), however, invited them to the incontestable argument of the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. Yet they rejected it and persisted in the ways of their ancestors. They preferred it to the Qur'ân. They were such blind conformists that they idolized their ways.

Remember! Such blind-following is forbidden which runs counter to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. The Qur'ân declares:

﴿ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ﴾

“And when it is said to them: ‘Come to what Allah has revealed and unto the Messenger’. They say: ‘Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following’...”
(*Al-Mâidah*, 5:104)

Think! Allah asks them to come to what Allah has revealed (the Qur'ân) and unto the Messenger (*Hadith*) but they retort: ‘Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following.’ In the face of the Qur'ân and *Hadith* they prefer the ways of their ancestors and elders. They are blind imitators of their forefathers. Muslim brethren should be frightened of it and they should never draw upon the views of their group or elders by preferring these to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. For this is the conduct of polytheists. The Qur'ân adds:

﴿ وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَجَسَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا ﴾

“And when they commit an evil deed, they say: ‘We found our fathers doing it’...” (*Al-A'raf*, 7:28)

The Makkan polytheists were so brazen conformists that on being censured for their evil deeds they resorted to the pretext that they had found their forefathers doing the same hence they do so. On being further questioned they even said that

Allah had asked them to do so. When they were asked to produce some proof on this count they would reason that since their ancestors committed these acts they must be doing it at Allah's behest. So this was the response of the foolish, blind imitators of Makkah. They preferred conformity to the commands of Allah and His Messenger. Such conformity is forbidden. No one can present it as a tenable position. The Qur'ân strongly refutes it.

O Muslim brethren! Today when the message of the Qur'ân and *Hadith* is presented before you, the conformist tend to say that the way of their religious leaders suffices for them. And that they are content with following the way of their forefathers. They deliberately prefer an individual's view to *Hadith*, while abandoning the latter. Does the above verse not embrace such so-called believers? It is perfectly all right to follow the views of some Imam, provided one would abandon the Imam if his views are found to be contrary to *Hadith*. However, such blind conformity, which forces one not to abandon the same even when the Qur'anic verse and *Hadith* are recited to him and he grasps well their import yet contends that he would not like to deviate from the ways of his ancestors, would land him into great trouble. These people would not be spared on the Day of Judgement on the ground that they had recited the creedal statement of Islam --- the *Kalimâh*. For merely being called as members of the Prophet's nation these people would not be forgiven who neglected *Hadith* and acted upon the views of individuals. They would be certainly held accountable.

O Muslim brethren! See to reason and think. Blind conformity, which is contrary to the Qur'ân and *Hadith*, was the way of Makkan polytheists which is downright reprehensible.

A great religious poet, Allamah Iqbal states:

“Had conformity, which runs counter to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, been a desirable practice, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) too, would have continued following the way of his forefathers.”

The Qur’ân repeatedly speaks of the disbelievers’ blind imitation of their ancestors in order to warn Muslims against it. When Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) urged Pharaoh and his people to adhere to the truth, they replied:

﴿وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ﴾

“We found our fathers worshipping them (false gods).”
(*Al-Anbiya*, 21:53) ... and ...

﴿وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ﴾

“We found our fathers doing so.” (*Ash-Shu‘arâ*, 26:74).

The polytheists believed angels as God’s daughters and professed similar other absurd beliefs. Allah says:

﴿مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ﴾

﴿أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ﴾

“...They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do nothing but lie. Or have we given them any Book before this (the Qur’ân) to which they are holding fast.”
(*Az-Zukhruf*, 43: 20, 21)

According to the Qur’ân, their beliefs did not issue from any definite knowledge, these were prompted by sheer speculation and conjecture and were not supported by any authority or proof. The Qur’ân asks whether they possess and practise some Scripture. If it is so, they should produce it in order to justify their conduct. In response, their only explanation was:

﴿ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴾

“...We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we guide ourselves by their footsteps.”
(Az-Zukhruf, 43:22).

So this was the reply of polytheists that they followed the way of their forefathers. When Allah asked them to cite some authority or proof for their conduct and practices, they referred only to the way of their ancestors which were, or course, opposed to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

These verses should serve as the eye-opener for Muslims. They should produce the sanction of the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* for their doctrines and deeds. Rather than referring to the views of some religious figures they should cite the authority of the Qur’ân and *Hadith*.

