

Ibn Baz Fatwas

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Status of the Sunnah in Islam and the sources of legislation

All praise be to Allah, peace and blessings be upon the master of all messengers and upon those who follow his guidance till the Day of Judgment!

This is an important research that relates to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) as the second source of Islam. We have to rely on and work according to the Sunnah if it is an authentically reported Sunnah. It is well-known among scholars that the Sunnah is the second source of Islam and it comes in significance directly after the Qur'an. Therefore, it is the reliable source after the Book of Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) according to the consensus of all scholars. It is independent evidence for the whole nation. Whoever denies it or alleges that it is permissible to leave it aside and work only according to the Qur'an goes astray, commits major Kufr (disbelief) and renegades from Islam. Holding this viewpoint and creed means that this person belies Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him), denies the commands of Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him), denies a great source that Allah (may He be Exalted) orders us to rely on and work accordingly and denies the consensus of Muslim scholars. The consensus of Muslim scholars are of the view that the reliable sources agreed upon by all Muslims are three: **The first source:** the Qur'an. **The second source:** the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. **The third one:** the consensus of scholars. Moreover, scholars have differed concerning other

sources. **The most important of these sources is;** analogical deduction. The majority of scholars consider it to be a fourth source if the considerable conditions for applying it are met.

As for the Sunnah, there is no difference among scholars that it is an independent source of Islam. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the entire Muslim nation to work according to it, rely on it and use it as evidence if the chain of transmitters are authentic. There are many Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) and authentic Hadiths that denote this meaning. This meaning is also affirmed by the consensus of Muslim scholars. They also condemned those who deny it or contradict it.

There was a group who deviated from the right path in the early days of Islam by denying the Sunnah because of accusing the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of disbelief. This group was the Kharijites who accused many Companions of disbelief and Fisq (flagrant violation of Islamic law). They alleged that they depend only upon the Qur'an because of their ill assumption about the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Rafidah has followed them in this regard and said that they would only accept the narrations that come to them through Ahl-ul-Bayt (members of the Prophet's family). They deem other narrations to be unauthentic.

There is another group that came after them that is called al-Qur'aniyyah whose view is circulated here and there. This group alleges that they are the people of the Qur'an. They only consider the Qur'an as evidence and they do not consider the Sunnah as evidence because it was, as they allege, written a long time after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They also said that man may forget and commit mistakes and books may contain some mistakes. They have also said many other myths,

superstitions and false viewpoints. They allege that they take precautions for their religion and therefore only accept the

Qur'an. They have deviated from the right path and committed an open and major kurr.

Allah (may He be Exalted) commands us to obey His Messenger (peace be upon him) and follow the revelation that he brings. Moreover, Allah (may He be Exalted) called the sayings of His Prophet (peace be upon him) a revelation in His saying: ﴿ **By the star when it goes down (or vanishes). ﴿ Your companion (Muhammad peace be upon him) has neither gone astray nor has erred. ﴿ Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. ﴿ It is only a Revelation revealed. ﴿** If the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not to be followed or obeyed, his commands and prohibitions will have no value.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the conveyance of his Sunnah. When he used to deliver a sermon, he usually asked the attendants to convey his Sunnah. This means that the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should be followed and obeyed by the whole nation. We have to obey the Messenger (peace be upon him) exactly as we have to obey Allah (may He be Exalted). Whoever ponders on the Glorious Qur'an will find this principle clear. Allah (may He be Exalted) says in His Glorious Book in Surah al-`Imran: ﴿ **And fear the Fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers. ﴿ And obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) that you may obtain mercy. ﴿** In this Ayah, Allah (may He be Exalted) joins obeying the Messenger to obeying Him. He (may He be Exalted) says: ﴿ **And obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) that you may obtain mercy. ﴿** He makes His Mercy dependent upon obeying Him and His Messenger. He (may He be Praised) says also in Surah al-`Imran: ﴿ **Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him to mankind): "If you (really) love Allâh then follow me (i.e. accept Islâmîc Monotheism, follow the Qur`ân and the Sunnah), Allâh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." ﴿ Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): "Obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him)." But if they turn away, then Allâh does not like the disbelievers. ﴿**

He (may He be Praised) says in Surah an-Nisa': ﴿ **O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination. ﴿** Allah (may He be Exalted) orders obeying Him and made obeying His Messenger (peace be upon him) an independent command and repeats the verb *Ati`u* (obey) with regard to obeying the Prophet (peace be upon him). He says: ﴿ **Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) ﴿** Then He (may He be Exalted) says: ﴿ **and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. ﴿** He did not repeat the verb *Ati`u* (obey) with regard to those who are in authority because obeying them is dependant upon obeying Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him). It means that we should not obey those in authority except in what is *Ma`ruf* (that which is judged as good, beneficial, or fitting by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) where their commands correspond to the commands of Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and do not violate them. Then He points out that the basic rule is obeying Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him). He says: ﴿ **And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) ﴿** He did not say: "and to those of authority among you", but he said: ﴿ **to Allâh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) ﴿** This denotes that referring the differential issues should be to Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Scholars said that referring controversial issues to Allah (may He be Exalted) means referring them to the Qur'an and referring them to the Prophet (peace be upon him) means referring them to the Prophet (peace be upon him) during his life and to his Sunnah after his death. This means that the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is an independent source that should be followed. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says: ﴿ **He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him), has indeed obeyed Allâh ﴿** He (may He be Exalted) also says: ﴿ **Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allâh ﴿** The Ayah that precedes this Ayah is Allah's saying:

So those who believe in him (Muhammad peace be upon him), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'ân) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be the successful. Allah (may He be Exalted) makes success dependent upon following the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is because the context of the Ayah denotes that. So those who believe in him (Muhammad peace be upon him), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'ân) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be the successful. He mentions that success is only for those who follow the Prophet (peace be upon him). This denotes that whoever denies the Sunnah or does not follow it will not be from among those who gain success. Then Allah (may He be Exalted) says: Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): "O mankind!" Allah (may He be Exalted) orders His Prophet (peace be upon him) to say to people: Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allâh ? to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad peace be upon him), who believes in Allâh and His Words [(this Qur'ân), the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allâh's Word: "Be!" ? and he was, i.e. 'Isâ (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary), peace be upon them], and follow him so that you may be guided."

Allah (may He be Exalted) also makes guidance dependant upon following the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This denotes that it is obligatory upon all people to obey the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to follow what he has brought of Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says in other Ayahs: Say: "Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (peace be upon him), but if you turn away, he (Messenger Muhammad peace be upon him) is only responsible for the duty placed on him (i.e. to convey Allâh's Message) and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on the right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to convey (the message) in a clear way (i.e. to preach in a plain way)." He (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says also in the same Surah which is Surah an-Nur: And perform As-Salât (Iqamat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh). Allah (may He be Exalted) only mentions obeying His Prophet (peace be upon him) in His saying: And obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) that you may obtain mercy.

He says also at the end of Surah an-Nur: And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad peace be upon him) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah — legal ways— orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them. Allah (may He be Exalted) mentions that whoever disobeys the commands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) will be in great danger. He may be exposed to ordeals; deviating from the truth, disbelief or misguidance or he may be inflicted with a painful chastisement. We seek refuge in Allah (may He be Exalted) against all these things. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says in Surah al-Hashr: And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allâh; verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.

All these Ayahs and all that bears the same meaning of other Ayahs denote the obligation of following and obeying him (peace be upon him). They also denote that guidance, mercy, happiness and well-being are in following the Prophet (peace be upon him) and obeying his commands. He who denies that denies the Qur'an. He who says that he follows the Qur'an only commits mistakes and Kufr. This is because the Qur'an orders us to follow the Messenger (peace be upon him). Therefore, he who does not follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not believe and work according to the Qur'an. This is because the Qur'an orders us to obey and follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) and warns us against violating his commands. One can

Qur'an orders us to obey and follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) and warns us against violating his commands. One cannot be a follower of the Qur'an without following the Sunnah and vice versa. They are correlative and can not be separated from each other.

It was mentioned in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) what was reported by Al-Bukhary and Muslim (may Allah be Merciful with them)

in their two authentic books on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah, and whoever obeys the ruler I appoint, obeys me, and whoever disobeys him, disobeys me."** It was reported in Sahih al-Bukhary (may Allah be Merciful with him) on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"My entire Ummah will enter Paradise except who refuses, then it was said: O' Messenger of Allah, who will refuse? He said, "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses."** This is a clear Hadith that he who disobeys the Messenger (peace be upon him) disobeys Allah (may He be Exalted) and whoever disobeys him refuses to enter paradise. We seek refuge in Allah (may He be Exalted) against all these things. It was also reported in al-Musnad, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sahih al-Hakim with a good chain of transmitters on the authority of Al-Miqdad ibn Ma'di Karib Al-Kindi (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"Beware! I have been given the Book and something like it..."** The book here means the Qur'an and his saying: "...something like it..." means the Sunnah which is the second revelation. **"Yet the time is coming when a man replete on his couch will say: The judge between us and you is the Book of Allah, what we find in it to be permissible treat as permissible, and what you find in it to be prohibited treat as prohibited."** This Hadith was reported in another wording: **"A time is about to come when a man replete on his couch will speak of my Hadith in which I have commanded and forbidden saying: Here is the Book of Allah a judge between you and me; what you find therein we will follow. Verily, what the Messenger of Allah has forbidden is the same which Allah has forbidden."** There are many Hadiths that bear the same meaning.

