

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LIFE OF THE PIOUS

Section One

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) the Prophet, and his wives the Mothers of the Believers and his descendants and the People of his House just as You blessed our master Abraham for You are the Praiseworthy the Mighty.

The Sunnah is a Miracle

In the time of Shaykh Junaid al Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) there was a person who was looking for a spiritual guide (a Shaykh) to give oath to (Bay'ah). He was looking for someone, who could perform miracles, as he wanted the greatest Shaykh of his time. Someone asked him to meet Shaykh Junaid al Baghdadi, so he went to see what miracles he could see in this Shaykh. He was offered a place in the guesthouse, but he wanted to be closer to observe him and the Shaykh accepted. One of the first things he noticed was that when the Shaykh would go out he would wear a beautiful *Jubbah* (garb) but once he came home he removed this clothing and wore clothing made of rough cloth. The reason for wearing a beautiful garb was to please persons like him and the reason for the rough cloth was to please his soul.

Another thing the guest observed was that the Shaykh ate very simple and tasteless food but gave delicious food to his guests to honour them. He ate simple food to control his desire (*Nafs*).

Finally, the man decided to leave as he did not observe any miracles but before leaving, he went to meet the Shaykh who asked him whether he obtained what he was looking for. The guest replied in the negative and then he was asked if he saw any action against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). The guest replied that you followed the Sunnah very closely, the Shaykh then told him:

“The establishing of Sunnah is more important than a miracle.”

Respected brothers/sisters of Islam! Let's think for a second how long ago this incident took place, approximately one thousand years ago and still we remember our predecessors we find that following the Sunnah raises the status of the follower in this world and in the hereafter. Let us follow the pious so we have their shade in the hereafter. ¹

Shaykh Junaid al Baghdadi's Statement

He says, “All paths are closed for the people, except for that man who followed in the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) footsteps. So he who followed the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Sunnah and regarded his method as crucial, then all the paths of good deeds are open for him.”

Some people claim to be Sufis without following the Shariah and the Sunnah. It is impossible to reach Allah (The Exalted) without following the Shariah and the Sunnah. There are many lessons to be learnt from the following incident:

Once, Shaykh Junaid Baghdad (may Allah have mercy on him) came to the shores of the river Tigris and began the *dhikr* of “*Ya Allah*.” He then walked over the water as if on solid ground and crossed the river. Before he crossed, a man was also waiting for transport to go across. When the man saw the *Shaykh* crossing, he said, “*Oh Shaykh! I would also like to go across.*” The *Shaykh* said, “*Repeat Ya Junaid! Ya Junaid! And follow me.*” The man did that and began walking on the water. As he reached the middle of the river, the *Shaytan* confused his mind by saying, “*Who is greater, Allah or the Shaykh? The Shaykh himself is saying ‘Ya Allah! Ya Allah! but orders you to say ‘Ya Junaid, Ya Junaid’. This is Shirk. Abstain from this and imitate the Shaykh who says ‘Ya Allah, Ya Allah?’*”

The cursed *Shaytan* misled the man and he began to say “*Ya Allah*”. As soon as he invoked the Name of *Allah*, he began drowning and screamed for help. The noble *Shaykh* watched this and shouted to him, “*Say ‘Ya Junaid, Ya Junaid, as I ordered you to do!’*” The man did so and was amazed to feel the water under his feet transformed as hard as the ground. He crossed over to safety. When he reached the banks, he inquired from the *Shaykh*, “*O Shaykh! I cannot understand this. You said ‘Ya Allah, Ya Allah’ and crossed*

over safely. But when I invoked His Glorious Name, I began drowning?" The Noble Walī replied "O ignorant! You have not as yet understood Junaid and have dreams of understanding Allah!" Subhān-Allāh!¹ ²

Shaykh Sufyan Al-Thawri's Statement

Sufyan Thawri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Words without action are baseless. Words and actions are baseless without sincere intention. Words with action and sincere intention are baseless if they are not in accordance with the Sunnah."ⁱⁱ

