

Lesson 3

Point Number 1

The author (Imaam al-Barbahaaree) *rahimahullaah* said,

“Know that Islaam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islaam and one of them cannot be established without the other. “

The Explanation:

His saying, **“Know”** – this is a word used to show importance, and the meaning of ‘i’lam’, ‘know’ is ‘ta’allam’ ‘learn’. And how will you know that Islaam is the Sunnah? If you learn, then you will know that.

So ‘i’lam’ ‘know’ is a word which is brought to show the importance of that which comes after it, just as He the Most High said:

﴿ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذُنُوبِكُمْ ﴾

(Explanation)

So know, that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and seek forgiveness for your sin.

(Soorah Muḥammad (47), *aaayah* 19)

Meaning: Know the meaning of ‘*laa ilaaha illAllaah*’ (‘none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah’) and act upon it.

﴿ أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

(Explanation)

Know that Allaah is severe in punishing and that Allaah forgives extensively and shows mercy.

(Sooratul- Maa'idah (5), *aayah* 98)

So the word '*i'lam*' 'know' (a command in the singular) or *i'lamoo* (a command in the plural) occurs to show the importance of that which comes after it.

His saying, "**Islaam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islaam**" – meaning Islaam is the way which the Messengers *alayhimus-salaatu was-salaam* came with. And every Messenger came with Islaam. So every Prophet called to Allaah and came with a *sharee'ah*, a revealed way, from Allaah, so that is Islaam. So Islaam is the worship of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, alone at every time with that which He legislated. And Allaah legislated for the Prophets ways and laws to last for appointed terms. Then He abrogated it (brought some new law and abrogated the previous one), so when that was abrogated then action came to be upon that which abrogated, that is Islaam, until all those revealed laws were abrogated by the revealed way sent to Muhammad *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*. Allaah the Majestic and Most High says:

﴿لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ^صوَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ

الْكِتَابِ ﴿

(Explanation)

There is an appointed time span for each Book sent down by Allaah. Allaah abrogates and changes whatever He wishes and He confirms. And the foundation of the Book is with Him.

(Sooratur-Ra'd (13), *aayah* 38-39)

So Islaam is that which the Messengers came with, with regard to the call and the action at every time with what was specific to it, until the sending of Muḥammad *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* came about; and then Islaam is whatever *he* came with to the exclusion of everything else. So therefore whoever remains upon the previous

religious ways and does not believe in Muḥammad *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* then he is not a Muslim, since he has not yielded or submitted to Allaah the Mighty and Majestic and he has not obeyed this Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*; because what he was upon has now ended and been abrogated, and remaining upon something abrogated (something replaced) is not a religion for Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, rather acting on what abrogates (what comes later and replaces) that is the religion.¹

His saying, **“and the Sunnah is Islaam”** – there is no difference between these two, if we explain the Sunnah to mean ‘the way’, the *‘tareeqah’*, then there is no difference between it and Islaam.

His saying, **“And one of them will not be established without the other one”** – Islaam will not be established except through the Sunnah and the Sunnah will not be established except through Islaam. So the person who claims to be upon Islaam but does not act upon the Sunnah, meaning the way of the Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*, then he is not a Muslim; and the person who knows of the Sunnah but does not submit to Allaah, then he is not a Muslim, even if he knows about the Sunnah. So it is essential to combine both of them.²

¹ Translator’s side point: The noble Shaykh, Saalih ibn Sa’d as-Suḥaymee, *hafizahullaah*, (the teacher who used to be in charge of the department of *‘aqeedah* in Madeenah) said referring to this initial part of al-Barbahaaree’s book, “He, *rahimahullaah*, began with the fact that the Sunnah and Islaam are inseparable. And what is meant by the Sunnah here is the Sunnah with its general meaning which is the *‘tareeqah’*, the way, which the Prophet *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* and his Companions were upon. So this is Islaam and Islaam is the Sunnah in this sense.”

² Translator’s side point: The noble Shaykh, Aḥmad ibn Yahyaa an-Najmee *rahimahullaah* said in his explanation, *Irshaadus-Saaree*, page 26, on this same point that *Islaam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islaam and one of them will not be established without the other*, “Islaam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islaam. How is that the case? Meaning that true Islaam is the Sunnah, so whoever is upright upon the Sunnah and establishes it then he has established Islaam, and whoever deviates away from it (from the Sunnah) and inclines away towards the right or the left, then he has fallen short with regard to true Islaam, in accordance with his deviation. However this inclining away is of two categories. Firstly turning away totally, such that the person becomes a disbeliever and judgement is passed about him that he has exited from Islaam altogether. Secondly is a partial turning away (from the Sunnah) through which a person does not become a disbeliever and he is not judged to be an apostate or to have left Islaam however he has rendered his Islaam deficient in accordance with the level of his deviation, whether it be a small deviation or a large one.”

Point Number 2

The author *rahimahullaah* said,

“So from the Sunnah is adhering to the *Jamaa`ah*. And whoever desires other than the *Jamaa`ah* and departs from it, then he has thrown off the yoke of Islaam from his neck, and he is astray leading others astray.”

