

## Ahlul Sunnah and the Obliteration of the Sunnah

In this chapter, we would like to explain something very important which researchers ought to deeply investigate in order to find out, beyond any shadow of doubt, that those who call themselves Ahlul Sunnah in all reality have very little to do with the Sunnah of the Prophet.

This is so because they, or rather their predecessors among the *sahaba* and “righteous caliphs,” whom they emulate, and through loving for and allegiance to whom they seek nearness to Allah, took a negative stand towards the Prophetic Sunnah to the extent that they burnt that Sunnah and prohibited anyone from recording it or narrating its *ahadith*.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, we have to unveil the mean plot woven against the pure Prophetic Sunnah in order to prohibit its dissemination, and in order to kill it in its infancy and substitute it with innovations, personal views, and interpretations of the rulers and the *sahaba*. Early rulers did the following:

**FIRST:** They fabricated false *ahadith* to support their stand to prohibit the recording of the Prophet's Sunnah and the *sacred ahadith*. Imam Muslim, for example, records in his *Sahih* what is quoted by Haddab ibn Khalid al-Azdi who cites Humam citing Zayd ibn Aslam citing Ata ibn Yasar citing Abu Sa'id al-Khudri saying that the Messenger of Allah has said, “Do not record anything which I say, and whoever quotes what I tell you besides the Qur'an should erase what he writes, and [orally] narrate about me without any hesitation.”<sup>2</sup> The purpose of fabricating this alleged “*hadith*” is to justify what Abu Bakr and Umar did to the Prophet's *ahadith* written down and recorded by a number of companions of the Prophet. This “tradition” was fabricated many years after the end of the period of the “righteous caliphs,” and the fabricators, professional liars, overlooked the following issues:

1) Had the Messenger of Allah actually said so, the *sahaba* would have acted upon his orders (not to write traditions down), and they would have erased all traditions many years before Abu Bakr and Umar had burned them.

2) Had this tradition been authentic, Abu Bakr would have first cited it, and then Umar, in order to justify their prohibition of recording *hadith*, and they would have erased them, and those who had recorded them would have sought an excuse for having done so either due to their ignorance [of such a

“tradition”] or to their lapse of memory.

3) Had this tradition been authentic, Abu Bakr and Umar would have had to erase all traditions, not burn them.

4) Had this “tradition” been authentic, the Muslims, who were contemporary to Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, till our time, would have been committing the sin of disobeying the Messenger of Allah, particularly their chief, namely Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz who had ordered the scholars of his time to record *hadith*, in addition to al-Bukhari and Muslim who regarded this tradition as authentic yet they did not act upon it but wrote thousands of the Prophet's *ahadith*.

5) Finally, had this “tradition” been authentic, it would not have been missed by the gate of knowledge Ali ibn Abu Talib who compiled the *ahadith* of the Prophet in one *saheefa* the length of whose pieces reached seventy yards which he called *al-jami`a*, the one that includes everything, and which we will discuss later by the help of Allah.

**SECOND:** Umayyad rulers spared no efforts to underscore their theory that the Messenger of Allah was not protected by Allah against falling into error as is the case with all other human beings who sometimes are right and sometimes are wrong, fabricating several “traditions” to support their claim.

The purpose of fabricating such “traditions” was to make sure that the Prophet used to follow his own personal views; therefore, he often erred to the extent that some of his companions had to correct him, as indicated in the incidents of palm tree pollination, the revelation of the verse referring to the issue of *hijab* (veil), the case of accepting *fidya* (ransom) from the captives seized after the Battle of Badr, in addition to many such incidents claimed by “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” and included in their *Sahih* books in support of such an attitude towards the Messenger of Allah, peace and the best of blessings be upon him and his progeny.

