

Adherence to the Prophet's Sunnah and Its effects

Written by His Eminence Shaykh, the erudite scholar

Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Foreword

Praise be to Allah, and may the peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

We are pleased - and I believe that you are too - to meet on this blessed night with a great scholar who has devoted much of his effort and time to serving knowledge and its seekers, pursuing nothing but the reward and pleasure of the Almighty Lord. He is the Eminent Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn, member of the Council of Senior Scholars, Imām and Preacher of the Grand Mosque of 'Unayzah, and Professor at Imām Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Al-Qasīm branch. We thank him dearly for accepting the invitation of the committee of the first Festival of Madīnah to attend and deliver a lecture on "Adherence to the Prophet's Sunnah and Its Effects" on the campus of this great university, the Islamic University in Madīnah, which is co-hosting this lecture along with the cultural committee of the first Festival of Madīnah.

It gives me pleasure to invite His Eminence Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn to deliver his lecture and kindly answer the written questions after the lecture. May Allah benefit Islam and Muslims with his knowledge.

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Adherence to the Prophet's Sunnah and its Effects

Praise be to Allah; we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no true god but Allah, alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger; Allah sent him with guidance and the religion of truth. He delivered the message, fulfilled the trust, advised the Ummah, and duly strove for the sake of Allah. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them rightly until the Day of Judgment. On this night; the night of Thursday, the 9th of Rajab of the year 1419 Hijri, I am pleased to meet with my brethren, the people of Madīnah - the people of Taybah - in the lecture hall at the Islamic University. I ask Allah Almighty to make this gathering a blessed and beneficial one.

Our lecture, as you have heard, is about the effects of adhering to the Prophet's Sunnah. The Sunnah is the partner of the Qur'an in its being an argument established against people, and they are obligated to act upon the Sunnah just as they are obligated to act upon the Qur'an.

The Sunnah is any statement, action, or tacit approval that is authentically reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Adhering to it is as obligatory as adhering to the Qur'an. However, he who cites the Qur'an as evidence for a certain view or ruling needs to look into one thing, but the one who cites the Sunnah as evidence needs to look into two things.

When a person cites the Qur'an as evidence, he needs to look into the meaning of the text and its indication of the ruling for which he seeks proof. Undoubtedly, people differ greatly in this respect, according to their levels of knowledge and understanding.

People differ in their understanding of the indications of the Qur'an according to their level of knowledge, comprehension, belief in Allah Almighty, and the extent to which they honor His sanctities.

As to the person who derives evidence from the Sunnah, he needs to look into two things:

First: the authenticity of the Hadīth at hand, because many weak and fabricated reports that have found their way into the Sunnah. Hence, one needs to ascertain a Hadīth before using it as proof.

It is for this reason that the scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them) authored books about Hadīth narrators and terminology in a bid to separate the sound narrations from the unsound ones.

Second: just like in the case of using Qur'an as evidence, the one who uses Sunnah as evidence needs to look into the indication of the text and how it serves as proof for the relevant ruling, and people differ greatly in this regard. Addressing His Prophet, Allah Almighty says:

{And Allah has revealed to you the Book and wisdom}

[Al-Nisā': 113]

Many scholars interpreted 'wisdom' in the verse to mean the Sunnah.

Allah Almighty commanded to obey Him and obey His Messenger, saying:

{O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger}

[Al-Nisā': 59]

The command to obey the Messenger entails that his Sunnah should be treated as legitimate proof that must be acted upon.

Allah Almighty says:

{And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger - then indeed, for him is the fire of Hell; they will abide therein forever}

[Al-Jinn: 23]

This confirmed warning against those who disobey the Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is a proof that his Sunnah is binding authority just like the Qur'an.

Allah Almighty says:{And whatever the Messenger has given you - take it; and whatever he has forbidden you - refrain from it}[Al-Hashr: 7]This verse was revealed in connection with the distribution of the spoils of war, which was done according to the Prophet's discretion; hence, if we are required to accept his ruling in this regard, then we are more so when it comes to the rulings of Shariah.Allah Almighty says:{There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often}[Al-Ahzāb: 21]Following the Prophet's example includes what he did according to the Qur'an and what he did as part of his Sunnah.In the Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) declared it:"The best speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad."He urged his followers to adhere to his Sunnah, saying:"Adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs after me. Cling to it firmly."

This same meaning occurs in many other texts.

Loss and disappointment befall such a person who says that "we should only apply what is in the Qur'an". Such a statement is also self-contradictory.The Qur'an itself states that we are required to follow the Prophet's Sunnah. So, if that person is truthful, he must accept the rulings laid down in the Sunnah.The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) referred to this type of people in the following Hadīth:"Let no one of you recline on his couch and say when he receives any ruling or commandment from me: 'We do not know! We only follow what is in the Book of Allah.' Indeed, I have been given the Book and the like of it with it."Moreover, many of the general verses are only explained in the Sunnah. So, if we say that the Sunnah should not be followed, the general proofs will thus be inapplicable, which is extremely dangerous.Hence, we say that the Prophet's Sunnah is like the Qur'an as to the obligation to act upon it according to what the proof denotes of obligation, desirability, permissibility, dislike, or prohibition.The righteous predecessors adhered to the Prophet's Sunnah, neither detracting from it nor going beyond it.Whenever they received a command from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), they would act upon it as they would act upon a command from Allah Almighty.Whenever the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) gave any command, the Companions would not ask whether this was obligatory or recommended; they would only comply.Unfortunately, some people, upon hearing a Prophetic command, would ask: Is it an obligation or recommended? How come! How could we ask such a questions,whereas Allah Almighty says: {O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among

you}[Al-Nisā': 59]?Do as you are commanded. If it is an obligation, you will have discharged it; and if it is a recommended thing, you will have gained the reward.

No one can provide an authentic report stating that the Companions would inquire as to whether any command that the Prophet had given to them was obligatory or recommended.

