

لَنْ يَصْلِحَ آخِرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا بِمَا صَلَحَ بِهِ أَوَّلُهَا

The last of this *Ummah* will not be correct except through that which the first of it was correct by

Follow those who came before you

Al-Imām Mālik – *rahimahullāh* – said:

مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ شَيْئًا لَمْ يَكُنْ عَلَيْهِ سَلْفُهَا فَقَدْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَانَ الدِّينَ ؛ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ : (الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ) فَمَا لَمْ يَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دِينًا لَا يَكُونُ الْيَوْمَ دِينًا

“Whoever invents anything in this Ummah which our Salaf (predecessors) was not upon, then he has verily claimed that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) has betrayed the religion. Because Allāh says:

“Today I have fulfilled for you your religion.” (Al-Māidah 5:3)

So whatever was not from the religion at that time will never be from the religion today.” (Kitāb Al-I’tisām by Ash-Shātibī)

And he – *rahimahullāh* – also said:

لَنْ يَصْلُحَ آخِرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا بِمَا صَلَّحَ بِهِ أَوْلَاهَا؛ فَمَا لَمْ يَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دِينًا، لَا يَكُونُ الْيَوْمَ دِينًا

“The last of this Ummah will not be correct except through that which the first of it was correct by. So whatever was not from the religion at that time will never be from the religion today.” (As-Shafā by Qādī ‘Iyyād)

These words can correctly be considered a principle among the greatest and most important of principles from the *shar’* (Islamic Law). Because the protection of the *Sharī’ah* is not achieved through distortion and exchanging, rather through preserving and following. So when it is known that the first of this Ummah – i.e. the *Sahābah* – did not become correct except through the Qurān and *Sunnah*, then the last of this Ummah will also not become correct except through the Qurān and *Sunnah*. And this is achieved by following the *Salaf*. So following them is *Sunnah* and disagreeing with them is *bida’*.

The *Sahābī* Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yamān – *radiAllāhu ‘anhu* – said:

اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا مَعْشَرَ الْقُرَاءِ ، وَخُذُوا طَرِيقَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ ، فَوَاللَّهِ لَئِنْ اسْتَعْمَمْتُمْ لَقَدْ سَبَقْتُمْ سَبْقًا بَعِيدًا ، وَلَئِنْ تَرَكْتُمُوهُ يَمِينًا وَشِمَالًا لَقَدْ ضَلَلْتُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

“Fear Allāh O you readers (of the Qurān)! And take the path of those who came before you. Because by Allāh, if you remain steadfast upon that, you have verily went ahead with a great advantage. But

if you leave it (in order to go) right or left, then you have verily went far astray.” (Az-Zuhd wa Ar-Raqāiq by Ibn Al-Mubārak)

And Imām Ash-Shāfi’ī – *rahimahullāh* – said:

كل من تكلم بكلام في الدين أو في شيء من هذه الأهواء ليس له فيه إمام مُتَقَدِّم من النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَصْحَابِهِ فَقَدْ أَحْدَثَ فِي
الإِسْلَامِ حَدَثًا

“Whoever speaks some words regarding the religion, or regarding something of these desires (i.e. bida’) and he does not have an imām (leader) who said this before him from the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions, then he has verily invented something new in Islām.” (Al-Intisār li-Ashāb Al-Hadīth by Abū Al-Mudhaffar As-Sam’ānī)

And Al-Ājurri narrates a conversation between Imām Ahmad – *rahimahullāh* – And Ibn Abū Dāwūd who was a caller towards the saying that the Qurān is created:

أخبرني عن هذا الذي تدعو الناس إليه ، أشيء دعا إليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ؟ قال : لا ، قال : فشيء دعا إليه أبو بكر الصديق بعده ؟ قال : لا ، قال : فشيء دعا إليه عمر بن الخطاب بعدهما ؟ قال : لا ، قال : فشيء دعا إليه عثمان بن عفان بعدهم ؟ قال : لا ، قال : فشيء دعا إليه علي بن أبي طالب بعدهم ؟ قال : لا ، قال : فشيء لم يدع إليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ولا أبو بكر ، ولا عمر ولا عثمان ، ولا علي رضي اللهم عنهم ، تدعو أنت الناس إليه ؟ ليس يخلو أن تقول : علموه أو جهلوه ، فإن قلت : علموه ، وسكتوا عنه ، وسعنا وإياك ما وسع القوم من السكوت ، وإن قلت : جهلوه وعلمته أنا ، فيا لكع بن لكع ، يجهل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم والخلفاء الراشدون رضي الله عنهم شيئاً تعلمه أنت وأصحابك ؟

