
Following the understanding of the Salaf

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The following is the translation of a lecture given by the Shaykh (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹.

باب مصادر الاستدلال عند أهل السنة
الكتاب، السنة، فهم سلف الأمة، وبيان أثر التكتب
عن منهج فهم السلف في أبواب العقيدة

Chapter

Being a discussion of the sources which the Ahlus-Sunnah derive proofs from: The Book, the Sunnah, and the understanding of the Pious Predecessors of the Ummah and a clarification of the effect of deviating from the methodology of the Pious Predecessors in the affairs of Creed

“In the Name of Allaah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, all praise is for Allaah, and may the peace and praise of Allaah be upon the Messenger of Allaah, may the prayers of Allaah, the Most High, be upon him, his family, and his Companions. As for what follows:

Then verily Allaah (تعالى)² has favoured us with the blessing of faith, and has favoured the ummah with the scholars, the ones whom (الله تعالى) honoured through the knowledge He gave them so that they could illuminate the path to Allaah and to the worship of Allaah (عزوجل)³ for the people. And they are the inheritors of the Prophets without doubt. The reason for our coming here [today], [a reason] which will remain, insha’allaah, is [to seek] the Pleasure of Allaah (عزوجل) and to seek [that] knowledge which leads to it, insha’allaah.

And by Allaah, this is certainly an excellent hour that we are able to meet our Shaykh, our scholar and our great teacher, the Shaykh Muhammad Naasirud-Deen al-Albaanee, in the name of the residents of this district firstly, the Shuwaikah district, we welcome our excellent Shaykh wholeheartedly, and [we welcome him] in the name of the residents of Al-Mafraq, and especially [in the name of] its students of knowledge, who all welcome [him] too and who have been eager to meet our noble teacher today—and there is no harm in that because all of us are eager to hear the pearls of knowledge and wisdom that he possesses insha’allaah.

So let us listen to the knowledge that Allaah (تعالى) has favoured him with, then after he finishes, or after our Shaykh finishes, the door to questions will open, on the condition that they are written [for which] small pieces of paper are readily available insha’allaah. I repeat again, a pleasant hour, and welcome to our noble Shaykh.”

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ): “Welcome to you all. Indeed all praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him and seek His Aid and we seek His Forgiveness, and we seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own souls, and the evil of our actions. Whoever Allaah guides then there is none to misguide him;

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² (تعالى) Ta’aala (He, The Most High)

³ (عزوجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

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and whoever He misguides then there is none to guide him. And I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, having no partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Slave and His Messenger. And the worst of the affairs are the newly invented matters, and every newly invented matter is an innovation.

And every innovation is misguidance. And all misguidance is in the Fire.

I thank the brother, the teacher, Ibrahim for his introduction and praise, and there is nothing for me to say in response to that except that I follow the first Caliph Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنه)⁴ who was the true and first Caliph of the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)⁵ yet even so when he would hear someone praise him with good—and I believe that that praise, whatever excessiveness the one who said it [to Aboo Bakr] may have gone to, since he was the Caliph of the Prophet of Allaah then it [i.e., such praise] was true, yet despite that, and Allaah’s aid is sought, despite that he would say, “O Allaah! Do not hold me to account for what they say, and make me better than what they think, and forgive me concerning those things they do not know about.” This is what the greatest truthful one [as-Siddeeq al-Akbar] would say, so what should we who came after him say?

So I say, emulating him, “O Allaah! Do not hold me to account for what they say, and make me better than what they think, and forgive me concerning those things they do not know about.”

The truth, and the truth I say, is that I am not the one who you heard described just now by our noble brother Ibrahim.

I am only a student of knowledge. Nothing else.

And it is upon every student of knowledge to implement the saying of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “Narrate from me even if it is only one aayah, narrate from me even if it is only one aayah ... narrate from the People of Israa’eel and there is no harm ... and whoever lies upon me let him take his seat in the Hellfire.”⁶

So upon this, and to be in accordance with this noble prophetic text and the other successive texts mentioned in the Book of Allaah and the hadeeths of the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) we expend efforts to convey to the people what they may not know—but this does not mean that we have become as [described in] the good suspicions our brothers have about us, it is not like that.

