

The meaning of gradual untying of the knots of Islaam

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah the most Kind the most Merciful

Question: The Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, [The knots of Islaam will be untied one by one. Each time one knot is undone, people will cling to the one next to it. The first of them to be undone is ruling and the last is Salaah (Prayer).] What is the interpretation of this Hadeeth? What is meant by the undoing of ruling?

Shaykh bin Baaz (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)¹: The mentioned Hadeeth was related by Imaam Ahmad in his Musnad (Hadeeth compilation), at-Tabaraanee in "Al-Mu`jam al-Kabeer" and Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (authentic) book of Hadeeth with a good Isnaad (chain of narration) on the authority of Aboo Umamah al-Bahilee (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, [The knots of Islaam will be undone one by one. Each time one knot is undone, people will cling to the one next to it. The first of them to be undone is ruling and the last is Salaah.] Its interpretation is obvious; the more Islaam is estranged, the more people contradict it and violate its rulings and commands. This is the same like the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), [Islaam initiated as something strange and it would revert to its (old position) of being strange, so good tidings for the strangers.]²

The meaning of his saying [The first to be undone is ruling] is clear, which is ignoring Allaah's Sharee'ah (Islaamic law), which is the current status of most of the Islaamic countries. It is known that everyone should apply Allaah's Sharee'ah in everything and beware of ruling according to laws and traditions that contradict with the sanctified Sharee'ah, according to Allaah's saying, [But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.] He (سبحانه) also says, [And so judge (you O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) among them by what Allaah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) far away from some of that which Allaah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, then know that Allaah's Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And truly, most of men are Faasiqoon (rebellious and disobedient to Allaah). Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance? And

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² Related by Muslim in his Saheeh Book of Hadeeth.

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who is better in judgement than Allaah for a people who have firm Faith.] He (عزوجل) also says, [And whosoever does not judge by what Allaah has revealed, such are the Kaafiroon (i.e. disbelievers of a lesser degree as they do not act on Allaah's Laws). And whosoever does not judge by that which Allaah has revealed, such are the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrong-doers - of a lesser degree). And whosoever does not judge by what Allaah has revealed (then) such (people) are the Faasiqoon [the rebellious i.e. disobedient (of a lesser degree) to Allaah].]

The scholars (رحمهم الله تعالى)³ clarified that the Muslim rulers should rule according to Sharee'ah in all the affairs of the Muslims and in every disputed matter, according to those gracious Ayahs (Qur'aanic verses), and that if a ruler rules according to other than what was revealed by Allaah and considers it Halaal (lawful), this is considered major Kufr (disbelief) that renders him out of Islaam. However, if he does not think it is Halaal but rules according to other than what was revealed by Allaah for other reasons, such as bribe or anything else, while believing that it is impermissible to do, and that he should apply the rulings of Sharee'ah, this is considered minor Kufr, minor Dhulm (injustice) and minor Fisq (flagrant violation of Islaamic law).

May Allaah guide all the Muslim rulers to rule according to his Sharee'ah, refer to it, impose it upon their peoples, and beware of what contradicts it. He is the Most Generous One. There is no doubt that referring to Sharee'ah and applying it leads to the benefits and welfare of this world and the Hereafter, safety from the conspiracies of enemies, and assistance for victory against them, according to Allaah's saying, [O you who believe! If you help (in the cause of) Allaah, He will help you, and make your foothold firm.] He (سبحانه) also says, [...and (as for) the believers, it was incumbent upon Us to help (them).] He (عزوجل) also says, [Verily, Allaah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allaah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.] [Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) enjoin Iqaamat-as-Salaat [i.e. to perform the five compulsory congregational Salaat (prayers) (the males in mosques)], pay the Zakaat and they enjoin al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam orders one to do), and forbid al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islaam has forbidden) [i.e. they make the Qur'aan as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allaah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures).] He (عزوجل) also says, [Verily, We will indeed make victorious Our Messengers and those who believe (in the Oneness of Allaah - Islaamic Monotheism) in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth, (i.e. Day of Resurrection) - The Day when their excuses will be of no profit to Zaalimoon (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah). Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode (i.e. painful torment in Hell-fire).] There are many Ayahs (Qur'aanic verses) that stress this meaning.