As to those who prefer the ways of certain individuals to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, Allah pronounces the following judgement about them:

﴿ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَانُ الشَّيْطٰنُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴾

“And when it is said to them: ‘Follow that which Allah has sent down’. They say: ‘Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers (following)’. (Would they do so) even if Satan invites them to the torment of the Fire.”(*Luqmân*, 31:21)

What emerges from the above verse is that it is the way of Satan that one follows a way without any sanction contrary to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*. Since the Makkan disbelievers said that they did not possess any Divine sanction for their conduct, except their blind conformity to their forefathers,

Allah declared that their conduct betrayed their clinging to the way of Satan. Their leader was Satan who led them straight on to Hell punishment. This makes it also crystal clear that all beliefs, deeds, practices, ideologies, and ways which run counter to the Qur'ân and *Hadith* represent only Satan's call. Out of sincerity for our Muslim brethren we therefore consider it our duty to tell them that they should not practise anything in matters of religion which is not borne out by the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. They should not follow blindly someone. All along they should remember the Divine warning: "Satan invites them to the torment of the Fire."

It should not be misconstrued by one in the sense that the above account is specific to disbelievers hence it is inapplicable to Muslims. Let us remind ourselves that just as lying is forbidden for disbelievers, same holds true for us. As polytheism, disbelief, breaking promises, fornication and cheating are prohibited for disbelievers, the same deeds are disallowed for us. By the same token of logic, they used to offer the pretext of following their forefathers and it was denounced by Allah. Allah directed them to act in accord with the Divine teachings. So it is obligatory on us, in the light of the above account, not to practise such things in religion which are actually unauthorized practices of our forefathers and unsubstantiated views of leaders. Since we have ample guidance in the Qur'ân and *Hadith*, we should adhere to the same. This warning should not be misinterpreted in the sense that we are opposed to the four leading Imams. No, never so. For we too, have regard for them and other Imams and supplicate that Allah shower on them His mercy. We draw on their erudition. However, if any of their views is contrary to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, we are no longer bound to them. For they were not blessed with Revelation. So those who follow

them in accord with the Qur'ân and *Hadith*, they are in the right.

Muslim ancestors

Were one to contend that following one's ancestors is forbidden if they were disbelievers, however, it is not so in the case of Muslim ancestors. This point may be countered thus: No one except Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is infallible. Everyone is prone to erring hence no one's view is to be taken as the final word in matters of *Shari'ah*, unless it is in line with the Qur'ân and *Hadith*. By command that obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is due on every Muslim, Allah has declared that *Hadith* is to be adhered to unquestioningly. And this is applicable to everyone, the rich and the poor alike. If someone rejects *Hadith*, he is to be dismissed outright, may be he from one's ancestors, saints, martyrs, Imam or *Mujtahid*. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) being the leader of both the worlds enjoys total obedience. We cannot move an inch without his leave and all of us depend on his Messengership. Everyone is blessed with life-giving guidance by him.

We should, therefore, lead life carefully and cautiously lest we may be deceived by someone which might result in our destruction.

To avoid the way of Jews

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَحْضَعُوا قُلُوبَكُمْ لِمَنْ لَدِكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ﴾

“Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe, to be affected by Allah's reminder and that which has been revealed of the Truth, lest they become

as those who received the Scripture before and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened? And many of them were disobedient ones.”
(*Al-Hadid*, 57:16)

Muslims are exhorted, in the above verse, to realize that it is time for their hearts to be softened by Allah’s reminder and Qur’ânic commands. They should turn attentively to Allah’s remembrance and the Qur’ân and be obedient and responsive to these. They should not behave like Jews who, though conferred with the Torah, were hard-hearted. They became fearless of God, abandoned the Torah and took to their whims as disobedient people. Muslims are warned against behaving like Jews. Muslims should not abandon the Qur’ân and take to their fancy in matters of religion. They are not to prefer their conjectures to the Qur’ân and *Hadith* and not to imitate blindly their religious scholars. Nor should they forsake *Hadith* and turn to the views of members of the nation. By neglecting the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* they should not idolize religious figures.

In their religious life Jews had abandoned the Torah and taken their rabbis as lords besides Allah. They clung to their views, without any authority and accepted without discerning what was branded lawful or unlawful by them. They blindly followed them, a point which is elaborated thus in *Tafsir* by Ibn Kathir:

“Jews had taken to the views and invented opinions of their rabbis while abandoning the Torah and Prophet Moses’s way. Rather than the Mosaic Law they followed the rabbis and by practising such blind conformity they took their rabbis as lords besides Allah.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*).