We argue with “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” thus:

If such is your creed and attitude towards the Messenger of Allah, how do you claim to be upholding his Sunnah, believing that you and your predecessors regarded such Sunnah as unprotected from Allah from error, even unknown and unrecorded?!<sup>3</sup> Yet we reject these claims and false charges and are able to refute them by quoting your own references and *Sahih* books.<sup>4</sup> Examples:

In a chapter on recording knowledge in his *Kitab al-`Ilm* (Book of Knowledge) of his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes Abu Hurayra saying, “None among the companions of the Prophet narrates more *hadith* than me except Abdullah ibn Umar, for he can write whereas I cannot (i.e. am illiterate).”<sup>5</sup>

This statement clearly indicates that there were among the Prophet's *sahaba* those who wrote his *ahadith* down. Since Abu Hurayra narrated more than six thousand traditions of the Prophet orally (because he could not write), Abdullah ibn Umar quoted more traditions of the Prophet because of his

ability to write them down.

Undoubtedly, there were among the *sahaba* those who could write the Prophet's traditions and whom Abu Hurayra did not mention because they were not famous for being so prolific. Add to the above Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib who used to spread out from the pulpit a scroll which he used to call *al-jami`a* in which he compiled all what people need of the Prophet's traditions, and which was inherited by the Imams of Ahlul Bayt who often referred to it. Examples:

Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq has said, "We have the *saheefa*; it is seventy yards long: it is the dictation of the Messenger of Allah written down in the hand-writing of Ali. Nothing permissible or prohibitive the knowledge thereof is needed by people, nor any other issue, except that it is in it, even the penalty for inflicting an offense as minor as a tiny scratch on someone's cheek."<sup>6</sup>

Al-Bukhari himself has referred to this *saheefa*, which was in Ali's possession, in many chapters of his book, but he, as was quite often his habit, curtailed a great deal of information about its nature and contents. In his *Kitab al-`Ilm*, al-Bukhari records the following:

Al-Sha`bi has quoted Abu Juhayfa saying, "I asked Ali: `Do you have a book in your possession?' He said, `No, except the Book of Allah, or some knowledge bestowed upon a Muslim man, or what this *saheefa* quotes of the Prophet.' I asked him, `And what is in this *saheefa*?' `It contains reason,' he said, `the ransoming of the captives, and that no Muslim should kill another Muslim.'<sup>7</sup>

In another place, al-Bukhari quotes Ibrahim al-Taymi quoting his father quoting Ali saying, "We have nothing except the Book of Allah and this *saheefa* which quotes the Prophet."<sup>8</sup> In yet another place in al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, the author quotes Ibrahim al-Taymi quoting his father saying, "Ali delivered a sermon once to us in which he said, `We have no book to read except the Book of Allah and what is recorded in this *saheefa*.'<sup>9</sup>

In another place of his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes Ali saying, "We did not write down from the Prophet except the Qur'an and this *saheefa*."<sup>10</sup> In yet another place of his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari says, "Ibrahim al-Taymi quotes his father saying, `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered a sermon to us once from a pulpit built of baked bricks, and he was carrying a sword from which a *saheefa* was draping and said, `By Allah! We do not have any book to read except the Book of Allah and what is recorded in this *saheefa*.'<sup>11</sup>

Al-Bukhari, however, did not indicate that Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq had said that this *saheefa* was called "al-jami`a" due to the fact that it contained all what is permissible and prohibitive, and it had all what people need, even the penalty for scratching one's cheek, that it was dictated by the Messenger of Allah and hand-written by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib.

Instead, he only made a casual reference to it. He has said once that it has reason, the ransoming of the captives, and that no Muslim man should be killed on account of a non-Muslim. And once he says, "Ali

spread it out, and it had a reference to camels' teeth, that Medina is not to be entered by non-Muslims, that the Muslims' security is their collective responsibility, and that if someone followed certain people without the permission of his masters..., etc.”

This is nothing but forgery and the adulteration of facts; otherwise, does it make sense to say that Ali wrote only those four statements on it then draped it to his sword to the extent that it was with him even whenever he preached from the pulpit, making it second only to the Holy Qur'an as his reference, telling people, “We have not quoted of what the Prophet has said except the Qur'an and what this *saheefa* contains”?!