“(Imām Ahmad) said: ‘Inform me about this which you invite the people towards. Is it something that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) invited towards?’ He (Ibn Abū Dāwūd) said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then something that Abū Bakr As-Siddīq invited towards after him?’ He said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then something that ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattāb invited towards after them?’ He said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then something that ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān invited towards after them?’ He said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then something that ‘Alī ibn Abū Tālib invited towards?’ He said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘So it is something that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) did not invite towards, nor Abū Bakr, nor ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, nor ‘Alī (radiAllāhu ‘anhum), but you invite the people towards it? (In that case) you cannot be free from saying: Either they knew about it or they were ignorant about it. Then if you say: They knew about it but remained silent about it, then it is sufficient for us and you, what was sufficient for the people of remaining silent. And if you say: They were ignorant about it but I know about it, then O you evil son of evil! Should the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam)

and the rightly guided califs (radiAllāhu ‘anhum) be ignorant about something while you and your companions know about it?’” (Ash-Sharī’ah by Al-Ājurri)

So a person must strive to seek the path of the *Salaf* and the follow it and do his utmost to avoid everything that opposes or exceeds their *manhaj* and *tariq*.

The Shaykh of the *Hanābilah* in his time Hasan ibn ‘Alī Al-Barbahārī – *rahimahullāh* – said in the opening words of his book “Sharh As-Sunnah”:

الحمد لله الذي هدانا للإسلام ومن علينا به وأخرجنا في خير أمة فנסأله التوفيق لما يحب ويرضى والحفظ مما يكره ويسخط.

”All praise is due to Allāh who guided us to Islām and bestowed it upon us (as a blessing) and made us be from the best Ummah. So we ask Him for success to what He loves and is pleased with, and the protection from what He hates and what causes His displeasure.

اعلم أن الإسلام هو السنة والسنة هي الإسلام ولا يقوم أحدهما إلا بالآخر فمن السنة لزوم الجماعة و من رغب غير الجماعة وفارقها فقد خلع ريقه الإسلام من عنقه وكان ضالاً مضلاً.

Know that Islām is the Sunnah, and the Sunnah is Islām, and neither of these two can be established without the other. And from the Sunnah is sticking to the Jamā’ah, and whoever seeks something else than the Jamā’ah and departs from it, then he has taken the loop of Islām of his neck and he is misguided and misguiding.

والأساس الذي بينا عليه الجماعة هم أصحاب محمد ﷺ رحمهم الله أجمعين وهم أهل السنة والجماعة فمن لم يأخذ عنهم فقد ضل وابتدع وكل بدعة ضلالة والضلال وأهله في النار قال عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه لا عذر لأحد في ضلاله ركبها حسبها هدى ولا في هدى تركه حسبها ضلاله فقد بينت الأمور وثبتت الحجة وانقطع العذر وذلك أن السنة والجماعة قد أحكما أمر الدين كله وتبين للناس فعلى الناس الاتباع.

And the basis upon which we clarify who the Jamā’ah is, are the Companions of Muhammad (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam), may Allāh have mercy upon them all. And they are Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jamā’ah. So whoever does not take from them he has verily gone astray and become an innovator. And every innovation is misguidance, while the misguidance and its people are in the fire. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattāb (radiAllāhu ‘anhu) said: ‘There is no excuse for anyone in a misguidance which he has indulged in while thinking it is guidance, nor in a guidance which he has left while thinking it is misguidance. Because verily has the issues become clear and the argument has been established and the excuse has been cut off.’ And this is that the Sunnah and the Jamā’ah firmly established all issues in the religion and clarified it for the people, so it is upon them to follow it.

