

Ar - Risala

Newsletter

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- [Allah praises] those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him and do not fear anyone but Allah. And sufficient is Allah as Accountant. (Translation of the meaning of 33:39, Qur'an)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Our Youth 2
Inside/Out

Dear 3
Muslimah

The 4-5
Difference
between
Hadeeth and
Sunnah

Hadeeth of 6
the Month

Masjid Muhammad is a multi-cultural religious community established in the city of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Our mission is to spread the beautiful teachings of Al Islam to the citizens of Atlantic County and the surrounding areas. We serve our community by providing many needed services such as a Food Pantry, Interfaith activities, Social and Marital counseling, and much more. We hold the five daily prayers in our 10,000 Sq ft facility. In addition, we conduct daily classes in the various Islamic disciplines.

Our educational approach is based on the famous hadith of the angel Jibril which mentions three divisions of our religion: Islam (Religious Practice), Iman (Religious Faith), and Ihsan (Spiritual Perfection). These three aspects are represented in the Islamic sciences of 'Aqidah (Creed), Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and Tasawwuf (Sufism). We believe that mastery of these three essential sciences are extremely important toward developing a complete believer and a healthy Islamic community.

We adhere to the traditional school of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah (The People of the Prophetic Way and The Majority of the Islamic Nation). In Aqidah, we are following the methodology of the knowledgeable scholars of Islamic Theology. In Fiqh, we are following the teachings of the famous Imams of Islamic Jurisprudence as conveyed by a continuous chain of narrators until our time. In Tasawwuf, we are following the traditional spiritual paths which were expounded upon by the pious scholars of the science of Islamic Spirituality. This is the way of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, which is the way of the majority of the Muslim nation, past and present.

Our Youth, Inside/Out

By Dwight Qawi

The poor state of our youth can be attributed to a lot of things; neglect, poor role models, psychological oppression and an invalidated educational system that allows them to fall through the cracks and sometimes chaotic and dysfunctional home life and upbringing that leaves them both callous and shallow when it comes to dealing with the world and their environment. Our youth have made the mistake that many of us as adults even have made and continue to make---“Responding to a negative with a negative.”

We must learn to develop the discipline and patience to think our situations through and putting the best construction on it. There is an affirmation I have replaced for that angry self-talk when I become angry and enraged, that is, “When I am so angry that I don’t know what to do, I don’t do anything.” That need to respond to a negative with a negative, is it learned or an innate part of our nature that instinctively kicks in? We must learn at times like this to become more rational and check our emotions.

I was watching the TV show *48 Hours* about a week ago and it reported how these young adults (mostly teens and some in their early twenties) found themselves associated and involved in a murder/homicide. This regrettably, sad and unfortunate event began when a member of one group of young men accused a member of the other group of “mean mugging” him. This incident began in front of a convenience store and ended up at an apartment complex resulting in one of the young men being murdered.

This all started because the anger was allowed to snowball to the point of insanity and nobody thought to check their feelings and emotions. Instead, they ‘acted out’. They forgot to use the universal remedy for anger...timeout!!! The prisons and graveyards are filled with young men and young women who didn’t give themselves permission to think their situation through, but instead acted out. We as humans who coexist in this world must learn the art of tolerance with one another and when responding to a conflict, we need to lead with our intellect rather than our raw emotions. It’s not as much about what’s affecting me from my environment, rather, it is how I am interpreting what’s happening and responding to it.

Not outside-in, but inside-out.



“The prisons and graveyards are filled with young men and women who didn’t give themselves permission to think their situation through”

Dear Muslimah [Being The Example]

By Justine Blair-Iddinn

*Although no one is perfect
I'm tired of seeing people **FLAUNTING THEIR FLAWS!!!***

*Who are you trying to impress?
Is there any other than Allah (SWT)
worth pleasing?
Trying to look like every other girl
instead of looking like a proud muslimah like you should be!
It's foolish to me!*

*Seeing girls being "half hijabis"
it shouldn't even exist!
Because if you were wearing hijab for the right reasons
you wouldn't be ashamed to wear it!*

*Flaunting the hijab only when muslims are around
taking it off for foolish reasons such as...
" it's too hot "
because you " don't feel like wearing it "
or because your hair looks nice & you want everyone to see it!
It's all just **STUPID** to me!
How are we suppose to show non muslims proud muslimahs
when you pick & choose when & where you wear your hijab!*