Was Abu Hurayra's mind greater than that of Ali ibn Abu Talib to the extent that he learned by heart one hundred thousand traditions from the Messenger of Allah without having written a single one of them down?!

Strange, by Allah, is the case of those who accept one hundred thousand traditions narrated by Abu Hurayra who did not accompany the Prophet except for three years, the illiterate that he was, while claiming that Ali was the gate of the city of knowledge from whom the *sahaba* learned various branches of knowledge.

Yet, according to them, Ali was carrying a scroll containing only four *ahadith* that remained with him during the Prophet's lifetime till his own caliphate, so he ascended the pulpit and it was draping from his sword...! What a big statement they make, and what lies they fabricate...

Yet what al-Bukhari has recorded suffices the researchers and any discreet person especially since he mentioned that that *saheefa* contained many topics relevant to the human mind and to the Islamic intellect. Our point is not to prove or disprove what the *saheefa* contained, for the residents of Mecca best know its valleys, and the family members know best what their house contains, but what concerns us in this research is the fact that the *sahaba* were indeed writing down the traditions of the Prophet.

Abu Hurayra's statement that Abdullah ibn Umar used to record the Prophet's traditions, in addition to the statement of Ali ibn Abu Talib saying, according to al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, “We have not quoted of what the Prophet has said except the Qur'an and what this *saheefa* contains,” irrevocably proves that the Messenger of Allah never prohibited anyone from recording his *ahadith*; rather, it proves the opposite.

The tradition recorded in al-Bukhari's *Sahih* quoting the Prophet saying, “Do not quote me, and anyone who quotes anything from me other than the Qur'an must erase it” is a false tradition fabricated by those who supported the caliphs so that they might support them. It was fabricated in order to justify what Abu Bakr and Umar and Uthman had done: the burning of Prophet's *ahadith* and the prohibition of the Sunnah from being disseminated.

What increases our conviction is the fact that not only did the Messenger of Allah refrain from prohibiting the writing of his *ahadith*, but that he even ordered them to be recorded. Imam Ali, who was the closest

person to the Prophet, said: “We have not quoted of what the Prophet has said except the Qur'an and what this *saheefa* contains.” This statement is quoted by al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*.

If we add to the above what Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq has said, that is, that *al-saheefa al-jami`a* was the dictation of the Messenger of Allah in the hand-writing of Ali, we will conclude by saying that the Prophet had ordered Ali to quote him.

In order to dispel any doubt which may still linger in the mind of the dear reader, I would like to shed more light and state the following:

Al-Hakim in his book *Al-Mustadrak*, Abu Dawood in his *Sahih*, Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, and al-Darimi in his *Sunan* have all quoted a very important *hadith* regarding Abdullah ibn Umar to whom Abu Hurayra referred and whom he described as having written down a larger number of the Prophet's *ahadith* than he himself had quoted; it is as follows:

Abdullah ibn Umar has said: “I used to write down whatever I heard from the Messenger of Allah, so Quraysh prohibited me from doing so saying, ‘Do you write everything you hear from the Messenger of Allah who is a human being talking in anger or when pleased?’ So I stopped writing, then I told the Messenger of Allah about it, whereupon he pointed to his mouth and said, ‘Keep writing, for by the One Who holds my soul do I swear that nothing comes out of it except the truth.’”<sup>12</sup>

This tradition clearly tells us that Abdullah ibn Umar used to write down everything he heard from the Messenger of Allah who did not prohibit him from doing so; rather, such a prohibition came from Quraysh. Abdullah did not want to identify those who prohibited him from writing what he was writing, for their prohibition contradicted what the Messenger of Allah had told him.

It is also quite clear that his generally ambiguous reference to “Quraysh” means the leaders of Quraysh [who were then present in Medina], that is, the *Meccan Muhajirs*, immigrants, led by Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, Abu Ubaydah, Talhah, al-Zubayr, and all those who followed their line.

