

THE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF AHL AS-SUNNAH



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Introduction

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists. May peace and blessings upon the one sent as a mercy to the creation, Muhammad ﷺ, his family and companions, and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

I received a message on social media consisting of a set of doctrinal questions which its compilers utilize to determine if someone is from Ahl as-Sunnah. Whoever answers most of these questions correctly is considered a Sunni Muslim. Otherwise, they are advised to re-examine their beliefs.

If we consider this to be the case, then to determine whether or not an individual is truly from Ahl as-Sunnah, we must first establish the fundamental principles of belief within the Ahl as-Sunnah creed. If a person's belief

system is aligned with these fundamentals, then they are Sunni Muslims. Additionally, it is obligatory for them to believe in the minutia that these beliefs entail, in accordance with the knowledge they possess. If anyone diverges from Ahl as-Sunnah in one fundamental principle or more, they are not considered Sunnis. This is the focus of this brief booklet. The objective then is not to extensively explore and exhaust the topic but rather to generally outline beliefs of those that differ with Ahl as-Sunnah while presenting the overall belief system of Ahl as-Sunnah.

For this specific purpose, I have not mentioned the evidence for these theological positions and details of established consensus because they are readily available in books of theology upon the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah. These books cite the relevant hadith narrations such as:

- ❖ *The Treatises by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* refuting the *Jahmiyyah* and *Zanaadiqah*
- ❖ *The Book by Ad-Daarimi* refuting the *Jahmiyyah* and *Zanaadiqah*
- ❖ *The Creed of Ar-Raaziyeen*
- ❖ *Creation of the Servants' Actions* by *Bukhari*
- ❖ *The Sunnah* by *Al-Marwazi*

- ❖ *The Sunnah by Abi A'sim*
- ❖ *The Sunnah by Al-Khilaal*
- ❖ *Oneness by Abi Khuzaymah*
- ❖ *Faith by Ibn Mundah*
- ❖ *The Declaration by Ibn Battah*
- ❖ *The Explanation of the Fundamental Beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah by Al-Alka'ee*
- ❖ *Shariah by Al-A'jurry*
- ❖ *The Vision by Ad-Daraqutni*
- ❖ *The Creed of the Predecessors and The People of Hadith by As-Saabooni*

These references, along with other publications from prominent Islamic authors and scholars, delve into the theological positions and consensus transmissions within the framework of Ahl as-Sunnah.

These theological positions and transmissions of consensus are also plentiful in the books of Ahl as-Sunnah, not solely based upon narrations. Some noteworthy sources include:

- ❖ *Sharh as-Sunnah by Al-Barbaaari*

- ❖ Works by Ibn Taymiyyah, including *Al-Waasitiyah*, *Al Hamwiyyah*, *Ad-Tadmuriyyah*, *Daaru' At-Taarud Wa Bayan Talbees Al-Jahmiyyah*, *Minhaj As-Sunnah*, etc.
- ❖ Books by Ibn Al-Qayyim such as *As-Sawaaiq Al-Mursalah*, *An-Nooniyah*, and *Hidayat Al-Hiyaraa*
- ❖ Explanation of the chapter of Eman from *Sahih Bukhari* by Ibn Rajab
- ❖ *At-Tahawiyah* and its explanation by *Ibn Abi Al 'iz al Hanafi*
- ❖ *Tajdeed At-Tawheed* by Al-Maqreezi
- ❖ *Tatheer Al-'itqaad 'an Adran Al Ilhaad* by As-Sanaani
- ❖ Works by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahab, including *Kitab At-Tawheed*, *Usool Athaalatha*, *Kashf Ash-Shubuhat*, and *Qawa'id Al Arba'*

These books, along with other publications, clarify the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah and its principles. They have been compiled and derived from the Quran, Sunnah, consensus of the companions, and the rightly guided predecessors from the scholars of the religion.

It is reported that the Prophet ﷺ narrated the Hadith known as 'The Hadith of Division.' This well-known

Hadith has been transmitted by multiple companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Hadith scholars have differed on its authenticity, with two main groups emerging: those who weaken all chains of its narrations, such as Ibn Hazm, and those who authenticate them and constitute the majority.