Yes, if the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) gave counsel to them, they might make such an inquiry in that case. An example is the Hadīth about Barīrah, a female slave that had been married to a man called Mughīth. 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) set her free, after which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) gave her the choice to stay with her husband or separate from him. She chose separation, but her husband clung onto her. He kept following her in the markets of Madīnah, weeping and hoping that she would come back to him, but she refused. Then the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) gave her counsel to return to her husband, Mughīth. Thereupon, she said: "O Messenger of Allah, if you are giving me an order, then I hear and obey. But if you are giving me advice, I have no desire for him."

In such a situation, the question may be asked, for if it were a command, she would have complied. But since it was only advice, she had the choice to accept or refuse.

The point is that I advise my brothers, the seekers of knowledge, not to ask questions when they are faced with a command from Allah and His Messenger. Allah Almighty says: {The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, "We hear and we obey."}[Al-Nūr: 51] Allah Almighty also says: {It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair}[Al-Ahzāb: 36] If someone engages in some violation, he may then ask whether this matter is an obligation, in which case he would be required to repent because leaving out an obligation is a sin, or whether it is a recommended thing, which would make it easier upon him. Otherwise, one should open his heart to the commands of Allah and His Messenger, saying {We hear and we obey} [Al-Nūr: 51] and act accordingly. This is what a person who wishes to comply with the commands of Allah Almighty and His Messenger should do.

It is essential for a person to understand the meanings of the texts, the requirements of the Shar'i facts, and the applicable evidence, lest he errs and goes astray. Some people are keen to follow the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but they do what they believe to be correct while it is not. There are many examples of this.

For instance, some people raise their hands as they rise from the first Tashahhud in prayer while still sitting. They mistakenly believe that this is the correct Sunnah, but it is not. According to the correct Sunnah in this regard, a person should not raise his hands until he stands up, as related in a Hadīth reported by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father). As another example, some people take the statement of the Companions "We used to stand ankle to ankle and shoulder to shoulder" to mean that in prayer each person should spread out his legs so that the ankles of the worshipers would all be touching, which is not the case. Rather, the Companions' statement means that they used to line up and straighten their rows by keeping their ankles in one line and thus no one would be ahead of or behind the row. If they used to keep their legs well apart, they would have said it explicitly. Obviously, if every person in a row expanded the distance between his legs, people's shoulders would not be touching.

The bottom line is that it is crucial that we understand the meaning of texts.

Let it also be known that adherence to the Sunnah has praiseworthy effects:

They include the following: that a person knows that he has taken a leader to follow, namely the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and thus love for the Prophet will develop in his heart. As an example, let's say that two persons performed ablution according to the Sunnah. However, one of them was conscious that he was following the Prophet's example as if he were looking at him while making ablution. The other was heedless of this. Hence, the former felt the effect on his heart more than the latter. This is because the latter made ablution in a state of heedlessness, while the former was conscious that he was taking the Prophet as an example and heeding his statement: "Whoever performs ablution similar to this ablution of mine and then he prayed two Rak'ahs

in which he did not let his thoughts wander, his previous sins will be forgiven."The same occurs in prayer. Many Muslims who are keen to abide by the Prophet's Sunnah - praise be to Allah - offer their prayers according to the Sunnah, yet they do not bear in mind that they are following the Prophet's example in every movement and statement. This is heedlessness. But if the worshiper, while praying, is conscious that he is following the Prophet's example, as if he is looking at him while praying, this will have a profound impact on his heart. Also, let it be known that one of the effects of adhering to the Sunnah is that a person rejects religious innovations, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The best of speech is the Book of Allah, and the best of guidance is that of Muhammad, and the most evil of matters are innovations in religion." He put innovations in religion in contrast with the Sunnah. So, the more a person adheres to the Sunnah, the farther he will be from innovations in religion and the more prone to rejecting them. It will not be possible for him to worship Allah except with what Allah has legislated, because he is a follower of the Sunnah. This is a great effect indeed; that he shuns innovations in religion because he adheres to the Sunnah.

Shunning innovations in religion and loathing them is a favor that Allah Almighty bestows upon His servants. Shunning them is like shunning polytheism because all acts of worship are not perfected without sincere intention that is devoid of polytheism and pure adherence to the Sunnah that is devoid of innovation.

Another benefit and praised effect is that an adherent to the Sunnah becomes a role model and an example for others to follow and no one can find fault with him, because when a person imitates one of the Imāms of Muslims, some may find fault with him and ask him to bring forth evidence for the legitimacy of what he does. But people cannot do that with an adherent to the Sunnah. If they do, he will reply: This is what the Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said or did; so he is inside the protected fortress of the Sunnah. Another praised effect is that a follower of the Sunnah acquires some of the morals and manners of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Indeed, the Prophet was sent to perfect good noble manners, and Allah Almighty gave him the most noble manners. If a person adheres to his Sunnah, he will have praiseworthy manners, which will bring him closer to his Lord. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The believers with the most perfect faith are those with the best manners."

As another effect, a follower of the Sunnah is moderate, taking a middle approach between extremism and negligence. Verily, Islam is a religion of moderateness. So, an adherent to the Sunnah adopts a moderate and proper approach in worshiping the Almighty Allah and in giving everything its due worth.

Let me give you two examples in this regard:

First example: Treating an ignorant sinner in a manner that suits their state.

Second example: Treating a deliberate sinner in a manner that suits their state.

Example of the first category is a man who entered the Prophet's Mosque, headed to one of the mosque's corners, and started to urinate. The people yelled at him. Thereupon, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Leave him; do not interrupt him." More urine would pollute the mosque more; however, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) behaved in this way for a wise reason not grasped by the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). As the Bedouin finished urination, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered that a bucket of water be poured on the urine, which they did. So, the bad thing, which is polluting the mosque, was removed with purification. As for the Bedouin, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) called him and said: "These mosques are not places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer, and the recitation of the Qur'an." Whereupon, the Bedouin said: "O Allah, have mercy upon me and upon Muhammad, and do not have mercy upon anyone else apart from us!"