We also notice that their prohibiting Abdullah took place while the Prophet was still alive: this by itself emphasizes the depth of the conspiracy and its gravity; otherwise, why should these men prohibit Abdullah from writing *hadith* without first consulting with the Prophet himself in this regard? This can also be understood from their statement that the Messenger of Allah was an ordinary human being who talked when angry and when pleased. It indicates how weak their belief in the Prophet was to the extent that they expected him to say something wrong, or pass an erroneous verdict, especially in the state of anger.

The fact that the Prophet said the following when Abdullah ibn Umar mentioned to him Quraysh's prohibition and what they said about him, he pointed to his mouth and said, “By the One Who holds my soul do I swear that nothing comes out of it except the truth” is another proof of the Prophet's knowledge of their doubting his justice, and that they expected him to err and to utter falsehood (*Astaghfirullah!* [We

seek forgiveness of Allah]); therefore, he swore by Allah that he said nothing except the truth. This is the accurate interpretation of the verse saying,

***“Surely he does not utter anything of his own desire; it is but a revelation revealed” (Holy Qur’an, 53:3-4),***

and that he was protected against erring or uttering falsehood.

Because of all the above, we emphatically state that all “traditions” fabricated during the time of the Umayyads which implied that he was not divinely protected against erring are not authentic at all. The tradition cited above also gives us the impression that their influence on Abdullah ibn Umar was so great that he stopped writing *hadith* down as he himself admitted when he said, “... so I stopped writing...”

He remained so till an occasion came wherein the Messenger of Allah interfered in person to dispel the doubts circulated against his infallibility and equity, the doubts which were quite often articulated even in his own presence such as their asking him: “Are you *really* a prophet?”<sup>13</sup> or: “Are you the one who claims to be a prophet?”<sup>14</sup> or: “By Allah, he did not seek in this distribution the Pleasure of Allah!”<sup>15</sup> or Ayesha's statement to the Prophet: “Your God is sure swift in fulfilling your desires!”<sup>16</sup> or her asking the prophet once to be fair..., up to the end of the list of impertinent statements which demonstrate the fact that they doubted his infallibility, believing that he was liable to be unfair, to oppress, to err, to lie...; we seek Allah's protection.

He, indeed, possessed sublime morals; he was kind and compassionate as he tried to dispel such doubts by saying once, for example, “I am only a servant receiving orders from his Master,” and once, “By Allah! I am kind for the sake of pleasing Allah Whom I fear,” and at another time he said, “By the One Who controls my life! It utters nothing except the truth.” He used quite often to say: “May Allah have mercy on my Brother Moses! He was subjected to more afflictions than this, yet he persevered.”

Those impertinent statements which cast doubts about the Prophet's infallibility and about his Prophethood were not made by those who were outcasts or hypocritical; rather, they were unfortunately made by very prominent companions of the Prophet, and by the Mother of the Believers, and by those who are still regarded by “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” as role models of conduct; so, there is no power nor might except in Allah, the Sublime, the Great.

What confirms our conviction that the tradition which supposedly prohibited the recording of *hadith* is fabricated and was baseless, and that the Prophet never said so at all, is the fact that Abu Bakr himself used to write down the traditions of the Prophet during his lifetime. Yet when he ascended to the post of caliph, he decided to burn them for a reason with which the researchers are familiar.