The scholars who authenticate this Hadith can be categorized into three groups. The first group authenticates the division of the Ummah into 73 sects without including the phrase, "All of them will be in the Hellfire except one." This version of the Hadith, without the addition, is reported by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah in their respective books of *Sunan*, and others. All of these narrations trace back to Muhammad ibn 'Amr, on the authority of Abu Salamah, and the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them).

The second category involves the addition, "All of them will be in the Hellfire except one." Some scholars, including Ibn Hazm, Ibn Al-Wazeer Al-Yamaani, and Ash-Shawkani, weaken this addition, meaning they do not authenticate or attribute it to the Prophet ﷺ or the companions.

The prevailing opinion is that this addition is preserved from the Hadith of Safwan ibn Amr, transmitted through Al-Azhar ibn Abdullah Al-Hiraazi, Abi Amir Abdullah

ibn Yahya, and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with them). It is supported by Tirmidhi and others through the Hadith of Ath-Thawri, and others on the authority of Abdulrahman ibn Ziyaad ibn An'um Al-Afreeqi, Abdullah Ibn Yazid, and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-Aas (may Allah be pleased with them).

Additionally, it finds support from Ibn Majah and Ibn Abi 'Aasim in 'As-Sunnah' by meaning, derived from the Hadith of Safwan ibn Amr, narrated through Rashid ibn Sa'ad and Awf ibn Malik Al-Ashja'i (may Allah be pleased with him). *Ibn Majah* also supports it via *Al-Awza'i*, narrated by *Qatadah* and *Anas*, from the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, the addition, supported by these various chains, is considered authentic.

The third category includes the statement, "All of the sects are successful and in Paradise except one sect, and they're the *Zanaadiqah*." However, there is a consensus among scholars that this is a fabricated addition.

Is the number mentioned in the Hadith specific, or is the purpose to signify a large number?

There are two opinions on the matter:

- The first opinion is that it is specific, and this view is deemed correct due to the context of the Hadith.

- ➄ The second opinion is that the intent is to indicate a large number, and the specific number isn't intended.

In the Arabic language, the word *iftirāq* (*disunity*) is the opposite of *ijtima'* (*unity*) - i.e., splitting from one thing or from multiple things. Splitting is separating. In the verb form, one would say, 'I split from him.' *firaq* (*sects*), plural of *firqah* (*sect*) refers to a party of people that detach themselves from the congregation.

As for the definition of disunity in accordance with Shariah, it refers to disagreement in religious matters and opposing the congregation. Most of these sects' initial detachment was marked by differentiation from the congregation and opposing the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah until they reached the level of innovation and separation.

And among those who have attempted to calculate the sects from our predecessors is *Yusuf bin Asbaat*. He states, "The origins of all sects are four: The *Raafidah*, The *Khawaarij*, The *Qadariyah*, and The *Murji'ah*." Each of these sects further split into 18 different sects, totaling 72. The 73rd sect is the *Jama'ah* (*congregation*), as mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ.

Another scholar who attempted this calculation is *Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubarak*. He concurred with *Asbaat*

that the origins of all sects are four, stating: "The Shia (*Raafidah*) split into 22 sects, the *Khawaarij* into 21 sects, the *Qadariyah* into 16 sects, and the *Murji'ah* into 13 sects."

These sects, in regards to their current existence, can be divided into four categories:

• Extinct in Name and Creed:

Those whose name and creed are extinct, such as the extreme *Qadariyah*, *Al-Hāshimiyyah* (the followers of *Hisham bin Hakm*) who likened Allah to His creation, and the *Yunusiyah* (the followers of *Yunus bin Abdulrahman Al-Jawālīqī*).

• Extinct in Name with the Presence of its Creed:

Those whose name is extinct but their creed remains, like the *Mu'tazila*. Their beliefs have been inherited by many groups such as *Al-Zaidiyyah*, *Al-Ibadiyah*, *Al-Imamiyyah*, and the Twelver Shias. Also, the *Sabaiyah*; their name is lost to history, but their creed still exists within the Twelver Shias' belief.