The reality which I feel from the depth of my soul is that when I hear such speech [i.e., praise] I remember the old proverb, well-known among the writers, and it is, “Indeed, in our land, the bugaath has become an eagle,” “Indeed, in our land, the bugaath has become an eagle.” Maybe the meaning of this speech or this proverb will be hidden from some people. The bugaath is a small bird of no value, so this small bird becomes an eagle in the eyes of the people due to their ignorance of the strength and hugeness of the [real] eagle. So this proverb applies to many of those who, [either] with truth and correctness, or with mistakes and falsehood, call to Islaam.

But Allaah knows that the land, all the Islaamic lands, are empty of those concerning whom it is correct to say, “So and so is a scholar,” except for very, very few. As occurs in the authentic saying of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which Imaam Bukhaaree reported in his Saheeh by way of Abdullaah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas (رضي الله عنه) that he said that the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that **Allaah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the breasts of the scholars, but He takes it away by taking away**

⁴ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

⁵ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

⁶ Reported by al-Bukhaaree from the hadeeth of Abdullah ibn Amr.

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the scholars such that when no scholar remains—and here is that which proves the point—such that when no scholar remains, the people take the ignorant ones as leaders and so they are asked and they give religious verdicts without knowledge and [thus] are misguided and lead others astray too.

When Allaah intends to take away knowledge, he does not snatch it away from the breasts of the people of knowledge, such that the scholar becomes as though he had never ever learnt anything, no, this is not from the Way of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, concerning His Servants, especially His righteous servants: that He take away the knowledge they gained from their breasts, [knowledge which they gained] to seek His Pleasure, solely for His Face, the Mighty and Majestic, as you just heard what the brother Ibraaheem, may Allaah bless him, said, even if only brief, that this gathering is only for seeking knowledge.

So Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, is Just and Fair, [He] truly does not pluck away the knowledge from the breasts of the people of knowledge. But Allaah’s established Way is that He takes away the knowledge by taking the [souls of the] scholars, as He did with the Master of the scholars, Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) such that when there is no scholar left, the people take the ignorant ones as leaders who are then asked and who give religious verdicts without knowledge, so they are misguided and misguide others.

This does not mean that Allaah (عز وجل) will leave the earth devoid of any scholars who will establish the proof of Allaah against His servants, rather it means that the further we go in time, the less knowledge there will be, and [that] the further [we go in time] the more it will decrease and the more deficient it will become until there will not remain on the face of the earth anyone who will say, “Allaah, Allaah.”

You hear this hadeeth many times, and it is an authentic one, **“The Hour will not be established when there is someone on the face of the earth saying, ‘Allaah, Allaah.’”**⁷ “... someone saying, ‘Allaah, Allaah.’” And many are the likes of those mentioned at the end of the earlier hadeeth, [the hadeeth stating that] Allaah’s taking away of knowledge is by taking away the scholars, until when no scholar remains the people take the ignorant ones as leaders, from these leaders are those who interpret the Qur’aan and the Sunnah with an interpretation which opposes what the scholars were upon, and I don’t say [that it opposes] only [what the] Salaf were upon, rather [that it also opposes what] those who came later [the khalaf] were upon too.

For they use this hadeeth, **“Allaah, Allaah ...”** to prove the permissibility, the recommendation even, to remember Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, with this word alone, **“Allaah, Allaah ...”**

[And so] that a person is not deceived and that an ignorant one does not act ignorantly upon hearing this hadeeth based upon such misinterpretations, I see it fit that I should remind our brothers present here, even if only in passing, that this interpretation is invalid.

Firstly, due to the fact that it is elucidated in another narration from the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Secondly, since if this interpretation were correct, our Pious Predecessors [Salaf as-Saalih], may Allaah be pleased with them all, would have acted upon it [in that manner], so when they did not do so, then their turning away from acting upon it based on this interpretation proves its falsehood.

So what do you think if the other narration is added to this, that Imaam Ahmad, may Allaah have mercy upon him, reported this hadeeth in his Musnad⁸ with an authentic chain of narration with the

⁷ Reported by Muslim no.392

⁸ Musnad of Imaam Ahmad[3/201, no. 13104]

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wording, **“The Hour will not be established when on the face of the earth there is someone who says, ‘Laa ilaaha illallaah.’** So this is what is meant by Allaah’s Name which was repeated, repeated in the first narration.

The point is that today the earth, most regrettably, is void of those scholars who used to fill this wide, expansive earth with their knowledge which they would spread between the ranks of their nation, so today they have become, as is said:

“And they were, when counted, few in number
So today they have become the fewest of the few.”