واعلم رحمك الله أن الدين إنما جاء من قبل الله تبارك وتعالى لم يوضع على عقول الرجال وآرائهم وعلمه عند الله وعند رسوله فلا تتبع شيئا بهواك فتمرق من الدين فتخرج من الإسلام فإنه لا حجة لك فقد بين رسول الله ﷺ لأمته السنة وأوضحها لأصحابه وهم الجماعة وهم السواد الأعظم والسواد الأعظم الحق وأهله فمن خالف أصحاب رسول الله ﷺ في شيء من أمر الدين فقد كفر.

And know – may Allāh have mercy upon you – that the religion is what has come from Allāh – tabāraka wa ta’ālā – and it was not put upon the intellects of men and their opinions. And its (i.e. the religion) knowledge is with Allāh and with His Messenger, so do not follow anything with you desires so you will pass through the religion and leave Islām, because there is no excuse for you. Verily did the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) clarify the Sunnah for his Ummah and he made it clear for his Companions, and they are the Jamā’ah, and they are As-Suwād Al-A’dham, and As-Suwād Al-A’dham is the truth and its people. So whoever opposes the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) in anything from issues of the religion then he has committed kufr.

واعلم أن الناس لم يتدعوا بدعة قط حتى تركوا من السنة مثلها فاحذر المحرمات من الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة والضلالة وأهلها في النار.

And know that no people have ever innovated an innovation except that they left a Sunnah equal to it. So beware of the forbidden of things, because verily newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and the misguidance and its people are in the fire.

واحذر صغار المحدثات من الأمور فإن صغار البدع تعود حتى تصير كبارا وكذلك كل بدعة أحدثت في هذه الأمة كان أولها صغيرا يشبه الحق فاغتر بذلك من دخل فيها ثم لم يستطع المخرج منها فعظمت وصارت دينا يدان بما يخالف الصراط المستقيم فخرج من الإسلام فانظر رحمك الله كل من سمعت كلامه من أهل زمانك خاصة فلا تعجلن ولا تدخلن في شيء منه حتى تسأل وتنظر هل تكلم فيه أحد من أصحاب النبي ﷺ أو أحد من العلماء فإن أصبت فيه أثرا عنهم فتمسك به ولا تجاوزه لشيء ولا تختبر عليه شيئا فتسقط في النار.

And beware of the small innovations, because the small of bida’ returns until they become big. And every bid’ah which was innovated in this Ummah began like this as something small that looked like the truth, so the one who entered it was deceived by that. Then he was not able to exit from it, and it grew and became a religion which he adopted. So he opposed the Straight Path and exited from Islām. So beware – may Allāh have mercy upon you – of everyone whose words you listen to specifically from the people of your time. Do not hasten and do not believe in anything until you ask and look; did anyone from the Companions of the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) speak about this, or anyone from the scholars (of the Salaf)? Then if you find an athar (narration) regarding it from them, then hold on to it and do not deviate from it for anything, and do not chose anything over it, so you (if you do that) would fall in the fire.

واعلم أن الخروج عن الطريق على وجهين أما أحدهما فرجل قد زل عن الطريق وهو لا يريد إلا الخير فلا يقتدى بزلاته فإنه هالك ورجل عاند الحق وخالف من كان قبله من المتقين فهو ضال مضل شيطان مرید في هذه الأمة حقيق على من عرفه أن يحذر الناس منه ويبين لهم قصته لئلا يقع في بدعته أحد فيهلك.

And know that leaving the (right) path is from two angles. Regarding the first of them then it is a man who made an error upon the path while he does not want anything but good. So his error is not followed because he is verily dead. And (the second is) a man who was stubborn towards the truth and opposed those who came before him of the God-fearing, so he is a misguided and misguiding rebellious shaytān in this Ummah, and it is befitting for the one who knows him to warn the people against him and tell them his story so no-one should fall in his innovation and become destroyed.

واعلم رحمك الله أنه لا يتم إسلام عبد حتى يكون متبعاً مصدقاً مسلماً فمن زعم أنه قد بقي شيء من أمر الإسلام لم يكفونا أصحاب رسول الله ﷺ فقد كذبهم وكفى بهذا فرقة وطعنا عليهم فهو مبتدع ضال مضل محدث في الإسلام ما ليس منه.