To take *Ulama* as lords

While speaking of the blind conformity of Jews Allah tells that they had taken their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah. When ‘Adi bin Hâtim (رضي الله عنه) enquired the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as to how they had idolized their religious leaders, he replied:

«كَانُوا إِذَا أَحَلُّوا لَهُمْ شَيْئًا اسْتَحَلُّوهُ وَإِذَا حَرَّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا حَرَّمُوهُ»

“When they prescribed something as lawful, though without any sanction, people would blindly accept so. Likewise, when they pronounced something as unlawful, people took it so unquestioningly.” (*Tirmidhi*)

The above *Hadith* clearly indicates that following the religious scholars blindly in matters of religion amounts to take them as lords besides Allah. For when they prescribe things, without any authority, as lawful and unlawful it is accepted so. Moreover, if it is proved that their pronouncements are opposed to *Hadith*, yet they are followed in preference to the Qur’ân and *Hadith*, it betokens that they are looked upon as lords besides Allah.

Think! The brethren who follow blindly the views and rulings of their Imams in preference to and even in opposed to *Ahadith*, are they not taking their Imams, in the lights of Qur’anic verses and *Ahadith*, as lords besides Allah? They do so even after realizing that these are discordant with *Sunnah*. They must give up their blind conformity which makes them prefer others’ views to *Hadith*.

O brethren! Think objectively and by giving up your stubborn bias. See whither you have been going. By the One True Lord! We make all these points only as a gesture of sincerity for you and for gaining Allah’s pleasure. Our only plea is that

you forsake all crooked paths and take to the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions.

Dear brethren! By Allah! Give up blind-following and sectarianism and seek guidance from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the victor in the battles of Badr and Hunain. Lead your life only in the light of *Hadith* and adhere fast to it. Do you not see that Jews were guilty of blind conformity to their rabbis as they followed them blindly. This made them negligent of the Torah and Moses's way while they were fully devoted to their rabbis. Were you to believe in the same manner and neglect *Hadith* by preferring the views of certain individuals, you would be pursuing a fatal path. For it would be reckoned as taking the Imams as lords besides Allah.

You should judge for yourself as to who occupies the throne of Messengership. Obviously this honour is exclusive to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). No one shares this honour. Since it is so, why do you elevate members of his Ummah to this status? By accepting their views as clinching arguments in matters of religion you associate them with Messengership. By preferring the views of individuals, as opposed to those of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, you set them on the throne of Messengership. Those guilty of such conduct would not be able to defend themselves on the Day of Judgement and face the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). What would they answer on appearing before Allah? O those who neglect *Hadith* and act upon others' views, it is for you to think about.

Those preferring someone's views to *Hadith* are in error and misguidance

According to Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) observed:

«تَعْمَلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ بِرُهَةٍ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَبُرْهَةٍ بِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ثُمَّ يَعْمَلُونَ بِالرَّأْيِ فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ضَلُّوا»

“My *Ummah* would adhere to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah* till a particular point of time. Then it would (regrettably) take to acting upon views (of the members of the *Ummah*). And when it does so, it would land into misguidance.” (*Ibn Kathir*)

We thus learn that those following a way other than the Prophet’s are misguided.

‘Umar’s verdict

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) stated:

“Those who follow their own opinions are opposed to *Hadith*. They can’t remember *Hadith*; these slip out of their memory. When asked to elucidate they think shame to profess their ignorance and they pronounce judgements based upon their whims, which are contrary to *Hadith*. Beware! You should keep off such people who judge things according to their whims. Do not let them gain proximity to you.” (*A ‘lâmul-Muwaqqi’in*)

Worst trouble-makers

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“The worst trouble-makers in my *Ummah* are those who would advance their own opinions in matters of religion in the face of *Hadith*.” (*Majma‘uz-Zawâ'id*)

So they are the worst mischief-makers who disregard *Hadith* and act upon views contrary to *Hadith*.

To discard the views contrary to *Hadith*

Imam Sha‘bi declared:

“As to those pronouncing judgements (in matters of religion), accept their verdict if they cite Qur’ân and *Hadith* in support of it; and throw in the bin such views of theirs, which issue from their own opinions.”

(*Al-Insâf*)

This inspiring decree of Imam Sha‘bi makes it plain that speculations and personal opinions that are contrary to *Hadith* deserve to be cast aside in the bin.

Calling towards the views of Imams

It is narrated by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه):

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ «سَيَكُونُ فِي أُمَّتِي رِجَالٌ يَدْعُونَ النَّاسَ إِلَى أَقْوَالِ إِمَامِهِمْ وَرَهْبَانِهِمْ وَيَعْمَلُونَ بِهَا وَيَحْسُدُونَ عَلَى التَّائِمِينَ خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ يَهُودُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ - ثَلَاثًا -»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “Soon there would be persons in my *Ummah* who would invite others to the views of their Imams and adhere to the same (in preference to *Hadith*). They would be hostile to such Muslims who (out of their adherence to *Sunnah*) say *Ameen* aloud⁽¹⁾ while praying behind the *Imâm*.

⁽¹⁾ According to another *Hadith* regarding those inimical to saying *Ameen* aloud: ‘Aishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) observed: “Jews are not more jealous of you than about your offering ‘*As-Salâmu Alaikum*’ (peace be upon you) and for reciting *Ameen*.” (*Ibn Mâjah*). Those Muslim brethren who are jealous and take this practice as an offence should objectively reconsider their position in

(Listen). They are the Jews⁽¹⁾ of this *Ummah*.” He repeated it thrice. (*Tareeq Muhammadi*)

O brethren! Be fearful. Abandon unsubstantiated views and opinions. Act upon *Hadith*. It is the sign of Jews to be guided by fellows rather than *Hadith*. Do not oppose such brethren who recite *Ameen* aloud while praying behind the *Imâm*. For this, once again, betrays the conduct of Jews. We have already studied the *Hadith* relating that the loud recitation of *Ameen* filled the Jews with jealousy and hostility.

Allah has named you Muslims

﴿ هُوَ أَحَبُّكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِّلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴾

view of the above *Hadith*. Now onwards they should not view with hostility the recitation of *Ameen* aloud. O brethren! You should better follow this practice, rather than be averse to it. Do not turn hostile at the instigation of some religious scholar. Such persons who breed sectarianism and cause mutual differences are sincere to neither Islam nor you.

- (1) Shah Waliullah regards the conduct of worldly *Ulama* and their blind followers as akin to that of Jews. He states: “If you want to observe the example of Jews, see the worldly-minded *Ulama* who imitate their predecessors while being neglectful of the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*. While imitating some scholar in utter ignorance they have turned indifferent to the perfect words of infallible. They are prompted by a false *Hadith* and their interpretations. So doing they resemble Jews.” (*Al-Fauzul-Kabir*).

This is the judgement of Shah Waliullah about such *Ulama* and their followers who prefer someone to the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*. We request *Ulama* to exhort the masses to act upon *Sunnah* and *Hadith*, rather than asking them to stick to blind following.

“He has chosen you, and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship, it is the religion of your father, Ibrahim. It is He Who has named you Muslims.” (*Al-Hajj*, 22:78)

It is evident from the above verse that Allah has chosen us for worshipping Him and laid upon us no hardship in religion. He has made everything easy for us. For example, it is permitted to offer only two *Raka'h* of prayer instead of four while on a journey. Likewise, there is leave for fast during a journey. Physically handicapped persons are not obliged to take part in *Jihâd*. In sum, there is allowance in all matters of religion and one is obliged to the extent he can afford to do. Allah declares that this easy religion is of our forefather Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام). We are directed to follow the same in accordance with *Sunnah*. We are warned eloquently against division into sects, also not to divide religion by ascribing ourselves to certain persons in religious practices. Rather Allah names us Muslims and we should hold it dear for ourselves and take pride in it. For the title Muslim implies obedience to Him. It must be remembered all along that we are Muslims.

By calling ourselves as Muslims all differences are ruled out. One who believes in Allah's Oneness and in the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and abides by the Qur'ân and *Hadith* in matters of faith and deeds is a Muslim. According to this principle, all Muslims constitute a universal brotherhood, embodying unity, fraternity and mutual love. However, once they start associating themselves with Imams and saints it would bring about sectarianism which would divide the nation. The contribution of Imams and saints should not result in the establishment of several schools of thought. Rather their erudition should help one follow better the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. So it is incumbent on everyone to give up here

worship and sectarianism and should be better known simply as a Muslim who lives by the Qur'ân and *Hadith*.