So we hope that Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, makes us students of knowledge who truly adopt the same course as the scholars and who truthfully follow their path. This is what we hope for from Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, that He makes us from those students who follow that way about which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, **“Whoever treads a path seeking knowledge thereby, Allaah will make easy for him the path to Paradise.”**⁹

And this opens the door for me to speak about this knowledge which is mentioned many times, very many times, in the Qur’aan, as in His Saying, the Most High, **“Are those who know equal to those who do not know?”**¹⁰, and His Saying, the Mighty and Majestic, **“Allaah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees,”**¹¹ What is this knowledge whose people Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, praised along with those who follow it and those who follow their path?

The answer is as Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ), the student of the Shaykh of Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ), said:

“Knowledge is, “Allaah said ... His Messenger said ...
The Companions said ...” and it is not hidden

Knowledge is not your raising up a dispute foolishly
Between the Messenger and the opinion of a faqeeh,

Never! And nor is it the denial of the Attributes or the negation of them whilst trying to be cautious in avoiding tamtheel [holding that Allaah has equals from His creation in all aspects] and tashbeeh [holding that Allaah has equals in some aspects].”

So we take from these words, from this poetry which we rarely hear from the speech of the poets, since the poetry of the scholars differs from that of the poets, and this is a man of knowledge who is also good at poetry, and he is saying that knowledge is, “Allaah said,” at the first level, and the second is, “The Prophet of Allaah said,” and the third level is, “The Companions said.”

During this pleasant evening gathering [which is] blessed insha’allaah, I will make my speech about [the fact that] these words of Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) remind us of an extremely important reality which the majority of the callers to Islaam spread-out [in the world] today [and who call] in the name of Islaam, are ignorant of.

This reality, what is it?

⁹ Reported by Muslim [no. 7028].

¹⁰ surah Zumar 39:9

¹¹ surah Mujaadilah 58:11

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What is well-known amongst all of these callers is that Islaam is only the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of Allaah's Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and this is true, there being no doubt about it, but it is [still] deficient. This deficiency is what Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) pointed to in his previous poetry where after the Book and the Sunnah he mentioned the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)¹². [So] knowledge is: Allaah said, His Prophet said, the Companions said ... and so on.

Nowadays it is very rare that we hear anyone mention the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) along with the Book and the Sunnah, and they all, as we know, are the Leaders of the Pious Predecessors, about whom it has been narrated in mutawaatir form from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he said, **"The best of the people is my generation ..."** and do not say as the majority of people from the callers do, **"The best of generations ..."** [since this wording] **"The best of generations ..."** has no basis in the Sunnah. The authentic Sunnah in the two Saheehs and other than them from the references of hadeeth and the Sunnah are absolute in reporting the hadeeth with the wording, **"The best of the people is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."**

Imaan Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) included these Companions (رضي الله عنهم)—who are at the head of the three generations which have been given the testimony of goodness—with the Book and the Sunnah. So was this inclusion on his part [based upon] an opinion, independent judgement [ijtihad], or a deduction which is possible could be mistaken, since [as is said], 'Every thoroughbred stumbles [once], if I might say, [stumbles] many times? [Transl. note i.e., every scholar, no matter what his status, will make a mistake]. The answer is no, this is not a deduction and nor independent judgement which is possible can be mistaken, it is, in fact, compliance with the Book of Allaah and the saying of the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم). As for the Book, then it is the saying of our Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, in the Noble Qur'aan, **"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the Believers ..."**¹³ **"... and follows other than the way of the Believers ..."** our Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, did not limit in this aayah—and if He did it [still] would have been true [i.e., whatever He says is true]—He didn't [limit Himself] by saying, **"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him we shall keep him in the path he has chosen."**

Rather He said out of perfect and extensive wisdom which is what we are in the process of explaining and clarifying right now, He said, **"... and follows other than the way of the Believers ..."** [He said], **"And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the Believers we shall keep him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell—and evil it is as a destination."**

I'd like you to keep this aayah firmly in your minds and hearts and [I'd like that] you do not let it go, for it is the truth just as sure as it is that you can speak, and with that you will be saved from deviating towards the left or right and [you will be saved]—even if only in a single matter or single issue—from being from a group other than the Saved Sect, or the misguided sects, because the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in the well-known hadeeth, and I will restrict myself now to just mentioning the point of proof from it,

"And my nation will split into seventy three groups, all of them will be in the Fire except one." They said, "Which [group] is it, O Messenger of Allaah?" He said, "It is the Jamaa'ah."¹⁴ The Jamaa'ah is the path of the believers. So the hadeeth, even if it isn't a direct revelation [revealed like the Qur'aan] from Allaah to the heart of His Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then nevertheless it is an extraction from the previous aayah, **"... and follows other than the way of the Believers ..."**

¹² (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

¹³ Soorah Nisaa [4:115]

¹⁴ Saheeh al-Jaami, 2042

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So when the one who contradicts and opposes the Messenger and follows other than the way of the Believers has been threatened with the Fire, then the converse is also true: that whoever does follow the path of the Believers has been promised Paradise without any doubt or uncertainty.