³ (رحمهم الله تعالى) May Allaah the Most High's Mercy be upon them

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The saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in the mentioned Hadeeth [the last of them is **Salaah**] means that many people will abandon it, which is the current status in many Islaamic countries. May Allaah set right the affairs of the Muslims, enable them to stick to His religion, and help them offer Salaah in its due times congregationally in the Masjids (mosques), about which Allaah (عزوجل) says, [In houses (mosques) which Allaah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His Name is remembered [i.e. Adhaan, Iqaamah, Salaat (prayers), invocations, recitation of the Qur'aan etc.]. Therein glorify Him (Allaah) in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings, Men whom neither trade nor sale (business) diverts from the Remembrance of Allaah (with heart and tongue), nor from performing as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat), nor from giving the Zakaat. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned (out of the horror of the torment of the Day of Resurrection). That Allaah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His Grace. And Allaah provides without measure to whom He wills.] Salaah is the main pillar of Islaam and its second corner, according to the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), [The peak of this matter is Islaam and its pillar is Salaah.] The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said, [Islaam was based on five pillars: testimony that there is no Ilaah (god) worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, offering Salaah, giving Zakaah, observing Sawm (fast) in Ramadhaan, and performing Hajj.]

Allaah (عزوجل) commanded us in His Glorious Book to offer Salaah and keep it in His saying, [And perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat), and give Zakaat and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allaah) along with those who bow down (in prayer).] He (سبحانه) also says, [And perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat), and give Zakaat and obey the Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) that you may receive mercy (from Allaah).] He (عزوجل) also says, [Guard strictly (five obligatory) as-Salawaat (the prayers) especially the middle Salaat (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allaah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salaat (prayers)].] The middle Salaah is the 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, as authentically reported from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

He (سبحانه) made it compulsory to offer the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers and keep them as prescribed by Allaah. He stressed on the 'Asr Prayer in particular. This might be because its time is in the end of the day after work, so people might skip it out of laziness or sleep. That is why Allaah (سبحانه) has urged us to keep it and warned us from skipping it. He (سبحانه) says, [Recite (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Qur'aan), and perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat). Verily, as-Salaat (the prayer) prevents from al-Faahisha' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)] There are many other Ayahs about Salaah.

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It is authentically reported from the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said, **[That which differentiates us from Kaafirs (disbelievers) and hypocrites is our offering of Salaah; a person who abandons it becomes a Kaafir.]**⁴ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said, **[What makes one a Kaafir and a Mushrik (polytheist) is abandoning Salaah.]**⁵

The great Sahaabee (Companion of the Prophet) `Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) said, **[He who likes to meet Allaah tomorrow as a Muslim, he should keep offering Salaah when the Adhaan (call to Prayer) is announced, for Allaah has laid down for your Prophet the paths of right guidance, and this (Salaah) is among the paths of right guidance. If you were to offer Salaah at home as this man who stays away from the Masjid (mosque) offers Salaah at home, you would abandon the practice of your Prophet. If you were to abandon the practice of your Prophet, you would go astray. Any man who purifies himself well, then heads for one of the Masjids, Allaah will record a blessing for him for every step he takes, raising him a degree for it and effacing a sin from him for it. I have seen the time when no one abandoned it, except a hypocrite, who was well known for his hypocrisy; whereas a man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in the row of prayers.]**⁶

There are many Hadeeths that encourage Salaah and warn against abandoning it. Allaah (سبحانه) told us in His Glorious Book that being lazy in offering Salaah is one of the attributes of hypocrites who are promised with the lowest depth of Hellfire, according to Allaah's saying in Soorah an-Nisaa', **[Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allaah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for as-Salaat (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allaah but little.]** He (سبحانه) says about the hypocrites in Soorah at-Tawbah, **[And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allaah and in His Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)), and that they came not to as-Salaat (the prayer) except in a lazy state, and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly.]** **[So let not their wealth nor their children amaze you (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)); in reality Allaah's Plan is to punish them with these things in the life of this world, and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers.]**

May Allaah grant safety to us and all the Muslims from the attributes of Kaafirs and hypocrites! May Allaah guide us and all the Muslims to stick to His religion and beware the causes of His Anger! He is the Only One Capable of doing so.

⁴ Related by Imaam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadeeth compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a Saheeh Isnaad.

⁵ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh Book of Hadeeth from Jaabir ibn `Abdullah (رضي الله عنه).

⁶ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh book of Hadeeth.