The Explanation :

His saying, **“So from the Sunnah is adhering to the *Jamaa`ah*’** (the United Body of the Muslims upon the Truth). Since that is the case, and since Islaam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islaam, then the Sunnah is of different types. **So from the Sunnah is adhering to the *Jamaa`ah*** – meaning adhering to the United Body of the Muslims, and what is meant by the *Jamaa`ah* here is the United Body of the Muslims who are upon the Truth³.

As for the *jama`aat*, the groups which are not upon the Truth, then these are not called the true *Jamaa`ah*. Every *jamaa`ah* which gathers upon misguidance or upon a methodology contrary to Islaam or upon a way contrary to Islaam, then it is not called the true *Jamaa`ah*, that which is required and praiseworthy.

So the *Jamaa`ah*, the United Body, which is meant here, they are the people of the Truth and this does not necessitate that they must be numerous, rather even if it is a single person upon the Truth then he will be called the *Jamaa`ah*, the United Body.

Then the Shaykh mentions evidence for that, the ḥadeeth of the seventy-three sects. (Irshaadus-Saaree fee Sharḥis-Sunnati lil- Barbahaaree)

³ Translator’s side point: Shaykh al-Albaanee *rahimahullaah* mentioned in his notes to Mishkaat al-Masaabeeḥ, Volume 1, page 61, the statement of `Abdullaah ibn Mas`ood *radhiyAllaahu `anhu* in that regard, that he said, “The *Jamaa`ah* is whatever conforms to the Truth even you are alone.” Shaykh al-Albaanee said this is reported by Ibn Asaakir in his Taareekh Dimashq, volume 13, page 322 part number 2, with an authentic, a *saḥeeḥ* chain from him.

So the *Jamaa`ah* is those who are upon the Truth, whether its people are few or whether they are many. So you adhere to whoever is upon the Truth and you do not contradict the *Jamaa`ah* which is upon the Truth, rather you should be with them upon the Truth. So whoever splits from the *Jamaa`ah*, the United Body, then explanation of this will follow.

And, “**Adhering to the *Jamaa`ah*”** means not departing from it and not conflicting with it.⁴

His saying, “**And whoever desires other than the *Jamaa`ah* and splits from it then he has thrown off the yoke of Islaam from his neck**’ – this is the text of a ḥadeeth:

*“Whoever separates from the *Jamaa`ah* by the amount of a hand span then he has thrown off the yoke of Islaam from his neck.”*⁵

⁴ Translator’s side point: Shaykh Saalih as-Suhaymee hafizahullaah said on this same point, “He (al-Barbahaaree) encouraged adherence to the *Jamaa`ah*, and the *Jamaa`ah* is *al-Firqatun-Naajiyah*, the Saved Sect, as proven by his *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* saying in the ḥadeeth of Mu`aawiyah *radhiyAllaahu `anhu* when he mentioned the splitting of the Ummah that it will split into seventy-three sects, all of them being in the Fire. So they said, ‘What is it, O Messenger of Allaah?’ So he said, ‘It is the *Jamaa`ah*.’ This was the narration of Ibn Maajah and it is the most authentic of the narrations and it is more authentic than the narration of at-Tirmidhee (when Allaah’s Messenger *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* was asked which one was the saved one he said) ‘That which is upon the like of what I and my Companions are upon today.’ Even though there is no difference between the two sentences with regard to the meaning, so each one of them emphasises the other one.

“So the *Jamaa`ah* is, to mention it in brief, the Companions and the *Taabi`een* and those who followed them upon good, those who are upon that which the Prophet *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* was upon and his Companions. This is the most precise and the most excellent and the most comprehensive and all-inclusive definition that it is possible to give to the *Jamaa`ah*. And there are some people who limit the *Jamaa`ah* to the time of the Companions, or limit it to the time of the rightly guided *Khulafaa`*, or the like of that. This is a restriction of something very wide, which Allaah has made wide, because Allaah the Exalted and Most High says, “**And the first and foremost from the Muhaajireen and the Ansaar and those who follow them upon good, Allaah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.**” So what is meant by the *Jamaa`ah* is: whoever is upon the methodology in any time and in any city, whoever is upon the methodology which the Prophet *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* and his Companions were upon in their sayings and actions and creed and belief, then he is from the *Jamaa`ah* and whoever splits from that and isolates himself from it, then he has split from the *Jamaa`ah*. And there occurs a severe threat upon those who split from the *Jamaa`ah*, that he has isolated himself, and whoever isolates himself will do so and be in the Fire, and whoever separates from the *Jamaa`ah* by a hand span then he has thrown off the yoke of Islaam from his neck.”

This is a severe threat. So if the splitting away is with regard to *`aqeedah* (creed and belief) such that he comes to worship other than Allaah then this is *kufr* (disbelief). And if the splitting away is less than that then it will be misguidance. So splitting away from the *Jamaa`ah*, there is no good in it. And there occurs in the hadeeth:

*“Adhere to the Jamaa`ah for the Hand of Allaah is upon the Jamaa`ah”*⁶.