***Ahlul-Hadith* Muslims**

You have already noted that the Companions were *Ahlul-Hadith* and that Sheikh Abdul-Qâdir Jilâni considers *Ahlul-Hadith* as the Saved Group. It needs to be reiterated that *Ahlul-Hadith* are not some sect. It simply denotes those who follow the Prophet's way and practise the Qur'ân as elucidated by *Hadith*. With one's belief in Allah's Oneness and Prophet Muhammad's Messengership, no doubt, one becomes Muslim. However, one stands in need of detailed guidance as to how to practise the Qur'ân, how to perform prayer etc. On this point the Qur'ân directs us to draw from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) this detailed guidance:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ ﴾

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

(*Al-Hashr*, 59:7)

Guided by this Qur'ânic directive we pray as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prayed. And this can be learnt only from *Hadith*. This points to the prominence of *Hadith* in that it is as important to follow it as the Qur'ân. Without *Hadith* one cannot practise the Qur'ân. Given this, a Muslim is one who professes Islam in the light of *Hadith* and *Sunnah*. However, those conforming to Imams follow the views of their religious leaders in practising Islam. *Ahlul-Hadith*, however, believe in Islam which has reached them through the word and practice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They practise the Qur'ân in the light of the Prophet's practice of the Qur'ân. Such people are Muslims. Being *Ahlul-*

Hadith reflects one's aversion to sectarianism. They dissociate themselves from groupism in Islam and are content with Islamic teachings alone. Other sects have several sources of guidance whereas *Ahlul-Hadith* draw only on the guidance provide by the leader of Arabia and the rest, the Last Messenger, the Mercy for the mankind, the Intercessor for the sinners, the most honoured of the first and the last, Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Sects be merged into Islam

Numerous are the sects in Islam which are named after members of the *Ummah*. It is not possible to mention all those by name. We would, however, like to ask politely whether these sects existed in the best days of Companions and their successors and followers? Since none existed then, it proves that they came into being at a later date. However, Islam does not allow it. They should not practise sectarianism and divide the nation and impair its unity. We sincerely urge upon them to merge all their sects into Islam for Allah's sake. Better be known simply as Muslims and be content with only *Sunnah* and *Hadith* as role models. They should worship Allah and follow Prophet Muhammad's way. This is the loud and clear message of the creedal statement of Islam—'There is no God besides Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.'

We implore earnestly all literate Muslims to consider themselves as only Muslims and be content with *Sunnah* and *Hadith* only as the model for their conduct. This would liberate them from pernicious sectarianism. They should become strict followers of *Hadith*. Allah would take you to account on the Day of Judgement and adjudge you with perfect justice. Remember! Only such deeds would be

reckoned which had been performed according to the Prophet's way (i.e., *Sunnah* and *Hadith*). Allah has nothing to do with the beliefs and practices of sects. For He proclaims:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ ﴾

“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow.” (*Al-Ahzâb*, 33:21)

While Allah has blessed you with this unique model, drawing on some model of sects betrays indifference to the Prophet's example. Does it not amount to degrading Messengership? Does it not run counter to Divine declaration that He had perfected Islam for us?

You should become indifferent to all else in the presence of the perfect model of the Last Messenger. You should give up everything else, the teachings and views of members of the Muslim *Ummah*. By renouncing narrow conformity you should better illumine yourself with the Prophet's perfect example.

Angels questioning the dead in the grave

Grave represents the first stage of Afterlife. A light test is conducted there and one who passes it finds it easier to cross other stages, even the most difficult one, i.e., the Reckoning on the Day of Judgement. However, if one fails the initial test in grave he would be overcome with troubles in later stages. Ultimately having failed the test he would find himself landed into Hell.

According to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) two angels would question the dead by Allah's leave thus: “Who is your Lord?

What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?"⁽¹⁾ Its reply, according to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is: "My Lord is Allah. My religion is Islam. My Prophet is Muhammad, Messenger of Allah." (*Abu Dâwud*)

A worldly person would be a loser in the Hereafter

O brethren! Allah pronounces:

﴿ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴾

"And whoever is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter, and more astray from the Path." (*Al-Isra*, 17:72)

As there are numerous eye ailments ranging from cataract to myopia, there are spiritual and moral diseases of the inner eye. While ailments of the eye hurt one, those of the inner eye damage one morally and spiritually. For example, polytheism divests one totally of Faith. Similarly, other beliefs and practices rooted in disbelief, major sins, acts of heresy take away one's inner sight.