Thus, when the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) answered the question, “What is the Saved Sect? Who are they?” He said, “**The Jamaa’ah,**” so the Jamaa’ah is the group of Muslims, and then there is another narration which confirms this meaning, rather, increases upon this one in explanation and clarity, where he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said “**It is what I and my Companions are upon.**” “**My Companions ...**” so this is the path of the Believers.

So when Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said in his previously quoted poetry, “The Companions said ...” then he extracted that solely from the previous aayah and this hadeeth. Likewise the well-known hadeeth, the hadeeth of Irbaad ibn Saariyyah (رضي الله عنه) [concerning] which I will also restrict myself to mentioning that part which proves the point so that there will be an opportunity for questions, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “**So upon you is [to follow] my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me.**”

Therefore, here, as was the case with the hadeeth before it and the previous aayah, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) didn’t say, “Upon you is to follow my Sunnah only,” rather in addition to [following] his Sunnah, he added [the necessity of] following the rightly guided Caliphs. And from here we say, especially in this day and age, a time in which opinions, thinking and groups are in conflict [with each other], and where the sects and groups have become numerous such that many of the Muslim youth live in a state of bewilderment, not knowing which group to join—it is here that the answer comes in the aayah and the two aforementioned sayings of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Follow the path of the Believers: the path of the believers of this day and age? The answer is no, rather those of the past era, the first era, that of the Companions, the Pious Predecessors, it is fitting that these are the ones who are our example and the ones we follow—and no one else on the face of the earth, whatsoever.

Thus, our call, and here is the point of proof, is based upon three foundations: the Book, the Sunnah and following the Pious Predecessors. So whoever thinks that he follows the Book and the Sunnah and does not follow the Pious Predecessors and [along with this] his unspoken condition says, and perhaps he [even] says it verbally, that, “They [i.e., the Salaf], were men, and we [too] are men,” then he will be in deviation and misguidance. Why? Because he has not acted upon these texts which I just read out to you.

Did he follow the path of the Believers? No.

Did he follow the path of the Companions of the Noble Prophet? No.

What did he follow? He followed, if not his desires, then [at the very least] he has followed his intellect. And is the intellect infallible? The answer is no. So he has gone plainly astray.

I believe that the cause for the great conflict inherited in these well-known groups of old, and that new conflict which arises today is the lack of returning to this third source: the Pious Predecessors.

Because everyone claims affiliation to the Book and the Sunnah, and for so long we’ve heard the bewildered youth say statements such as, “O my brother, these people say, ‘The Book and the Sunnah.’ And those people [also] say, ‘The Book and the Sunnah.’ What is the determining judgement?” [It is] the Book, the Sunnah and the methodology of the Pious Predecessors. So whoever relies upon the Book and the Sunnah without relying upon the Pious Predecessors then he

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has not relied upon the Book and the Sunnah, but has rather relied upon his intellect, if not his desires.

It is from my habits that I coin some examples to clarify this issue, this crucial fundamental principle in fact, concerning the methodology of the Pious Predecessors. There is a saying that is reported from Al-Faarooq, Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنهم) that he said, "When the people of desires and innovations debate with you using the Qur'aan, then debate with them using the Sunnah, for the Qur'aan can be interpreted in many different ways." For what, why did Umar (رضي الله عنهم) say this sentence?

I say: [he did so] due to the fact that Allaah (عز وجل) said, addressing his Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in the Qur'aan, "**And We sent down unto you the Reminder [i.e., the Qur'aan] that you may explain clearly to the people what was sent down to them,**"¹⁵ So what do you say? Do you think that an Arab Muslim, let's say as it were, he is the Seebawayhee [i.e., the famous master grammarian] of his time in being acquainted with the Arabic language, its literature, and its expression, can he understand the Qur'aan through a path other than that of our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)? The answer is no, since if not then His Saying, the Most High, i.e., "...that you may explain clearly to the people what was sent down to them," would be in vain. And far be it that the Speech of Allaah contains anything vain whatsoever.