• Extinct in Creed but Name Remains:

That whose creed is extinct but their name still exists, like *Al-Mufaddilah* (those who favored Ali

over Uthman) and the *Zaidiyyah* (Those who also favored Ali over Uthman but didn't favor either over Abu Bakr or Umar).

• Existent in Name and Creed:

Those whose name and creed still exist today, like *Al-Ismaīliyyah*, *Khawārij*, and the *Rāfidah*, which includes *Ismaīliyyah* and Twelver Shias.

We do not condemn any group or say they have separated until they oppose one of the fundamental beliefs that is a known pillar of the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah, or they oppose more than one principle. Like the *Qubūriyyīn*, the extreme Sufis, and the *Rāfidah* who oppose the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah on the matter of Allah's oneness and Worship. Or like the *Jahmiyyah*, who oppose *Ahl as-Sunnah* regarding the names and attributes of Allah. They [The *Jahmiyyah*] also oppose *Ahl as-Sunnah* on the issues of predestination and free will. Or like the *Khawārij* and *Murji'ah* who oppose *Ahl as-Sunnah* in matters of Allah's names and rulings, and this is the first issue that led to dispute within the ummah. Some of the scholars state: "A person may fall into innovation by one or two views that oppose these principles."

It is incumbent upon us to elucidate the circumstances of the people of innovation to the ummah, and this

should be executed with justice and knowledge. In this regard, we assert that the implications of a position are not a position in and of itself, except when it pertains to the speech of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

Two conditions are essential for the pronouncement of *takfeer* (declaring someone a disbeliever), *tabdee'* (declaring someone an innovator), or *tafseeq* (declaring someone morally or religiously corrupt):

- ❖ Legislative Evidence: It is imperative to present clear and conclusive legislative evidence that establishes the actions or speech as constituting disbelief, innovation, or immoral/sinful behavior.
- ❖ Additionally, one must meticulously establish the necessary conditions and requirements. This involves recognizing and addressing any barriers or obstacles that might excuse a statement or action from being categorized as *kufr* (disbelief), *bid'a* (innovation), or *tafseeq* (moral or religious corruption).

Innovation (*bid'a*) in the religious context is defined by the Messenger ﷺ in his statement: "Whomever innovates in our affair, what is not from it, then it is rejected." Ash-Shatibi states in his book *Al-I'tisaam*, innovation is "a path in the religion that is invented, attempting to rival the

Shariah." The intention behind such innovation is often excessiveness in worshiping Allah.

The earliest signs of innovation appeared during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but they were initially restricted to individuals and promptly addressed. The earliest signs of division within the Ummah became apparent after the killing of Uthman, giving rise to the *Khawārij* and *Shia* in Iraq. Toward the end of the era of the companions, the *Qadariyah* and *Murji'ah* also emerged. In the final stages of the *Banu Umayyah* Caliphate, the *Jahmiyyah*, *Qadariyyah*, and *Mumathila* also made their appearance.

From the region of Kufa, two parties emerged: The *Shi'a* and *Murji'ah*. In Basra, two sects also arose: the *Qadariyyah* and the extreme Sufis. Additionally, from the Levant, the innovation of *Nasb* (those who harbor animosity towards Ali and *Ahl ul-Bayt*) and the innovation of predestination emerged. Finally, from *Khurasan*, two parties emerged: The *Jahmiyyah*, who negate Allah's names and attributes, and the *Mujassimah*, who liken Allah to His creation.

Just as disunity and division are found in beliefs, the same reality exists in acts of worship, legislated acts, and rituals. Innovation often starts with a deviation in one or two pillars of belief, and it doesn't stop there. Those who

innovate may continue to pursue their desires, eventually creating novel, independent ways and establishing new fundamentals upon which they build their innovation.

Innovation can be classified into two types: Innovation in belief and innovation in action.

Innovation in belief may either lead one out of the fold of Islam or not. On the other hand, innovation in actions is intricately linked to factors such as category, type, time, place, amount, and characteristics of the action.