Do you see how the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) treated that person?

A person who adheres to the Sunnah should behave like the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). He would not deal harshly with an ignorant or declare him a sinner; rather, he would treat him wisely.

As an example of the second category, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saw a man wearing a gold ring. He removed it, threw it away, and said: "One of you takes a live coal and puts it on his hand." Do you see the difference between how the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) dealt with this man and how he dealt with the Bedouin? After the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had left, the man was told to take back his ring, but he said: "By Allah, I shall not take a ring that was thrown away by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)." Adherence to the Sunnah also inspires mercy, compassion, leniency, and modesty, as the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would joke with children, greet them, and bear their mistakes patiently. A case in point is the child who had a bird called Al-Nughayr. He used to play and have fun with his bird, which later died. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would joke with him, saying: "O Abu 'Umayr, what did Al-Nughayr do?"

One day Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali came to the Prophet while he was in prostration, leading the people in prayer, and he got upon his back. The Prophet prostrated for a little long. When the prayer was over, he told his Companions that his grandson rode on him and he wanted to let him complete his fun.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him!

Would any of us do that? And if he did, many people would criticize him. The Prophet did it, out of gentleness towards children.

Many of us do not treat children gently and mercifully. Even if a child comes to a gathering in the most polite manner, someone might still reproach him and tell him to get out or the like. If blamed, he would probably say that he feared the child could play and annoy the gathered men.

How strange! Allah Almighty says: {There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for someone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.} [Al-Ahzāb: 21]

Adherence to the Sunnah has such great effects. But this requires knowledge of the Sunnah. Therefore, I urge my brothers, the seekers of knowledge, to diligently study the Prophet's Sunnah so that they can act upon it and invite others to do the same. This is something great indeed and its reward is everlasting.

At some point in my speech, I have mentioned that adherence to the Sunnah entails dislike and rejection of religious innovations.

And since we are now in one of the sacred months, Rajab, I wrote something about what is said or done during this month. I would like to read it out for you, hoping it would be of benefit:

1. Rajab is one of the four sacred months: Dhul-Hijjah, Dhul-Qi'dah, Muharram - those three come in succession - and Rajab, which occurs separately between Jumāda and Sha'bān. The four months are marked by a number of traits common to all of them and not limited to Rajab alone.

The scholars differed over which of the four is the best.

Some Shāfi'i scholars held that it is Rajab, a view deemed weak by Al-Nawawi and others.

Others said it is Muharram. This view was stated by Al-Hasan and favored by Al-Nawawi.

It was also said to be Dhul-Hijjah, a view reported from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr and others. This is the stronger opinion.

This is what was stated in Al-Latā'if.

I say: This is the correct opinion, for Dhul-Hijjah combines two merits; it is one of the months of Hajj, including the Day of Al-Nahr, and it is one of the sacred months.

2. The month of Rajab used to be held dignified by the people of Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic period of ignorance). They prohibited fighting in it, like in the other sacred months.

Muslims, on the other hand, differed over the prohibition of fighting in these months.

Most scholars held that the prohibition of fighting in the sacred months was abrogated, and so it became permissible in Rajab -and in the other sacred months - to initiate fighting; I mean fighting the disbelievers, given the generality of the proofs in this regard.

The correct opinion is that initiating fighting in those months is prohibited. But, if they fight us, or it is ongoing fighting that has begun in the non-sacred months, there is nothing wrong with that.

3. The people of Jāhiliyyah used to exalt Rajab by observing fast in it. But nothing is authentically reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) on fasting in Rajab in particular.

In Al-Fatāwa (25/290), Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: "As for fasting during Rajab in particular, all the relevant Hadīths are weak or fabricated and cannot be relied upon by the scholars. They are not like the weak Hadīths reported on the merits of good deeds; rather, most of them are lies and fabrications."

He went on till he said: "It is authentically reported that 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb would strike people's hands to force them to place their hands into the food during Rajab, saying: 'Do not liken it to Ramadan.'

And Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) entered his house one day and found that his family had bought jugs for water and got prepared for fasting. He asked: 'What is this?' They said: 'It is for Rajab.' Thereupon, he said: 'Do you want to liken it to Ramadan?' and he broke the jugs." [End of quote]

Al-Hāfizh Ibn Rajab cited in Al-Latā'if the report of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, as it is in Al-Fatāwa, with the addition: "Rajab was exalted by the people of Jāhiliyyah; when Islam came, this was abandoned."

4. The Arabs used to dignify the month of Rajab by performing 'Umrah (minor pilgrimage) therein. This is because Dhul-Hijjah is a month of Hajj (major pilgrimage), and Rajab occurs in the middle of the Hijri year which starts in Muharram. So, they would make 'Umrah in it so that the Sacred House would be filled with pilgrims at the end and middle of the year.

The author said in Al-Latā'if: "'Umar ibn al-Khattāb and others liked to perform 'Umrah in Rajab. 'Ā'ishah would also do it, and so would Ibn 'Umar. Ibn Sirīn reported that the righteous predecessors used to do so as well."

5. There is a prayer in Rajab called Al-Raghā'ib prayer that people offer on the eve of the first Friday, between Maghrib and 'Ishā'. It consists of 12 Rak'ahs and is performed in an unusual manner. Al-Hāfizh Ibn Hajab mentioned it in his book Tabyīn al-'Ajab bima Warada fi Fadl Rajab.

In Sharh al-Muhadhdhab (3/548), Al-Nawawi said: "The prayer known as Al-Raghā'ib prayer consists of 12 Rak'ahs and is performed between Maghrib and 'Ishā' on the eve of the first Friday in Rajab. And the prayer on the eve of mid-Sha'bān is 100 Rak'ahs.