Here is his daughter Ayesha saying, “My father gathered the *ahadith* of the Messenger of Allah, and they totalled five hundred, then he spent his night sleeplessly turning on his sides. I thought that he was upset because of someone's complaint, or because of some news which he had heard. The next morning, he

said to me, `Daughter! Bring me the *ahadith* in your possession,' so I brought them to him, and he set them on fire.”<sup>17</sup>

And here is Umar ibn al-Khattab, also upon becoming caliph, delivering a sermon one day to people in which he said, “Anyone who has in his possession a book must bring it to me so that I may tell him what I think of it.” People thought that he simply wanted to verify their contents to remove from them any discrepancy, so they brought him their books whereupon he set them on fire.<sup>18</sup> Then he dispatched his orders to Islamic lands ordering people thus: Anyone who has any *ahadith* written down has to erase them.<sup>19</sup>

This is the greatest evidence testifying to the fact that all the *sahaba*, had they lived in Medina or in the rest of Muslim lands, had in their possession books in which they compiled sacred *ahadith* of the Prophet which they had recorded during the Prophet's lifetime. They were all burnt according to the orders first of Abu Bakr then of Umar. All other books found in other lands were erased during Umar's caliphate as he had ordered.<sup>20</sup>

Based upon the above, we cannot, nor can any sane person, believe that the Messenger of Allah had prohibited them from writing them down, having come to know that most *sahaba* possessed books containing traditions especially the *saheefa* with which Imam Ali never parted, and whose length reached seventy yards, and which he used to call *al-jami`a* [literally meaning: the university] because it contained all sorts of knowledge.

Since the interests of the ruling authority and the dominant political line dictated the obliteration and the burning of the Sunnah and the prohibition of quoting *hadith*, the *sahaba* who supported such caliphate obeyed those orders and burnt such Sunnah and ceased quoting *hadith*.

Thus, they left themselves and their followers no option except resorting to personal views expressed as *ijtihad*, or following the “sunnah” of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Mu`awiyah, Yazid, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, al-Waleed ibn Abd al-Malik, Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik.... This continued till [Umayyad caliph] Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz came to power and asked Abu Bakr al-Hazmi to write down what he remembered of the *ahadith* and Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah or the “sunnah” of Umar ibn al-Khattab.<sup>21</sup>

Thus does it become clear to us that even during the circumstances that permitted the recording of the Sunnah, a hundred years after the obliteration and prohibition of the Sunnah, we can see the moderate Umayyad caliph whose name was added by “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” to the list of the “righteous caliphs” ordering the compilation of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah in addition to the “sunnah” of Umar ibn al-Khattab, as if Umar ibn al-Khattab was a partner of Muhammad in his Prophetic mission and prophethood...!

And why did Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz not ask the Imams from Ahlul Bayt, who were his contemporaries, to give him a copy of *al-saheefa al-jami`a*? And why did he not put them in charge of collecting the Prophet's *ahadith* especially since they knew best what their grandfather had said? But verifiers and

researchers know the secret.

Can those traditions which were compiled by “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” be taken for granted especially since those who compiled them belonged to Banu Umayyah and their supporters who represent Quraysh's caliphate? Can we rely on them after having already come to know the truth about Quraysh and its attitude towards the Messenger of Allah and his purified Sunnah? It remains obvious, having come to know all of that, that the ruling authority across the centuries acted only upon the principles of *ijtihad*, analogy, and mutual consultation...

Since the said authority had expelled Imam Ali from the stage of public life and ignored him, it had nothing against him to require him to burn what he had recorded during the Prophetic Message according to the dictation of the Prophet himself.

Ali remained in possession of that *saheefa* in which he compiled everything people need, even the penalty for slightly scratching one's cheek. When he became caliph, he was still letting it drape from his sword as he ascended the pulpit to deliver a sermon to people to acquaint them with its importance.

Consecutive stories told by the Imams of Ahlul Bayt kept indicating that their sons inherited that *saheefa* from their fathers, chronologically one from another, and that they used to refer to it in order to issue religious decisions (*fatawa*) with regard to questions raised to them by their contemporaries who were guided by the light of their guidance. For this reason, Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq, Imam al-Rida, and many other Imams, used to always repeat the same statement in its regard.