It's important to note that not every deviation necessarily takes a person out of Islam; one may hold divergent beliefs or engage in deviant actions but still remain within the broader Muslim community, albeit not within *Ahl as-Sunnah*. This type of detachment is often done through *ta'weel* (differing interpretations/exegesis), exemplified by groups like the *Mu'tazila*, *Jahmiyyah*, the second wave of *Qadariyyah*, *Murji'ah al-Fuqaha*, *Kilābiyyah*, *Asha'irah*, and *Maturidiyyah*. They are considered outside the fold of Islam only if they espouse beliefs or statements that necessitate apostasy and not able to be interpreted otherwise. In this case, they may be considered outside the fold of Islam. Examples include extreme *Jahmiyyah* and *Qadariyah*, *Batiniyyah*, extreme *Murji'ah* who assert "belief isn't affected by sins," and the extreme *Mu'tazila* and *Qadariyyah*.

Innovation can be categorized into two types: proper innovation and relative innovation. Proper innovation lacks any evidence, fundamentals, or general principles to substantiate it. Despite claims of derivation from sources like the Quran and Sunnah, those introducing proper innovation are, in reality, attempting to justify their doubts.

Relative innovation is characterized by evidence that could justify the innovation from a certain facet, but from another facet, it constitutes proper innovation. Those who introduce relative innovation often attempt to affirm it without concrete evidence, relying on their misunderstandings. Such innovation does not fall under any fundamental or general principle.

An illustrative example is found in the interaction between *Ibn Mas'ud* and a congregation he found gathered in the masjid using pebbles to count the number of times they remembered and glorified Allah. In response, he remarked, "By Allah, you have introduced a dark innovation, or you have surpassed the companions of your Prophet in knowledge."

It is worth noting that differences of opinion in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) are distinct from what is meant by innovation. While some differences in *fiqh* can be

acceptable and fall within the bounds of scholarly discourse, there are situations where they may not be considered as such.

We have elucidated the factors leading to divergence from the beliefs of *Ahl as-Sunnah*, specifically within the realm of fundamental beliefs.

These foundational beliefs are categorized into seven key aspects:

- ✿ *Tawheed* and Worship
- ✿ Allah's Names and Attributes
- ✿ Eman (Belief)
- ✿ Predestination and Free Will
- ✿ *Asmaa* and *Ahkaam* (Names and Legislative Rulings)
- ✿ *Imaamah*
- ✿ The Companions and Family of the Prophet





Tawheed and Worship

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah regarding Allah's Oneness and worship affirms that Allah is alone without any partners in His *Rubūbiyyah* (lordship), *Ulūhiyyah* (oneness in worship), as well as His names and attributes. *Ahl as-Sunnah* singles out Allah in everything unique to Him, including His Oneness in actions such as creation, provision, kingship, and governance, and in knowledge of the unseen. They believe in His Oneness in the actions of His servants, confining all acts of worship for Allah, including swearing oaths, sacrificing, seeking aid, seeking rescue, and prayer.

Furthermore, they believe in Allah's Oneness regarding His names and attributes, affirming what Allah has affirmed for Himself and what His messengers have affirmed on His behalf, without anthropomorphism or likening (*Takyeef* or *Tamtheel*). They also deny what Allah

has denied about Himself or what the messengers have denied about Him, without distortion or negation.

The beliefs of *Ahl as-Sunnah* regarding *Tawheed* have been articulated in different ways. At times, it is expressed as: "*Tawheed* is of three categories: *Rubūbiyyah*, *Ulūhiyyah*, *Asmā wa Sifāt*." Alternatively, it is broken into four categories, separating *Asmā wa Sifāt* as its own independent category, as *Ibn Munda* did. Another perspective separates *Tawheed* into two categories: *Tawheed* is either in knowing and affirming or it is in intent and seeking. In this categorization, the knowing and affirming category comprises *Rubūbiyyah* and *Asmā wa Sifāt*, while the intent and seeking category comprises *Ulūhiyyah* and *Asmā wa Sifāt*. Yet another occasion sees *Tawheed* divided into two categories: the *Tawheed* of knowledge, encompassing *Rubūbiyyah* and *Asmā wa Sifāt*, and the *Tawheed* of action, comprising *Ulūhiyyah* and *Asmā wa Sifāt*.