And know – may Allāh have mercy upon you – that the Islām of the slave does not become complete until he is a follower, a believer and a person who submits himself. So whoever claims that there remains something from Islām in which the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) has not been sufficient for us, then he has verily belied them. And this is verily enough for him, of leaving them and insulting them. So he is a misguided and misguiding innovator who invents in Islām what is not from it.

واعلم رحمك الله أنه ليس في السنة قياس ولا تضرب لها الأمثال ولا تتبع فيها الأهواء بل هو التصديق بآثار رسول الله ﷺ بلا كيف ولا شرح ولا يقال لم ولا كيف فالكلام والخصومة والجدال والمرء محدث يقدر الشك في القلب وإن أصاب صاحبه الحق والسنة.

And know – may Allāh show you mercy – that in the Sunnah there is no qiyās, nor is similitudes put forth with it, nor is desires followed in it. Rather is it believing in the narrations of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) without conditions, nor explaining it, nor do you ask ‘why’ or ‘how’, because speaking, disagreeing, disputing and arguing are newly invented and causes doubt to enter the heart, even if the one who does this is upon truth and the Sunnah.

(Sharh As-Sunnah by Al-Barbahārī)

The way of the Salaf

The attentive believer who seeks to follow the best of generations of this *Ummah* will see, that for them the question was not in names, status, opinions or loyalty. The question for them was simple: 'Is it in the Qurān, or has it correctly been narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam)? If yes, then they would follow it without hesitation and they would order others to follow it. Therefore they are the *aimmah* (leaders) of this *Ummah* and they are most deserving of being followed.

Al-Bukhārī – *rahimahullāh* – narrates in his *Sahih*:

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ خُصَيْفَةَ ، عَنْ بُسْرِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ، قَالَ : كُنْتُ فِي مَجْلِسٍ مِنْ مَجَالِسِ الْأَنْصَارِ ، إِذْ جَاءَ أَبُو مُوسَى كَأَنَّهُ مَدْعُورٌ ، فَقَالَ : اسْتَأْذَنْتُ عَلَى عُمَرَ ثَلَاثًا ، فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي ، فَرَجَعْتُ ، فَقَالَ : مَا مَنَعَكَ ؟ قُلْتُ : اسْتَأْذَنْتُ ثَلَاثًا ، فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي ، فَرَجَعْتُ ، وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : إِذَا اسْتَأْذَنْ أَحَدُكُمْ ثَلَاثًا ، فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لَهُ ، فَلْيَرْجِعْ ، فَقَالَ : وَاللَّهِ لَتُقِيمَنَّ عَلَيْهِ بَيْتَةَ أَمِنَكُمْ أَحَدٌ سَمِعَهُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَقَالَ أَبِي بْنُ كَعْبٍ : وَاللَّهِ لَا يَقُومُ مَعَكَ ، إِلَّا أَصْعَرُ الْقَوْمِ ، فَكُنْتُ أَصْعَرُ الْقَوْمِ ، فَقُمْتُ مَعَهُ ، فَأَحْبَرْتُ عُمَرَ : أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ذَلِكَ .

“Alī ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated to us, from Sufyān, from Yazīd ibn Khusayfah, from Busr ibn Sa’id, from Abū Sa’id Al-Khudrī who said: ‘While I was present in one of the gatherings of the Ansār, Abū Mūsā came as if he was scared, and said: ‘I asked permission to enter upon `Umar three times, but I was not given the permission, so I returned.’ (When `Umar came to know about it) he said (to Abū Mūsā): ‘Why did you not enter?’ I said: ‘I asked for permission three times, and I was not given it so I returned, because the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) said: **‘If anyone of you asks the permission to enter three times, and the permission is not given, then he should return.’** Umar said: ‘By Allāh, you will verily bring an evidence for it (i.e. that the Messenger of Allāh really said that).’ (Abū Mūsā went to a gathering of the Ansār and said:) ‘Did anyone of you hear this from the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam)?’ So Ubay bin Ka`b said: ‘By Allāh, no-one will go with you but the youngest of the people (as a witness).’ And I (Abū Sa’id) was the youngest of them, so I went with Abū Mūsā and informed `Umar that the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) had said so.” (Sahīh Al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim)

And ‘Abdullāh ibn Imām Ahmad – *rahimahumallāh* – narrated regarding Hammād ibn Zayd from *tābi’ at-tābi’in* – *rahimahullāh* – an excellent narration demonstrating this as well:

حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ الْحُجَّاجِ النَّاجِيُّ ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ ، قَالَ : جَلَسْتُ إِلَى أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ بِمَكَّةَ فَبَجَّاهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ : لَيْسَتْ التَّغْلِينَ أَوْ قَالَ : لَيْسَتْ السَّرَاوِيلُ وَأَنَا مُحْرِمٌ أَوْ قَالَ : لَيْسَتْ الْحُقُوفُ وَأَنَا مُحْرِمٌ - شَكَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ - فَقَالَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ : عَلَيْكَ دَمٌ ، فَمُلْتُ لِلرَّجُلِ وَجَدْتُ نَعْلَيْنِ

أَوْ وَجَدْتَ إِزَارًا؟ قَالَ: لَا، فَقُلْتُ: يَا أَبَا حَنِيفَةَ إِنَّ هَذَا يُرْعَمُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَجِدْ قَالَ: سَوَاءٌ وَجَدَ أَوْ لَمْ يَجِدْ، قَالَ حَمَّادٌ: فُقُلْتُ حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو بْنُ دِينَارٍ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: السَّرَاوِيلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَالْحَقْفَيْنِ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ وَحَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: السَّرَاوِيلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَالْحَقْفَيْنِ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ فَقَالَ بِيَدِهِ وَحَرَكَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ الْحَجَّاجِ يَدَهُ أَيُّ لَا شَيْءَ، فُقُلْتُ لَهُ: فَأَنْتَ عَنْ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: نَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ: عَلَيْهِ دَمٌ وَجَدَ أَوْ لَمْ يَجِدْ، قَالَ: فَعُمْتُ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَتَلَقَّيْنِي الْحَجَّاجُ بْنُ أَرْطَاةَ دَاخِلَ الْمَسْجِدِ فُقُلْتُ لَهُ: يَا أَبَا أَرْطَاةَ مَا تَقُولُ فِي مُحْرَمٍ لَيْسَ السَّرَاوِيلُ وَلَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَلَيْسَ الْحَقْفَيْنِ وَلَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ، فَقَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَمْرُو بْنُ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: السَّرَاوِيلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَالْحَقْفَيْنِ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ قَالَ فُقُلْتُ لَهُ: يَا أَبَا أَرْطَاةَ: أَمَا تَحْفَظُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَالَ: لَا قَالَ: وَحَدَّثَنِي نَافِعٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: السَّرَاوِيلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَالْحَقْفَيْنِ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ قَالَ: وَحَدَّثَنِي أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ، عَنِ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: السَّرَاوِيلُ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ الْإِزَارَ وَالْحَقْفَيْنِ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدِ التَّغْلِينَ قَالَ: فُقُلْتُ لَهُ مَا بَالُ صَاحِبِكُمْ قَالَ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ قَالَ: فَعَيِي ذَاكَ وَصَاحِبُ مَنْ ذَاكَ قَبَّحَ اللَّهُ ذَاكَ

"Ibrāhīm ibn Al-Hajjāj An-Nājī narrated to us and said: Hammād ibn Zayd narrated to us and said: 'I was sitting with Abū Hanīfah in Makkah when a man came to him and said: 'I have worn sandals', or he said: 'I have worn trousers while I was in ihrām'. Or he said: 'I have worn khuff (thick socks from leather) while I was in ihrām' – Ibrāhīm (the narrator) doubted (with regards to what the man said). So Abū Hanīfah said: 'You must offer a sacrifice.' So I (Hammād) said to the man: 'Did you find any sandals or did you find a waist cloth?' He said: 'No'. So I said: 'O Abū Hanīfah, this man claims that he could not find.' He (Abū Hanīfah) said: 'It doesn't matter if he could find or he could not find.' Hammād said: 'So I said: 'Amr ibn Dīnār narrated to us from Jābir ibn Zayd, from Ibn 'Abbās (radiAllāhu 'anhu) that he said: I heard the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) say: "Trousers for the one who cannot find a waist cloth, and the khuff for the one who cannot find sandals." And Ayyūb narrated to us, from Nāfi', from Ibn 'Umar (radiAllāhu 'anhu) that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Trousers for the one who cannot find a waist cloth, and the khuff for the one who cannot find sandals.'" So he (Abū Hanīfah) said with his hand – and Ibrāhīm ibn Al-Hajjāj (the narrator) moved his hand showing it – i.e. that is nothing. So I said to him: 'Then who do you narrate from (i.e. what do you base your opinion upon)?' He (Abū Hanīfah) said: 'From Hammād ibn Ibrāhīm.' He (Abū Hanīfah) said: 'He must offer a sacrifice whether he finds or does not find.' He (Hammād) said: So I got up from him. Then I met Al-Hajjāj ibn Artaah on the way into the masjid. So I said to him: 'O Abū Artaah. What do you say regarding a person who is in ihrām and he wore trousers when he could not find a waist cloth, and he wore khuff when he couldn't find sandals?' So he said: 'Amr ibn Dīnār narrated to us from Jābir ibn Zayd, from Ibn 'Abbās (radiAllāhu 'anhumā) that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa

sallam) said: **“Trousers for the one who cannot find a waist cloth, and the khuff for the one who cannot find sandals.”** So I said to him: ‘O Abū Artaah, did you not memorize that he (Ibn ‘Abbās) said: ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam)?’ He said: ‘No’. He then said: ‘And Nāfi’ narrated to me, from Ibn ‘Umar (radiAllāhu ‘anhumā) that the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) said: **“Trousers for the one who cannot find a waist cloth, and the khuff for the one who cannot find sandals.”** And he said: ‘And Abū Ishāq narrated to me, from Al-Hārith, from ‘Alī (radiAllāhu ‘anhu) that he said: **“Trousers for the one who cannot find a waist cloth, and the khuff for the one who cannot find sandals.”** So I said: ‘Then what is it with your companion that he says so and so?’ He said: ‘This is in him. And who is he the companion of? May Allāh make him ugly.’” (As-Sunnah by ‘Abdullāh and Sahīh Ibn Hibban with another chain of narration)

So the *Salaf* would consider a correct chain of narration from the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) sufficient for the *hadīth* to be followed without any question. Thus the words of Umar to Abū Mūsā (radiAllāhu ‘anhumā):

‘By Allāh, you will verily bring an evidence for it (i.e. that the Messenger of Allāh really said that).’

And for the same reason Hammād ibn Zayd and Abu Artaah mentioned their chain of narration when they brought their evidence and they considered this sufficient for the *hadīth* to be followed. And in order for the *Salaf* to turn away from the apparent meaning of a *hadīth*, there had to be another correct *hadīth* from the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) which would allow them to do that. Thus the words of Hammād ibn Zayd to Abū Hanīfah when he opposed the meaning of the *hadīth* which Hammād mentioned to him:

‘Then who do you narrate from?’

In other words: Then bring me a *hadīth* with a correct chain of narration which allows for me to deviate from the meaning of the correct *hadīth* which I am in possession of. And if you cannot do so, then your opinion is based upon nothing and is rejected.

This is what they did and this is why we follow them. And it is the conclusion found in the words of Al-Barbahārī – *rahimahullāh* – when he said:

وذلك أن السنة والجماعة قد أحكما أمر الدين كله وتبين للناس فعلى الناس الاتباع.

“And this is that the *Sunnah* and the *Jamā’ah* firmly established all issues in the religion and clarified it for the people, so it is upon them to follow it.” (Sharh As-Sunnah)

The deviators

Deviation lies in abandoning the way of the *Salaf*. The *Salaf* acknowledged that the Qurān was revealed upon and regarding the *Sahābah* (*radiAllāhu anhum*) and they were the people who lived with, helped and sacrificed for the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*). Therefore they are those with the deepest knowledge and understanding of the evidences. Whoever then chooses someone else over the *Sahābah* has not followed the way of the *Salaf*. And we bear in mind that the *tābi'īn* and the *tābi' at-tābi'īn* only have the status that they have, based upon their closeness to the *Sahābah* and them taking their knowledge from them.