Shaykh Abu Bakr Shibli

Abu Tayyab Ahmad Maqatal Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) states that "On the day Shaykh Abu Bakr Shibli passed away, I was sat at Ja'far Khuldi's house, a servant of Shaykh Abu Bakr Shibli came and who was present when Shaykh Shibli passed away. The servant was asked by Ja'far Khuldi (may Allah have mercy on him) 'What did you see at the time of the death of Shaykh Shibli?' The servant said, "When he could not talk he signalled with his hand to make him perform ablution. I did this but forgot to make him wipe the beard with his fingers. Shaykh Shibli caught my hand in order to make him perform the Sunnah." Listening to this Ja'far Khuldi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, 'What is to be said of a person when near death and could not talk but still did not miss the wiping of the beard.'" ⁱⁱⁱ

Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan

It has been recorded that Mawlana Naeemuddeen Muradabadi once asked A'la Hadhrat Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan the reason for him being so severe upon those who disrespected the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan replied, "O Mawlana! I am severe upon those people, because instead of insulting the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) they should rather make me the target for their insults. I do not have any interest in what they are calling me. At least, while they are busy insulting me, my beloved master is spared from these insults."^{iv} This is true as a person doesn't care if anyone insult him but to insult one he loves he will become defendant and try to protect in whichever way possible.

Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan and Following The Sunnah

Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan's says, "There was once a rumour in Bareilly, (his home town) that a Plague had appeared. Co-incidentally, at that moment, my gums became extremely inflamed. It continued to such proportions that it became difficult for me to open my mouth. I also had a high fever, coupled with inflamed glands. The doctor, who was called, looked at me closely for a few minutes. He exclaimed that I had the Plague. I could not speak at that moment, or else I could have told him that his diagnosis was incorrect and false."

"I was certain that I did not have the Plague or any other major disease, simply because I had recited a supplication³ as explained by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who said that if one sees a serious and deadly illness, he should recite this supplication which would protect the person from such an illness. Whenever I saw a serious illness, I recited this supplication; therefore, I was protected against it, including the Plague."

"Thereafter, with extreme respect, I proclaimed aloud, 'O Allah! Prove that the words of your Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is true, and that the words of the doctor are false'. At that moment a voice on my right advised me to use the *Miswak* and black pepper. With a little difficulty, I performed brushing with the *Miswak* and kept the black pepper on my tongue as a tablet. Infinite, indeed, is the Mercy of Allah (The Exalted)! Within a few minutes, I had gained my strength and sent the doctor away by proving that his diagnosis was false and baseless."^v

This was the belief of Shaykh Ahmad Raza on the sayings of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

1 Malfoozat-e-Ala Hadhrat with reference to ©adiqat al-Nadiyyah by 'Arife-Bill@h Imām 'Abd al-Ghani Nab'l^s+ (d.1143/1731).

2 There is a great lesson for the Murid (disciple) to learn in this incident. The Murshid (spiritual guide) is to be obeyed at all times and slightest disobedience or opposition to the Murshid will destroy all virtues of the Murid. Nowadays, people call themselves Murids, but their behaviour with the Murshid is pathetic. At times it seems that the Murid is in fact the Murshid. May the Merciful Lord grant us Tawfiq to respect and fulfil the rights of the Murshid.

3 This supplication can be found in Chapter 69

Following of The Smaller Sunnah

A similar incident showing the great trust that Shaykh Ahmad Raza had in Allah (The Exalted), and His beloved Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is recorded by Mawlana Mohammed Shareef. He says, "Once, when Shaykh Ahmad Raza was returning from Hajj by ship with his father, there was a great storm. The storm reached such intensity that the Captain advised the passengers to wear their shrouds (*kafans*) for he could see no escape from such a storm. Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan noticing the concern on the face of his father, inquired as to what had transpired. His father replied, 'My beloved son, I have no concern for myself, rather it is for you that I am sad'. The young Shaykh replied, 'O father! If the captain has lost hope, then let him do so. We should have complete faith in Allah (The Exalted), and His beloved Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). In accordance with the commands of the beloved Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) when entering this ship, I recited the supplication, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated that, "Whosoever, recites this supplication when entering a ship, that ship would not be destroyed. Therefore, I have absolute certainty that generations may change, yet, this ship would never sink.'" SubhanAllah!

Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan having merely spoken these words, when the captain arrived and began informing the passengers that the storm is subsiding and that there was no need for concern! ^{vi}

*Daal Di Qalb Me Azmate Mustafa
Sayyidi Ala Hazrat Pe Lako Salaam*

*Placed in the hearts the respect of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace
Thousands of salutations be upon Ala Hazrat*

Who Can Follow The Sunnah?