The various truthful definitions and correct statements regarding *Tawheed* serve the purpose of guiding individuals to believe in the meaning of these categories. The categorization itself becomes secondary; what matters is the belief in the creed. Allah, in the Quran (*Maryam*:65), gathers the categories of *Tawheed* when stating, "Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them - so worship Him and have patience for His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him?"



The Names and Attributes of Allah

The beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah regarding the names and attributes of Allah, falling under *Tawheed* and worship, have been categorized separately due to disputes and confusion among Muslims. The general belief of Ahl as-Sunnah in this category is as follows: they affirm Allah's names and attributes in a manner befitting His Majesty, as affirmed by Himself and His messengers, without anthropomorphism or likening (*Takyeef* or *Tamtheel*). They also deny anything Allah has denied about Himself or His messengers have denied without distortion or negation (*Tahreef* or *Ta'teel*). These names and attributes are considered complete truths possessed by Allah.

In implementing the belief in His names and attributes,

Ahl as-Sunnah follow the principle of understanding them as known in regards to their meaning but unknown in regards to the essence of these meanings are manifested. The *Salaf*'s approach is summed up in the phrase: "We believe in them as they were relayed without asking how." The methodology of affirming in detail and denying in general, consistent with the way of the Quran, is maintained. Any views or beliefs regarding His attributes are considered just as any views regarding Allah's essence."





Predestination and Free Will

As for the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah regarding predestination and the free will of a servant:

They affirm that Allah's knowledge is eternal and encompasses everything, including the actions of the servants. His knowledge extends prior to the performance of actions, after they are performed, and even if they were not performed. All actions are recorded in *Lawh-ul-Mahfūdh*. Ahl as-Sunnah believes in the all-encompassing and inevitable will of Allah, His absolute omnipotence, and His role as the creator of everything. This includes the creation of the essence, attributes, and actions of all beings. All that exists, other than Allah, is considered His creation and servant. Exalted is He, and

Glory be to His names.

Ahl as-Sunnah believes in the free will of individuals, but they assert that the will and actions of humans are in accordance with the will of Allah. Whatever Allah wills comes to be, regardless of the will of the creation, and anything Allah does not will, even if desired by the creation, will not come to pass. Allah has mandated obedience and prohibited sin. Those who adhere to Allah's commands are beloved to Him, receiving His pleasure, while disobedience exposes one to His wrath. Allah does not love disbelievers or wrongdoers, and He is not pleased by acts of disbelief or corruption.

In times of testing decreed by Allah, some legislative requirements may be alleviated for the servant. This emphasizes the importance of *taqwa* (piety) toward Allah to the best of one's capabilities. For instance, if one cannot pray standing, they are given the license to pray sitting, and if sitting is not possible, then they are permitted to pray lying on their side.





Islamic Labels and Legislative Rulings

As for the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah regarding Islamic labels and legislative rulings:

Ahl as-Sunnah holds that individuals affirmed as Muslims, with established Eman, cannot be labeled as disbelievers due to committing sins, be they major or minor. The focus is on the possibility of repentance, and if the person repents, Allah accepts it. In cases where the person persists in major sins and dies without repentance, their fate in the Hereafter is left to Allah's discretion. If Allah wills, He may punish them according to the sin, but they will not remain eternally in hellfire as long as they died upon Eman.

In the worldly context, such individuals are classified as '*Fasiq*' or '*Fasiq Milli*' (*Muslim Fasiq*). The term '*Fasiq*' is applicable to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Ahl

as-Sunnah does not affirm absolute Eman for such individuals but acknowledges their general Eman, recognizing their imperfections while maintaining their status as believers.

As it is the opinion of the majority, with the *Hanafi* opinion differing, *Ahl as-Sunnah* states regarding those who fall into major sin that they are believers with incomplete *Eman* or believers due to their *Eman*, and *Fasiq* due to falling into major sin. Some of the predecessors had different preferences in terminology, negating the title of complete faith and sufficing with labeling them as Muslims due to textual evidence that emphasizes aspects of belief and conduct.