So, whoever wants to understand the Qur'aan by other than the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then he has indeed strayed far away. Thereafter, is it possible for that man to understand the Qur'aan and the Sunnah by other than the way of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (Compilers Note: I think this is a slip of the tongue on behalf of the Shaykh, may Allaah have mercy on him, and I think what he meant to say was, "other than the way of the Companions," may Allaah be pleased with them all) the answer here also is no, [and] that is because they are the ones who:

Firstly: Transmitted the wording of the Qur'aan to us which Allaah revealed to the heart of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Secondly: Conveyed his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explanation to us which was mentioned in the previous aayah, and [they also conveyed] his implementation (صلى الله عليه وسلم) of this Noble Qur'aan. And here I have to make a point, which I hope will be brief.

The Prophet's, (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explanation is of three types:

- 1 Verbal
- 2 Action
- 3 His consent

His verbal [explanations], who conveyed them [to us]? His Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

His [explanations in the form of] actions, who conveyed them [to us]? His Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

His [explanations in the form of his] consent, who conveyed it [to us]? His Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

Due to this, it is not possible for us to restrict ourselves to understanding the Book and the Sunnah based upon our linguistic capabilities alone, rather we have to seek help in that. [Yet at the same time] this does not mean that we can dispense with the language, no.

For this reason we believe that those foreigners who have not mastered the Arabic language have fallen into many, many mistakes. Especially when they fall into this mistake [which is connected to]

¹⁵ Soorah Nahl [16:44]

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the fundamental principles: and that is their lack of returning to the Pious Predecessors in understanding the Book and the Sunnah.

I do not mean by what I have just said that we do not rely upon the language. How so? When we want to understand the speech of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) then we must understand the Arabic language just as we must be acquainted with it to understand the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. But we say: the explanation of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which has been mentioned in the aforementioned aayah is split into three categories:

- 1 Speech/verbal
- 2 Actions/non-verbal
- 3 Silent approval

Let us give an example or more in order to grasp that this classification is a reality which none can deny. His Saying, the Blessed and Most High, “[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands ...”¹⁶ Look now at how we cannot rely solely on the language when explaining the Qur'aan [since] linguistically a thief is anybody who steals some wealth from a secure place, whatever this wealth is, it can have no value, [maybe] he stole an egg, for example, a penny or five, linguistically such a person is called a thief. He said, “[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands ...” does everyone who steals have their hand amputated? The answer is no. Why? Because the one who explains and who was charged with explaining—the one who explains is the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and the thing being explained is the Speech of Allaah—the Prophet explained to us whose hands from the male and female thief is to be cut off, “It is not cut off except for a quarter of a deenaar and upwards.”¹⁷

So whoever steals less than a quarter of a deenaar, then even though linguistically he is called a thief, he is not named as such in the Sharee'ah.

So from here we come to a knowledge-based reality which many of the students of knowledge are heedless of: [which is that] there is [on one hand] a traditional Arabic language and [on the other] there is a Sharee'ah language, [and] Allaah is the One who laid it down. The Arabs who speak the language of the Qur'aan, the language in which the Qur'aan was revealed, did not know such [Sharee'ah] usage before it. So when the [term] thief is used linguistically, it includes all thieves, but when it is mentioned in the legislative sense, then it does not include every thief, but only those who have stolen a quarter of a deenaar or more.

Thus, this is an actual example showing us that we cannot restrict ourselves to our acquaintance with the Arabic language when understanding the Book and the Sunnah. And this is something which many of the authors of today fall into, they invest their knowledge of the Arabic language with authority over the noble aayahs and the prophetic sayings explaining them [based upon this], and thus they come with an innovated explanation which the Muslims before them did not know. For this reason we say that it is obligatory to understand that the true call of Islaam is based upon three principles, on three fundamentals:

- 1 The Book
- 2 The Sunnah
- 3 What the Pious Predecessors were upon

¹⁶ surah Maa'idah 5:38

¹⁷ Reported by Saheeh Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim [no. 4494] by way of Aboo Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Hazm from Amrah from A'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her.

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Thus the aayah, “[As for] the thief, the male and the female ...,” is not explained according to the language, but rather in conformity with the language of the Sharee’ah which said that, “It is not cut off except for a quarter of a deenaar and upwards.”