These two prayers are religious innovations, and they are strange and bad. Let no one be deceived by their mention in Qūt al-Qulūb and Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn or by the Hadīth reported on them. All this is false. Also, let no one be deceived by some scholarly rulings which deem them recommended. These rulings are incorrect.

The leading scholar Shaykh Abu Muhammad 'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Ismā'īl al-Maqdisi wrote a valuable book proving that they are false; and he did an excellent job. May Allah have mercy upon him."

In Majmū' al-Fatāwa (23/124), Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Al-Raghā'ib prayer is a religious innovation, by consensus among the scholars. Neither the Prophet nor any of his successors prescribed it, nor was it recommended by any of the leading scholars, like Mālik, Al-Shāfi'i, Ahmad, Abu Hanīfah, Al-Thawri, Al-Awzā'i, and Al-Layth. The Hadīth reported on it is a fabrication, by consensus among the scholars of Hadīth." In Al-Latā'if, Ibn Rajab said: "There is no authentic report about a specific prayer during Rajab in particular. The Hadīths reported on the merit of Al-Raghā'ib prayer on the eve of the first Friday of Rajab are lies and fabrications."

He also said: "The earlier generation did not mention it because it was introduced after them. It first emerged after 400 A.H. That is why they did not know it or speak about it."

In *Al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah* (p. 48), Al-Shawkāni said: "The scholars of Hadīth concurred that it [meaning Al-Raghā'ib prayer] is a fabrication... Even those who have the least knowledge of Hadīth cannot argue about this... Al-Fairūzabādi said in *Al-Mukhtasar*: 'It is a fabrication by consensus, and Al-Maqdisi held the same view.'"

Al-Shawkāni cited in the aforementioned book a Hadīth on the merit of prayer on the eve of mid-Rajab and said: "It was narrated by Al-Jawzaqāni via Anas, in a Marfū' manner. It is fabricated and its narrators are unknown."

5. Some people head to Madīnah in the month of Rajab to pay a visit that they call "Al-Rajabiyyah", considering this as a confirmed Sunnah, and they visit a number of places there,

some of which are legitimate visiting destinations, like the Prophet's Mosque, Qubā' Mosque, the Prophet's grave, the graves of his two Companions, Al-Baqī', and the graves of the martyrs of Uhud.

But others are not legitimate visiting destinations, like the mosque called Al-Ghumāmah Mosque, the Mosque of the Two Qiblahs, and the Seven Mosques.

This "Rajabiyyah" visit has no basis in the statements of the scholars, as if it were introduced lately. There is no doubt that the Prophet's Mosque is one of the mosques to which Muslims may travel, namely the Sacred Mosque, the Prophet's Mosque, and Al-Aqsa Mosque. But we may not do this in a certain month or on a certain day without a proof; and there is no proof for doing this during Rajab in particular. Accordingly, taking this as an act of Sunnah which one can do to please his Lord during this month in particular is a rejected innovation. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever does a deed which is not part of our matter, it will be rejected." In another version: "Whoever introduces into this matter of ours what is not part of it, it will be rejected." meaning that it will not be accepted from its doer.

6. In Rajab, the anniversary of Isrā' and Mi'rāj, according to the more common practice among later generations, is celebrated on the 27th night and possibly marked as an official holiday. However, this needs proof for two things:

First: From the historical aspect.

Second: From the devotional aspect, concerning the celebration.

As for the first point, the scholars differed over it.

In his book *the Beginning and the End* (3/119 - Al-Fajjālah edition), Ibn Kathīr quoted from Al-Zuhri and 'Urwah that "it was one year before the Prophet's Hijrah to Madīnah." Accordingly, it occurred in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal (not Rajab).

Al-Suddi said: "It happened 16 months before the Hijrah." Accordingly, it occurred in the month of Dhul-Qi'dah.

In his book *Al-Sīrah*, Al-Hāfiz 'Abdul-Ghanyy ibn Surūr al-Maqdisi mentioned a Hadīth, with an unsound chain of transmission, saying that it occurred on the eve of the 27th day of Rajab.

"Some people claim that it happened on the eve of the first Friday of Rajab, which is the night of Al-Raghā'ib, the time of the newly introduced prayer known as Al-Raghā'ib prayer. This has no basis; and Allah knows best." [End of quote]

In the commentary on his 'Aqīdah (2/280), Al-Saffarīni said: "Al-Wāqidi related from those who narrated it that Isrā' and Mi'rāj happened on the eve of a Saturday, after the passing of 27 nights in Ramadan, 12 years after the start of the Prophet's mission, and 18 months before Hijrah.

He [Al-Wāqidi] also related from some of his Shaykhs that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was taken for the night journey on the eve of the 17th of Rabī' al-Awwal, one year before Hijrah.

Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm claimed that there is consensus over this.

This was the view of Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them)."

Then, he cited Ibn al-Jawzi as saying that it happened in Rabī' al-Awwal or Rajab or Ramadan.

In Fat'h al-Bāri (7/203 - Chapter: Mi'rāj, from Sahīh al-Bukhāri), Ibn Hajar said:"The scholars expressed more than ten different views over this issue. Ibn Sa'd and others said it was one year before the Hijrah; a view firmly supported by Al-Nawawi. Others said it happened before Hijrah by 8 months, 6 months, 11 months, one year and 2 months, one year and 3 months, one year and 5 months, 18 months, three years, or five years. It was also said that it occurred in Rajab, an opinion reported by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr and firmly supported by Al-Nawawi in Al-Rawdah."

However, some scholars stated that they did not find it in Al-Rawdah.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah is quoted by his student Ibn al-Qayyim in Zād al-Ma'ād, as part of his talk on the preference of some days and months over others, as saying:"With reference to those who say that the night of Isrā' is better than the night of al-Qadr, if they mean that the night during which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was taken on the night journey - and its anniversary every year - is better for Muhammad's Ummah than the night of al-Qadr such that the night prayer and supplication therein are more meritorious than in the night of al-Qadr, then this opinion is wrong and never before stated by any Muslim. This applies if the night of Isrā' is specified; how then could it be correct when the date of that night is not even known. There is even no evidence for the day, ten days, or month during which it occurred. Reports in this respect are different and have interrupted chains of narrators without any definitiveness. Moreover, no worship, night prayer or the like, has been prescribed in Islam particularly for the assumed night of Isrā'."

Afterwards, he said: "No Muslim is known to have given the night of Isrā' any privilege over other times, especially the night of al-Qadr. Neither the Companions nor the succeeding generation would do anything specifically on the night of Isrā', nor would they mention it. That is why it is not known which night it was."

This is the first point regarding the Isrā' and Mi'rāj. It has been clarified that no date - eve, month, or year - is proved for this event.

The second point is concerning the celebration of this night, during which sermons are delivered and fabricated or very weak Hadīths on the story of Isrā' and Mi'rāj are read out. No one, if unbiased and acquainted with the truth, has any doubt that this is something newly introduced in Islam. Neither the Companions nor their Successors knew the celebration of this night. In fact, there are only three Eids in Islam: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Ad'ha, and those are annual occasions; and the third Eid is Friday, a weekly one. Islam has no other Eid but those three. Let it be known that the real following of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is "adherence to his Sunnah by doing what he did and refraining from what he refrained from."Whoever adds to it or omits from it, then his following is deficient. Adding to the Sunnah is more grave, however, for it denotes going ahead of Allah and His Messenger and entails things which no sane person, let alone a believing one, doubts that they are disasters. It is enough perfection for a believer to worship Allah Almighty by what He has prescribed through His Messenger; and it is enough deficiency for a person to add to what Allah and His Messenger have prescribed. A believer should beware of introducing anything of his liking to the religion of Allah. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) warned against doing so and he used to announce it in Friday sermons, saying:"The best speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is that of Muhammad. The worst things are the newly introduced ones, and every newly introduced thing is misguidance."This is the version in Sahīh Muslim. Another version by Al-Nasā'i adds:"and every misguidance will be in Hellfire."

I implore Allah Almighty to make us steadfast with the firm word in this world and in the Hereafter and to safeguard us from trials, the apparent and the hidden thereof; indeed, He is the Most Generous.

We have delivered these few pages during a lecture titled "Adherence to the Sunnah and its Effects", held in the lecture hall at the Islamic University, Thursday, 9/7/1419 A.H.

We probably made some additions or omissions during the lecture.

Delivered by its author
Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn
on 13/7/1419 A.H.

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Questions

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

May Allah reward the Shaykh for his valuable lecture and benefit Islam and Muslims by his knowledge.

We have actually received too many questions, of which we will tackle as many as the time allows. We will leave the remaining questions with the Shaykh so that perhaps he would be able to answer them at a later time.

Question One: My question, your Eminence, is that I am an Imām of a mosque, but I do not pray in that mosque, and my excuse is that my work is arduous and the mosque is very distant from my house. What is the ruling on the salary I receive for this job? Kindly note that there are lots of people in a similar situation. So, what is your advice to me and them? Answer: May Allah bless him. This question is important. Some people get appointed as an official Imām or Muezzin of a mosque, but they do not actually do their work. They get paid and let other people do the job for half of the salary or less; and the situation continues like this.

In his book Al-Ikhtiyārāt, Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy upon him) mentioned in the Chapter on Waqf (Endowments) that this constitutes unjust devouring of wealth that a person receives work for a high payment and appoint someone else to do the job for a less pay. He spoke the truth.

If he neglects the congregational prayer and does not appoint someone in his place, this is even more serious; it is not lawful for him to remain Imām of a mosque where he does not pray. He should let go of this job, and - praise be to Allah - there are others who can assume the Imām role.

Similarly, some employees fail to show up at work for days or hours, or they arrive late every day. What is worse is that they punch in as arriving on time, though they have come an hour or more late; and they also leave work before the appointed time. This is unlawful and dishonesty. Let's say that the weekly work hours is 35. If one hour is omitted on a daily basis, due to the late arrival at work, this means five hours a week. What entitles him then to his full salary? What makes this permissible? If one dirham was lacking from this person's salary, would he not claim it? Then, why would he not commit himself to the complete working hours? Indeed, if a person accustoms himself to firmness and to arriving at work on time and leaving on time, this will be easy for him. Conversely, if he accustoms himself to laziness, it will be difficult for him to fulfill his duties. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is authentically reported to have said: "A strong believer is better and dearer to Allah than a weak believer; and there is goodness in both of them. Be keen on what benefits you and seek help from Allah, and do not give up. If anything afflicts you, do not say: 'If I had done such and such, such and such would have happened;' for 'If' opens the door for the work of Satan." And the Qur'an says: {Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy.} [Al-Qasas: 26]

He is not trustworthy who sleeps until one or two hours of work has passed without him showing up. A person should hold himself accountable and fear his Lord.

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Question Two: If a performer of Tawāf breaks his ablution and proceeds with Tawāf and completes 'Umrah, is his 'Umrah valid? Answer: Some scholars held that purification is a condition for the validity of Tawāf. Accordingly, the 'Umrah of this person is invalid, yet he is still in the state of Ihrām. So, he should take off the clothes he is wearing now and put on the clothing of Ihrām and go to Makkah to perform Tawāf and Sa'i, after which he is to shave or cut his hair. Other scholars held that purification

is not a condition for the validity of Tawāf; a view adopted by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him). Accordingly, this man's 'Umrah is valid, for his Tawāf is valid, and thus his Sa'i is valid and his 'Umrah is complete. Question Three: It is a common practice in some Muslim countries that people recite the whole Qur'an in groups for the fulfillment of some pressing needs, like obtaining a higher rank or a job. What is the ruling on this? May Allah bless you. Answer: It is well known that the Qur'an is the word of Allah Almighty, and that whoever recites it will get a good deed recorded in his account for each letter, and every good deed is multiplied tenfold. A person should not use a deed done for reward of the Hereafter to get a reward in the life of this world. Moreover, who said that recitation of the Qur'an can be a reason for obtaining a job, business, or the like?! The Qur'an is a healing for every disease within people's hearts and a healing for physical diseases as well. But is it reported that it can be a cause of sustenance? Sustenance can be obtained by fear of Allah Almighty, Who says: {And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect} [Al-Talāq: 2-3] So, we say to those who treat the Qur'an's recitation as a means of sustenance without proof: Where is your proof? As for fear of Allah, yes, it is a cause of sustenance, as revealed in the verse that reads: {And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect} [Al-Talāq: 2-3]

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Question Four: Some people argue that when an act is done by the majority of people, this is a proof of its validity, citing the Hadīth: "Stick to the greater majority." What does Your Eminence think about this? Answer: This argument is not correct, for Allah Almighty says: {And if you disagree over anything, refer it...} To whom? {to Allah and the Messenger.} [Al-Nisā': 59] He does not say "refer it to the greater majority". It is not a matter of parliamentary vote or the like. It is a question of evidence from the Book of Allah Almighty or the Sunnah of His Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). So, our duty is to refer to the evidence in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, even if only one single person follows it. As for "stick to the greater majority", if it is authentically reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), the "greater majority" refers to Muslims who hold onto the truth, for 'greater' here means great in status, not in numbers. Those who have greater status are those who abide by the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. That is if this Hadīth is authentic. I think it is a report from Ibn Mas'ūd or someone else.

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Question Five:

What is the ruling on depositing money in banks?

Answer:

There is nothing wrong with depositing money in the bank, if needed, for some people argue that money kept at home is at risk. So, they put it in the bank for security reasons.

If the banks deal in usury only, we would say: Never put your money in the bank. However, they have sources of revenue other than usury. Hence, money put there is a mixture of lawful and unlawful. This makes it permissible for a person to put his money in the bank if he fears it might be lost elsewhere. But in such case he should look for the bank with the least dealing in usury. It is noteworthy here that people call putting money in the bank as 'deposit', which is not correct. The definition of deposit [Arabic: Wadī'ah] according to scholars is money a person gives to someone as a trust which he may not dispose of. But when a person puts money in the bank, the latter puts the money in its fund and uses it in buying and selling; the scholars define such transaction as a loan [Arabic: Qard]. That is why they stated that if a person deposits money with someone and then he gives him permission to dispose of it, the deposit turns into a loan. The difference between deposit and loan is clear. If a deposit suffers damage, without transgression or neglect on the part of the trustee, there is no liability on the trustee. A loan, by contrast, involves liability in all cases.

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Question Six: We often hear contemporaries repeat this rule: Let's get together on what we agree over and excuse one another in what we differ about. Is this statement correct? Answer: The first part of it is correct. We should get together on what we agree over. As for the second part, it needs to be addressed in some detail. If we differ over something and there is evidence in support of either view, and there is no room for Ijtihād in the matter at hand, then we should not let anyone express a wrong opinion without voicing disapproval of it. For example, if someone differs from us over a matter of creed, we should not keep silent about it, for the creedal principles are well known, and the consensus among the righteous predecessors over them is also well known. So, we should criticize those who differ over this issue. As for Fiqhi issues, which have room for Ijtihād, yes, we should not criticize one another over things prone to independent reasoning, for if someone criticizes a differing view, this means he claims that his view is the correct one. Nonetheless, it is likely that his view or the view of the other person is wrong.

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this means he claims that his view is the correct one. Nonetheless, it is likely that his view or the view of the other person is wrong.

Moreover, if a person wants to bring people to adopt his view and accuse his opponents of being misguided, he has thus put himself in the position of the Prophet, who was infallible. Your Ijtihād belongs to you, and the Ijtihād of anyone else belongs to them.

The problem is that some people take such difference as one that justifies loyalty and disavowal and they hate and malign their opponents, even though the issues they disagree over do accept Ijtihād. This approach is wrong and it runs counter to the Companions' approach. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) would differ over greater issues, yet none of them would speak ill of another or label him as misguided. Many of you know the story of the Companions when the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) returned from the battle of Al-Ahzāb, and among the allies against the Prophet was the tribe of Banu Qurayzah, who broke the covenant with him. So, Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and ordered him to set out to Banu Qurayzah. Thereupon, the Prophet called on the Companions to go there, saying: "Let no one of you pray 'Asr except in Banu Qurayzah." They left. The time of prayer came

while they were on their way. Some of them said: We ought to pray, lest the time of prayer elapses. Others said: We ought not to pray, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Let no one of you pray 'Asr except in Banu Qurayzah." So, some of them prayed and the others did not. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not criticize or rebuke either group. They themselves did not hold any grudge against one another or label one another as misguided or the like. No one should bring people to accept his opinion over controversial issues that are subject to Ijtihād; otherwise, he would be claiming to be a prophet. With regard to issues that have no room for Ijtihād, particularly the matters of creed, it is not permissible to acknowledge incorrect views.

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Question Seven: Is it permissible to interpret the name of Allah "Al-Shakūr" (The Appreciative) as "Al-Ghafūr" (The Forgiving)? What is the difference between this and the interpretation of mercy as the intent of kindness? Answer: This is not permissible. We may not interpret the name of Allah "Al-Shakūr" to mean "Al-Ghafūr", for Al-Shakūr is the one who gives and rewards commendable deeds. Al-Ghafūr, on the other hand, is the one who conceals the sins of His servants. There is a difference between He Who appreciates those who obey Him and He Who forgives those who disobey. So, it is not permissible to take this to mean that, given the clear difference between the two. The second part of the question: What is the difference between this and the interpretation of mercy as the intent of kindness?

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The second part of the question:

What is the difference between this and the interpretation of mercy as the intent of kindness?

Answer:

Mercy - also - has nothing to do with the issue of appreciation and forgiveness, for mercy means that Allah Almighty is merciful to His servants by bestowing favors upon them and keeping afflictions away from them.

It is wrong to interpret the mercy of Allah as the intent of kindness, for the intent of kindness is one of the requirements of mercy, not the mercy itself. Mercy is an essential attribute of Allah Almighty and He shows it to whomever He wills. The effects of His mercy include the intent of kindness towards His creation.

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It is not permissible to construe mercy as the intent of kindness or kindness, for those are among the requirements of mercy, not the mercy itself.

*

Question Eight: Is it permissible to buy and sell sperms from male animals and insert them into female animals for the purpose of breeding? Answer: The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is authentically reported to have forbidden taking a price for animal copulation, which is similar to the issue in question; rather, there is greater reason to prohibit this, for animal copulation may harm the male animal, while taking the sperms causes no harm. It does not matter what non-Muslims do, for they do not care about anything. So, we say: Selling such things is similar to animal copulation for a fee, which was prohibited by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

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while taking the sperms causes no harm. It does not matter what non-Muslims do, for they do not care about anything. So, we say: Selling such things is similar to animal copulation for a fee, which was prohibited by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

More grave and reprehensible than this is the sale of human sperms to sterile people so that they can have children, whom they attribute to themselves. This is among the most serious sins; may Allah keep us safe from this.

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Question Nine: What is the more correct opinion among the righteous predecessors regarding the Prophet's statement: "Allah created Adam in His image"? May Allah reward you. Answer: This question is important, not for itself, but for the duty to believe and accept what is in the Qur'an and Sunnah about the attributes of Allah and not ask how or why. Indeed, asking and thinking too much about such matters of the unseen may lead a person to ruin, prompting him to deny a divine attribute or liken Allah to His creation. "Allah created Adam in His image." In another version by Al-Bukhāri: "In the image of the Most Compassionate." Did the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) ask the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) about the meaning of this or they totally accepted it? The answer is: They accepted it, without any doubt. We do not know about any Companion who said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is meant by His image?" Rather, they accepted it. But they relied upon a great foundation: To not draw similarities between Allah and His creation, for Allah Almighty says: {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.} [Al-Shūra: 11]

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{There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.} [Al-Shūra: 11]

Even if we say that the matter of the image is established, we firmly believe that it is not like the image of the created being, and that Adam's image is not similar to that of Allah Almighty.

Consider, for example, the Prophet's statement: "The first group to enter Paradise will be in the image of a full moon." Does his statement "in the image of a full moon" necessarily mean similarity? No, it does not. Likewise, we believe that Allah created Adam in His image, but without drawing similarity between the Creator and the creation, based on the verse that says: {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.} [Al-Shūra: 11]

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Some of the righteous predecessors said that "in His image" means that Allah chose this image in the best stature. So, this image which Allah has made with perfect care should not be made ugly or hit.

The first opinion is more cautious, however, because the second one involves some personal interpretation. So, we should adopt the first view that Allah actually created Adam in His image, but without drawing similarities.

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Question Ten: Some reliable scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them) argued that the strongest evidence for rejecting metaphorical interpretation of the Qur'an is that a metaphor can be negated, while nothing in the Qur'an can be negated. I am confused, Your Eminence, because the Qur'an contains a lot of news, and when a person receives a piece of news, he can describe the bearer of news as a truthful person or a liar; but nothing in the Qur'an can be belied. Kindly explain to me, may Allah reward you.

Answer: When the scholars defined news as a piece of information whose bearer can be described as a truthful person or a liar, they meant the news itself, regardless of its bearer. In other words, we can say true or false with regard to the news itself, not the one who has conveyed it. For example, the news revealed by Allah Almighty can never be described as false; whereas the news conveyed by Musaylimah the liar, who claimed to be a messenger, can never be described as true. Concerning

metaphors in the Qur'an or elsewhere, this matter is subject to a difference of opinion that needs to be discussed extensively. However, we should know that words are containers of meanings, and it is the contexts that determine the intended meanings. The real meaning of a word can be known through its place and context, regardless of its literal meaning. If we say that this is the true essence of speech, we will get rid of many obscurities. A city, for example, refers to the dwellers of the city and may also refer to the collective structures. So, the Qur'anic verse: {Indeed, we will destroy the people of this city} [Al-'Ankabūt: 31] refers to the collective structures; whereas the verse {And ask the city in which we were} [Yūsuf: 82] refers to the population of the city. So, the same word in one place should be interpreted as the collective structures and in another as the population of the city.

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So, the same word in one place should be interpreted as the collective structures and in another as the population of the city.

No sane person could ever say that the statement of the children of Ya'qub (Jacob) to their father: {And ask the city in which we were} might mean that they really wanted him to go and ask the buildings and walls. This cannot be.

That is the view favored by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah: There is no metaphor in the language nor in the Qur'an, because the meaning of a word is determined according to its context; and if the meaning is determined, it becomes a fact in its context, and thus many obscurities are cleared.

Among of the proofs cited by those who held that there is metaphor in the Qur'an is the verse that says: {And they found therein a wall that wanted to collapse} [Al-Kahf: 77] They argued that walls are inanimate, and inanimate things cannot possess a will - according to their understanding. In reply, we say: In fact, a wall has a will, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said about Mount Uhud: "It loves us and we love it." Love is more specific than will. Plus, who could possibly say that a wall has no will while Allah Almighty says: {a wall that wanted to collapse} [Al-Kahf: 77]?! This only rests on the understanding of some people who argue that only living things have a will, whereas the Hadīth "Uhud is a mountain that loves us and we love it" proves that a mountain has the ability to love.

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This only rests on the understanding of some people who argue that only living things have a will, whereas the Hadīth “Uhud is a mountain that loves us and we love it” proves that a mountain has the ability to love.

Someone may say: “How can I know that a wall wants to collapse?” In reply, we say that this can be known through its leaning or the emergence of cracks therein.

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Question Eleven: Should we differentiate between the deeds the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) would do by way of nature and habit and the deeds in which we are required to follow him? May Allah reward you. Answer: This is an important question, and praise be to Allah that the scholars of the principles of Fiqh (jurisprudence) have clarified it thoroughly. Things that naturally happened, which are those needed by the body, like the Prophet’s sleep; was his sleep by way of innate nature or an act of worship or a habit? We say that it was innate nature, and so was his drinking when he was thirsty and his eating when he was hungry. All such things are part of human’s innate nature.

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We say that it was innate nature, and so was his drinking when he was thirsty and his eating when he was hungry. All such things are part of human’s innate nature.

His wearing of the waist-wrapper and long garment was a habit. Letting his hair grow long is debatable. Some said this was an act of worship, and others said it was a habit, which is the more correct view.

As to the deeds that had an apparent intent of worship, they are acts of worship. We can know these deeds by excluding the deeds that were motivated by nature or habit, in which case they would be acts of worship. In principle, the deeds of the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) are intended as worship.

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Question Twelve: "The path of the righteous predecessors." What is the meaning of this phrase? What are the signs that a person follows this path? And is it a duty to follow this path?

Answer: "The path of the righteous predecessors" means following their approach in the issues of creed, worship, and dealings. It is a phrase with a broad meaning.

We can judge each matter separately to see if it accords with or runs counter to the path of the righteous predecessors. But generally, the path of the righteous predecessors is their approach in worship, dealings, attitude, and the like.

The signs indicating that a person follows the path of the righteous predecessors are that he assumes their manners and imitates their actions in worldly and religious matters. Whoever desires safety should follow their righteous path.

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Question Thirteen: What are the means whereby one can understand the Sunnah and apply it correctly? Answer: First of all, you should know that understanding is a blessing from Allah Almighty. No one can attain it through endeavor. It comes as a favor from Allah Almighty. Hence, when Abu

Juhayfah asked 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him): "Has the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) left anything for you specifically?" - meaning the caliphate as circulated at that time - he replied: "No, by Allah, he has left nothing for me specifically except for an understanding that Allah bestows upon someone with regards to the Qur'an and to what is in this scroll." He asked: "What is in this scroll?" He said: "The blood money, release of captives, and that a Muslim should not be killed in retribution for the killing of a disbeliever."

What are the means whereby one can understand the Sunnah and apply it correctly?

Answer:

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Hence, when Abu Juhayfah asked 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him): "Has the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) left anything for you specifically?" - meaning the caliphate as circulated at that time - he replied: "No, by Allah, he has left nothing for me specifically except for an understanding that Allah bestows upon someone with regards to the Qur'an and to what is in this scroll." He asked: "What is in this scroll?" He said: "The blood money, release of captives, and that a Muslim should not be killed in retribution for the killing of a disbeliever."

People differ greatly in their understanding. That is why some scholars may derive ten rulings from a certain Hadīth, while others may derive far more. Some others may derive nothing at all.

It is reported that a man memorized Al-Furū' in the Fiqh of Imām Ahmad, a large book; yet, he did not know the ruling on any matter. He lacked understanding. His companions would take him with them as a copy of the book. If they doubted something, they would say: O so-and-so, read for us such-and-such section or chapter. As he read, they would derive the ruling from his reading. So, this is a favor of Allah which He bestows upon whomever He wills.

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However, there are some means that can help a person obtain understanding, including being exposed to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, contemplation, and referring to the views of the earlier scholars.

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Question Fourteen: The question is about antiquities, the attention given to them, and visiting such places. The questioner needs your guidance on this matter; may Allah protect you. Answer: In my view, if there is benefit in giving attention to antiquities, then there is nothing wrong with that. But if people take this as a form of worship and go to such places believing that these monuments have some influence, then these antiquities should or even must be eliminated. The Commander of the Believers 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) was informed that some people would go to the tree under which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) took the pledge of allegiance known as Allegiance of Al-Ridwān. Thereupon, he ordered that it be cut off. We thank Allah Almighty that it was cut off at the hand of this caliph. What would be the case if it had remained to this day? People would make Hajj to it more than they do to the Ka'bah, for most souls incline to falsehood.

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The antiquities you mention are of two types:

First: Antiquities that have no origin. Obviously, removing them is the right thing to do.

Second: Antiquities that have an origin. We should consider whether the Shariah sanctions visiting them and observing them; if so, this is good; otherwise, the right thing to do is to abandon them.

An example is the cave of Hirā’. It is a place where the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) received the first revelation. However, should it be revered; and should it be deemed an act of worship to go up to it?The answer is: Not at all. If it had been a place to be revered and an act of worship to go up to it, the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions would have been the first to do so.

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The same applies to the cave of Thawr.

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Question Fifteen: The question is about preaching Islam in non-Muslim countries. Is it better than living in Madīnah or Makkah? Answer: Undoubtedly, calling people to Allah is one of the greatest things one can do. Preaching Islam in non-Muslim countries, if it is likely to yield good results, is better than staying in Makkah or Madīnah, for the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) left Makkah for Tā’if to invite its people to Islam. Furthermore, as the Companions conquered different countries, they left Makkah and Madīnah and went to the places where they preached Islam. But if a person’s preaching effort is proving fruitless, then his stay in a meritorious place is better. That is why when the scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them) differed over which is better for a person: to stay in Makkah or in Madīnah, and each of them presented his argument, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: “Staying in the place where his faith and piety increase is better.”

The question is about preaching Islam in non-Muslim countries. Is it better than living in Madīnah or Makkah?

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By this we conclude our gathering, and we implore Allah Almighty to make it blessed and to grant all of us useful knowledge and good deeds; indeed, He has power over all things.

O Allah, make us among the advocates and supporters of the truth.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and Companions.

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