And when the Prophet *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* informed *Huthayfah* ibn al-Yamaan of the trials and tribulations that would occur and the splitting that was going to occur, *Huthayfah* said to him, “What do you command me with if that reaches me?” So he said,

*“That you should adhere to the Jamaa`ah (United Body of the Muslims upon the Truth) and their ruler.”*⁷

So the *Jamaa`ah* will not be except by way of two matters:

The first matter: is that the person is upon the methodology, the way, of the Book and the Sunnah. Its methodology is not the *math.hab* (the way) of so-and-so, nor the saying of so-and-so rather the Book and the Sunnah.

The second matter which comprises the *Jamaa`ah*: is that it has an imaam (a Muslim ruler) who leads it and to whom it refers back. It is not possible for a *Jamaa`ah* to

⁵ Reported by Imaam *Aḥmad* and at-Tirmithi and Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn *Hibbaan* and al-*Haakim* and others as a *hadeeth* of Al-*Haarith* al-Ash`aree *radīyAllaahu `anhu* and it was declared to be *saḥeeh* by Imaam at-Tirmithi and ibn Khuzaymah and ibn Hibbaan and al-Haakim and others.

Translator’s side point: It was declared *saḥeeh* by Muḥammad Naasirud-Deen al-Albaanee *rahimahullaah*.

⁶ Reported by Imaam *Aḥmad* and al-*Humaydee* and at-Tirmithi and an-Nasaa`ee in his *Sunan* al-Kubraa and Ibn *Hibaan* and al-*Haakim* and others besides them from the *hadeeth* of `Umar *radīyAllaahu `anhu* with wordings which are close to each other. At-Tirmithi said the *hadeeth* is ‘*hasan saḥeeh ghareeb*, (good, authentic, singular) with this chain here’. And it was declared *saḥeeh*, authentic, by Ibn *Hibaan* and al-*Haakim* and ath-*Thahabee* agreed.

Translator’s side point: It was declared authentic by Shaykh al-Albaanee.

⁷ Reported by al-Bukhaaree in his *Saḥeeh* (no. 3411) and reported by Muslim (no. 1847) as a *hadeeth* of *Huthayfah* *radīyAllaahu `anh*.

unite without an imaam; there must be a ruler for it to turn back to, and therefore he said to Huthayfah,

“Adhere to the Jamaa`ah of the Muslims and their ruler.”

So then he (Huthayfah *radīyAllaahu `anh*) said, “What if they do not have a United Body nor a ruler?” Then he (*sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) said,

“Then avoid all of those sects.”

He ordered him to avoid all of the sects, so he should not be except with the United Body of the Muslims and he should not be with the *jama`aat*, the different groups, other than the *Jamaa`ah* of the Muslims, rather he should remain alone upon the Truth until death comes to him while he remains upon that.

So this shows that a person should not be with the *jama`aat*, the groups, which conflict with the true methodology and they will not be the *Jamaa`ah* except with two conditions; that their methodology is the Book and the Sunnah and the methodology, the way, of the Pious Predecessors and (secondly) that they have a Muslim ruler who leads them and they refer back to. So there will be no religion except with the *Jamaa`ah*, United Body of the Muslims, and there will be no *Jamaa`ah* except with the ruler and there will be no ruler except with hearing and obeying. This is the methodology of the Muslims and this is the Sunnah which he *rahimahullaah* explained.

So this contains a prohibition of isolated and irregular opinions and conflicting acts and that a person should adhere to the *Jamaa`ah* as long as they are not upon misguidance.

His saying, **“then he has thrown off the yoke of Islaam from his neck”** – it used to be the custom of the Arabs that they would put a cord or heavy rope upon the sheep, upon their necks so that the sheep would not become separate and become lost and become eaten by the wolves, and these ropes would be connected by a single rope which joined them together to safeguard them. So the Prophet *sallAllaahu `alayhi wa sallam* likened adhering to the *Jamaa`ah* to this matter, for the *Jamaa`ah* is the rope which protects from those things which bring about destruction; just like the rope, which is upon the necks of the sheep, protects them from the wolf and from being lost.

His saying, “and he is misguided, misguiding others” – meaning misguided himself away from the path, misguiding other people. So he is misguided himself and misguiding other people who take him as an example and follow him. He the Most High says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بُيِّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ سَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ۝ ﴾

(Explanation)

And whoever contends with the Messenger after the guidance has been made clear to him and then he follows other than the way of the believers, then We will put him upon the path he has chosen and enter him into Hell Fire and what an evil destination.

(Sooratu-Nisaa· (4), aayah 115)

So what is obligatory upon the Muslim is to follow the path of the Believers and not to be at variance with them and not to isolate himself away from them.

Ithaaful-Qaaree bit-Ta`leeqaat `alaa Sharḥis-Sunnah

by Shaykh Saalih ibn Fowzaan al-Fowzaan hafizahullaah

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Points discussed by Shaykh Saalih al-Fowzaan hafizahullaah in this excerpt include:

- the usage of the word *'i`lam'*
- the general meanings of the terms 'Islaam' and 'the Sunnah'
- the meaning of the *Jamaa`ah*, its conditions and adhering to it