

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT THE FOUR CALIPHS OF ISLAM SAY?

Section One

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), the Unlettered Prophet and the family of our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Al-'Irbad ibn Sariyya relayed the warning of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who said, *"You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Cling to it fiercely and beware of new things. These new things are innovations, and every innovation is misguidance."*ⁱⁱ Jabir added, *"Every misguidance is in the fire."*ⁱⁱⁱ

We will take a brief look the way in which the first four caliphs of Islam observed the Sunnah.

ABU BAKR (may Allah be pleased with him) AND FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

Abu Bakr As-Siddique (may Allah be pleased with him) was the closest friend of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and had the privilege of spending day and night in the company of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Although the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not possess a shadow¹, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was the shadow of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as he would accompany the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in travelling, taking part in battles mirroring the way the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) worshipped Allah (The Exalted). Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) did the same; to such an extent that he even followed the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in eating, drinking, sleeping, walking and talking. Even if it would be the smallest Sunnah, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) followed it.

First Caliph

After the passing away of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) from this world², Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed as the first successor. In his first sermon he said, *"Follow me until I follow Allah (The Exalted) and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) but when I stop following the commands of Allah (The Exalted) and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) do not follow me."*^{iv}

Raf'i Ta'i (may Allah be pleased with him) states, 'Once I went to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked him for some advice', he said, *"May Allah (The Exalted) shower his mercy and blessings upon you, pray Salaah, keep fast, give Zakah, perform Hajj, and follow every Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)."*^v

The advice of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) is to follow the five pillars of Islam, but do not leave it at that, also observe the Sunnah too.

Resolve The Problem By The Sunnah

Whenever a case or a problem arose, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) would first resolve the problem through the book of Allah (The Exalted) or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and thereafter would make a decision.^{vi}

¹There are many hadith quoted by many Muhaddith, however, only one is quoted at this point as this is not the point of discussion. Ibn Mubarak (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not have a shadow and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not stand in front of the Sun, except that his light use to overcome the light of the Sun (brighter than the sun) and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not stand in front of the candlelight except that his light used to overcome the light of the candle." (Jamuool Wasil, Vol: 1, Page No: 174. Sharh Shamail, Vol: 1, Page No 47. Zarqani Alal Mawahib, Vol: 4, Page No 220)

² The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"The Prophets are alive in their graves, praying."* (Abu Ya'la in Musnad, Al-Haytami in Majma' al-Zawa'id, Bayhaqi in Hayat al-Anbiya' fi Quburhim and Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari. All with a sound chain.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *“I have not omitted doing anything that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to do. I feared that I would deviate if I left out any of his commands.”*^{vii}

At The Time Of Death

Only some time before the death of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) he asked Aisha³ (may Allah be pleased with her) *“How many sheets did the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) have for his shroud and what day was his death? The reason for this question was that I have spent all my life following the blessed Sunnah, I also want to follow the blessed Sunnah at my death when the shroud is given to me too.”*^{viii}

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: *“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘As for you, Abu Bakr, you will be the first of my Ummah to enter Paradise.’”*^{ix}
Subhanallah! He has been given the guarantee of Paradise by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in this world, yet he did not discard his Salaah, nor the other pillars of Islam, nor did he discard the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), but he followed it very closely and he advised others to do so too.

Section Two

‘UMAR (may Allah be pleased with him) AND FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

‘Umar’s (may Allah be pleased with him) life was based on following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). ‘Umar’s (may Allah be pleased with him) dress was simple according to the Prophet’s (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) dress. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) always spent his life as simple as possible so both the poor and the rich could follow his blessed lifestyle equally. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) spent a simple life even when he was ruling Rome and Iran.^x

Prepare For The Hereafter

Once Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) said, ‘Now that Allah (The Exalted) has given you all this you should spend your life accordingly’, ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *‘Have you forgotten the life of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)? I swear by Allah (The Exalted) I will follow the footsteps of my master so that I get the best in the hereafter’.* ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) kept talking about the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to the extent that tears flowed from the eyes of Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her).^{xi}