They used to say, “We do not issue verdicts to people according to our own views; had we been issuing verdicts to people in the light of our own views and according to the dictates of our own inclinations, we would surely have been among those who perish. Rather, they are legacies of the Messenger of Allah of knowledge which sons inherit from their fathers, and which we treasure as people treasure their gold and silver.”<sup>22</sup> Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq said once,

My hadith is my father's, while my father's hadith is my grandfather's, and the hadith of my grandfather is that of al-Husayn; al-Husayn's hadith is that of al-Hasan; al-Hasan's hadith is that of the Commander of the Faithful; the hadith of the Commander of the Faithful is the hadith of the Messenger of Allah, and the hadith of the Messenger of Allah is the speech of Allah, the Lord of Dignity and Greatness.<sup>23</sup>

Based on such premises, the tradition of the Two Weighty Things (al-Thaqalain) becomes consecutively reported (*mutawatir*), and its text is as follows:

I have left among you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my Progeny; so long as you (simultaneously) uphold both of them, you shall never stray after me.<sup>24</sup>

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1. Read in this regard from page 200 and beyond in my book Ask Those Who Know.

2. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 8, p. 229, "Kitab al-Zuhd" (Book of Asceticism) in a chapter dealing with verification of hadith and the injunction regarding the recording of knowledge.
3. This is so due to the fact that recording the Sunnah was postponed till the time of caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz or even thereafter. As for the caliphs and rulers who preceded him, they burnt it and prohibited anyone from writing it down or quoting it.
4. What is strange is that Ahlul Sunnah often narrate one hadith and its antithesis in the same book. Yet even more strange is that they quite often follow false traditions and neglect authentic ones.
5. Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 1, p. 36, "Kitab al-'Ilm" (Book of Knowledge).
6. Usul al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 239, and also on p. 143 of Basair al-Darajat.
7. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 1, p. 36, [original Arabic text].
8. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 2, p. 221.
9. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 67, and Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 115.
10. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 69.
11. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 8, p. 144.
12. Al-Hakim, Mustadrak, Vol. 1, p. 105. Also Abu Dawud, Sunan, Vol. 2, p. 126. Also al-Darimi, Sunan, Vol. 1, p. 125, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 2, p. 162.
13. This statement was made by Umar ibn al-Khattab during the Treaty of Hudaibiya, and it is recorded on p. 122, Vol. 2, of al-Bukhari's Sahih.
14. This statement was made by 'Ayesha daughter of Abu Bakr; see p. 29, Vol. 2, of al-Ghazali's book Ihya al-'Ulum.
15. This was the statement made to the Prophet by an Ansar companion as recorded on p. 47, Vol. 4, of al-Bukhari's Sahih.
16. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 6, p. 24, and also Vol. 6, p. 128, of the same reference.
17. See p. 237, Vol. 5, of Kanz al-'Ummal. Refer also to Ibn Kathir's book Al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya as well as p. 5, Vol. 1, of al-Dhahabi's Tadhkirat al-Huffaz.
18. Ibn Sa'ad, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 5, p. 188. It is also recorded in Taqyeed al-'Ilm by al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi.
19. Refer to Ibn Abd al-Birr's book Jamai' Bayan al-'Ilm.
20. Look, may Allah protect you, at such a horrible act committed by the caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar towards the Prophetic Sunnah! Imagine the greatly immeasurable loss which they inflicted upon the Islamic Ummah which very badly needed such ahadith in order to understand the Holy Qur'an and the commandments of Allah, the Most Glorified One. They were, by my life, authentic ahadith because they were direct quotations from the Prophet recorded in the absence of a second narrator. As for the "traditions" which were compiled after that period, these were mostly fabrications because dissension had already taken place, and Muslims killed one another, and they were manufactured according to the specifications provided by various oppressive rulers...
21. Malik, Al-Muwatta', Vol. 1, p. 5.
22. 'Allama al-'Askari, Ma'alim al-Madrasatayn, Vol. 2, p. 302.
23. Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 53.
24. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 5, p. 122, also al-Tirmidhi, Sahih, Vol. 5, p. 637.

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