

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

## Chapter 1:

# The Excellence of Islam

Shaikhul-Islām Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

Allah, the Most High, said:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ  
الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

**“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”<sup>1</sup>**

And He, the Most High, said:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن  
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِن أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَقَّعُكُمْ

**“Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! If you are in doubt as to my religion, then know that I will never worship those whom you worship besides Allah. But I worship Allah, the one who causes you to die...”<sup>2</sup>**

And He, the Most High, said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وءَامِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ ءِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ  
وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ ءِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ءِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

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<sup>1</sup> Surah Al-Mā'idah: 3

<sup>2</sup> Surah Yūnus: 104

**“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger. Allah will then give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk, and He will forgive you. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”<sup>3</sup>**

It is reported in the Sahīh from Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) that Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَثَلُكُمْ وَمَثَلُ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابَيْنِ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجْرَاءَ فَقَالَ: مَنْ يَعْمَلُ لِي مِنْ غَدْوَةٍ إِلَى نِصْفِ النَّهَارِ عَلَى قِيرَاطٍ فَعَمِلَتِ الْيَهُودُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ يَعْمَلُ لِي مِنْ نِصْفِ النَّهَارِ إِلَى صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ عَلَى قِيرَاطٍ فَعَمِلَتِ النَّصَارَى. ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ يَعْمَلُ لِي مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ إِلَى أَنْ تَغِيَبَ الشَّمْسُ عَلَى قِيرَاطَيْنِ فَأَنْتُمْ هُمْ. فَغَضِبَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى وَقَالُوا: مَا لَنَا أَكْثَرُ عَمَلًا وَأَقَلُّ أَجْرًا قَالَ هَلْ نَقَصْتُمْ مِنْ حَقِّكُمْ شَيْئًا قَالُوا: لَا. قَالَ: ذَلِكَ فَضْلِي أُوتِيهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ.

“Your example and the example of the people of the two Books (Jews and Christians) is like the example of a man who employed some laborers and asked them, **‘Who will work for me from morning till midday for a measure of gold?’** So, the Jews accepted and carried out the work. He then asked, **‘Who will work for me from midday up to the ‘Asr prayer for a measure of gold?’** So, the Christians accepted and fulfilled the work. He then said, **‘Who will work for me from ‘Asr till sunset for two measures of gold?’** So, you (this Ummah) accepted the offer. The Jews and the Christians got angry and said, **‘Why should we work**

<sup>3</sup> Surah Al-Hadid: 28

more and get lesser wages?’ Allah said, ‘Have I withheld any part of your right?’ They replied, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Then, it is My bounty, and I bestow it upon whomever I will.’”<sup>4</sup>

Regarding this there is the narration of Abu Hurayrah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) who said that Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْجُمُعَةِ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَنَا. فَكَانَ لِلْيَهُودِ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ وَلِلنَّصَارَى  
يَوْمَ الْأَحَدِ فَجَاءَ اللَّهُ بِنَا فَهَدَانَا لِيَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ. وَكَذَلِكَ هُمْ تَبِعَ لَنَا يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْأَوَّلُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Allah caused Friday to be lost to those who came before us. For the Jews, there was Saturday and for the Christians, there was Sunday. Then Allah brought us forth and He guided us to Friday. Likewise, they will follow after us on the Day of Resurrection. We were the last nation to come forth, but we will be the foremost on the Day of Resurrection.”<sup>5</sup>

Bukhari reported in disconnected form from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said:

أَحَبُّ الدِّينِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْخَنِيفِيَّةُ السَّمْحَةُ

“The most beloved religion to Allah is *Al-Hanefiyyah As-Samhah*: the pure monotheism, lenient and easy-going.”<sup>6</sup>

Ubayy Bin Ka‘b (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

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<sup>4</sup> Al-Bukhāri, no. 2268.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Bukhāri, no. 876, and Muslim, no. 856.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Bukhāri, no. 38, and with a connected chain of narration from Ibn ‘Abbās (L) in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, no. 287. Graded authentic by Shaikh Al-Albānī.