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It is obligatory on the entire community of Muslims to revere and glorify the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) by acknowledging its indispensibility and refering to it, as it explains and demonstrates the Book of Allah; it clarifies the allegorical, defines absolute matters, and qualifies the general principles. Whoever reflects upon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet knows this because Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) states: **And We have also sent down to you (O Muhammad peace be upon him) the Dhikr [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'ân)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.** Prophet (peace be upon him) explained what has been revealed to them, so if his Sunnah is not considered and cannot be used in argument, how was he able to explain to the people their faith and the Book of their lord?! This is one of the manifest errors. It is thus evident that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the expounder of the Book of Allah. Allah states in Surah Al-Nahl: **And We have not sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (O Muhammad peace be upon him), except that you may explain clearly to them those things in which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a folk who believe.** Thus, He (may He be Glorified) declares that He sent down the Book on him to decide disputable matters among people. If his Sunnah cannot explain or cannot be consulted as a legal proof, this meaning becomes void. Allah (may He be Praised and Glorified) states that the Prophet explained to humans the revelation sent down to them and decide their disputes, this denotes that following his Sunnah is obligatory,

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not exclusively for the people of his time and his Companions, but for them and those who will come thereafter until the Last Day. The Shari`ah he brought was applicable to his time and the subsequent times until the Last Day, for he is the Messenger of Allah to all people. Allah (May He be Exalted) states: **And We have sent you (O Muhammad peace be upon him) not but as a mercy for the `Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).** - **And We have not sent you (O Muhammad peace be upon him) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind** He is the Messenger of Allah to the entire world: Jinn and humans, Arabs and Non-Arabs, black and white, rich and poor, rulers and common people until the Day of Judgment. There is no Prophet after him, because he is the seal of Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon him).

Therefore, his Sunnah is the interpretive text of the Book of Allah, which explains its meaning. The Sunnah also holds legislative status, for it laid down independent ordinances that were not mentioned in the Book of Allah such as the details of the five Salah, Zakah, the details of Zakah and the rulings on suckling, for example. Only foster mothers and sisters are mentioned in the Book of Allah then the Sunnah provided the rest of categories prohibited by suckling. The Messenger (peace be upon him) stated: **Milk relationships are equal to blood relationships in rendering marriage unlawful i.e. whatever prohibited due to blood relationships is also prohibited by milk relationships.** The Sunnah came with an independent rulings such as the prohibition of combining between a woman and her paternal aunt, and a woman and her maternal aunt. It came with independent rulings that were not mentioned in the Book of Allah on

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many issues: in Al-Jinayat (Taxes and fines imposed by the sultan as a penalty), Diyyat (blood money), expenditures, rulings on Zakah, Hajj, etc.

When some people said in the knowledge session of `Imran Ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them): Do not mention Hadith and speak to us about the Book of Allah, `Imran (may Allah be pleased with him) got angry and said: But for the

Sunnah, we would not have known that the number of Zuhur (Noon) Prayer is four, Asr (Afternoon) Prayer is four, Isha' (Night) Prayer is four and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer is three, etc.?!)

The Sunnah explained the details of Salah and the details of the Islamic rulings. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) resorted to the Sunnah for judgment and used it as a proof. When some Arabs apostatized, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) called the people for fighting them. `Umar objected to this saying: how could we fight them while the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: [I have been ordered to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, so if they say it, then they save their lives and property from me except legally, and then their reckoning \(accounts\) will be with Allah.](#)) Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said, [Is not Zakah from the requirements of La ilah illa-Allah \(There is no deity but Allah\). By Allah! If they object to paying anything they used to give it to the Prophet \(peace be upon him\), even if it is a she-goat, I will fight them for refusing to do so.](#)) `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Then, I knew that Allah opened the heart of Abu Bakr to fighting and I realized that this was the truth. Thus, Muslims and all Companions agreed and their opinion was unanimous to fight the apostates by the command of Allah and His Messenger.

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When a grandmother came to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) about inheritance, he said: I have no knowledge of this matter either from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), but I shall enquire. He asked the people and they decided that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) portioned one sixth in the case where the mother is not alive. `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was confused about the ruling on Imlas (a woman killing her embryo)? He did not pass a judgment until he asked the people. Muhammad Ibn Maslamah and Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah testified before him that the Prophet (peace be upon him) orderd to pay the value of a male or female bondsman and so he passed a verdict. When `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was unsure about the ruling on `Iddah (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood) whether a women should remain in the house of her husband after he dies or move to the house of her parents. Furay`ah, the daughter of Malik Al-Khudriyyah, the sister of Abu Sa`id gave testimony that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) commanded her to spend `Iddah in her house; and so did `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) judge. When `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) heard `Uthman during one of his Hajj journeys forbidding Tamattu` Hajj (combining Hajj and `Umrah with a break in between) and commanding people to perform Ifrad Hajj (performing Hajj only), `Ali performed Tamattu` and said: I shall never leave a Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), because of an opinion of any one of the people. When Ibn `Abbas heard some people deny his fatwa regarding Tamattu' Hajj and objected by mentioning the view of Abu Bakr and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), who hold the view of Ifrad Hajj. He said: Stones from sky are about to hit you. I tell you that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, and you say Abu Bakr and `Umar said?! When Imam Ahmad heard of a group of people who did not follow the instructions of Hadiths and followed the opinion of Sufyan Al-Thawry and questioned him about his knowledge he said: I wonder at a of people who are sure of the authenticity of the Hadith reported from the Messenger of Allah

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and then follow the opinion of Sufyan. Allah (may He be Exalted) states: [And let those who oppose the Messenger's \(Muhammad peace be upon him\) commandment \(i.e. his Sunnah — legal ways— orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.\) \(among the sects\) beware, lest some Fitnah \(disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant\) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.](#)) When Ayyub Al-Sikhtiyany (may Allah be pleased with him) heard of a man calling to follow the Qur'an and abandon the Sunnah, he said: "Leave him for he is astray". Thus, the pious predecessors knew this matter, because of the Kharijites who denied the actions of the Sahabah and doubted their beliefs

because of what they thought about some of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them). As for those who have come recently and denied the Sunnah, they have committed a reprehensible act, fallen into a great trial and major sin. They falsely claim that the Sunnah cannot be used as a proof, and defame the Sunnah as well as its narrators and narrations. Colonel Qadhafi, the Libyan ruler, declared many times not to accept the Sunnah which caused confusion, thus he went astray and misled others. Likewise, a group in Egypt and other countries have gone astray and named themselves Al-Qur'aniyyun i.e. the followers of the Qur'an. They lied and were ignorant of the efforts of the scholars of Hadith. If they understood the Qur'an, surely they would glorify the Sunnah and act according to it, but they do not understand the indications of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Consequently, they have gone astray and led people astray.

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Scholars of the Sunnah took all precautions to safeguard the Sunnah which they first received from the Companions by memorizing and studying then transmitting it to the latter generations. In the first, second, and third century, scholars composed books and compiled the Hadiths in order to keep it safe from any form of distortion. So, it was transmitted from the memories of the well-versed memorizers to the authentic current books which contain no errors or mistakes. Later on, they verified narrators and identified the trustworthy and the weak among them. They also could identify and classify those who were qualified to narrate and those were not; who was trustworthy and who was not. They were careful about the mistakes some people might have made and could identify the liars and those who fabricated Hadith. They composed books about narrators, mentioned their names, which were of great help to the Sunnah by the will of Allah. With them, He established the proof, put an end to excuses, confusion was removed, and the aberrance of those who went astray was disclosed. The Sunnah remained - by the will of Allah - clear and purely free of any doubts or interpolations. The great scholars glorified the Sunnah and would rebuke and condemn the actions of those who rejected or neglected the Sunnah.

Once, `Abdullah Ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them) told the people about the Prophet's statement: [Do not forbid women from \(going into\) the mosques of Allah](#) . Some of his children said, "By Allah, we will prevent them based on Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings). He meant that women changed and deemed it going out an easy matter. He did not mean to deny the Sunnah. Thereupon, `Abdullah approached them, admonished them severely, and said, "I say the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said... and you say 'By Allah, we will prevent them?'

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`Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal Al-Muzany (may Allah be pleased with him) saw some of his relatives throwing pebbles and informed them of the statement of the Messenger of Allah: [It does not catch prey, nor does it defeat the enemy.](#) . When he saw the same person doing this again he said: "I told you that the Prophet forbade this and you repeat it? I shall never speak to you.

The Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with him) also used to glorify the Sunnah and warn people against neglect, desertion, or opposition of the Hadiths by any opposing views or Ijtihad. Abu Hanifah said in this context: "When the Hadith comes from the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is the proper matter to follow. When it comes from the Companions, it is also the same, but when it comes from the followers, they are men (who can verify Hadiths) as we are. Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Our views can be accepted and refuted except the sayings of the one who is buried in this grave" (i.e. the Prophet, peace be upon him). He also said: "Nothing will rectify (the discrepancies of) this community except what rectified (the discrepancies of) the former generation, which is following the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Al-Shafi` said: "When I narrate to you an authentic Hadith reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) then you see that it conflicts with it, let it be known that I have lost my mind. According to another report, "When the Hadith is manifest and my saying differs from it, then set my saying aside." Ahmad (may Allah be Merciful with him) said: "Do not follow me, Imam Malik or Al-Shafi` but take from

my saying aside. Ahmad (may Allah be Merciful with him) said: DO NOT follow me, Imam Malik or Al-Shafi'i, but take from the source which we extracted from (the Qur'an and the Sunnah). He also said: "I wonder at a people who know the authenticity of the Hadith and then follow the view of Sufyan. Allah (may He be Exalted) states: **And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad peace be upon him) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah — legal ways— orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.**)

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The matter is clear and scholars spoke at length about this such as Abu Al-`Abbas Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir and others. They explained that those who deny the Sunnah are astray. Whoever gives preference to the views of people over the Sunnah, goes astray and commits a manifest error. It is obligatory to verify the views of the people according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Thus, what is in harmony with the Qur'an and the Sunnah is accepted and what is not, cannot be accepted. Al-Hafizh Al-Suyuty (may Allah be Merciful with him) was from the latter scholars who wrote a booklet titled: Muftah Al-Jannah Fi Al-Ihtjaj Bi-Sunnah. He mentioned at the beginning of the book that those who deny the Sunnah and claim that it cannot be used as a proof are disbelievers according to Ijma, and reported many views from the Predecessors regarding this matter.

This is the status of Sunnah in Islam, which is the second source of Islam. It is an independent proof that must be taken and adhered to when the Hadith is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), it must be followed. It is not necessary for the Hadith to be Mutawatir (a Hadith reported by a significant number of narrators throughout the chain of narration, whose agreement upon a lie is impossible), Mashhur (Well-known Hadith: A hadith reported by three or more narrators in each stage of its chain of transmission), Mustafid (A hadith reported by three or more narrators in each stage of its chain of transmission; a higher rank than Mashhur) or in any particular number of the manner of narration, but we must follow the Sunnah even if it is reported from one way of narration. When the chain of narration is sound, the Hadith must be accepted whether it is with one, two, three or more chains of narration, or whether it is Mutawatir or Hadith-ul-Ahad (a Hadith which at some point in the chain has only a single narrator). All of them are proofs which must be accepted, whether the knowledge these narrations convey is essential, theoretical, or just presumptive when the chain of narration is authentic and free of defects. Acting according to them is obligatory and using them as proofs is essential

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when the chain of narration is authentic and free of defects according to the people of knowledge. As for being Hadith Mutawatir, Mashhur, Mustafid, Ahad, non-Mashhur, or Hadith Gharib (a Hadith with a single narrator usually at the beginning of the chain of narration), these terms were agreed upon by the scholars of Hadith and explained in Usul-ul-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) as well. Their rulings are well-known to them but acting upon them differs according to the differences of people in knowledge. The Hadith may be Mutawatir to the criteria of one, but non-Mutawatir to another because of different considerations. A person may narrate a Hadith from five, six, seven, or ten ways and say that the Hadith is Mutawatir, because its narrators are trustworthy and memorizers accurate and knowledgeable. Another may narrate a Hadith from different twenty ways, but does not have the certainty that it is authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah, or is not sure that it is Mutawatir.

These matters differ according to the knowledge that people have regarding the conditions of Narrators, their trustworthiness, their status in Islam, their truthfulness, memorization, etc. They differ according to their knowledge of the conditions of narrators, their qualities, the ways of narrating Hadith, etc. The scholars agree that when the chain of narration is authentic and free of any defect, it must be followed. They explain that the meaning of an authentic chain of transmission

is one originating from a trustworthy narrator to another trustworthy narrator tracing back to the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) and then to the Prophet (peace be upon him) without any abnormality or `Illah (defect). So, when the Hadith comes in this form, connected without abnormality or `Illah,

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it must be followed and used as a proof in debatable matters whether we judge the Hadith to be Gharib, `Aziz, Mash-hur, Mutawatir, etc. The most important point is to ascertain the authenticity of the chain of narration, integrity, and freedom of abnormality and `Illah whether it has several chains of narration or not.

May Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) guide us and all Muslims to useful knowledge and pious acts, and guide us all to understand his Din and please Him. We ask him to protect us from the evils of ourselves and our bad deeds, for He is Generous. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them righteously until the Last Day!