However, this difference is primarily a distinction in verbiage. *Ahl as-Sunnah* unanimously agrees that committing major sins does not lead one to leave the fold of Islam. Instead, they view such individuals as believers with incomplete a *Fasiq* (corrupt) *Muslim*.





Eman (Faith)

As for their belief in the chapter on faith, they believe in what the texts have indicated, and the *salaf* (righteous predecessors) unanimously agreed upon. They believe that faith consists speech and action: speech through the heart and tongue, and action through the heart and limbs. They also express it as follows: Faith is speech with the tongue, belief through the soul, and acting upon the pillars. They believe that faith increases and decreases, as the majority of scholars have stated, and that it increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. They agree that faith increases by increasing words and deeds, but there was some dispute regarding increasing knowledge. Two narrations were narrated on the authority of Ahmad regarding that, which Abu Bakr Al-Khallal narrated about him in the book "The Sunnah," the more correct of which is that it increases and decreases,

and it was chosen by his prominent companions, Judge Abu Ya'la and Abu Abdullah Ibn Hamid.

They believe that the foundations of faith and its pillars are six, and that a believer has not truly believed until he believes in them: faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and faith in destiny, both good and evil. As for the branches of faith and its parts, they are sixty-few or seventy-few branches, the highest of which is the saying, 'there is no deity except Allah,' and the lowest thing is to remove harm from a path.





Imamah

As for the creed of *Ahl as-Sunnah* regarding Islamic leadership (*Imamah*): They believe in the obligation of having a Muslim ruler among them, tasked with safeguarding their livelihood affairs, resolving disputes, protecting the weak from the strong, and establishing Islamic legislation. This belief is supported by a hadith found in *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, where the Prophet ﷺ states, "Verily, the Islamic Imam is protection and a sanctuary, he is to be fought behind, and he is a means of protection. If he calls towards the obedience of Allah and is just, then he is rewarded for such, and if he orders for something other than that, then his actions will count against him."

This perspective aligns with both the legislative order and the sound intellect, as articulated by *Al-Awfah Al-*

Awdee in his poetic expression, "There is neither good nor prosperity for the people in chaos, nor prosperity if they're led by the ignorant."

Ahl as-Sunnah, regarding the Islamic leader, establishes a set of conditions and prerequisites. These include the requirement that the leader is upon Islam, is male, is known for uprightness, possesses Islamic knowledge, is recognized for justice, and belongs to the descendants of *Quraysh*. The methods employed by *Ahl as-Sunnah* for choosing the Islamic leader involve either the majority of the people of ability and knowledge (*Ahlul-Hal Wal-A'qd*) choosing and pledging allegiance to a leader, or the choice of a current appointed leader who was previously selected by the people of knowledge.

Ibn Taymiyyah provides historical context, citing the example of *Umar Ibn Al-Khattab*, highlighting that he did not become Imam until the people of knowledge and ability chose him and pledged their allegiance. Another method emphasized by *Ahl as-Sunnah* is the agreement among current members of the *Shura* (Islamic leadership-appointed cabinet) to choose a leader. This consensus ensures a unified decision, as seen in the case of *Uthman*, where all members pledged allegiance, and his leadership was undisputed.

In times of necessity, *Ahl as-Sunnah* holds the belief in the obligation of obeying and pledging allegiance to a leader who forcefully and oppressively takes leadership. This stance is motivated solely by the imperative to prevent bloodshed, safeguard the Muslim community, and avert the potential occurrence of greater harm. The pragmatic approach taken by *Ahl as-Sunnah* in such circumstances underscores the priority of protecting lives and ensuring the well-being of the general Muslim populace.

Whether the Islamic leader is chosen out of choice or not, *Ahl as-Sunnah* maintains the belief in the obligation of obedience to the leader, provided the leader's commands and legislation align with the principles of the faith. *Ahl as-Sunnah* unanimously agrees to obey the leader as long as the leader does not order a sin or an act of wrongdoing. In cases where the leader deviates from the path of truth, *Ahl as-Sunnah* believe in the obligation to advise and guide the leader toward the correct understanding of the legislation.