Then at the end of the aayah, He said, “... amputate their hands ...” what is a hand linguistically? All of this is a hand, from the fingertips to ... so is it amputated from here or from here or from here? The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explained this through his actions, we do not have an authentic saying [from him] as there was regarding the definition of the theft for which the hand of the thief deserves to be cut off, we do not have a hadeeth defining the place that is to be amputated from his verbal explanations. We only have his actual, practical, applied [non-verbal, physical] explanation. Where did we get this practical implementation from? From our Pious Predecessors, the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

This is the second category, the physical [non-verbal] explanation.

The Third Category: The Prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) approval for something: he doesn’t reject or forbid it, this approval is not a saying from him, [i.e., is not verbal], and neither is it an action which he carried out, rather this action was performed by someone else, everything which he saw and acknowledged ... so when he saw something and remained silent and agreed to it, then this thing became an established, permissible matter. And when he saw something and rejected it, even if some of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) did that thing but it has been established that the Prophet forbade it, then this thing which he forbade differs totally from that which he approved.

And here are two examples for both of these issues, and this is from the hadeeth not commonly known to the students of knowledge: Abdullaah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) said, “We used to drink and eat while standing, and we would eat while walking in the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).” In this hadeeth Abdullaah (رضي الله عنه) spoke about two matters:

- 1 About drinking while standing
- 2 And about eating while walking

And [he mentioned] that this was something which occurred during the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), so what is the legislative ruling regarding these two matters, i.e., drinking while standing and eating while walking? When we apply what we previously said, we are able to come to a ruling, naturally, whilst bearing in mind an inescapable addition which is that: whoever has knowledge regarding what the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was upon [whether it is a] saying, an action or a tacit approval ... so when we refer back to the authentic Sunnah concerning that which is connected to the first issue which many Muslims have been afflicted with if not most of them and [in which] they have opposed the saying of the noble Prophet, [this issue being] drinking while standing, they used to drink while standing, they used to wear gold, they used to wear silk, these are realities which it is not possible to deny, but did the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) approve of that?

The answer is that he rejected some things and approved of others. So whatever he disapproved of falls under the definition of being something rejected, and whatever he approved of falls under the category of being something known. So he rejected drinking while standing in many hadeeths, and I do not want to go into mentioning them here so that we do not leave, firstly, that which we planned for ourselves [about] summarizing the speech in this topic so as to make way for questions, and secondly, that this issue alone requires a separate sitting to deal with it.

But it is sufficient for me to report one authentic hadeeth to you which Imaam Muslim (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) relates in his Saheeh, [and it is] from the hadeeths reported from Anas ibn Maalik (رضي الله عنه) that he said, “The Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade us from drinking while standing,” and in another

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wording, “The Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prevented/deterred [us from] drinking while standing,” Thus, this thing [i.e., drinking while standing] which, according to the [above] hadeeth of Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه), was done in the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), [but then] he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade it, and so that which they used to do [i.e., drinking while standing] became something overruled/annulled, due to the Prophet forbidding it. But the second part of the hadeeth, i.e., that they would eat while walking, no forbiddance of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning it has been reported to us, and so we can deduce a legislative ruling from this tacit approval.

I will suffice with this for now in clarifying the necessity of relying upon the understanding of the Pious Predecessors when understanding the Book and the Sunnah, and that a person does not restrict himself to understanding the Book and the Sunnah according to whatever seems to be correct to him according to his [own] knowledge, if I don't say, his ignorance.

But so that the importance of this check, i.e., ‘... upon the methodology of the Pious Predecessors...’ be understood, I must mention some examples to you.

From a long time ago the Muslims split up into many groups. You hear of the Mu'tazilah, the Murji'ah, the Khawaarij, you hear of the Zaidiyyah let alone the Raafidee Shi'ites, and so on. However deeply-rooted in misguidance these groups are, you will not find any of them not sharing with all of the Muslims in their saying that, “We are on the Book and the Sunnah.’ None of them will say, “We do not embrace the Book and the Sunnah,” since if not, if one of them were to say this, he would have left Islaam totally. So, why then is there this difference when all of them rely on the Book and the Sunnah? And I bear witness that they rely on the Book and the Sunnah, but how is this reliance? [It is a reliance] without the third principle, “... on the understanding of the Pious Predecessors.”