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالسَّبِيلِ وَالسُّنَّةِ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ عَلَى سَبِيلٍ وَسُنَّةٍ ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ  
فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ فَتَمَسَّهُ النَّارُ. وَلَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ عَلَى سَبِيلٍ  
وَسُنَّةٍ ذَكَرَ الرَّحْمَنَ فَأَقْشَعَرَ جِلْدُهُ مِنْ مَخَافَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا كَانَ كَمَثَلِ شَجَرَةٍ يَبَسَ  
وَرَقُّهَا إِلَّا تَحَاتَّتْ عَنْهُ ذُنُوبُهُ كَمَا تَحَاتَّتْ عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ وَرَقُّهَا. وَإِنَّ  
اِقْتِصَادًا فِي سُنَّةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ اجْتِهَادٍ فِي خِلَافِ سَبِيلٍ وَسُنَّةٍ.

“Cling to the Straight Path and the Sunnah for indeed the Fire will not touch a person who follows the Straight Path and the Sunnah, who remembers the Most Merciful, and then weeps out of the fear of Him. There is not a person upon the Straight Path and Sunnah who remembers the Most Merciful and his skin quivers from the fear of Allah except that his likeness is that of a tree with dried leaves. So, when the wind blows, the leaves fall away from it. So, his sins fall away from him just as the leaves fall away from that tree. Verily, exerting moderate effort on the Straight Path and Sunnah is better than striving hard in opposition to the Straight Path and Sunnah.”<sup>7</sup>

Abu Dardā’ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

يَا حَبْدًا نَوْمُ الْأَكْيَاسِ وَإِفْطَارُهُمْ كَيْفَ يُغْبَنُونَ سَهَرَ الْحُمَقَى وَصَوْمَهُمْ  
مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ بُرٍّ مَعَ تَقْوَى وَيَقِينٍ أَعْظَمُ وَأَفْضَلُ وَأَرْجَحُ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ  
الْمُعْتَرِينَ

“O seeker of excellence! The sleeping at night and the absence of fasting of the learned and discerning people—how is that superior

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Abī Shaybah in *Al-Musannaf*, no. 35526, *Al-Lālikā’ī* in *Sharh Usūl I’tiqād Ahlis-Sunnah*, no. 10, and others.

to the night-prayer and regular fasting of the of the foolish people? Verily, a barley-seed's weight of piety alongside the fear of Allah, being dutiful and having certainty is greater, better and preferable than mountains of worship performed by those who have been deceived and deluded.”<sup>8</sup>

## Commentary: Al-Imām ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

The intent of this chapter is that Allah made Islam the best of all religions. It is the religion through which happiness and salvation is attained. If the servant was to hold fast to it, and remain steadfast upon it, then he would attain Paradise and honor. The striving of a person in Prayer or Fasting or other matters does not benefit him if it is upon other than the Sunnah. Allah, the Most High, stated:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

**“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”<sup>9</sup>**

And He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

**“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter, he will be one of the**

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<sup>8</sup> Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in *Az-Zuhd*, no. 737, Abu Nu‘aym in *Al-Hilyah* 1/630, 211, and others.

<sup>9</sup> Surah Al-Mā'idah: 3

losers.”<sup>10</sup>

So, it is incumbent upon every sane adult to cling to Islam and strive in the obedience of Allah. That is the path to salvation, the path to happiness. Moderation in Islam and to traverse upon it with little is better than striving hard with much that is not from Islam, and not from the Sunnah. There is no movement or power except by Allah.

## Additional Comments<sup>11</sup>

Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, “**Cling to the Straight Path and the Sunnah.**” The intent of the path here is the Path of the Prophet, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ). And that is mentioned in the saying of Allah, the Most High:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن  
سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

**“This is My Path, it is straight, so follow it. And do not follow the other paths, for you will be separated from His Path. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.”<sup>12</sup>**

In this verse, Allah made the path singular, meaning that there is only one path of salvation. It is this one path that gathers the affairs of the Religion in detail, and the affairs of the Sunnah in detail. As for the other paths, they are the paths of deviation, innovation and desires, and upon each of those paths there is devil

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<sup>10</sup> Surah Āli ‘Imrān: 85

<sup>11</sup> Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid.

<sup>12</sup> Surah Al-An‘ām: 153

that calls the people to it.

Ubayy (رضي الله عنه) continued, “Indeed the Fire will not touch a person who follows the Straight Path and the Sunnah, who remembers the Most Merciful, and then weeps out of the fear of Allah.”

So, Ubayy explained that the one who acquires this virtue is the one who is upon the Straight Path and the Sunnah. As for the one who weeps out fear while he is upon bid‘ah, misguidance and partisanship (hizbiyyah) even after being shown the truth, then his weeping, outward humility and fear will not benefit him. He is deceiving himself and others.

