

Chapter 8

An Explanation of the Obligation to Adhere to the Sunnah and to Take from the Guidance of the Messenger of Allaah

Indeed from the greatest benefits and lessons from *Hajj* for the pilgrims to the House of Allaah is knowing the importance of the Sunnah and limiting oneself to it in all actions of the *Hajj*. The importance of knowing the Sunnah becomes apparent from the state of many pilgrims who you see gathering together in circles of knowledge and remembrance. They ask the scholars many questions regarding the description of *Hajj*: how to perform it, its pillars and obligatory duties and those acts that negate it. These questions are asked with precision and enthusiasm, especially by those who, in their *Hajj*, are conscious of the saying of the Messenger of Allaah *-sall'Allaahu alayhi wa sallam-*: "Take your *Hajj* rites from me"¹

Therefore *Hajj* will not be accepted by Allaah unless the Muslim does it in the manner of the Messenger of Allaah, adhering to his guidance in the *Hajj* and following his Sunnah - without excess or negligence, without going to extremes or being without purpose and without adding to or taking away from it.

So if a Muslim adheres to the Sunnah of the Prophet *-sall'Allaahu alayhi wa sallam-* in his *Hajj* and limits himself to his guidance, he benefits from the knowledge that adhering to the Sunnah and following his *-sall'Allaahu alayhi wa sallam-* guidance is obligatory in all acts of obedience.

Just as it is necessary to take the rites of *Hajj* from the Messenger, it is also necessary for all Muslims to take the guidance of the Messenger in every act of obedience.

This is why the Messenger of Allaah *-sall'Allaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said with regards to prayer: 'pray as you have seen me praying.'²

He also said in all matters of general obedience: 'Whoever does an action which we have not commanded then it is rejected.'³

In another narration: 'Whoever innovates in this matter of ours, that which is not from it, it will be rejected.'⁴

¹ Saheeh Muslim

² Saheeh al-Bukharee

³ Saheeh Muslim

⁴ Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim

Thus all actions which are not done in accordance to the guidance of the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* will not be accepted by Allaah, as is shown by his explicit statement *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam:* ‘Whoever does an action which we have not commanded then it is rejected.’

Indeed this proves that every innovation (*Bida'*) introduced into the religion has no foundation in the Book or Sunnah, regardless of whether it is from knowledge-based verbal innovations or practical, worship-based innovations.

So whoever informs of other than that which Allaah and His Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* have informed or worships in a way that Allaah and His Messenger have not permitted then this will be returned to the one who did it and it will not be accepted.

This hadeeth also implies the meaning that anyone who does an action in accordance to what Allaah and His Messenger have commanded i.e. is worshipping Allaah with correct creed and righteous actions from what is obligatory and recommended, then his action will be accepted.

It is narrated by Abu Daawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and others on the authority of al-Irbaad bin Sariyyah *-RadhiAllaahu anhu-* who said that the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* led us in prayer that day, then turned and faced us and gave us an admonition which caused hearts to tremble and eyes to shed tears.

So we said: ‘It is as if this is a farewell speech, so advise us O Messenger of Allaah!’

He said: ‘I advise you to hear and obey, even if a slave rules over you. Indeed whosoever from you lives will see many differences, so hold on to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided *Khulafaah* after me, bite on to it with your molar teeth. Beware of newly invented matters, since every *Bida'* is misguidance.’⁵

As for the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* saying in the hadeeth ‘All *Bida'* is misguidance’ then this is from his comprehensive, eloquent speech. This statement is a great principle from the principles of the *Deen* and it resembles the saying of the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam:* ‘Whoever innovates anything in this matter of ours that which is not from it, will be rejected.’

⁵ Sunan Abee Dawood, Sunan at-Tirmidhee & Sunan Ibn majah

Thus anyone who innovates and ascribes something to the *Deen* which has no foundation to which it can be referred, then it is misguidance which the *Deen* is free from, the one who innovates has the innovation rejected and it is not accepted from him.

The *Deen* of Allaah is built upon two great, strong principles and foundations.

Firstly; That we do not worship except Allaah Alone who has no partner.

Secondly; That we do not worship Him except with what He legislated on the tongue of His Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-*. We do not worship Allaah according to our desires or *Bida'*.

And Allaah *Ta'ala* said :

<< Then We have put you on a plain way of (Our) commandment. So follow that and do not follow the desires of those who do not know. Verily, they can avail you nothing against Allaah >>

[Al-Jathiyah : 18-19]

And Allaah *Ta'ala* said :

<< Or do they have partners with Allaah (false gods), who have instituted for them a religion which Allaah has not allowed. >>

[Shura: 21]

It is not allowed for anyone to worship Allaah except with what His Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* legislated from obligatory and recommended actions. We do not worship Him with newly invented matters which have no foundation in the *Deen* nor any basis for them in the *Sharia'*. It is not allowed for anyone to worship anything except Allaah Alone, so no-one is allowed to pray except to Allaah, nor fast except for Allaah, nor perform the *Hajj* except to His house, nor rely upon anyone except Him, nor can anyone direct any aspect of worship to anyone except Him.⁶ Allaah combined these two great principles in His – Subhanhu- statement :

<< So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.>>[Kahf:110]

A good action is that which is in agreement with the pure *Sharia'* and is sincere i.e. that which is not done, except for Allaah's Face. These are the two pillars

⁶ Majmoo'Al-Fatawa by Ibn Taymeeyah

for acceptance of actions. So if an action is done sincerely but is not correct then it will not be accepted and if the action is correct but is not done sincerely for Allaah, then it will not be accepted unless the action is sincere and correct-where sincere means that it is done purely for Allaah and being correct means that it is done according to the Sunnah.

What is obligatory on every Muslim who hopes for success and happiness for himself in this world and the hereafter is that he attaches himself to the guidance of the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-*, that his action conforms to his *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* Sunnah and that he is wary of deviating from his guidance, opposing his Sunnah or following other than his path; since he *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* is a guide and example for his nation, as Allaah *Ta'ala* said regarding him :

<< Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a good example to follow for he who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allaah and the Last Day and remembers Allaah much. >>

[Ahzab:21]

And He said :

<<The Prophet is closer to the believers than their ownelves >>

[Ahzab: 6]

Which means : ‘He has more right over them in all aspects of the *Deen* and worldly affairs and he is of greater importance to them than their ownelves or anyone else. It is obligatory upon them to give what he determines from their wealth even if they are in need of it. It is obligatory upon them to have more love for him than for their ownelves, and it is obligatory upon them to put his rulings first, before their own rulings for their ownelves. In brief, if the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* calls them to something and they themselves call to something else then it is obligatory for them to give precedence to what he calls them to and to defer what they themselves call to. It is obligatory upon them to have obedience to him which supersedes obedience to their ownelves and that they prefer obedience to him before that which their ownelves incline to and their inner selves desire.’⁷

There is no doubt that this necessitates that the Muslim strives to know the Sunnah and sacrifices time in the path to knowing the guidance of the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* - which is done by questioning the people of knowledge, sitting in the circles of remembrance where the rules of *Halaal* and *Haraam* are explained and also by reading beneficial books and useful works which collect these issues. So after that a Muslim can establish a path whereby

⁷ Fath al-Qadeer

he can worship correctly on a sound methodology, in agreement with the guidance of the noble Messenger *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam*.