Along with another addition which must be pointed to, which is that the Sunnah differs totally from the Noble Qur'aan in that the Noble Qur'aan is preserved between its two covers as is known by everybody. As for the Sunnah then it:

Firstly: is spread out over hundreds of books, if I don't say thousands of books, from them is a very large portion which is still in the world of the unseen, the world of manuscripts.

Thereafter, even those books which are in print today contain that which is authentic and that which is weak. So those who rely on the Sunnah, whether it be those who associate themselves to Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and the methodology of the Pious Predecessors, or those from the other groups, many of these [are people who] cannot distinguish the authentic Sunnah from the weak and thus they fall into that which contravenes the Book and the Sunnah, due to their relying on weak or fabricated hadeeths.

The proof is that there are some groups of old and those of today which we pointed to that reject certain Qur'aanic realities and prophetic sayings. [For example] the Noble Qur'aan confirms and gives glad tidings to the believers of an extremely great blessing which they will be honoured with when they meet Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, in the Garden of Pleasure—wherein the Lord of all the worlds will appear to them and so they will see Him, as that Salafi scholar said:

“The Believers will see Him without asking ‘How?’ [And without] tashbeeh and nor coining any similtudes [for Him].”

There are texts from the Qur'aan and tens of sayings of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning this, so how could some of the old and present day groups deny this blessing? As for the old groups: the

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Mu'tazilah, today there is not found, as far as I know, anyone on the face of the earth who says, "We are Mu'tazilah, we are on the madhhab of the Mu'tazilah."

But I did see a stupid man, proclaiming that he was a Mu'tazilee and who strenuously denied legislated [Sharee'ah] realities, [and this was] because he had made his intellect his judge.

So these Mu'tazilah denied this blessing and said, based upon their weak intellect, they said, "It is impossible that Allaah (عزوجل) be seen." So what did they do? Did they reject the Qur'aan? In the Noble Qur'aan, Allaah says, "[Some] faces that Day, will be radiant. Looking at their Lord."¹⁸ Did they reject this aayah? No. If they had rejected it they would have disbelieved and committed apostasy. But to this day, Ahlus-Sunnah judge that the Mu'tazilah are misguided but they do not throw them out of the fold of Islaam, because they did not reject this aayah, rather they rejected its true meaning which has come in the Sunnah as we shall mention.

So when Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, said about the Believers, the people of Paradise, "[Some] faces that Day, will be radiant. Looking at their Lord," they resorted to trickery, believing in its wording but disbelieving in its meaning, and the wording, as the scholars say, is the mould from which the meaning is taken. So if we believe in the wording but disbelieve/reject the meaning, then this faith does not nourish nor avail against hunger [i.e., does not benefit]. But why is it that these [people] rejected this seeing?

[They did so because] it was too difficult for their intellects to perceive and envisage that it can be possible for this feeble, created servant to openly see Allaah (عزوجل) as [happened with] the Jews when they made [that] request of Moosaa, so Allaah (عزوجل) told them that they were incapable of that in the famous story, "... look at the mountain, if it should remain in place, then you will see Me."¹⁹ Their intellects were not able to comprehend this, so they were forced to play around with the Qur'aanic text and to misinterpret it. Why?

Because their faith in the Unseen was weak and their faith in their [own] intellects was stronger than their faith in the Unseen which they were ordered with at the beginning of Soorah al-Baqarah, "Alif. Laam. Meem. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allaah. Those who believe in the Unseen ..." ²⁰ So Allaah is the most unseen of all the unseen, thus it is upon us to attest to the truthfulness of and to believe in whatever our Lord says about Himself, for our senses are very limited.

The Mu'tazilah never acknowledged this reality and for this reason they denied many facts from the Sharee'ah, from them is His Saying, the Blessed and Most High, "[Some] faces that Day, will be radiant. Looking at their Lord," likewise the other aayah, which maybe lighter as regards those people than the first one, and it is His Saying, the Mighty and Majestic, "For those who have done good is the best [reward], and extra ..." ²¹ "For those who have done good is the best [reward] ..." i.e., Paradise, "... and extra ..." i.e., seeing Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, in the Hereafter, as occurs in the hadeeth reported in Saheeh Muslim with an authentic chain of narration from Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas (رضي الله عنه), who said, "The Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "For those who have done good is the best [reward] ..." 'Paradise,' "... and extra ..." 'Seeing Allaah.'"