Leaving The Sunnah

Once Yazeed bin Abi Sufyan and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sat to eat. After the normal food was laid down, some special food was laid. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) pulled his hand away and said, *‘I swear by Him who holds ‘Umar’s life, if you leave the Sunnah and the way shown by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then Allah (The Exalted) will take away what has been given to you.’*^{xii}

The Straight Path

Sa’eed bin Maseeb narrates that, *“‘Umar bin Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) (from a journey) came to Madinah and gave a sermon. After praising Allah (The Exalted) he said, ‘O people! The way of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) meaning the Sunnah, has been left for you, you have to follow it this is the straight path for you, do not make people go astray.’”*^{xiii}

‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote to his governors telling them to learn the Sunnah, the shares of inheritance and the dialects, saying, *“People will try to argue with you (i.e. by using the Qur’an), so overcome them with the Sunnah. The people of the Sunnah have the greatest knowledge of the Book of Allah.”*^{xiv}

³ The daughter of Abu Bakr and the wife of the Prophet of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

When ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) prayed two cycles at *Dhu’l-Hulayfa*,⁴ he said, “*I do as I saw the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) doing.*”^{xv}

When ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) looked at the Black stone, he said, “*You are a stone and can neither help nor harm. If I had not seen the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) kiss you, I would not have kissed you.*”^{xvi}

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘While I was asleep⁵ I saw myself in Paradise, and there was a woman performing ablution beside a palace. I said, ‘Whose is this palace?’ They said, ‘It belongs to ‘Umar.’*”^{xvii}

Subhanallah! ‘Umar (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is also granted Paradise and look at how close he would follow the Sunnah! O Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), Ameen.

Section Three

‘UTHMAN (may Allah be pleased with him) AND FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was also a very strict follower of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and was drowned in his love. He always feared Allah (The Exalted) and did nothing that would displease Allah (The Exalted) or His beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He would often cry due to the fear of Allah (The Exalted), death, and the concern of the hereafter and tears would flow from his eyes.

Bay’ah With The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

He loved the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and all his blessed actions, to the extent that he did not let any impurity get on the hand with which he gave oath (bay’ah) to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him) peace.

Smiling After Ablution

He loved the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) so much that he would observe all the actions and followed them. Once ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) smiled after *Wudhu* and was asked why he smiled? He replied, “*I saw the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) do the same.*”^{xviii}

Follow Me or Leave Me

‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) spent his life practising even the smallest Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and gave invitation to others to practise the Sunnah. When he became the Caliph, he stood in front of the people and said, “*Follow me until I follow the Sunnah and leave me as soon as I leave the Sunnah. If I leave or move away from the Sunnah then show me the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).*”^{xix}

Passing Funeral

Once a funeral was passing ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) when he suddenly stood up and said, “*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would do this.*”^{xx}

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) related that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) gathered his garments around him when ‘Uthman entered and said, “*Should I not feel shy of a man of whom the angles are shy?*”^{xxi}

Subhanallah! This is the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying this, however, we do not feel shy at all when we go against the teaching of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah

4 The border (*miqat*) for the people of Madinah on their way to Hajj.

5 The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “*My eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep.*” (Bukhari and Muslim. Ash-Shifa; Page: 45)

bless him and grant him peace). O Allah! (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow in the footsteps of 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), Ameen.

Section Four

'ALI (may Allah be pleased with him) AND FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was another companion immersed in the love of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and carefully followed the Sunnah. If anyone had any questions about rules and regulations or the Sunnah, they would ask 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

Hunted Meat

Once at the time of Hajj someone presented the meat of a hunted animal to 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). There was a disagreement among the people. 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *'You can eat the meat'*. However, some people who were in the state of *Ihraam* objected. 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *'It is permissible to eat the meat but not permissible to hunt it yourself. However, if someone else hunts it that is not in Ihraam it is acceptable'*. Some people said, *'This is not the Sunnah'*. 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) thought why did 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) not tell us about this ruling?