Al-Haytham ibn Jamīl – *rahimahullāh* – said:

قلت لمالك بن أنس : يا أبا عبد الله إن عندنا قوما وضعوا كتباً يقول أحدهم : ثنا فلان عن فلان عن عمر بن الخطاب بكذا وكذا وفلان عن إبراهيم بكذا ، ويأخذ بقول إبراهيم . قال مالك : وصح عندهم قول عمر ؟ قلت : إنما هي رواية كما صح عندهم قول إبراهيم ، فقال مالك : هؤلاء يستتابون ، والله أعلم.

“I said to Mālik ibn Anas: ‘O Abū ‘Abdullāh. Verily with us is a people who has written books and one of them say: ‘(It was narrated) from fulān, from fulān, from ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattāb saying this and this, and (it was narrated) from fulān from Ibrāhīm saying this’, and then he takes the opinion of Ibrāhīm.’ Mālik said: ‘And the opinion of ‘Umar is correct (i.e. the narration is correct) for them?’ I said: ‘It is verily a narration, just like the opinion of Ibrāhīm is correct for them.’ So Mālik said: ‘These people should be asked to make tawbah, and Allāh knows best.’” (I’lām Al-Mawaqqi’īn by Ibn Al-Qayyim)

And Abū ‘Abdullāh Al-Qawārīrī – *rahimahullāh* – said:

سمعت أحمد يذكر رجلاً فقال له الرجل: قال عطاء، فأخذ أحمد نعله وقال: أقول لك: قال ابن عمر، وتقول: قال عطاء، من عطاء؟! ومن أبوه!؟

“I heard Ahmad discuss with a man when the man said to him: ‘Atā said.’ So Ahmad took his sandal and said: ‘I say to you: Ibn ‘Umar said, and you say to me: ‘Atā said. Who is ‘Atā?! And who is his father?!’” (Al-Jāmi’ li-‘Ulūm Al-Imām Ahmad)

So when all this is established, then what is left to say to those who prefer the opinions of the latecomers over the Words of Allāh, the words of His Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) and his Companions (*radiAllāhu ‘anhum*)? If the *Salaf* would criticize those who took the opinion of a *tābi’ī* over the opinion of a *Sahābi*, then what would they say to people who take the opinion of people living today over the clear evidences from the Qurān and *Sunnah*?

And even more disastrous are those who do this while blind following!! Not based upon a wrong *ijtihad* that they were convinced by, not based upon a wrong *qiyās* which they found reasonable, but solely based upon pure fanaticism to a specific *madhhab* or person.

This is not Islām. This is not submission to Allāh. Rather this is the fanaticism that every single scholar has criticized and forbidden.

An example of this could be the disagreement which has occurred in the issue of judging people upon the apparent signs of Islām. Many people have accepted that we had a horrible mistake in this issue after having seen the clear evidence from the Qurān, the *Sunnah*, the sayings of *Sahābah* (*radiAllāhu ‘anhum*) and the sayings of the *Salaf*¹ confirming what was already clear from the texts; that a person is judged upon the outwardly without looking into possibilities, assumptions, percentages, times or anything else.

But a group of people remained upon the old *bid’ah* opinion stating that the outwardly Islām is not sufficient for judging a person as Muslim in *dunyā*. But they do not produce the evidence for this opinion, nor are they able to defend it when being asked. So they lean upon that their *Shaykh* has approved this opinion without knowing what the basis for it is. This is called blind following in its purest form, and Allāh does not forgive this when the evidences are clear and present.