The Mu'tazilah—as did the Shi'ites, and they are Mu'tazilah in creed, the Shi'ites are Mu'tazilah in creed—they rejected [the fact] that Allaah will be seen, [something which was] openly declared in the first aayah and which was explained by the Prophet of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning the other

¹⁸ Soorah Qiyaamah 75:22-23

¹⁹ Soorah A'raaf 7:143

²⁰ Soorah Baqarah 2:1-3

²¹ Soorah Yoonus 10:26

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aayah, along with the fact that the hadeeths from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in this regard have reached the level of being mutawaatir.

So their misinterpretation of the Qur'aan caused them to fall into rejecting the authentic hadeeths from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) so they left [the possibility of them] being the Saved Sect, **“That which I and my Companions are upon.”** The Prophet was upon the belief that the believers will see their Lord, because it has been reported in the two Saheehs from the hadeeth of a group of the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) from them: Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree, Anas ibn Maalik, and in other than the Saheeh from Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنهم) and so on, [that] he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

“You shall certainly see your Lord on the Day of Resurrection as you see the moon on the night of the full moon, and you will have no difficulty or trouble in seeing Him.” [There are] two narrations, one reporting [the Arabic word which occurs in the hadeeth and whose meaning is], **“... and you will have no difficulty or trouble in seeing Him ...”** with a shaddah and the other without.

The meaning is that you will not doubt seeing Him just as you do not doubt seeing the moon on the night of the full moon when there are no clouds.

They rejected these hadeeths based upon their intellects, thus they did not submit and believe, and as a result they were weak in faith. This is an example of what some of the groups of the past fell into.

And upon this today are the Khawaarij, and from them the Ibaadiyyah who have now become active in calling to their misguidance. And they have articles and books which they distribute, and they are reviving the rebellion which the Khawaarij of old were known for in many of their deviations, from which is their denial that Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, will be seen in Paradise.

Now we will bring you a modern-day example: the Qadyianees. Maybe you have heard of them, they say the same as we do: we bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the Messenger of Allaah [and so do they], they pray the five prayers, establish the Jumu'ah, perform the pilgrimage [Hajj] to the Sacred Sanctuary, and they perform the lesser pilgrimage [Umrah], there is no difference between us and them as Muslims.

But they differ with us in many issues of creed—and here is the point of proof—they say that the door to Prophethood has not yet been closed, they say that messengers after Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will come, and they believe that one of them came to Qadiyan in a town in India, and that whoever does not believe in this prophet who was with them is a disbeliever. How did they say this when there is the clear aayah, **“But he is the Messenger of Allaah and the Seal of the Prophets ...?”**²² How did they say this when there are mutawaatir hadeeths that, **“There is no prophet after me?”**²³

So they misinterpreted the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and did not explain them as the Pious Predecessors explained them, [an explanation] which the Muslims followed one another in, in succession, without any difference between them, until this aberrant, misguided one came alone, called Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadyanee, so he claimed to be a prophet, and his is a long story which we are not now in the middle of explaining. So many people were fooled by him from those who had no knowledge of this reality [i.e., taking the understanding of the Pious Predecessors] which is a protection for the Muslim from deviating to the right or left as these Qadyianees did with this Dajjaal of theirs who claimed Prophethood.

²² Soorah Ahzaab 33:40

²³ Saheeh Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

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What did he do with the aayah, “**But he is the Messenger of Allaah and the Seal of the Prophets ...**”? They said, “The Seal of the Prophets doesn’t mean that there is no prophet after him. It means that he is the adornment of the Prophets, just as a ring is the adornment of the fingers, in the same way, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the adornment of the Prophets.” So they did not disbelieve in the aayah, they didn’t say, “Allaah did not reveal this to the heart of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).” But they disbelieved in its true meaning. Thus, what benefit is there in believing in the wording without believing in the true meaning? And when this is the reality in which there is no doubt, what is the path to attaining the true meanings of the Book and the Sunnah?

You have come to know the path [now]: it is not that we rely on our knowledge of the [Arabic] language or its literature and [nor that] we explain the Qur’aan and the Sunnah with our desires or our habits or our customs or our schools of thought or our ways, it is only as was said, and I will end the talk with this quote:

“All good is in following the Salaf, and all evil is in the innovations of those who came later [khalaf].”

Maybe in this there is a reminder for whoever has a heart or who listens while he is present [in mind].”²⁴

²⁴ Mawsoo’atul-Allaamah, al-Imaam, Mujaddidil-Asr, Muhammad Naasirid-Deen al-Albaanee, of Shaykh Shady Noaman, vol. 1, pp. 212-230.