Respected brothers/sisters of Islam! Whoever and whatever you may be, you would find a shining example in the life of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to illuminate your behaviour. If you have the life of the Prophet before you, you can find examples of all the Prophets, Nuh, Ibraheem, Ayyub, Yunus, Yusuf, Musa and Isa (upon them all be peace). If the life and character of each Prophet of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) were deemed to be a shop selling the wares of one commodity, that of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would verily be a variety store where goods of every description can be had to suit the tastes and needs of all.

O Allah! (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow in the footsteps of the pious and get close to you,
Ameen.

Section Two

Love For The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

There are many signs one can have to love the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Some of the signs a person must possess are as follows:

- 1) The first sign is that he will emulate him, apply his Sunnah, follow his words and deeds, obey his commands and avoid his prohibitions and take on his *adab* (manners) in ease and hardship, joy and despair.
- 2) He will prefer what the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has laid down as law and encouraged, over his own passions and appetites.
- 3) Another of the signs of love for the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is to mention him often. Whoever loves something mentions it a lot.
- 4) Another is great yearning to meet him. Every lover yearns for their beloved.
- 5) One who loves him will exalt and respect him when he mentions him and display humility and abasement when he hears his name. The Scholars are unanimous concerning the obligation to magnify

and exalt the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) his Family, and his Companions. It was the practice of the Pious Predecessors and the Imams of the past that whenever the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) his Family was mentioned in their presence they were seized by reverence, humbleness, stillness, and dignity.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (this is Ja'far al-Sadiq) (may Allah be pleased with them) would turn pale whenever he heard the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his Family mentioned.

Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) would not mention a hadith except in a state of ritual purity (ablution).

'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) would turn red and stammer whenever he heard the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his Family mentioned.

As for 'Amir ibn 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awamm al-Asadi (one of the early Sufis (may Allah be pleased with them)), he would weep until his eyes had no tears left in them. When a hadith was mentioned in their presence they would lower their voices. ^{vii}

Ismail Haqqi (may Allah have mercy upon him) writes: "The name of Mahmood Sultan's servant was Ayaz whose son was called Muhammad. Once the Sultan was in need of ablution, so he called out "O son of Ayaz bring some water." Ayaz heard this and was anxious what has my son done wrong that the sultan called Ayaz's son and not by his name Muhammad. When the sultan saw Ayaz anxious he asked for the reason and he said, 'You did not take his name and called my name?', the king smiled and said "I didn't have ablution and was ashamed of bringing this name on my tongue this is why I said Ayaz's son." ^{viii}

This is the respect of a Sultan in front of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

6) Another sign is loving those who love the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the people of his house and his Companions, both the Muhajirun⁴ and Ansar⁵, for his sake. Such a person will also be hostile to those who hate them and curse them. Whoever loves anyone, loves those he loves.

7) Another sign of it is love for the Qur'an which the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) brought, by which he guided and was guided, and whose character he took on so that 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "*His character was the Qur'an.*" Part of love for the Qur'an is its recitation and acting by it and understanding it and loving his Sunnah and keeping within its limits.

8) Another sign is to have compassion for his Ummah, giving them good counsel, striving for their best interests and removing what is harmful from them just as the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was "...most kind and Merciful." ^{ix}

O Allah (The Exalted)! Give us the ability to have all the qualities of loving and following the Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Sunnah, Ameen.

ⁱ Adaab-e-Sunnat, p.44-5

ⁱⁱ Sufyan Al-Thawri: Volume: 7; Page: 32

ⁱⁱⁱ Adaab-e-Sunnat, p. 42

^{iv} Imam Ahmad Raza Khan, His Academic and spiritual Services.

^v ibid

^{vi} ibid

^{vii} "Wasilat al-islam bi al-nabi 'alayhi al-salat wa al-salam" (The Means to Islam Through the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). p. 145-146.)

^{viii} Ruhul Bayan, Surah 22. Vol: 7 p. 334.

^{ix} Surah Tawba, Surah No: 9, Verse: 128

⁴ Those who migrated from Makkah to Madinah.

⁵ The people of Madinah who welcomed the migrants.