The best of these people of *bida’* say: ‘*There is a difference of opinion in this issue*’, and thereby accept the truth as a valid opinion. And even though this is clearly a false and rejected statement, then it is much better than those who became like Al-Barbahārī – *rahimahullāh* – said:

واحذر صغار المحدثات من الأمور فإن صغار البدع تعود حتى تصير كبارا وكذلك كل بدعة أحدثت في هذه الأمة كان أولها صغيرا يشبه الحق فاغتر بذلك من دخل فيها ثم لم يستطع المخرج منها فعظمت وصارت ديننا يدان بما فخالف الصراط المستقيم فخرج من الإسلام

“*And beware of the small innovations, because the small of bida’ return until they become big. And likewise began every bid’ah which was innovated in this Ummah as something small that looked like the truth, so the one who entered it was deceived by that. Then he was not able to exit from it, and it grew and became a religion which he adopted. So he opposed the Straight Path and exited from Islām.*”
(Sharh As-Sunnah by Al-Barbahārī)

So for the worst of them their *bida’* grew until they rejected the truth and called it *kufr*. So for them accepting the clear evidences that no-one can dispute, is not even a valid opinion

¹ See the text: “Accepting the outwardly Islām and not looking into possibilities and assumptions”

in an issue of *ikhtilāf* (as some claim). Rather it is misguidance and disbelief, and they declare *takfīr* upon the one who build his religion upon the clear and confirmed. And even these people, if you ask them for evidence from the Qurān or *Sunnah*, or from someone from the *Salaf* who held the same opinion as them, they will not be able to answer you. And therefore there has not been produced a single answer to the evidences which has been presented in this issue. And by ‘answer’ we mean an answer which includes Qurān and *Sunnah* according to the understanding of the *Salaf*, and not an explanation based upon the understanding and assumption of the latecomers.

We are still waiting...

And to those who are still wavering in confusion in this issue, then listen to the advice from Al-Barbahārī which he mentioned as a cure for the disease of leaving the way of the *Salaf*:

فانظر رحمك الله كل من سمعت كلامه من أهل زمانك خاصة فلا تعجلن ولا تدخلن في شيء منه حتى تسأل وتنظر هل تكلم فيه أحد من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أو أحد من العلماء فإن أصبت فيه أثرا عنهم فتمسك به ولا تجاوزه لشيء ولا تختار عليه شيئا فتسقط في النار.

“So beware – may Allāh have mercy upon you – of everyone whose words you listen to specifically from the people of your time. Do not hasten and do not believe in anything until you ask and look; did anyone from the Companions of the Prophet (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) speak about this, or anyone from the scholars (of the Salaf)? Then if you find an athar (narration) regarding it from them, then hold on to it and do not deviate from it for anything, and do not chose anything over it, so you (if you do that) would fall in the fire.” (Sharh As-Sunnah by Al-Barbahārī)

This religion was completed on a *Jumu’ah* on a day of ‘Arafah² when Allāh – the Exalted – revealed the following verse to Muhammad (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam):

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

“Today I have fulfilled for you your religion.” (Al-Māidah 5:3)

There is no need in Islām for *ijtihādāt* and *qiyāsāt* in issues where there is clear and correct evidence stating what is correct in the issue, nor are these acceptable. We need to discipline

² According to a *hadīth* narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim from ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattāb (*radiAllāhu ‘anhu*) who said that the verse was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) on that day.

our souls not to be satisfied with anything except with what the *Salaf* were satisfied with. Because as Imām Mālik – *rahimahullāh* – said:

لن يصلح آخر هذه الأمة إلا بما صلح به أولها؛ فما لم يكن يومئذ ديناً، لا يكون اليوم ديناً

“The last of this Ummah will not be correct except through that which the first of it was correct by. So whatever was not from the religion at that time will never be from the religion today.” (As-Shafā by Qādī ‘Iyyād)

So my dear brother and sister. Submit to the words of Allāh, follow His Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) and base your religion upon what the generations who were approved by the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) has understood from the Qurān and *Sunnah*. The Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) said:

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُوكُهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُوكُهُمْ

“The best people are those of my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them.” (Sahīh Al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim)

And Allāh – the Exalted – said:

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Follow that which has been revealed to you from your Lord. And do not follow any *awliyā* besides Him. Little is it that you remember.” (Al-A’rāf 7:3)

We ask Allāh to show us the truth as the truth and provide us with following it. And we ask Him to show us the falsehood as falsehood and provide us with keeping away from it.

And may the peace and abundant blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions, and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Judgement. Allāhumma āmīn.

Abū Hajār