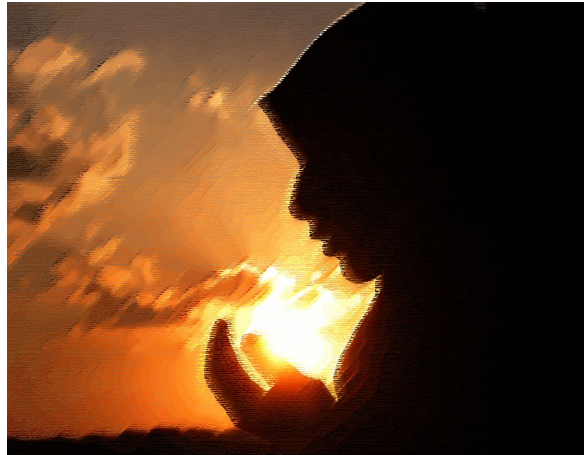
*I advise muslimahs constantly
to wear hijab when they are ready!
Because when they don't do it for Allah (SWT)
the hijab comes off more quickly from what I see!*

*Don't get me wrong being a hijabi
has nothing to do with being a proud muslimah!
Fixing your lips to use profanity
& wearing your clothes very tightly
are both ways to portray a muslimah negatively.*

*Dear muslimah please respect this
& take these words to heart!
Don't be foolish
just do it
because muslimah your smart!
Don't do things for other people's recognition
do it to do good first in Allah's (SWT) Sight
and then do good so that your sisters in islam can recognize!*

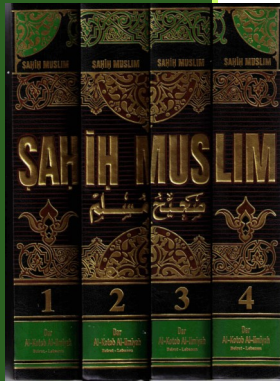
*And don't take this as if I'm saying to be like me
because I'm nowhere near perfect!
But I don't flaunt my imperfections
I flaunt being a Muslimah
PROUDLY!!!*

♥ *Instead of trying to teach others how they "should" be, just be the example* ♥



The Difference Between Hadeeth and Sunnah

By Bilal Ibn Tariq Iddinn



"I am simply stating that the terms 'Hadeeth' and 'Sunnah' do not always carry the same meaning"

Praise is for Allah (SWT) the Lord of the worlds and peace and blessings upon the master of the messengers, the seal of the prophets, the leader of the God-Conscious (Pious), and (peace and blessings) upon his noble family and companions and all of those who follow him in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

Since the commission of the prophecy of Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (SAWS) Islam has been consistently spreading to all parts of this earth. There are Muslims in every part of the world and people all over the world are embracing Islam on a daily basis. This is indeed the will of Allah (SWT) and we are reminded of this every time we read Surah al-Nasr ("When you see the people entering into Allah's religion in crowds..."). The fact that people are entering into Allah's religion in crowds is indeed a thing of beauty but with so many new cultures embracing Islam there has never been more of a need for the scholarship and guidance of the people of knowledge. One cannot just simply teach themselves Islam or interpret the Book of Allah on their own. This is not the way Islam was conveyed and there are many wisdoms behind this. The Prophet (SAWS) learned Islam directly from Angel Gibril (AS) and he taught this Deen directly to his companions (As-Sahabah) who taught it to their companions (At-tabiyyun) who taught it to their companions (Atba At-Tabiyyun) and so on until it reached us this very day. Despite this long-standing tradition of learning and passing on Islam by way of direct study with people of knowledge there are many Muslims in our age that insist on both studying for themselves and teaching others the religion without the knowledge and guidance from Islamic scholars. These particular individuals are divorced from sound Islamic knowledge and they attempt to interpret (rather misinterpret) Allah's religion and then teach others based on their own understandings of what Islam is. Some go as far as making Takfeer (declaring disbelief) on anyone that doesn't agree with their own understanding of Islam. One of the greatest examples of this trend is Muslims making Takfeer on fellow Muslims because "they don't follow the Sunnah". Insha'Allah I am going to attempt to define the term "Sunnah" as well as "Hadeeth" and explain how not acting on Hadeeths that are not Muttawatur (Indisputably Authentic) does not necessarily translate as a rejection or denial of the Sunnah.

The Scholars in the Sunni tradition have determined that whoever rejects Hadeeths all together are guilty of disbelief. If one were to reject hadeeths all together irrespective of soundness or rank then that would lead one to reject Hadeeth Muttawatur (100% authentic). Hadeeth Muttawatur is as strong a verse from al-Qur'an and anyone that rejects a single verse from Qur'an is guilty of disbelief. So, I am in no way claiming that those who reject Hadeeth all together are still within the fold of Islam because by scholarly consensus within the Sunni tradition they are not. I am also in no way claiming that it is permissible for a layperson (Non-scholar) to accept or reject Hadeeths based on their own knowledge. I am simply stating that the terms "Hadeeth" and "Sunnah" do not always carry the same meaning and that there were many instances when Scholars declared sound Hadeeths to be unfit for usage and other times when they would not act on a sound report based on other evidences and considerations within Islamic Law.