Ahl as-Sunnah also firmly holds that it is prohibited to rebel against an Islamic ruler, even if the ruler is known to be a sinner or an oppressor. Instead, the preferred course of action is to advise the ruler and strive to rectify the situation through peaceful means. If, however, the

removal of an oppressive ruler becomes possible without resulting in greater harm, it is deemed obligatory to do so. In situations where removal is not feasible, Muslims are urged to remain patient upon the harm caused by the ruler, while still actively participating in Islamic duties such as Jihad and Pilgrimage when commanded. Ahl as-Sunnah also advocates supplicating for the uprightness and righteousness of the ruler.





Companions and *Ahl Al-Bayt*

The beliefs of *Ahl as-Sunnah* regarding the companions and family of the Prophet ﷺ are rooted in reverence, honor, and love. *Ahl as-Sunnah* emphasizes the importance of guarding one's tongue from slandering, insulting, or scrutinizing the mistakes of the companions. They refrain from engaging in disputes about them and firmly believe that the companions are the best of the *Ummah*. The love and approval of the companions are integral aspects of the beliefs held by *Ahl as-Sunnah*.

Ahl as-Sunnah categorically rejects any lies or slander attributed to the companions by groups such as the Shia and other misguided innovators. They assert that any narrations about the companions are explicit lies, distorted and changed narratives, or truthful

narrations that have been verified for accuracy. While acknowledging that the companions were not individually infallible, Ahl as-Sunnah believes in their collective infallibility as a group. This belief is grounded in the conviction that Allah does not allow the entire Ummah to congregate upon falsehood, and the companions of the Prophet ﷺ are regarded as the best among the Ummah.

Ahl as-Sunnah holds that the companions' statuses are determined by their virtues. The *Muhajiroon* (those who migrated from Mecca to Medina) are considered superior to the *Ansaar* (the residents of Medina who supported the *Muhajiroon*). Those companions who gave generously and fought before The Treaty of *Hudaybiyah* are held to a greater esteem than those who did so afterward. Ahl as-Sunnah affirms the specific virtues reported about individual companions, such as *Abu Bakr*, *Umar*, *Uthman*, *'Ali*, *Sad Ibn Muadh*, and *Bilal*. Additionally, they recognize the virtues of specific groups among the companions, such as the ten promised paradise, the people of *Badr*, and the people of *Bay'atu-Ridwan*.

Ahl as-Sunnah acknowledges the varying degrees of virtue among the companions, asserting that *Abu Bakr* and *Umar* are superior to the rest, and *Uthman* is

considered better than Ali, maintaining the consensus of the companions. The order of virtue among the companions aligns with their order in succession after the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, with *Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman*, and then *Ali*. *Ahl as-Sunnah* expresses reverence and approval for all the companions while recognizing distinctions in their virtues and statuses.

Ahl as-Sunnah expresses love for the family of the Prophet ﷺ and endeavors to preserve the legacy of the Prophet ﷺ within their hearts. According to the most correct opinion within *Ahl as-Sunnah*, *Ahl al-Bayt* includes the family members of *Ali, Jafar, Aqeel, Abbas*, the children of *Harith bin Abdul Mutalib*, and the wives of the Prophet ﷺ (the mothers of the believers, may Allah be pleased with them). This inclusive understanding reflects the broader concept of *Ahl al-Bayt* within the Sunni tradition, recognizing and honoring the extended family members and wives of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

These comprehensive beliefs represent the core tenets of *Ahl as-Sunnah*, contrasting with the divergent views of their opponents. Alignment with *Ahl as-Sunnah* requires adherence to these fundamental principles and consensus views. Those in agreement, irrespective of era or place, are considered part of *Ahl as-Sunnah*.

Conversely, deviation on fundamental beliefs or consensus views results in detachment from Ahl as-Sunnah, regardless of claims of association. This is best captured in a poet's verse: "Claims unsupported by evidence are mere assertions."





Conclusion

I ask Allah to make this work of mine beneficial, to make it sincerely for His sake, and to make what Allah has taught us a proof for us on the Day of Judgment, not against us. May Allah allow us to lead a life according to Islam and the Sunnah, and to die upon Islam and the Sunnah. May blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, companions, and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.





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