'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) then said, *'Those people who remember this incident give evidence for me, once the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was in the state of Ihraam and some meat was presented that was hunted, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'We are in the state of Ihraam give it to those who are not in Ihraam'*. From the gathering twelve people gave evidence to this incident and the meat that was hunted was not eaten. ^{xxii}

Instructing Others To Follow The Sunnah

In the same way that 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) would act upon the Sunnah he instructed others to follow too. When he became the ruler after 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) appointed Qais bin Sa'ad (may Allah be pleased with him) the governor of Persia. He advised him to pass this message on to the people of Persia, that *'Always follow and act upon the Sunnah and as long as you hold tight onto Allah's book and the Sunnah, Allah (The Exalted) will always assist you. Those who turn their faces away from the Sunnah will be discarded.'* ^{xxiii}

When 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) joined the *Hajj* and *'Umrah* together, 'Uthman said to him, *"Why do you do this, when you know that I have forbidden the people to do it?"* He replied, *"I do not abandon a Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) for the statement of anyone."* ^{xxiv}

'Ali (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"I am not a Prophet, nor have I received revelation, but I act according to the Book of Allah (The Exalted) and the Sunnah of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as much as I can."* ^{xxv}

Abu Surayhah or Zaid ibn Arqam (may Allah be pleased with them) related from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that he said, *'He for whom I am his master (mawla), then 'Ali is his master.'* ^{xxvi}

Habashi ibn Jinadah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *'that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali."* ^{xxvii}

The caliphs of Islam feared Allah (The Exalted) and loved the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). They are those to whom the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) gave them glad tidings of Paradise in this world, however, they did not leave following the Sunnah but followed it very closely.

People nowadays say, *'You don't need to do all this, as long as you have a clean heart because Allah (The Exalted) is 'Raheem' (Most Merciful) and Ghaffaar (Most Forgiving)'* of course Allah (The Exalted) is

the Most Merciful, however, remember He also is *Al-Mumeet* (The Slayer). If those who are guaranteed Paradise did not leave the Sunnah, then what can be said of us who do not know of our destination?

May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow in the footsteps of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen (The Four rightly guided Caliphs).

ⁱ Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Hakim, Ibn Majah, and Tabarani.

ⁱⁱ Darimi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad, Mustadrak al-Hakim, Talkis al-Mustadrak by al-Zahabi, Talkhis al-Habir by al-Asqalani and Takhrij Ahdaith Usul by al-Bazqawi.

ⁱⁱⁱ Muslim

^{iv} Adab-e-Sunnat, p.27

^v Ibid. p.27

^{vi} Ibid. p.27

^{vii} Ash-Shifa. Part Two, Chapter One, Section four, p222.

^{viii} Bukhari.

^{ix} The History of the Khalifahs. p. 41

^x Adab-e-Sunnat, p.28

^{xi} Ibid. p.28

^{xii} Ibid. p.29

^{xiii} Ibid. p.30

^{xiv} Ash-Shifa. Part Two, Chapter One, Section four, p220.

^{xv} Ibid.

^{xvi} Ash-Shifa. Part Two, Chapter One, Section four, p221.

^{xvii} The History of the Khalifahs. p. 119

^{xviii} Ibid. p.30-1

^{xix} Ibid. p.32

^{xx} Adab-e-Sunnat, p. 31

^{xxi} The History of the Khalifahs. p. 162

^{xxii} Ibid. p.33-4

^{xxiii} Ibid. p.34

^{xxiv} Ash-Shifa. Part Two, Chapter One, Section four, p220.

^{xxv} Ibid.

^{xxvi} The History of the Khalifahs. p. 185

^{xxvii} The History of the Khalifahs. p. 185