What is the literal meaning of Hadeeth? There are several linguistic meanings of Hadeeth. In some instances Hadeeth is synonymous with the word "Kalaam" (Speech). In other cases it is synonymous with the word "jadeed" (New). It can also mean an "occurrence" and a "report" or "narration". There are many examples of the different usages in al-Qur'an. *What is the meaning of Hadeeth as it relates to Islam?* Hadeeth is generally translated as a "Prophetic Tradition" however anyone who is familiar with even the basics of the Sciences of Hadeeth are aware that some Hadeeths are actually sayings of the Companions or the Followers of Companions so it wouldn't be completely accurate to define Hadeeth as a "Prophetic Tradition". It would be more accurate to define Hadeeth as simply a "Tradition" or "Report". The technical definition of Hadeeth specific to the Prophet (SAWS) [Hadeeth Marfu'a] is "A statement, an action, or approval of something that has been reported about the Prophet (SAWS). Reports about his physical description and mannerisms also fall within the category of Hadeeth.

What is the literal meaning of Sunnah? Sunnah literally means "way" or "example". This usage appears several times in Qur'an when Allah (SWT) is describing his way "You will not find any change in the way (Sunnah) of Allah [Surah al ahzab]." *What does Sunnah mean in the Islamic context?* Sunnah holds different meanings to the scholars of the various Islamic Sciences. To the Scholars of Hadeeth (Muhaddithun) "Sunnah and "Hadeeth" are synonymous.

The Difference Between Hadeeth and Sunnah (Continued)

They use the two terms interchangeably. To the scholars of Fiqh (Fuqaha) “Sunnah” is basically whatever is encouraged or recommended to do by the divine law but not obligatory. So for example, fasting on Mondays and Thursdays (with the exception of Ramadan) are Sunnah not obligatory. Meaning if you fast on these days you will earn a reward and if you abstain from fasting them you will not incur a sin. Rulings such as *Mustahab*, *Mandub*, and *fadeelah* are all subcategories of “Sunnah”, meaning acts encouraged to do but not an obligation. To the scholars of Legal Theory (Usuliyeen) the definition of Sunnah is similar to that of the scholars of Hadeeth with one main difference. The scholars of Legal Theory define Sunnah as “A statement, action, or approval of something that has been reported about the Prophet (SAWS) that can be used as a source of extracting a judgment or legal ruling.” So, in essence if a sound Hadeeth is reported and cannot be used for this purpose then it is not considered to be “Sunnah”. For example, Hadeeths that are simply describing the appearance of the Prophet (SAWS) are not considered to be Sunnah because they are not sources of law.

Is it possible to not act on a sound Hadeeth but still adhere to the Sunnah? Yes. As I previously stated there were many occasions when the scholars of this Ummah did not act on or dismissed certain sound reports in favor of other considerations in Islamic Law. An example of this was the opinion of Imam Malik Ibn Anas (RA) and his statement with regards to fasting on Fridays alone. There is a sound Hadeeth related in the Saheeh of Imam Muslim reported by Abu Huraira (RA) where he stated that the Prophet (SAWS) said “None among you should observe the fast Friday, but that he observes the fast before it or after it.” When this report reached Imam Malik (RA) he stated that he found the scholars of Madinah fasting on Fridays alone and that this was a good practice. *Why didn’t Imam Malik act on this sound Hadeeth?* If you are familiar with the sources of Islamic Law there are 4 sources that are agreed upon. Qur’an, Sunnah, Ijma (Consensus), and Qiyas (Legal Analogy). In addition to these four, there are additional sources specific to each Mujtahid (Scholar that has reached the level of Independent Reasoning). For example, Imam Malik (RA) had some sources of Islamic Law that Imam Abu Hanifah (RA) did not agree with and vice versa. One source of Islamic law that is specific to the Maliki Madhab is “*The Practice of the Scholars of Madinah*”. Imam Malik (RA) actually considered this to be a valid Sunnah. Meaning what the scholars of Madinah practiced, which encompassed all aspects of Islam (business transactions, prayer, fasting...) was an inherited Sunnah of the Prophet (SAWS) even if there wasn’t a written Hadeeth to support it. The wisdom behind this was that the Prophet (SAWS) made Hijrah (Migration) to Madinah, a significant portion of al-Qur’an was revealed in Madinah, Islamic Law was established in Madinah, the Prophet (SAWS) died and was buried in Madinah, most of his companions lived in and died in Madinah, so the Sunnah was witnessed, practiced, and passed on to the subsequent generations in Madinah. In other words, what the scholars of the early period (Salaf) practiced in Madinah was Sunnah. This was the reason that Imam Malik (RA) and many other early scholars from Madinah would place the actions of the scholars of Madinah over a sound Hadeeth when the two conflicted. They believed this “Inherited Sunnah” produced more certainty than many sound Hadeeths. So, it wouldn’t be correct for anyone to state that Imam Malik (RA) did not follow the Sunnah because he did not act on every sound Hadeeth. He was one of the upholders of the Sunnah and in his scholarly opinion the “Sunnah of Madinah” was stronger than certain types of Hadeeth. One could correctly state that Imam Malik (RA) didn’t follow a particular Hadeeth, but that doesn’t mean he didn’t follow the Sunnah because as stated above these two terms are not synonymous in most cases. There are many other examples of this from Imam Malik (RA) and many other notable scholars. What we need to understand is that the sources of Islamic Law are not restricted to just Qur’an and Hadeeth and they never were.