There are many among the Christians, the grave-worshippers — and deniers of the Lofty Attributes of Allah among the innovators who weep much but it does not benefit them in front of Allah. The affair is not about crying and outward humility. Rather, what matters is what a person is upon. Is he following the Straight Path and Sunnah? If so, he is rewarded. But if he is upon *bid‘ah* and misguidance, then his weeping and humility does not benefit him.

Ubayy (رضي الله عنه) said, **“There is not a person upon the Straight Path and Sunnah who remembers the Most Merciful and his skin quivers from the fear of Allah except that his likeness is like a tree with dried leaves. So, when the wind blows, the leaves fall away from it. So, his sins fall away from him just as the leaves fall away from that tree.”**

If he upon the Straight Path (*As-Sirāt*) and Sunnah, his sins will fall away just as dry leaves fall from a tree. This is just as it is reported in a Hadith Qudsi wherein Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that Allah (the Most High) said:

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي عَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْكَ وَلَا أُبَالِي.  
 يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ: لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي عَفَرْتُ لَكَ. يَا  
 ابْنَ آدَمَ: إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقَرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقَيْتَنِي لَا تَشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا  
 لَأَتَيْتَنِكَ بِقَرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

“O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam! Were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me in worship, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it.”<sup>13</sup>

This proves the tremendous station of holding fast to the methodology (*manhaj*) of the Prophet (ﷺ). That is the Straight Path and Sunnah that he left his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) upon. So, whoever wants salvation, let him turn his sight, his pursuit of knowledge and his heart to the time before the appearance of these sects and desires. That was the era in which the Muslims were united in the creed (*‘aqidah*), the Methodology and the Sunnah. That was the time of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) before differing in the Ummah came about. There was none among the Companions who innovated into Allah’s Religion. Rather, Allah saved them from innovations and misguidance.

Ubayy (رضي الله عنه) said: **“Moderation on the Straight Path and Sunnah is better than striving hard upon opposition to the**

<sup>13</sup> Sahih Sunan At-Tirmidhi, no. 2805.

**Straight Path and the Sunnah.”** That is because Allah blesses small deeds that are in accordance with Sunnah in harmony with the Revealed Texts.

Actions that are done upon other the Straight Path and Sunnah are in opposition to the Truth—they are newly introduced and innovations. So, a person who acts in opposition to the Truth is disobedient to Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) and has followed other than the Path of the believers regardless of whether his deeds are numerous—he is not upon guidance and he is not rewarded for those deeds that are innovated.

Abu Dardā' (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, **“Verily, a barley-seed’s weight of piety alongside the fear of Allah, being dutiful to Him and having certainty in Him is greater, better and preferable than the like of mountains of worship performed by those who have been deceived and deluded.”**<sup>14</sup>

This narration shows the importance of sincerity of the heart (*al-ikhlas*) and being truthful in one’s conduct with the Lord of the worlds. The people are of different levels in this affair. Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) excelled the whole *Ummah* in this regard. Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 H) reported in *Faḍā'il As-Sahābah* (no. 118):

قَالَ بَكْرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ: إِنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ لَمْ يَفْضَلِ النَّاسَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ صَلَاةً وَصَوْمًا إِنَّمَا فَضَلَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ

With an authentic chain of narration to Bakr Ibn ‘Abdillāh Al-

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<sup>14</sup> Reported by Imām Ahmad in *Az-Zuhd* (737), Abu Nu‘aym in *Al-Hilyah* (1/211). Though there are some unknown narrators in the chain from Abu Dardā’, it is nevertheless supported by the texts of the Quran and Sunnah.

Muzanī that he said: **“Abu Bakr did not excel the people in that he prayed more than them or fasted more than them. Rather, he excelled them with an affair that was in his heart.”**

And this is the meaning of the saying of Abu Dardā' (رضي الله عنه), along with adhering to the Straight Path. It is of paramount importance that the deeds are in accordance with the Sunnah, the Methodology and the Straight Path. It is not about *how much* one worships, or strives, or gives *da‘wah*. Rather, what really matters is whether these actions are in agreement with the Sunnah and the Straight Path, alongside the fear of Allah, obedience to Him and certainty in belief. Imām Al-Hasan Al-Basrī (d. 110 H) was asked:

**“Why were the Sahābah the best of people even though some of the people of the next generation had more acts of worship than them?”** He (رضي الله عنه) responded, **“The Sahābah worshipped and the Hereafter was in their hearts. Those [who came after them] worshipped and the world was in their hearts.”**

We ask Allah, the Most High, for well-being and safety.