Whoever fails to recognise His Creator, Master and the true Lord along with His Divinity and Attributes, fails to believe in Him with faith in His Oneness reflected in one's convictions and practices; and leads his life in utter disregard for the Qur'ân would be lost, groping blindly everywhere yet unable to reach his goal. Being blind to the Prophet's way he would not succeed in getting Paradise in the Next Life.

⁽¹⁾ According to another version, there is a variant question: "What about him who was sent among you?" (*Ahmad and Abu Dâwud*).

Grave is one of the stages of the Next Life. One who is blind to Monotheism, Islam, and *Sunnah* would not be able to affirm his being a monotheist and a member of Prophet Muhammad's *Ummah*. What would befall the person who was heedless of Allah and Islam and disobedient to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) at the hands of the angels of the death? May Allah have mercy on all of us and grant us the ability to adhere to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* so that we may escape penalty in the grave and suffering on the Last Day.

O esteemed readers! We would be interrogated first in the grave about our belief in Monotheism. Ensure that you lead life as a monotheist. Next question would be regarding religion. The pure, unadulterated religion is Islam which comprises the Qur'ân and *Hadith* only. Hence abide by these. You would be asked also about Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Hence you must free yourself from allegiance to any other than the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Beware! Do not adulterate your belief in pure Monotheism with polytheism. Do not tamper with the pristine purity of Islam. Do not follow any way other than the Prophet's. A Muslim having belief in Monotheism and practising Islamic commands as taught by *Hadith* and *Sunnah* would, by Allah's leave, behave steadfastly in his grave.

The above accounts of angels interrogating the dead is to elucidate the point to you that no question would be posed to you regarding any sect, group, Imam, *Mujtahid*, spiritual leader, nor about the Schools associated with them. Therefore, for Allah's sake, renounce all sects, groups and invented varieties of Faith. For you are a Muslim with Islam as your religion. The only way to practise Islam is the way of the one who would intercede for you on the Day of Judgement, i.e., Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Conclusion and supplication

O Allah! Grant us the Faith of Your Choice. Make us a Muslim who fits in with Your Will. Grant us the ability to practise the religion Islam in the manner Your true Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) practised. Illumine our lives with the guidance of the Prophet's word and deed. Make the guidance of *Sunnah* available to us. Make the Prophet's model conduct as the dearest thing on the earth for us. O Allah! Keep us off the morasses and make available to us till our last breath the Prophet's guidance. May Allah provide us with *Al-Kauthar* at the Prophet's hands and bless us with his intercession.

We are well pleased with Allah as our Lord and with Islam as our religion and with Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as the Messenger. O Allah show us the truth as it is and enable us to follow the same. And reveal to us falsehood as it is and enable us to avoid the same. Praised is Allah, the Lord of the worlds and blessings be upon His Messenger, the Leader of Allah's Prophets, and blessings be upon his family and his Companions, all of them ----- *Ameen!*

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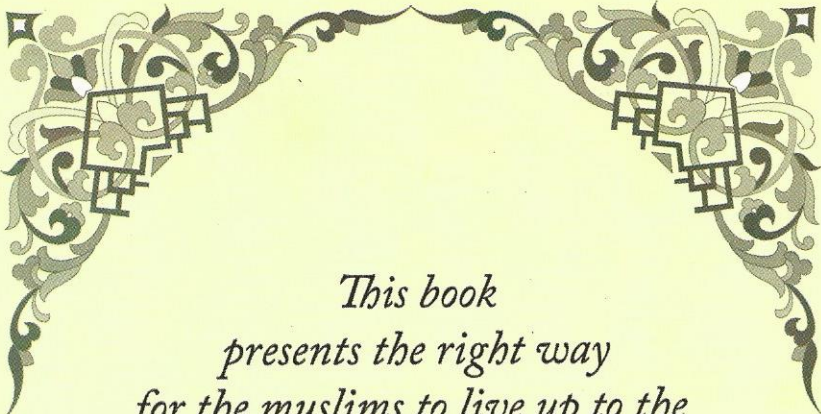
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