How should we approach learning Islam? If we want to acquire sound Islamic knowledge then we have to take our religion seriously. We have to learn how to read and recite the Book of Allah in Arabic with proper Tajweed. We have to study the basics of Fiqh so that we perform Wudu, Ghusl, and the prayer properly. We have to learn the basics of Aqeedah (Tawheed) so that we have the correct belief about Allah and His Messengers. All of these basics are an obligation on the individual and those who don’t learn these individual obligations will have to answer for it on the Day of Judgment. *How do we learn our individual obligations?* We must seek knowledge from those qualified to teach. We must seek out scholars and students of knowledge that have received permission and license to teach these various aspects of our Deen. Following the methodology of Ahlu Sunnah in all of the religious sciences is necessary for continuity and perfection in our faith. If we are not able to extract rulings directly from al-Qur’an and Sunnah by virtue of our religious scholarship (a right specific to the Absolute Mujtahid) then we must follow the opinions of those that were able to do so (Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shaf’i, Ahmad). All of the Imams of Ahlu Sunnah followed and upheld the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAWS), and by “Sunnah” I am referring to the linguistic meaning “way/example”. Know that whoever accuses the pious scholars of this Ummah of not adhering to the Sunnah has a diseased heart and will have to answer to Allah (SWT) for that which they utter.

I advise myself and all of the Muslims to have fear of Allah (SWT) and to speak about the pious scholars only in the best of ways. Avoid speaking about matters that you do not know and if you don’t know something then say “I don’t know” or “Allah knows best”. Do not attempt to read translations of al-Qur’an and Hadeeths and extract rulings from what you have read based on your own understanding. Do not accuse anyone of disbelief unless they say or do something that clearly constitutes a rejection of Islam intentionally. Do not command the good and forbid the wrong unless you are absolutely sure that the thing you are commanding is good and the thing you are forbidding is wrong. Stay out of matters and issues that do not concern you. Allah has preserved our Deen through our pious scholars and their connected chains of transmitted knowledge all the way back to the Prophet (SAWS); when we seek knowledge from them Allah (SWT) will exalt us in rank and when we seek knowledge from some other source we will eventually prepare the way for our own demise. May Allah (SWT) bless us with sincere faith and devotion to him and may he bless us with both humility and wisdom.



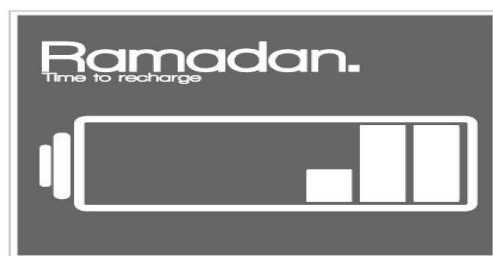
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Hadeeth of the Month



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) addressed his companions on the last day of Sha`ban, saying, "Oh people! A great month has come over you; a blessed month; a month in which is a night better than a thousand months; month in which Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night. Whoever draws nearer (to Allah) by performing any of the (optional) good deeds in (this month) shall receive the same reward as performing an obligatory deed at any other time, and whoever discharges an obligatory deed in (this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time. It is the month of patience, and the reward of patience is Heaven. It is the month of charity, and a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast, shall have his sins forgiven, and he will be saved from the Fire of Hell, and he shall have the same reward as the fasting person, without his reward being diminished at all."

[Narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah]