



Al-Albani **Unveiled**

**An Exposition of His Errors
and
Other Important Issues**

**Compiled by
Sayf ad-Din Ahmed Ibn Muhammad**

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PREFACE

All praise be to Allahu Ta'ala. Peace and blessings be on His final Messenger, Sayyidina Muhammad. Auspicious salutations be on his pure Ahl al-Bayt (people of the Prophet's House) and on all his just and devoted Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all); and last but not least praise be upon the glorious pious predecessors (Salaf as Salihin) and their successors who are the Ahl-as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah (People of the Sunnah and Community) of the four existing schools of Sacred Law (Fiqh).

O you who believe! What you are about to read is of dire importance to the believer who accepts the authority of the Noble Hadith, second only to the Holy Qur'an al-Karim. I here present to the open minded believer an exposition of the mistakes and contradictions of probably the foremost Hadith Shaykh of the 'Salafiyya' sect, by the name of **Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddeen al-Albani**. I was asked by some brothers on the status and rank of al-Albani, and fearing the declaration of Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him): **"He who is asked something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on the Day of Resurrection (Sunan Abu Dawood, 3/3650, English ed'n);** I decided to compile this short work. Let me stress at the outset, this work was primarily compiled to correct some notions held by al-Albani and secondarily the "Salafi" sect; hence the last part of this work has been entitled: *"and Other Important Issues."*

This short piece of work has been edited and abridged from the four volume set which emphatically and clearly outlines al-Albani's mistakes, contradictions, slanders and even lies in the honourable and sacred Islamic Science of Hadith (Uloom al Hadith), by the well-known scholar, **Al-Shaykh Hasan ibn Ali al-Saqqaf** (may Allah reward him for his effort) of Amman, Jordan; from his work entitled: **"Tanaqadat al-Albani al-Wadihat" (The Clear Contradictions of al-Albani).**

Shaykh Saqqaf is a contemporary Shafi'i scholar of Hadith and Fiqh. His Shaykhs include **Hashim Majdhub** of Damascus in Shafi'i Fiqh, **Muti' Hammami** in estate division, **Muhammad Hulayyil** of Amman in Arabic Grammar, and he has been given written authorization (Ijaza) in the field of Hadith from one of the greatest Hadith scholars of our time - **Shaykh Abdullah Muhammad al-Ghimari** (may the Mercy of Allah be upon him) of Tangiers, Morocco [born 1910 C.E; died Feb. 1413/1993 C.E]; an ex-Professor of Hadith at Al-Azhar University, author of nearly 150 works, his late brother: **Ahmad ibn Muhammad** (Allah's mercy be upon him) was a great Hafiz of Hadith, (see later for the definition of Hafiz of Hadith). Shaykh Ghimari has declared in one of his published Fatwas that al-Albani is an innovator (mubtadi) in Islam, (al-Albani has criticised Shaykh Ghimari's classifications of Hadith in some of his works; but then contradicted himself in others - see the quotes from Shaykh Saqqaf later). Shaykh Saqqaf presently teaches a circle of students in Amman and has published over forty five books and treatises on Hadith, tenets of faith (Aqeeda), Fiqh and heresiology.

So as to enlighten the reader who is unaware of al-Albani's status, the following is a short biography as given in the inside back cover of the English translation of al-Albani's booklet by the title 'Adaab uz Zufaaf' (The Etiquettes of Marriage and Wedding) as published by his followers in England (viz: "Jami'at Ihyaa Minhaj al Sunnah") :-

"Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albani was born in the city of Ashkoder, capital of Albania in 1914 C.E. While he was young, his parents migrated with him to Damascus, Syria. From an early age he became fascinated by the science of Hadith and thereafter spent his time devoted to seeking knowledge. In later life he was given Professorship of Hadith at the Islamic University of Madinah. He is well known to students and scholars for his knowledge and writings. He has many well known students and has visited places throughout the Middle East and Europe. He was forced to migrate from Syria to Jordan. He has

been of enormous service to the Prophetic Hadith, taking great pains to check and sort out the authentic from the weak and fabricated narrations. He has produced many pamphlets and books, some of them running into many volumes - on topics of great importance to the Muslims - and has fully checked many of the famous books of Hadith - the Sunan of Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, An-Nasai and Ibn Majah, along with Suyooti's huge "Jami-us-Sagheer" (NB- This work has previously been checked and commentated by Imam Munawi [died. 1031/1622 C.E; Rahimahullah] and also commentated by Shaykh al-Azizi [died 1070/1660 C.E; Rahimahullah]) and "Mishkat-ul Masabih" (by Imam Wali-ad-Din al-Tabrizi, and not al-Suyooti as the unknown biographer asserts!). He is the foremost scholar of Hadith and related sciences of this age."

It is this last statement which is highly far-fetched, and it is the pre-dominantly imaginary belief of his misguided followers in certain parts of the world. Since only Allah knows who is the "foremost scholar of Hadith and related sciences of this age." I say this because there are others who may well be the 'foremost scholar'. One thing that may be noticed from the above biography, is that al-Albani does not seem to have been given any authorization (ijaza) in Hadith from any recognized scholar of Hadith. I have read other biographies and asked some of his supporters in England to give me the name of al-Albani's Hadith Shaykh; but to no avail. It seems that al-Albani "taught" himself the science of Hadith by spending many hours in the famous library of Damascus - al-Maktabatuz Zahiriyah. In the biography written in the preface of the English edition of his work - "Sifah salah an-Nabee", it was also stated that he was: "influenced by articles in 'al-Manaar' magazine." The last named magazine was edited by the notorious freemason - Muhammad Rashid Ridah (d.1935 CE)!

Al-Albani has not made a handful of forgivable errors, but rather well over 1200, which are only forgivable if he himself admits and corrects his mistakes by repenting in front of the People of Knowledge, as well as the sincere believers who may have been relying on his 'classifications of Hadith'. The selected contradictions from "Tanaqadat al-Albani al-Wadihat" have been derived for sake of brevity from volumes one and two only, and whenever the symbol * is indicated, this corresponds to the original reference to the Arabic edition. The reader should also remember that whenever anything appears in brackets, then these are usually my words and not that of Shaykh Saqqaf. It should also be said that Volume 1 of the original contains 250 Ahadith, in which al-Albani has said Sahih (an authentic Hadith) in one of his books and then contradicted himself by saying Daeef (a weak Hadith) in another of his books, or similar mistakes and contradictions. Volume 2 contains 652 Ahadith of the same description as the above, or similar contradictions in individual rijal (biography of a Hadith narrator) of the Sanad (the chain of transmission of a specific Hadith) of the Hadiths in question. In some instances (e.g. Vol.2, pp. 63-64), Shaykh Saqqaf shows how a Hadith narrator is 'trustworthy' when al-Albani wants to use a Hadith to prove something, but becomes 'untrustworthy' when in a Hadith used by the person al-Albani is arguing against; an extremely embarrassing mistake for anyone of any scholarly integrity. These books by Shaykh Saqqaf have already done much to pull the rug from under 'Salafiyyism' in Jordan and even in 'Saudi' Arabia, where the first volume alone has seen no less than SIX reprints in a single year alone! These books are extremely hot property that any 'Salafi' (or anti-Salafi) who reads Arabic will want to buy. I ask you, how many times does an inept student of Hadith like al-Albani have to contradict himself before he ceases to be of authority? Can you find even ten such contradictions in the works of the traditional memorizers of Hadith (Huffaz), those who had memorized at least **100,000 Ahadith with their Sanads?** The great scholars like AbuHanifah, Malik, Shafi'i, Ibn Hanbal, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, al-Nasai, Daraqutni, Hakim, Asqalani and so on.... Allah's mercy be upon them. The discerning believer should know that al-Albani has not in his memory anywhere near a 100,000 Ahadith in his memory, in fact as far as we know there is no one who is a Hafiz of Hadith today! If there is, we say please come forward and prove it, and only Allah knows best!

During the course of examining various Hadiths, Shaykh Saqqaf compared them to the written opinion of al-Albani. Eventually Shaykh Saqqaf began a compilation of al-Albani's mistakes. He came across

contradictions, supposition, inadequate research and the blatant perversion of sayings quoted from the great scholars of Islam. He was especially worried by the fact that many students and members of the youth who do not have enough or no knowledge are simply not bothering to investigate the Hadiths classified by al-Albani, are being misled into blind ignorance; even though these very people are the ones calling staunchly and vociferously for the complete abandonment of Taqleed (usually translated as “blindfollowing” by the opponents, but in reality it is the following of qualified and verified scholarship of a Mujtahid Mutlaq [an absolutely independent scholar of the highest calibre] like the Imams Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi’i, Ibn Hanbal (Allah’s mercy be upon them) and the like, as well as the scholars who adhered to and promulgated a particular school of Fiqh [Madhhab] for the greater part of Islam’s history; Taqleed in simple language is the following of one of the four existing schools of Fiqh). These people seem to contradict themselves, as well as displaying hypocrisy when they go around making it a priority to attack the followers of the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i or Hanbali schools of Sacred Law; even though they themselves are practising Taqleed of an individual(s)!

Bearing in mind the Hadith reported by **Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri** (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him): **“Whoever sees an evil, he must prevent it with his hand, and if he has no power for this action, then he should prevent it with his tongue, and if he cannot do this, then he should at least consider it a vice in his heart, and this is a very low level of one’s Iman (faith).** [see **Sahih Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Nisai** - as recorded in Targheeb Wal-Tarheeb by Al-Hafiz Mundhiri, d. 1258 C.E; Rahimahumullah], and even more explicitly from **Imam al-Darimi** (Rahimahullah) who reported Ziyad Ibn Hudair (Rahimahullah) saying: **“Umar** (Allah be pleased with him) said to me: ***Do you know what can destroy Islam?***” I said: “No.” He said: ***“It is destroyed by the mistakes of scholars, the argument of the hypocrites about the book (of Allah), and the opinions of the misguided leaders.”*** (see *Mishkatul Masabih*, 1/269, Trans. A.H. Siddiqui). We took the liberty to forewarn and guide the many sincere believers who are turning to their faith from blundering into miscomprehension and wrong by translating selectively from Shaykh Saqqaf’s books.

In order to safe keep today’s youth from falling into heresy, Shaykh Saqqaf has embarked upon a quest to expose such a person who considers himself to be among the great scholars of Hadith like **Imams al-Bukhari and Muslim** (Rahimahumullah), to the extent that one of his deluded followers considered him to be in the rank of the Amir al-Mu’minin fil Hadith, **Shaykh al-Islam al-Hafiz Ahmad Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani** (the Shafi’i Imam who authored the most famous commentary of Sahih al-Bukhari and many other books, d. 852/1449 C.E; Rahimahullah).

As for Shaykh Saqqaf, the respected reader may get the impression that he has an uncompromising demeanour in some of his comments made straight after he exposes an error of al-Albani. I make no apology for his style of exposition, since many Allah fearing scholars have been uncompromising in the past when it comes to enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil as has been prescribed in the Qur’an and Sunnah (e.g. in the refutations against the heretical sects like the Khawarij, Mu’tazila, Shi’ah...), so long as it forewarns the general masses from accepting the falsities of the heretics and other like minded “scholars”. Maybe Shaykh Saqqaf considers al-Albani to be an innovator, just as his late teacher - Shaykh Ghimari (Rahimahullah) considered him to be. There are many Hadith which command us to detest the Heretics. For example, Ibrahim ibn Maisara reported Allah’s Messenger (Peace be upon him) as saying: ***“He who showed respect to an innovator he in fact aided in the demolishing of Islam.”*** (*Bayhaqi* - see *Mishkatul Masabih*, 1/189, English ed’n).

I hope the esteemed reader will read this short piece of work with vigilance and an open mind, especially those who have been loyal readers and supporters of al-Albani’s books and decrees. I sincerely hope that this work will be of great benefit to all who read it and pray that Allah accept it as a good deed done purely for His pleasure. I would also like to thank all those brothers who assisted me in the compilation of this work, especially to the brother who supplied me with Shaykh Saqqaf’s books. May Allah forgive us for any shortcomings and errors. Amin.

AL-ALBANI'S WEAKENING OF SOME OF IMAM BUKHARI AND MUSLIM'S AHADITH.

Al-Albani has said in “*Sharh al-Aqeedah at-Tahaweeah*, pg. 27-28” (8th edition, Maktab al-Islami) by **Shaykh Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi** (Rahimahullah), that any Hadith coming from the Sahih collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim is Sahih, not because they were narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, but because the Ahadith are in fact correct. But he clearly contradicts himself, since he has weakened Ahadith from Bukhari and Muslim himself! Now let us consider this information in the light of elaboration :-

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS FROM VOLUME 1

No 1 : (*Pg. 10 no.1)

Hadith: The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) said: “*Allah says I will be an opponent to 3 persons on the day of resurrection: (a) One who makes a covenant in my Name but he proves treacherous, (b) One who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price (c) And one who employs a labourer and gets the full work done by him, but doesn't pay him his wages.*” [Bukhari no. 2114-Arabic version, or see the English version 3/430 pg. 236].

Al-Albani said that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 4/111 no. 4054**”. Little does he know that this Hadith has been narrated by **Ahmad and Bukhari from Abu Hurayra** (Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 2 : (*Pg. 10 no. 2)

Hadith: “*Sacrifice only a grown up cow unless it is difficult for you, in which case sacrifice a ram.*” [Muslim no. 1963-Arabic edition, or see the English version 3/4836 pg. 1086].

Al-Albani said that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 6/64 no. 6222**.” Although this Hadith has been narrated by **Imams Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nisai and Ibn Majah from Jaabir** (Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 3 : (*Pg. 10 no. 3)

Hadith: “*Amongst the worst people in Allah's sight on the Day of Judgement will be the man who makes love to his wife and she to him and he divulges her secret.*” [Muslim no. 1437- Arabic edition].

Al-Albani claims that this Hadith is **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 2/197 no. 2005**.” Although it has been narrated by **Muslim from Abi Sayyed** (Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 4 : (*Pg. 10 no. 4)

Hadith: “*If someone woke up at night (for prayers) let him begin his prayers with 2 light rak'ats.*” [Muslim no. 768]. Al-Albani stated that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 1/213 no. 718**.” Although it is narrated by **Muslim and Ahmad from Abu Hurayra** (may Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 5 : (*Pg. 11 no. 5)

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Hadith: “You will rise with shining foreheads and shining hands and feet on the Day of Judgement by completing Wudhu properly.....” [Muslim no. 246].

Al-Albani claims it is **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 2/14 no. 1425.**” Although it has been narrated by **Muslim from Abu Hurayra** (Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 6 : (*Pg. 11 no. 6)

Hadith: “The greatest trust in the sight of Allah on the Day of Judgement is the man who doesn’t divulge the secrets between him and his wife.” [Muslim no.’s 124 and 1437]

Al-Albani claims it is **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 2/192 no. 1986.**” Although it has been narrated by **Muslim, Ahmad and Abu Dawood from Abi Sayyed** (Allah be pleased with him)!!

No 7 : (*Pg. 11 no. 7)

Hadith: “If anyone **READS** the last ten verses of Surah al-Kahf he will be saved from the mischief of the Dajjal.” [Muslim no. 809].

Al-Albani said that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 5/233 no. 5772.**” NB- The word used by Muslim is **MEMORIZED** and not **READ** as al-Albani claimed; what an awful mistake! This Hadith has been narrated by **Muslim, Ahmad and Nisai from Abi Darda** (Allah be pleased with him)!! (Also recorded by Imam Nawawi in “Riyadh us-Saliheen, 2/1021” of the English ed’n).

No 8 : (*Pg. 11 no. 8)

Hadith: “The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) had a horse called al-Laheef.” [Bukhari, see **Fath al-Bari of Hafiz Ibn Hajar 6/58 no.2855**]. But Al-Albani said that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in “**Daeef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 4/208 no. 4489.**” Although it has been narrated by **Bukhari from Sahl ibn Sa’ad** (Allah be pleased with him)!!!

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “This is only anger from anguish, little from a lot and if it wasn’t for the fear of lengthening and boring the reader, I would have mentioned many other examples from al-Albani’s books whilst reading them. Imagine what I would have found if I had traced everything he wrote?”

AL-ALBANI’S INADEQUACY IN RESEARCH (*Vol. 1 pg. 20)

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “The strange and amazing thing is that Shaykh al-Albani misquoted many great Hadith scholars and disregards them by his lack of knowledge, either directly or indirectly! He crowns himself as an unbeatable source and even tries to imitate the great scholars by using such terms like “Lam aqif ala Sanadiah”, which means “I could not find the chain of narration”, or using similar phrases! He also accuses some of the best memorizers of Hadith for lack of attention, even though he is the one best described by that!”

Now for some examples to prove our point:

No 9 : (*Pg. 20 no. 1)

Al-Albani said in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 6/251 no. 1847**” (in connection to a narration from Ali): “**I could not find the Sanad.**”

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “Ridiculous! If this al-Albani was any scholar of Islam, then he would have known that this Hadith can be found in “Sunan al-Bayhaqi, 7/121” :- Narrated by Abu Sayyed ibn Abi Amarah, who said that Abu al-Abbas Muhammad ibn Yaqoob who said to us that Ahmad ibn Abdal Hamid said that Abu Usama from Sufyan from Salma ibn Kahil from Mu’awiya ibn Soayd who said, ‘I found this in my fathers book from Ali (Allah be pleased with him).’”

No 10 : (*Pg. 21 no. 2)

Al-Albani said in ‘**Irwa al-Ghalil, 3/283**’: Hadith of Ibn Umar ‘*Kisses are usury*’, “**I could not find the Sanad.**”

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “This is outrageously wrong for surely this is mentioned in ‘**Fatawa al-Shaykh ibn Taymiyya al-Misriyah (3/295)**’: ‘Harb said Obaidullah ibn Mu’az said to us, my father said to me that from Jiballa who heard Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) as saying: Kisses are usury.’ And these narrators are all authentic according to Ibn Taymiyya!”

No 11 : (*Pg. 21 no. 3)

Hadith of Ibn Masood (Allah be pleased with him): “*The Qur’an was sent down in 7 dialects. Everyone of its verses has an explicit and implicit meaning and every interdiction is clearly defined.*” Al-Albani stated in his checking of “**Mishkat ul-Masabih, 1/80 no. 238**” that the author of Mishkat concluded many Ahadith with the words “Narrated in Sharh us-Sunnah,” but when he examined the chapter on Ilm and in Fadail al-Qur’an he could not find it!

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “The great scholar has spoken! Wrongly as usual. I wish to say to this fraud that if he is seriously interested in finding this Hadith we suggest he looks in the chapter entitled ‘**Al-Khusama fi al-Qur’an**’ from **Sharh-us-Sunnah (1/262)**, and narrated by **Ibn Hibban** in his Sahih (no. 74), **Abu Ya’ala** in his Musnad (no. 5403), **Tahawi** in Sharh al-Mushkil al-Athar (4/172), **Bazzar** (3/90 Kashfal-Asrar) and **Haythami** has mentioned it in Majmoo’a al-Zawaid (7/152) and he has ascribed it to Bazzar, Abu Ya’ala and Tabarani in al-Awsat who said that the narrators are trustworthy.”

No 12 : (*Pg. 22 no. 4)

Al-Albani stated in his “**Sahihah, 1/230**” while he was commenting on Hadith no. 149: “*The believer is the one who does not fill his stomach....* The Hadith from Aisha as mentioned by Al-Mundhiri (3/237) and by Al-Hakim from Ibn Abbas, **I (Albani) could not find it in Mustadrak al-Hakim** after checking it in his ‘Thoughts’ section.”

Shaykh Saqqaf said: “Please don’t encourage the public to fall into the void of ignorance which you have tumbled into! If you check **Mustadrak al-Hakim (2/12)** you will find it! This proves that you are unskilled at using book indexes and the memorization of Hadith!”

No 13 : (*Pg. 23)

Another ridiculous assumption is made by al-Albani in his “**Sahihah, 2/476**” where he claims that the Hadith: “*Abu Bakr is from me, holding the position of (my) hearing*” is not in the book ‘**Hilya**’. We suggest you look in the book “**Hilya, 4/73!**”

No 14 : (*Pg. 23 no. 5)

Al-Albani said in his “**Sahihah, 1/638 no. 365, 4th edition**”: “Yahya ibn Malik has been ignored by the 6 main scholars of Hadith, for he was not mentioned in the books of Tahdhib, Taqreeb or Tadhhib.”

Shaykh Saqqaf: “That is what you say! It is not like that, for surely he is mentioned in **Tahdhib al-Tahdhib of Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (12/19 Dar al-Fikr edition)** by the nickname **Abu Ayooob al-Maraagi!!**

So beware!

FURTHER EXAMPLES OF AL-ALBANI’S CONTRADICTIONS

No 15 : (*Pg. 7)

Al-Albani has criticized the Imam al-Muhaddith **Abul Fadl Abdullah ibn al-Siddiq al-Ghimari** (Rahimahullah) for mentioning in his book “**al-Kanz al-Thameen**” a Hadith from Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) with reference to the narrator Abu Maymoona: “*Spread salam, feed the poor...*”

Al-Albani said in “**Silsilah al-Daeefa, 3/492**”, after referring this Hadith to **Imam Ahmad (2/295)** and others: “I say this is a weak Sanad, Daraqutni has said ‘Qatada from Abu Maymoona from Abu Hurayra: Unknown, and it is to be discarded.’” Al-Albani then said on the same page: “Notice, a slapdash has happened with **Suyuti** and **Munawi** when they came across this Hadith, and I have also shown in a previous reference, no. 571, that **al-Ghimari** was also wrong for mentioning it in al-Kanz.”

But in reality it is al-Albani who has become slapdashed, because he has made a big contradiction by using this same Sanad in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 3/238**” where he says, “Classified by **Ahmad (2/295)**, **al-Hakim...** from Qatada from Abu Maymoona, and he is trusted as in the book ‘al-Taqreeb’, and **Hakim** said: ‘A Sahih Sanad’, and **al-Dhahabi** agreed with Hakim!

So, by Allah glance at this mistake! Who do you think is wrong, the Muhaddith al-Ghimari (also Suyuti and Munawi) or al-Albani?

No16 : (*Pg. 27 no. 3)

Al-Albani wanted to weaken a Hadith which allowed women to wear golden jewellery, and in the Sanad for that Hadith there is **Muhammad ibn Imara**. Al-Albani claimed that **Abu Haatim** said that this narrator was: “**Not that strong,**” see the book “**Hayat al-Albani wa-Atharu... part 1, pg. 207.**”

The truth is that Abu Haatim al-Razi said in the book ‘**al-Jarh wa-Taadeel, 8/45**’: “**A good narrator but not that strong..**” So note that al-Albani has removed the phrase “A good narrator !”

NB- (al-Albani has made many of the Hadith which forbid Gold to women to be Sahih, in fact other scholars have declared these Hadith to be Daeef and abrogated by other Sahih Hadith which allow the wearing of gold by women. One of the well known Shaykhs of the “Salafiyya” - **Yusuf al-Qardawi** said in his book: ‘Islamic awakening between rejection and extremism, pg. 85: “In our own times, Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani has come out with an opinion, different from the consensus on permitting women to adorn themselves with gold, which has been accepted by all madhahib for the last fourteen centuries. He

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not only believes that the Isnad of these Ahadith is authentic, but that they have not been revoked. So, he believes, the hadith prohibit gold rings and earrings.” So who is the one who violates the Ijma of the Ummah with his extreme opinions?!)

No 17 : (*Pg. 37 no. 1)

Hadith: Mahmood ibn Lubayd said, “Allah’s Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) was informed about a man who had divorced his wife 3 times (in one sitting), so he stood up angrily and said: *‘Is he playing with Allah’s book whilst I am still amongst you?’* Which made a man stand up and say, *‘O Allah’s Messenger, shall I not kill him?’*” (al-Nisai).

Al-Albani declared this Hadith to be Daef in his checking of “**Mishkat el-Masabih, 2/981**, 3rd edition, Beirut, 1405 A.H; Maktab al-Islami”, where he says: “This man (the narrator) is reliable, but the Isnad is broken or incomplete for he did not hear it directly from his father.”

Al-Albani then contradicts himself in the book “**Ghayatul Maram Takhreej Ahadith al-Halal wal Haram** no. 261, pg. 164, 3rd Edn, Maktab al-Islami, 1405 A.H”: by saying it is **SAHIH!!!**

No 18 : (*Pg. 37 no. 2)

Hadith: *“If one of you was sleeping under the sun, and the shadow covering him shrank, and part of him was in the shadow and the other part of him was in the sun, he should rise up.”* Al-Albani declared this Hadith to be **SAHIH** in “**Sahih al-Jami al-Sagheer wa Ziyadatuh (1/266/761)**”, but then contradicts himself by saying it is **DAEEF** in his checking of “**Mishkat ul-Masabih, 3/1337 no. 4725**, 3rd Edn” and he has referred it to the Sunan of Abu Dawood!”

No 19 : (*Pg. 38 no. 3)

Hadith: *“The Friday prayer is obligatory on every Muslim.”* Al-Albani rated this Hadith to be **DAEEF** in his checking of “**Mishkat al-Masabih, 1/434**”, and said: “Its narrators are reliable but it is discontinuous as is indicated by Abu Dawood”. He then contradicts himself in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 3/54 no. 592**”, and says it is **SAHIH!!!**

So beware o wise men!

No 20 : (*Pg. 38 no. 4)

Al-Albani has made another contradiction. He has trusted Al-Muharrar ibn Abu Hurayra in one place and then weakened him in another. Al-Albani certifies in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 4/301**” that Muharrar is a trustee with Allah’s help, and Hafiz (Ibn Hajar) saying about him “accepted”, is not accepted, and therefore the Sanad is **Sahih**.

He then contradicts himself in “**Sahihah 4/156**” where he makes the Sanad **DAEEF** by saying: “The narrators in the Sanad are all Bukhari’s (i.e; used by Imam al-Bukhari) men, except for al-Muharrar who is one of the men of Nisai and Ibn Majah only. He was not trusted accept by Ibn Hibban, and that’s why al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar did not trust him, Instead he only said ‘accepted!’”

So beware of this fraud!

No 21 : (*Pg. 39 no. 5)

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Hadith: Abdallah ibn Amr (Allah be pleased with him): *“The Friday prayer is incumbent on whoever heard the call”* (Abu Dawood). Al-Albani stated that this Hadith was **HASAN** in **“Irwa all-Ghalil 3/58”**, he then contradicts himself by saying it is **DAEEF** in **“Mishkatul Masabih 1/434 no. 1375”!!!**

No 22 : (*Pg. 39 no. 6)

Hadith: Anas ibn Malik (Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) used to say: *“Do not be hard on yourself, otherwise Allah will be hard on you. When a people were hard on themselves, then Allah was hard on them.”* (Abu Dawood)

Al-Albani stated that this Hadith was **DAEEF** in his checking of **“Mishkat, 1/64”**, but he then contradicts himself by saying that this Hadith is **HASAN** in **“Ghayatul Maram, pg. 141”!!**

No 23 : (*Pg. 40 no. 7)

Hadith of Sayyida Aisha (Allah be pleased with her): *“Whoever tells you that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to urinate while standing, do not believe him. He never urinated unless he was sitting.”* (Ahmad, Nisai and Tirmidhi)

Al-Albani said that this Sanad was **DAEEF** in **“Mishkat 1/117.”** He then contradicts himself by saying it is **SAHIH** in **‘Silsilat al-Ahadithal-Sahihah 1/345 no. 201’!!!**

So take a glance dear reader!

No 24 : (*Pg. 40 no. 8)

Hadith: *“There are three which the angels will never approach: The corpse of a disbeliever; a man who wears ladies perfume, and one who has had sex until he performs ablution.”* (Abu Dawood).

Al-Albani corrected this Hadith in **“Sahih al-Jami al-Sagheer wa Ziyadatuh, 3/71 no. 3056”** by saying it was **HASAN** in the checking of **“Al-Tarhib 1/91”** [Also said to be Hasan in the English translation of ‘The Etiquettes of Marriage and Wedding, pg. 11]. He then makes an obvious contradiction by saying that the same Hadith was **DAEEF** in his checking of **“Mishkatul-Masabih, 1/144 no. 464”** and says that the narrators are trustworthy but the chain is broken between al-Hasanal-Easri and Ammar (Allah be pleased with him) as al-Mundhiri had said in al-Tarhib (1/91)!!

No 25 : (*Pg. 42 no. 10)

It reached Malik (Rahimahullah) that Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) used to shorten his prayer, in distances such as between Makkah and Ta’if or between Makkah and Usfan or between Makkah and Jeddah...

Al-Albani has weakened it in **“Mishkat, 1/426 no. 1351”**, and then contradicts himself by saying it is **SAHIH** in **“Irwa al-Ghail,3/14”!!**

No 26 : (*Pg. 43 no. 12)

Hadith: *“Leave the Ethiopians as long as they leave you, because no one takes out the treasure of the Ka’ba except the one with the two weak legs from Ethiopia.”* Al-Albani has weakened this Hadith in his checking of **“Mishkat 3/1495 no. 5429”** by saying: *“The Sanad is DAEEF.”* But then he contradicts himself as is his habit, by correcting it in **“Sahihah, 2/415 no. 772.”**

An example of al-Albani praising someone in one place and then disparaging him in another place in his books

No 27 : (*Pg. 32)

He praises **Shaykh Habib al-Rahman al-Azami** in the book ‘**Sahih alTarghib wa Tarhib**, page 63’, where he says: “I want you to know one of the things that encouraged me to.... which has been commented by the famous and respected scholar Shaykh Habib al-Rahman al-Azami”.... And he also said on the same page, “And what made me more anxious for it, is that its checker, the respected Shaykh Habib al-Rahman al-Azami has announced...”

Al-Albani thus praises Shaykh al-Azami in the above mentioned book; but then makes a contradiction in the introduction to ‘**Adaab uz Zufaaf** (The Etiquettes of Marriage and Wedding), new edition page 8’, where he said: “Al-Ansari has used in the end of his letter, one of the enemies of the Sunnah, Hadith and Tawhid, who is famous for that, is Shaykh Habib al-Rahman al-Azami..... For his cowardliness and lack of scholarly deduction....”

NB - (The above quotation from **Adaab uz Zufaaf** is not found in the English translation by his supporters, which shows that they deliberately avoided translating certain parts of the whole work). So have a glance at this!

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS FROM VOLUME 2

No 28 : (*Pg. 143 no. 1)

Hadith of Abi Barza (Allah be pleased with him): “*By Allah, you will not find a man more just than me.*” (Sunan al-Nisai , 7/120 no. 4103).

Al-Albani said that this Hadith was **SAHIH** in “**Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh**, 6/105 no. 6978”, and then he astonishingly contradicts himself by saying it is **DAEEF** in “**Daeef Sunan al-Nisai**, pg. 164 no. 287.”

So beware of this mess!

No 29 : (*Pg. 144 no.2)

Hadith of Harmala ibn Amru al-Aslami from his Uncle: “*Throw pebbles at the Jimar by putting the extremity of the thumb on the fore-finger.*” (Sahih Ibn Khuzaima, 4/276-277 no. 2874)

Al-Albani acknowledged its weakness in “Sahih Ibn Khuzaima” by saying that the Sanad was **DAEEF**, but then contradicts himself by saying it is **SAHIH** in “**Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh**, 1/312 no. 923!”

No 30 : (*Pg. 144 no. 3)

Hadith of Sayyidina Jabir ibn Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him): “*The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was asked about the sexually defiled [Junubi].. can he eat, or sleep... He said : 'Yes, when this person makes Wudhu.'*” (Ibn Khuzaima no. 217 and Ibn Majah no. 592).

Al-Albani has admitted its weakness in his comments on “**Ibn Khuzaima**, 1/108 no. 217”, but then contradicts himself by correcting the above Hadith in “**Sahih Ibn Majah**, 1/96 no. 482”!!

No 31 : (*Pg. 145 no. 4)

Hadith of Aisha (Allah be pleased with her): *“A vessel as a vessel and food as food.”* (Nisai, 7/71 no. 3957).

Al-Albani said that it was **SAHIH** in **“Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 2/13 no. 1462”**, but then contradicts himself in **“Daef Sunan al-Nisai, no .263 pg. 157”**, by saying it is **DAEEF!!!**

No 32 : (* Pg. 145 no. 5)

Hadith of Anas (Allah be pleased with him): *“Let each one of you ask Allah for all his needs, even for his sandal thong if it gets cut.”*

Al-Albani said that the above Hadith was **HASAN** in his checking of **“Mishkat, 2/696 no. 2251 and 2252”**, but then contradicts himself in **“Daef al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 5/69 no. 4947 and 4948”!!!**

No 33 : (*Pg. 146 no. 6)

Hadith of Abu Dharr (Allah be pleased with him): *“If you want to fast, then fast in the white shining nights of the 13th, 14th and 15th.”*

Al-Albani declared it to be **DAEEF** in **“Daef al-Nisai, pg. 84”** and in his comments on **“Ibn Khuzaima, 3/302 no. 2127”**, but then contradicts himself by calling it **SAHIH** in **“Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 2/10 no. 1448”** and also corrected it in **“Sahih al-Nisai, 3/902 no. 4021”!!** So what a big contradiction!

NB- (Al-Albani mentioned this Hadith in ‘Sahih al-Nisai’ and in ‘Daef al-Nisai’, which proves that he is unaware of what he has and is classifying, how inept!)

No 34 : (*Pg. 147 no. 7)

Hadith of Sayyida Maymoonah (Allah be pleased with her): *“There is nobody who has taken a loan and it is in the knowledge of Allah....”* (Nisai, 7/315 and others).

Al-Albani said in **“Daef al-Nisai, pg. 190”**: **“Sahih, except for the part al-Dunya.”** Then he contradicts himself in **“Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 5/156”**, by saying that the whole Hadith is **SAHIH, including the al-Dunya part**. So what an amazing contradiction!

No 35 : (*Pg. 147 no. 8)

Hadith of Burayda (Allah be pleased with him): *“Why do I see you wearing the jewellery of the people of hell.”* (Meaning the Iron ring), [Nisai, 8/172 and others...]. Al-Albani has said that it was **SAHIH** in **“Sahih a-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 5/153 no. 5540”**, but then contradicts himself by saying it is **DAEEF** in **“Daef al-Nisai, pg. 230”!!!**

No 36 : (*Pg. 148 no. 9)

Hadith of Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him): *“Whoever buys a carpet to sit on, he has 3 days to keep it or return it with a cup of dates that are not brownish in colour.”* (Nisai 7/254 and others).

Al-Albani has weakened it with reference to the ‘3 days’ part in **“Daef Sunan al-Nisai, pg. 186”**, by saying: **“Correct; except for 3 days.”** But the ‘genius’ contradicts himself by **correcting the Hadith and approving the ‘3 days’ part** in **“Sahih al-Jami wa Ziyadatuh, 5/220 no. 5804”**.

So wake up (al-Albani)!!

No 37 : (*Pg. 148 no. 10)

Hadith of Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him): “*Whoever catches a single Rak’ah of the Friday prayer has caught (the whole prayer).*” (Nisai 3/112, Ibn Majah 1/356 and others). Al-Albani has weakened it in “**Daeef Sunan al-Nisai, no. 78 pg. 49**”, where he said: /”Abnormal (shadh), where Friday is mentioned.” He then contradicts himself by saying **SAHIH**, including the Friday part in “**Irwa, 3/84 no. 622.**” May Allah heal you!

AL-ALBANI AND HIS DEFAMATION AND AUTHENTICATION OF NARRATORS AT WILL!

No 38 : (*Pg. 157 no. 1)

KANAAN IBN ABDULLAH AN-NAHMY :-

Al-Albani said in his “**Sahihah, 3/481**” : “Kanaan is considered Hasan, for he is attested by Ibn Ma’een.” Al-Albani then contradicts himself by saying, “**There is weakness in Kanaan.**” (see “**Daeefah, 4/282**”)!!

No 39 : (*Pg. 158 no. 2)

MAJA’A IBN AL-ZUBAIR :-

Al-Albani has weakened Maja’a in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 3/242**”, by saying, “This is a weak Sanad because Ahmad has said: ‘There is nothing wrong with Maja’a’, and Daraqtuni has weakened him...”

Al-Albani then made a contradiction in his “**Sahihah, 1/613**” by saying: “His men (the narrators) are trusted **except for Maja’a who is a good narrator of Hadith.**” An amazing contradiction!

No 40 : (* Pg. 158 no. 3)

UTBA IBN HAMID AL-DHABI:-

Al-Albani has weakened him in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 5/237**” by saying: “And this is a weak (Daeef) Sanad which has three defects.... **the second defect is the weakness of al-Dhabi**, the Hafiz said: ‘A truthful narrator with hallucinations’”.

Al-Albani then makes an obvious contradiction in “**Sahihah, 2/432**”, where he said about a Sanad which mentions Utba: “**And this is a good (Hasan) Sanad**, Utba ibn Hamid al-Dhabi is trustworthy but has hallucinations, and the rest of the narrators in the Sanad are trusted.”!!

No 41 : (*Pg. 159 no. 4)

HISHAM IBN SA’AD :-

Al-Albani said in his “**Sahihah, 1/325**”: “**Hisham ibn Sa’ad is a good narrator of Hadith.**” He then contradicts himself in “**Irwa al-Ghalil, 1/283**” by saying: “**But this Hisham has a weakness in memorizing.**”

So what an amazement!!

No 42 : (*Pg. 160 no. 5)

UMAR IBN ALI AL-MUQADDAMI :-

Al-Albani has weakened him in “**Sahihah, 1/371**”, where he said: “**He in himself is trusted but he used to be a very bad forger, which makes him undependable....**” Al-Albani then contradicts himself again in “**Sahihah, 2/259**” by accepting him and describing him as being trustworthy from a Sanad which

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mentions Umar ibn Ali. Al-Albani says: **“Classified by Hakim, who said: ‘A Sahih Isnad (chain of transmission)’**, and al-Dhahabi went along with it, and it is as they have said.” So what an amazement!!!

No 43 : (*Pg. 160 no. 6)

ALI IBN SA'EED AL-RAZI:-

Al-Albani has weakened him in **“Irwa, 7/13”**, by saying: **“They have said nothing good about al-Razi.”** He then contradicts himself in another ‘fantastic’ book of his, **“Sahihah, 4/25”**, by saying: **“This is good (Hasan) Sanad and the narrators are all trustworthy.”** So beware !!!

No 44 : (*Pg. 165 no. 13)

RISHDIN IBN SA'AD :-

Al-Albani said in his **“Sahihah, 3/79”** : "In it (the sanad) is Rishdin ibn Sa'ad, **and he has been declared trustworthy.**" But then he contradicts himself by declaring him to be **DAEEF** in **“Daefah, 4/53”**; where he said: **“And Rishdin ibn Sa'ad is also Daef.”** So beware!!

No 45 : (*Pg. 161 no. 8)

ASHAATH IBN ISHAQ IBN SA'AD :-

What an amazing fellow this Shaykh!! Al-Albani!! Proves to be. He said in **“Irwa al-Ghalil, 2/228”**: **“His status is unknown, and only Ibn Hibban trusted him.”** But then he contradicts himself by his usual habit! Because he only transfers from books and nothing else, and he copies without knowledge; this is proven in **“Sahihah, 1/450”**, where he said about Ashaath: **“Trustworthy”**.

So what an amazement!!!

No 46 : (*Pg. 162 no. 9)

IBRAHIM IBN HAANI:-

The honourable!! The genius!! The copier!! Has made Ibrahim ibn Haani trustworthy in one place and has then made him unknown in another. Al-Albani said in **‘Sahihah, 3/426’**: **“Ibrahim ibn Haani is trustworthy”**, but then he contradicts himself in **“Daefah, 2/225”**, by saying that **he is unknown and his Ahadith are refused!!**

No 47 : (*Pg. 163 no. 10)

AL-IJLAA IBN ABDULLAH AL-KUFI:-

Al-Albani has corrected a Sanad by saying it is good in **“Irwa, 8/7”**, with the words: **“And its Sanad is good, the narrators are trustworthy, except for Ibn Abdullah al-Kufi who is truthful.”** He then contradicts himself by weakening the Sanad of a Hadith where al-Ijlaa is found and has made him the reason for declaring it **DAEEF** (see **‘Daefah, 4/71’**); where he said: **“Ijlaa ibn Abdullah has a weakness.”** Al-Albani then quoted Ibn al-Jawzi's (Rahimahullah) words by saying: **“Al-Ijlaa did not know what he was saying.”!!!**

No 48 : (*Pg. 67-69)

ABDULLAH IBN SALIH : KAATIB AL-LAYTH :-

Al-Albani has criticised **Al-Hafiz al-Haythami, Al-Hafiz al-Suyuti, Imam Munawi and the Muhaddith Abul-Fadl al-Ghimari** (Allah's mercy be upon them) in his book **“Silsilah al-Daefah, 4/302”**, when checking a Hadith containing the narrator Abdullah ibn Salih. He says on page 300: **“How could Ibn Salih be alright and his Hadith be good, even though he has got many mistakes and is of little awareness, which also made some fraudulent Hadiths enter his books, and he narrates them without knowing about them!”**

He has not mentioned that **Abdullah ibn Salih is one of Imam al-Bukhari's men** (i.e. used by al-Bukhari), because it does not suit his mode, and he does not state that Ibn Ma'een and some of the leading critics of Hadith have trusted him. Al-Albani has contradicted himself in other places in his books by making Hadiths containing Abdullah ibn Salih to be good, and here they are :-

Al-Albani said in "**Silsilah al-Sahihah, 3/229**": "And so the Sanad is good, because Rashid ibn Sa'ad is trustworthy by agreement, and who is less than him in the men of Sahih, and there is also **Abdullah ibn Salih who has said things that are unharmed with Allah's help!!**" Al-Albani also said in "**Sahihah, 2/406**" about a Sanad which contained Ibn Salih: "**a good Sanad in continuity.**" And again in "Sahihah , 4/647": "He's a proof with continuity."

NB- (Shaykh Saqqaf then continued with some important advice, this has been left untranslated for brevity but one may refer to the Arabic for further elaboration).

By the grace of Allah, this is enough from the books of Shaykh Saqqaf to convince any seeker of the truth, let alone the common folk who have little knowledge of the science of Hadith. If anyone is interested for hundreds of other similar quotes from Shaykh Saqqaf, then I suggest you write to the following address to obtain his book *Tanaqadat al-Albani al Wadihat* (The Clear Contradictions of al-Albani).

**THE IMAM AL-NAWAWI HOUSE
P.O.BOX 925393
AMMAN
JORDAN**

[The cost for volume 1 is \$4.00 US plus shipping and the cost for volume 2 is \$7.00 plus shipping]. Allah knows best.

HERE ENDS THE QUOTATIONS FROM SHAYKH SAQQAF

This has been just 48 selected contradictions from the works of al-Albani, as derived by Shaykh Saqqaf. During the course of my research into al-Albani's works which have been translated into English by his followers in England, I myself came across some startling errors. I was given some publications coming from his supporters in England [**Jami'at Ihya Minhaaj al-Sunnah**]; one by the title: "***Daeef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan (according to Shaikh al-Albaanee, No's according to the English Translation of Professor Ahmad Hasan, published in 1411/1991 C.E.)***", and the other by the title: "***Daeef Ahadith of an-Nawawi's Riyaad-us-Saaliheen (according to the checking of Naasir ud-Deen Al-Albaani, No's according to the English Translation of S. M. Madni Abbasi)***".

I found some serious contradictions when I cross-referenced the above named publications; but I content myself by quoting just two of the contradictions, so that a round figure of fifty errors is achieved! Besides these errors there are others which will be displayed in the following pages, from the one who claims to be giving us the most '**authentic**' **Sunnah** through his '*classifications of Ahadith*'! The main aim in carrying out the latter exercise is for the benefit of those believers who do not and can not read the Arabic works of al-Albani for one, and secondly to give the opportunity to any doubting "Thomas"; who may or may not be one of al-Albani's supporters at the time of reading this short exposition, to actually go along and check the references I have quoted from (mainly in English). By doing this, Insha'Allah, all doubts about the authenticity of this exposition will be alleviated and the hearts of those who doubt may become content! Allah knows best.

No 49 :-

Hadith: Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) reported the Apostle of Allah (Peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: “*Allah and His Angels bless those who are on the right flanks of the rows (in prayer).*” [See **Sunan Abu Dawood, 1/676 pg. 175, English ed’n and Riyadh-us-Saliheen, 2/1094 pg. 548**]. When I checked the authenticity of the above Hadith by using the list “Daeef Ahadith of Abu Dawud’s Sunan”, it was not counted amongst the Daeef ones, which means to the user of this list that the above Hadith is **SAHIH** (or at least **HASAN**) according to the checking of al-Albani!

But, when I found the same Hadith In Riyadh-us-Saliheen, it was declared to be **DAEEF** by al-Albani. The actual words used by the author of “Daeef Ahaadith of an-Nawawi’s Riyadh-us-Saliheen”, was:- “Al-Albaanee brings a long note..... The wording (‘upon those on the right rows’) is Shaadh or Munkar -the correct narration being : (‘upon those who join the rows’) -see Mishkaat, no. 1096, “Daeef Abi Daud”, no. 153...”!!!

NB- al-Imam Nawawi (Allah’s mercy be upon him) said that the above Hadith has been cited on the terms of **Imam Muslim** by **Imam Abu Dawood** (see the above reference in ‘Riyadh’).

No 50:-

Hadith: Abu Umamah (Allah be pleased with him) says that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: “*A person who did not take part in jihad or failed to equip a fighter, or did not look well after the family of a fighter, would be severely punished by Allah before the day of judgement.*” (**Abu Dawood, 2/2497, pg. 693 and Riyadh-us-Saliheen, 2/1348, pg. 643**)

When I checked the authenticity of the above Hadith by using the list ‘Daeef Ahadith of Abu Dawud’s Sunan’, it was not listed as being **DAEEF**, hence it has been declared to be **SAHIH** (or at least **HASAN**) in al-Albani’s checking of Abu Dawood! But when I found the above Hadith in Riyadh-us-Saliheen, al-Albani declared it to be **DAEEF**. The actual words used by the author of ‘Da’eeef Ahaadith of An-Nawawi’s Riyaad-us-Saaliheen’ was: “Its isnad contains al-Waleed ibn Muslim-a mudaliis- and he has used ‘an-anah’ here (‘from...’). See ‘at-Ta’leeq-ur-Ragheeb’, 2/200.”

NB- Imam an-Nawawi said that the above Hadith has been related with a **Sahih Isnad**, besides that, according to **Shaykh Shu’ayb al-Arnaoot’s** checking of the above Hadith in his edition of Riyadh-us-Saliheen, the above Hadith is not **Daeef** (this information has been derived from another publication of ‘Jami’at Ihyaa Minhaaj al-Sunnah, by the title “*List of Daeef Ahadiths in Riyaad-as-Saliheen according to Shuaib Amaoutt,*” but as for the lists authenticity, I say: it needs to be checked). I leave you to decide whose checking you will adopt.

Now that I have quoted you 50 mistakes of al-Albani in Hadith, I wish to delve into some rather important issues of Fiqh, especially by comparing al-Albani’s declarations with the views of other authors! For the record let me say at the outset, that most of the opinions that I will be quoting from al-Albani are sound and acceptable to one school of Fiqh or another. But if the reader may sometimes get the feeling that I have inclined too much towards one particular school, then I have only done so to defend other sound and acceptable views which have been and are still being practised by large sections of the Ummah, indifference to the views of al-Albani and others. To all of us, more than one view should be acceptable if a Mujtahid has used his personal reasoning to extract a ruling from the sources of the Shari’ah; since this was the attitude of the glorious Salaf as-Salihin (pious predecessors of the first three generations of Islam), may Allah be pleased with them all. But as for al-Albani and the generality of his supporters they have adopted the tactless way of rejecting/criticising all other ways ‘unacceptable’ to their deductions from the Qur’an and Sunnah as you shall see below. Allah knows best.

MOVING THE FINGER IN TASHAHHUD

With reference to al-Albani's recently translated book "The Prophet's Prayer described from the beginning to the end as though you see it (Sifah Salah-al-Nabee), al-Albani claimed (pg. 66): "Further, the Hadith that he would not move his finger does not have an authentic Isnad, as I have explained in Da'ef Abi Daawood (175). "But when I looked this Hadith up in the English Translation of the *Sunan of Imam Abu Dawood (1/984, pg. 252)* I found that Abdallah ibn al-Zubair (Allah be pleased with him) said : "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to point with his finger (at the end of Tashahhud) and he would not move it."

But lo and behold, this very Hadith has not been listed In "Da'ef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan", by his followers; which means to the user of this list that this Hadith is acceptable to them, and is either of the rank of SAHIH or HASAN to the user of this list! Imam Muslim (Rahimahullah) also reported Ibn al-Zubair (Allah be pleased with him) narrating from his father: "That when the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) sat for supplication, i.e. Tashahhud, he placed his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh, and pointed with his forefinger, and placed his thumb on his (middle) finger, and covered his knee with the palm of his left hand." (Sahih Muslim, 1/1202, English ed'n)

According to the Hanafi, Hanbali and Shafi'i Madhhabs, one should not continuously make supplications with the fore-finger. It is written in the English translation of *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, by As-Sayyid Sabiq, (vol. 1, pg. 157): "Wa'il ibn Hajr (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) would place his left palm on his left thigh and knee. He would place the end of his right elbow upon his right thigh and would then close his right hand, forming a circle. In another narration it states, he would make a circle with his middle finger and thumb and point with his index finger, and (Wa'il) saw him moving it to make supplications (related by Ahmad)." Explaining the Hadith, al-Bayhaqi (Rahimahullah) says, "The implication of 'he would move it' is that he would point with it, not that he would continue to move it." This would be in agreement with the narration of Ibn az-Zubair (Allah be pleased with him), who reported, "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) would point with his finger while supplicating, and he would not move it." This is related by Abu Dawud with a Sahih chain. An-Nawawi also mentioned it (NB - Both Imams al-Bayhaqi and Nawawi were great Shafi'i scholars of Hadith who followed this Hadith of Ibn al-Zubair, besides so many other scholars of Hadith).

Now, there is also a footnote (no 11) by the translator Jamal Zarabozo who said, "In his notes to Mishkat al-Masabih, al-Albani has discussed the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hajr and of Ibn az-Zubair. He said that the first Hadith has a Sahih chain. The narrators of the latter Hadith (i.e. of Ibn al-Zubair) are all trustworthy. Muharnmad ibn Ijlan (a narrator in the chain going back to Ibn az-Zubair) has some weakness due to his memory, but his memory was not so poor as to drop to the rank of Hasan (a good Hadith). Therefore, the statement recorded by Sabiq that the chain is Sahih is incorrect (i.e only if you accept al-Albani's classification of Hadith); The important words in the latter Hadith are, 'and he would not move it.' According to al-Albani this addition is irregular and rejected (Shadh and munkar)."

And I say: "al-Albani's followers have not said that it is Shadh and munkar in their *Da'ef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan!*"

Again referring to *Fiqh-us-Sunnah* (vol. 1, pg. 158), Sabiq says: "According to the Shafiyyah, one points with the finger only once, when saying 'except Allah' in the statement bearing witness. The Hanafiyyah raise the finger in the denial part of the Statement (there is no God) and put it back down during the confirmation part (except Allah). The Malikiyyah (see below for the Maliki view) move the finger to the left and to the right until they finish the prayer. The Hanbaliyyah point with the finger every time they mention Allah, as a reflection to the oneness of Allah, and they do not move it."

Another two Hadith on this issue have been related by Imam Muslim (Rahimahullah) in his Sahih: "Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported that when the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon

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him) sat for the tashahhud he placed his left hand on his left knee, and his right hand on his right knee, and he raised his right finger, which is next to the thumb, making supplication in this way, and he stretched his left hand on his left knee. Another version on the authority of Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) says: When the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) sat for the tashahhud, he placed his left hand on his left knee and placed his right hand on his right knee, and he formed a ring like (Arabic number 53) and **pointed with his finger of attestation**. (Also) Ali ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'awi reported: Abdullah ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) saw me playing with pebbles during prayer. After finishing the prayer he forbade me (to do it) and said: Do as the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) used to do. I said: How did Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) do? He said that he (the Messenger of Allah) sat at tashahhud, placed his right palm on the right thigh and closed all his fingers and pointed with the help of the finger next to the thumb, and placed his palm on his right thigh." (**Sahih Muslim, 1/1203-4, English ed'n**)

Imam Ibn Abi Zaid al-Qairawani (d. 389 AH; Rahimahullah) who is famed with the title 'little Malik', gave the view of the Maliki Madhhab in his *al-Risala* (pg. 31) in the following words: "At the time a worshipper reads the tashahhud, that is the tahiyah, he places his hands on his thighs. He then folds the fingers of his right hand, but he leaves his index finger unfolded and pointing forward with its side pointing towards his face. There are differences of opinion about the interpretation of the state of the finger. Some believe that keeping the finger still signifies that Allah is one God. Those who shake it consider it a club with which to ward off the Satan. I consider that the interpretation of that is that it reminds the worshipper that he is in the state of prayer, and that moving the finger shall prevent him from forgetting himself. The worshipper then places his left hand on his left thigh with the palm downwards, he must not move it nor point with it."

Finally, it is written in the English translation of *Umdat al Salik wa Uddat al-Nasik - {This book gives the Shafi'i Madhhab's views}* (**The Reliance of the Traveller, by Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Naqib al-Misri**, d. 769AH/1368 CE; Rahimahullah, trans. Noah H.M. Keller, pg. 142, f8.44): "One does not move it while it is thus raised (Shaykh Umar Barakat said in his commentary to Umdat al-Salik: following the Sunnah from a Hadith related by Abu Dawud. It is offensive to move it here, though some hold that it is recommended, the evidence for which is also from the Sunnah, in a Hadith related by Bayhaqi, who states both Hadiths are rigorously authenticated (Sahih).

Precedence is given to the former Hadith (i.e of Ibn Az-Zubair), which negates moving the finger, over the latter Hadith, which affirms it, because scholars hold that what is sought in prayer is lack of motion, and moving it diminishes one's humility). (I say: al-Albani's comment on the Hadith of Ibn al-Zubair: 'Even if it were authentic, it is negatory, while the Hadith above is affirmatory: the affirmatory takes precedence over the negatory, as is well known among the scholars' [see pg. 66 of Sifah Salah an-Nabee] is of no consequence to what most of the Fuqaha (Jurisprudents) have said from amongst the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali scholars, but his opinion is only supported by the Malikiyyah, so do not be confused). The Prophet's moving it was merely to teach people that it was permissible (and Shaykh Abdal-Wakil Durubi said: 'As it was the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) duty to distinguish for his Community the acts that were offensive from those that were unlawful, and he was given the reward of the obligatory for doing such offensive acts'). Moreover, Bayhaqi says that the meaning of 'moving it' in the latter Hadith is simply *raising* it, so there is no actual contradiction)."

From the above discussion we may briefly say in summary that al-Albani labelled the Hadith of Abdallah ibn al-Zubair as being **DAEEF** according to what he said in 'Sifah-Salah an-Nabee, (pg. 66), but his followers have not labelled it as being **DAEEF** in 'Da'ef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan'!! Also according to Jamal Zarabozo's quotation from al-Albani's checking of Mishkat ul-Masabih, this same Hadith was of the rank of **HASAN**, and not **DAEEF** as he had said in 'Da'ef Abi Dawood (no 175)'; is this not a grave contradiction? We should rather accept the checking of such great memorizers of Hadith like the Imams Bayhaqi and Nawawi (Allah's mercy be upon them). Allah knows best.

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With regard to the placing of the hands below the navel in Salah (see *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, appendix 4, pg. 102-103, English ed'n), al-Albani has declared all the Hadith that reached him on this issue to be Da'eef, due to the presence of the narrator **Abdar-Rahman ibn Ishaq al-Wasiti al-Koofi**. This may be true due to what the scholars of Hadith have said, but he has either overlooked the fact that there are many other Ahadith which order the placing of the hands below the navel, or has deliberately not bothered to mention them to his readers who are usually unaware of this fact! Al-Albani claims on page 12 of the same book: "To place them on the chest is what is proved in the Sunnah, and all that is contrary to it is either **Da'eef or totally baseless.**" But he contradicts himself on page 102-103 of the same book by saying: "What further points to its weakness (i.e. the Hadith of Abdar-Rahman ibn Ishaq) is that contrary to it has been narrated on the authority of Ali (Allah be pleased with him) with a better Isnad: the Hadith of **Ibn Jareer al-Dabbi** an (from) his father, who said, 'I saw Ali holding his left arm with his right on the wrist, above the navel (I say: The statement above the navel, does not mean the chest, but literally above the navel and below the chest, since this is the opinion of the Shafiyyah scholars like Bayhaqi, Nawawi, Muslim and so on) - this Isnad is a candidate for the rank of **HASAN**; Baihaqi (1/301) firmly designated it to be Hasan, and Bukhari (1/301) designated it with certainty while giving it an abridged, ta'leeq form."

Is this not a clear contradiction from within the same book? And this is not all my dear reader...

Al-Albani claimed that it was found in Bukhari (1/301), but when I examined the **Sahih al-Bukhari** (Vol. 1, Chapter. 6, no. 707, pg. 396, English ed'n), I did not find this narration of Ibn Jarir al-Dabbi (Allah be pleased with him), but instead a **Hadith from Sahl ibn Sa'ad** (Allah be pleased with him) who said: "*The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in the prayer.*" *Abu Hazim said, "I knew that the order was from the Prophet (Peace be upon him)."* [see also Muwatta of Imam Malik, section 9.15, no 50, pg 70 English trans'n by A. Abdarahman and Y. Johnson for a very similar narration]. According to the author of *Ja'al Haqq*, Shaykh Ahmad Khan, there is not even one Hadith in the Sahih collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim which specify where the hands should be placed!

Now you have just read above that al-Albani classified the Hadith of Ibn Jarir al-Dabbi to be **HASAN**, but when I found this very Hadith in the **Sunan of Abu Dawood (1/756, pg. 194, English ed'n)** and cross referenced it to the list, "Da'eef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan." I found that his followers listed it as being **DAEEF!! Imam Abu Dawood** (Rahimahullah) said after relating the Hadith from Ibn Jarir al-Dabbi: "Sa'id ibn Jubair narrated the words: 'above the navel'. Abu Mijlaz reported the words: 'below the navel'. This has also been narrated by Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him). But that is not strong." The latter quote is one which al-Albani failed to mention in "Sifah Salah an-Nabee!"

Note also that al-Albani said with regard to the placing of the hands on the chest (see *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, pg. 12, in the footnote): "**In fact, Imam Ishaq ibn Rahwaih acted on this Sunnah, as Marwazi said in 'Masaa'il (pg. 222): 'Ishaq used to pray with us.... he would raise his hands in qunoot, and make the qunoot before bowing, and place his hands on his breast or just under his breast.'**"

But when I read the footnote to *Abu Dawood's Sunan* (vol. 1, pg. 194, fn. 345, English ed'n), I noticed that the author of *Awn al Mabood* (1,275), **Shams al-Haqq Azimabadi**, claimed that both **Abu Ishaq al-Marwazi and al-Hafiz Ishaq ibn Rahwaih** (one of Imam al Bukhari's teachers) held the position that the hands should be folded below the navel! In his **Sahih Muslim sharif-Mukhtasar Sharh Nawawi** (vol. 2, pg. 28, fn. 23), **Wahid az-Zaman** (a late scholar of the 'Salafiyya' in Pakistan) also affirmed that the Imams Sufyan al-Thawri, Abu Hanifah, Ishaq ibn Rahwaih and Abu Ishaq al-Marwazi (Allah's mercy be upon them) all used to place their hands below the navel! So who do you think is quoting correctly, al-Albani or al-Azimabadi and az-Zaman?

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Here is the full quote from Abu Dawood's Sunan: "The question of folding hands in prayer below the navel is disputed amongst the jurists. According to **Abu Hanifah, Sufyan al-Thawri, Ishaq ibn Rahwaih, Abu Ishaq al-Marwazi** (I say: others who held the same view include the Mujtahids like **Ibrahim al-Nakhai, Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman, Abu Yusuf, Muhammad al-Shaybani, Zufar ibn Hudayl** and many other scholars, Allah's mercy be upon them), **the hands should be folded below the navel.** This tradition is followed by them (I say: it is not just this tradition which lends support to placing the hands below the navel, but others as well). According to al-Shafi'i, the hands should be **placed below the chest** (I say: this is also the opinion of **Imam Muslim**, according to the chapter heading used by him: '**The placing of the right hand over the left hand after the first takbir in prayer below the chest and above the navel** and then placing them opposite the shoulders in prostration' -see **Sahih Muslim, vol.1, pg. 220, English ed'n**). **Al-Nawawi** says that this is the view of the majority of the jurists (this may have been in Imam Nawawi's day, but it is well known that throughout the centuries of Islam in aggregate, most of the Ulama as well as the common folk have been placing their hands below the navel, by Allah's decree and will). Two statements have been attributed to **Ahmad ibn Hanbal** (see al-Albani's *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, footnote on pg. 51). According to the third view ascribed to him he does not give any preference to any of these two views. One has the choice of placing the hands. **Malik** is also reported to have held two different views. According to the second, he held that one should leave the hands in their natural position without folding them. One should not fold them, placing one on the other."

NB- The most authoritative position of **Imam Malik** (Rahimahullah) has been recorded in **al-Mudawwana al-Kubra**, by **Qadi Sahnoun** (d. 240 AH). This book contains the most authentic positions of al-Imam Malik and his illustrious disciples, namely **Imam ibn al-Qasim** and **Imam ibn Wahb**. Qadi Sahnoun recorded the declarations of Imam Malik directly from Imam ibn al-Qasim, hence there is no real doubt in my mind that whatever has been recorded in this book is the Madhhab of al-Imam Malik, and usually the amal (practise) of the people of Madinah in his day. In **al-Mudawwana** (vol. 1, pg. 75-76), Imam Malik has been recorded to have said, "**Putting the right hand on the left in salah, I have no knowledge of it in the compulsory (Fard) prayer, it is thus disliked (Makrooh). But in the supererogatory (Nafl) prayer there is no harm (in folding the hands), it is left to the individual to decide.**" This statement from Imam Malik is a strong proof against those who claim that Imam Malik only prayed with his hands at his sides, after he received a severe beating (see *The Evolution of Fiqh*, pg. 70, by A.A. Bilal Philips)!

Al-Albani has only 'checked' six Hadith which allow the placing of the hands below the navel (see his 'Sifah', pg. 102, Appx. 4). But there are more than 6 other Hadith (which allow the placing of the hands below the navel) which he has not bothered to mention/check; maybe he has not come across them! One of such Hadith is very similar to what al-Albani mentioned in "**Sifah Salah an-Nabee**," pg. 11: "*We, the company of Prophets, have been commanded to hasten the breaking of the fast, to delay the meal before the fast, and to place our right arms on our left arms during prayer.*" [from Ibn Hibban and Diyaa', with a Sahih Isnad according to al-Albani]. The version I have is related by Hadrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him): "*Three things are from the habits of Prophethood: To hasten the breaking of the fast, to delay the Sehri (pre-fast meal) as late as possible, and to place one's right hand on top of the left hand below the navel.*" (transmitted by **Hafiz Ibn Shaheen**)."

To finish, As-Sayyid Sabiq quoted Imam Tirmidhi (Rahimahullah) as saying in **Fiqh-us-Sunnah** (vol. 1, pg. 132): "**Knowledgeable Companions (Allah be pleased with them all), their followers and those that came after them believed that one should put his right hand over the left during prayer, while some say above the navel and others say below the navel.**"

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Another point I wish to raise concerns the long disputed issue of raising the hands in prayer (Salah). It is a well known fact that al-Albani and the generality of people amongst the ‘Salafiyya’ have made a mountain out of a molehill, and have brewed a storm in a teacup with regards to this issue, such that many of them are bold enough to accuse those who do not raise their hands in Salah (i.e. after the initial raising called Takbir-Tahrimah) of not following the Sunnah, as well as going to the disgusting length of openly detesting and despising those who do not raise their hands after the first Takbir!

I must also admit that among those who do not raise their hands in the subsequent stages of Salah, usually the ignorant people have accused those who raise the hands in the other stages of Salah to be ‘Wahhabis!’ This is due to ignorance and pride of both sides, which usually stems from the lack of knowledge of the opinion of our great Mujtahid Imams, and the Ahadith based evidences used by the research scholars in their respective defence of either raising or not raising the hands in the other stages of Salah. Our brothers and sisters who accuse those of raising the hands in the other stages of prayer should ask themselves: “Were the great Imams like al-Shafi’i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Allah’s mercy be upon them) Wahhabis?” I pose this question because it is well known that both of the latter named Imams used to practise Raful-Yadayn after the initial Takbir, besides many other Companions and successors (Tabi’een), may Allah be pleased with them all!

It is a well known fact from the Mutawaatir Ahadith (a report of a large number of narrators whose agreement upon a lie is inconceivable) available to us, that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) used to raise his hands when pronouncing the initial Takbir in Salah. Sayyid Sabiq stated in his **Fiqh-us-Sunnah** (vol. 1, pg. 129): “Says **Ibn al-Mundhir**, ‘All scholars agree that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) raised his hands at the beginning of his prayer.’ Commenting upon this report, **Ibn Hajar (al-Asqalani)** says, ‘The Prophet’s raising his hands at the beginning of his prayer has been narrated by fifty companions, including the ten who were given the tidings of Paradise.’ **Al-Bayhaqi** related that **al-Hakim** said, ‘I do not know of any Sunnah other than this one which is accepted by the four rightly guided Khalifahs, the ten companions who were given the tidings of Paradise, and other Companions scattered across many lands.’ (NB- In my own experience, the only people I have met who do not raise their hands in any stage of the Salah have been the remnants of a Kharijite sect called the **Ibaadiyah**, nor do they fold their hands in Salah).

Now, the difference in opinion stems on the question of whether the raising of the hands is necessary in the other stages of Salah, like when going into Rukoo, standing up from Rukoo, in between the prostrations (sajdah) and when standing up for the third rakah in Salah...

Al-Albani said in “**Sifah Salah an-Nabee, pg. 42, fn. 4**”: “The raising of the hands is reported as Mutawaatir from him (Peace be upon him), as is the raising of the hands on straightening up after Rukoo. It is the Madhhab of the three Imams **Malik, Shafi’i and Ahmad**, and of the majority of scholars of Hadith and Fiqh. **Imam Malik practised it right up to his death, as reported by Ibn Asakir (15/78/2)**. Some of the Hanafis chose to do it, among them **Isam ibn Yusuf Abu Asamah al-Balkhi** (died. 210 A.H.), a student of Imam Abu Yusuf, as has been explained in the introduction.”

I wish to say to the bias of al-Albani, “You have quoted a portion of the truth correctly, but have also blundered in one of your opinions!” It is absolutely true that the great Mujtahid Imams like **al-Shafi’i** and **Ahmad ibn Hanbal** (Allah’s mercy be upon them) recommended the raising of the hands in the other subsequent stages of Salah, but it is a mistake to say that the great Imam of Madinah, **Malik ibn Anas** (Rahimahullah) “practised it right up to his death” as al-Albani claims, by quoting from **Imam Ibn Asakir** (a Shafi’i scholar of Hadith, and a staunch defender of the **Imam Abul Hasan al-Ashari**, he wrote a work

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entitled *'The Exposure by al-Imam Abul Hasan al-Ashari of Mischievous untruths'*, d. 571 AH; Rahimahullah).

For the real and authoritative view of Imam Malik and his followers, one must study the books written by the Maliki Madhhab, and then quote their opinions! I say this due to the sensible advice given to me by one of my friends in a written communication. He said: "One lesson you should learn from all this is not to, for example, take Hadith from someone who is mainly specialized in Fiqh or some other subject, or take Hanafi dalils (evidences used to give legal verdicts) from someone who is not a specialist in the Hanafi madhhab's methodological bases and evidences, or take a Hanbali scholar's word about some ruling in a different madhhab, or take Hadith knowledge from scholars who make large numbers of mistakes, and so on. In general, one does not take an accounting problem to a shoe salesman."

For the most authentic view and stance of Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) and his disciples please refer to the appropriate title and discussion later, but as for what al-Albani quoted from Imam Ibn Asakir (Rahimahullah), then I say the authenticity of this report needs to be checked, since al-Albani has failed to classify it himself in his "Sifah Salah an-Nabee," (does this not mean that he wants his readers to 'blindly' accept his verdicts?), and even if Hafiz Ibn Asakir's reference proves to be Sahih, then there is no doubt in my mind that this statement coming from Imam Malik must be rejected in favour of the real position of Imam Malik himself. The statements that I shall be quoting in favour of Imam Malik's authoritative opinion, comes directly from his most famous disciples, whereas the reference coming from Ibn Asakir as given by al-Albani, was recorded well over **300 years** after the death of Imam Malik (NB- Imam Malik passed away in the year 179 AH; while Imam Ibn Asakir was born in the year 499 AH)!

As you have read above al-Albani stated that the Imams Shafi'i and Ibn Hanbal (Allah's mercy be upon them) performed Raful-Yadayn, but one should also know that on the other hand, the great Mujtahids amongst our Pious-Predecessors, like **Abu Hanifah, Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman, Ibrahim al-Nakhai, Alqama, Aswad** (two famous disciples of the great Companion Abdallah ibn Masood), **Abu Yusuf, Muhammad al-Shaybani, Sufyan al-Thawri** and many other Ulama (Allah's mercy be upon them all) did not perform Raful-Yadayn, except in the initial Takbir, based on many sound chains of narration! So you may now ask: "Why the difference of opinion?"

The answer to this small problem is simple; it is only due to preference given to the derived Ijtihad of the available Ahadith on this subject, by individual Mujtahids of the highest scholarly rank, and not that of the laity amongst the general masses of this Ummah. Since many a scholar has said that it is impermissible to derive legal verdicts from the Qur'an and Sunnah, if one is not qualified to do Ijtihad (see the section on Taqleed), but conversely, what do we see today (see later)? The Imams who held the view that Raful-Yadayn is unnecessary, besides the initial Takbir, have based their views from many authentic Ahadith coming from the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), as well as directly from the great Companions (May Allah be pleased with them all).

The fact of the matter is, that in their view the practise of performing Raful-Yadayn in the other stages of prayer have been abrogated, and hence unnecessary in performance. Contrary to this, Imams like al-Shafi'i, Ibn Hanbal.... believe it to be desirable to perform Raful-Yadayn, and in their view the practise has not been abrogated. Consequently, many of the well known and wise research scholars have said that one's Salah is correct and acceptable by the practice of either mode! So please do not fall into the abyss of ignorance, by accusing and abusing each other of performing Salah incorrectly, since it was not generally the way of our foremost Mujtahids of the pious generations (see the discussion between Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifah and Imam al-Awzai later)!

Al-Albani has said that some of the Hanafis like Shaykh Isam ibn Yusuf al-Balkhi (Rahimahullah) chose to perform Raful-Yadayn because he did not know the evidence of his Imams who held the view that Raful-Yadayn was unnecessary after the initial Takbir (See "Sifah Salah an-Nabee, pg xvii," and also "*The Evolution of Fiqh, pg. 126*", by A.A. Bilal Philips). I find it strange that Shaykh Isam ibn Yusuf did not

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know the evidence for not performing Raful-Yadayn, since by simple logic one can deduce the fact that he must have seen his two main Imams (Muhammad al-Shaybani and Abu Yusuf) not performing Raful-Yadayn, and hence he must have been curious enough to ask his Imams for the evidence they used for not performing Raful-Yadayn! What seems more apt in a situation like this, is to say that probably Shaykh Isam ibn Yusuf felt that the evidence for performing Raful-Yadayn was more convincing to him, than the converse evidence for not performing Raful-Yadayn, and Allah knows best.

One lesson which can be learnt from this incident, is that if Shaykh Isam ibn Yusuf was a Mujtahid within the Hanafi school, then like all other Mujtahid scholars it is incumbent on him to follow his own Ijtihad, even if it has at times contradicted the founder of the Madhhab he belonged to. Thus, Shaykh Isam had to follow his own Ijtihad. The proof for what I have just said has been agreed upon by most of the scholars who were specialized in the fundamentals (Usool) of Islam. For example, it is written in the book *'Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence'*, by **Mohammad Hashim Kamali** (pg. 370): "The Ulema of Usul are in agreement that the Mujtahid is bound by the result of his own Ijtihad. **Once he has deduced the ruling on a particular issue which is founded in his true conviction and belief, he may not imitate (Taqleed) other Mujtahids on that matter regardless as to whether they agree with him or otherwise.** For the Mujtahid, the conclusion that he reaches is tantamount to a divine command which he must observe. It is therefore unlawful for him to abandon it or to follow anyone else in respect of it. But if he had not rendered his own Ijtihad on an issue which is not urgent, and he has time to investigate, then according to some ulema he may imitate other Mujtahids. However, the preferred view is that he must avoid taqleed, even of one who might be more learned than him. **Only the ammi (layman/non-Mujtahids) who is incapable of Ijtihad is allowed to follow the opinion of others.**" (The above author has quoted from **Imam Ghazzali's Mustasfa**, vol. 2 pg. 121; **Imam Amidi's Ihkam**, vol. 4 pg. 204 and from **al-Kassab's Adwa**, pg. 119).

The above quote clears some of the misconceptions held by some people on the role of Mujtahids in Islam. For example, some people who try to refute the Taqleed of the Mujtahids, bring forward examples in which the disciples of the four main Imams contradicted the Ijtihad of their Masters on certain points. These people should always remember that if a disciple contradicts the opinion of his master, then this is the result of the natural prerogative bestowed upon him, when he attained the high and honourable grade of Ijtihad. There is a well known story related from the great **Imam Abu Hanifah** (d. 150 AH; Rahimahullah), who said: "*I follow the book of Allah, and if I find no solution there, I follow the Sunnah of The Prophet (peace be upon him). If I find no solution in either the Qur'an or the Sunnah, I follow whichever of the pronouncements of the Sahabah I prefer, and leave whichever I wish. If there is a pronouncement on a particular matter by any of the Sahabah, I would not adopt any other made by any other scholar. But, if I found a solution only in the opinions of Ibrahim (al-Nakhai), al-Shabi, Ibn Sirin, Hasan al-Basri, Ata (ibn Abi Rabah) or Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib (they were all Mujtahids), I would make Ijtihad just as they did.*" (vide: "Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami," pg. 64, by **Taha Jabir al-Alwani**, who reported this account from *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. xxxi, pg. 368, *al-Intiqah* of Ibn Abdal Barr, pg. 142, and *Mashayikh Balkh al-Hanafiyah*, pg. 190).

This report exemplifies the prerogative of a Mujtahid, as well as why Shaykh Isam ibn Yusuf may have held different opinions from his Masters. I must stress, the above discussion only refers to those who can perform Ijtihad, and not to those who are unable to fulfil the conditions recognized by the scholars of Usul for carrying out the duties of a Mujtahid. Those who are not Mujtahids are bound to the opinions of qualified Mujtahids, and this is Taqleed.

Al-Albani said in *'Sifah Salah an-Nabee'*, (pg. 105-6): "About raising the hands on going into Ruku and rising from it, many Ahadith have been narrated from the Prophet (Peace be upon him): they are actually mutawaatir in the eyes of the scholars; in fact, raising the hands with every takbir is proven on his authority in many Ahadith; whereas not raising the hands is **not authentically** related from him **except once via Abdallah ibn Masood** (Allah be pleased with him), but this is not suitable for putting into

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practise, for it is naaf (negatory). It is firmly established, in the eyes of the Hanafis and others, that the muthbit (affirmatory) takes precedence over the naaf (negatory); this is even when the affirmatory is on its own, let alone the case when it is a multitude of narrations, as in this issue! On the basis of this principle, and in the absence of anything contrary, this renders it binding on them to adopt the raising of the hands, and not to stick zealously to the Madhhab after the establishment of proof. However, it is a pity that only a handful of the earlier or later ones have adopted it, so much so that **not raising the hands has become a landmark for them!**”

The above quote shows the limited and superficial knowledge of al-Albani, in the evidences used by the Hanafi scholars for not performing Raful-Yadayn! It is true that the Ahadith confirming Raful-Yadayn are Mutawaatir, but what the reader should also know, is that not performing it has also come down to us in a Mutawaatir way! In fact there are more than 50 Ahadith proving the converse of what the “great scholar,” al-Albani holds, as well as those who bolster his claims!

Al-Albani claims that not raising the hands has come to us authentically only, “once through Abdallah ibn Masood, but this is not suitable for putting into practise.” To which I reply, why should it not be possible to put into practise the Hadith related by the great Companion Ibn Masood (Allah be pleased with him)? Did he (Allah forbid) lie or fabricate from the Prophet (Peace be upon him)?

Please do not forget that there are many other authentic Ahadith to back up the opinion of the Hanafis (and Malikis)! Al-Albani only explains this Hadith of Ibn Masood away by bringing in the jurisprudential principle of, “the affirmative takes precedence over the negatory”, but his argument is fallacious in this case, since I have already said that the Hanafis believe that the performance of Raful-Yadayn has been **abrogated** by many other Ahadith, hence the above principle is inapplicable in this case! He claims the Hadith from Ibn Masood (Allah be pleased with him) has been only related authentically once. I say this is incorrect, and only due to his ignorance of all the available routes (Asanid) coming from Ibn Masood. As far as I know he has not listed the Hadith of Ibn Masood to be Da'eef, in his checking of Imam Abu Dawood's Sunan, since his followers have not recorded it in their “*Da'eef Ahadith of Abu Dawud's Sunan*”.

The Hadith in question is from **Alqamah** (Rahimahullah), who said: “Abdallah ibn Masood (Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘Should I pray in the way the Apostle of Allah (Peace be upon him) had performed it?’ He said: ‘He prayed, **raising his hands only once.**’” [*Abu Dawood*, 1/747, pg. 193, English ed'n]. Since it has not been listed in the above mentioned publication, this means that the above narration is either **Sahih**, or at least **Hasan** to the user of the list. Note also, according to **Shams al-Haqq Azimabadi**, in his book *Awn al-Mabood* (1,272-73), the above Hadith was regarded to be **Hasan** by **Hafiz Ibn Ma'een** (Rahimahullah), and it is well known that **Imam Tirmidhi** (Rahimahullah) rated it to be **Hasan** (see *Sunan al Tirmidhi*, 2/257, pg. 40-41, edited by Ahmad Muhammad Shakir).

The above Hadith has been related from **Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifah** (Rahimahullah), through an absolutely **SAHIH** chain (all the narratives given below were well known Mujtahids and absolutely truthful), and here it is: **Imam Abu Hanifah** (Rahimahullah) has related to us from his teacher, **Imam Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman** (Rahimahullah), who related from his teacher, **Imam Ibrahim al-Nakhai** (Rahimahullah), who related from his two teachers **Imam Alqamah and Imam Aswad** (Allah's mercy be upon them), the two distinguished pupils of Ibn Masood (Allah be pleased with him), who related from **Ibn Masood** (Allah be pleased with him), who related from the **Holy Prophet** (Peace and blessings be upon him). The reference for this is given after the discussion between Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam al-Awzai (Allah's mercy be upon them), please see below. So my dear reader, I have just proven to you that the Hadith from Ibn Masood has come to us authentically, through at least two authentic routes, as given above. Can you now believe in al-Albani's assertion that it has only come through one authentic narration?

As for al-Albani saying, “However, it is a pity that only a handful of the earlier or later ones (i.e. Hanafis) have adopted it, so much so that **not raising the hands has become a landmark for them!**” I say this statement is due to his ignorance, lack of scholarly deduction and knowledge of the principles and

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proofs held by the Hanafis! He claims that it has become a “landmark”, for the Hanafis only! I say, “O ‘Shaykh’, have you not contradicted yourself by admitting that others besides the Hanafis do not raise their hands in Salah in the same book?” Here is al-Albani’s admission that it is not just the Hanafis who have made it a “landmark”; he said in “**Sifah Salah an-Nabee,**” (footnotes to pg. 91): “The Ibaadiyyah have distorted this hadeeth: **their scholar Rabee’ has related it in his unreliable Musnad with a different wording to justify their view that raising the hands with takbeer invalidates the Prayer! That wording is false, as I have explained in ad-Da’eefah (6044).**”!!! This by Allah, is a grave contradiction from within the same book, and tantamount to his admission that **besides the Hanafis, the Ibaadiyyah sect do not also raise their hands!** In fact we have on record some scholars who stopped performing it altogether, except for the initial Takbeer; when they had taken into account all the arguments and evidence. Two of such great scholars are as follows:-

(A) Imam Abu Ja’far al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH; Rahimahullah):

He was a Mujtahid in specific issues (Mujtahid fi al-Masa’il) and also the famous author of the work ‘**Al-Aqeeda al-Tahawiyya**’ (The Muslim Belief According to al-Tahawi), which has been translated into English by two different organisations, and many other works on Hadith. He was originally a Shafi’i scholar who gained mastery in Shafi’i Fiqh from his famous uncle **Imam al-Muzani** (Rahimahullah) [mentioned in *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, pg. xvi], who was the famous disciple of Imam al-Shafi’i (Rahimahullah). But later in his life he joined the Hanafi school and hence stopped performing Raful-Yadayn indifference to the Shafi’i view of performing it. Imam Tahawi lived in a time when most of the Hadith had been collected (after Bukhari, Muslim etc), hence he had an ideal opportunity to sift through the Hadith on Raful-Yadayn and he came to the conclusion that Imam Abu Hanifah’s (Rahimahullah) view point was more convincing to him, and in this regard he quoted some Hadiths negating the practise of Raful-Yadayn in some of his works.

(B) Imam Muhammad Amin ibn Abidin (d. 1252/1836; Rahimahullah):

He was also originally a Shafi’i scholar who changed his school and became the foremost Hanafi Imam of his time. Hence he also changed his original opinion of performing Raful-yadayn, to not performing it. His most famous work is ‘Hashiya Radd al-Mukhtar’. Al-Albani has quoted from him in ‘*Sifah Salah an-Nabee*’ (pgs. viii, xvii).

The View of Imam Malik and his Madhhab on Raf-ul-Yadayn

I have already quoted the opinion of al-Albani with regard to his quotation from Imam ibn Asakir. Al-Albani has claimed that Imam Malik used to perform Raful-Yadayn right up to his death. But this is in direct contradiction to what has been related from Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) by his famous disciple, Imam ibn al-Qasim. The foremost book of the Maliki Madhhab in terms of Fiqh is a book called ‘**Al-Mudawwanah**’ (A Book of Legal Cases).

It is a recension of **Qadi Sahnoon** (Rahimahullah), containing his questions, answered by **Imam Ibn al-Qasim** (Rahimahullah). These answers repeat the literal words of Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) by occasional personal interpretation of Ibn al-Qasim himself. It is written in “**al-Mudawwanah**”, (vol. 1, pg. 71): “*Imam Malik has said that he does not know of Raful-Yadayn being done in any Takbeer, even when going into (Rukoo) or rising from it, except in the Takbeer Tahrimah (the initial Takbeer),*

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then ibn al-Qasim said that in the opinion of Imam Malik the performance of Raful Yadayn was Daeef (a weak practice)."

The diligent reader may have noticed that Imam Malik has quoted two Hadith which seems to support the practice of performing Raful-Yadayn, in his celebrated al-Muwatta! The Hadith quoted is as follows, "Yahya related to me from Malik from Ibn Shihab from Salim ibn Abdullah from Abdullah ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with them) that the *Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to raise his hands to the level of his shoulders when he began the prayer and when he raised his head from ruku he raised them in the same way, saying, 'Allah hears whoever praises him, our Lord and praise belongs to You.'* He did not raise them in sujud (prostration)." Also, "Yahya related to me from Malik from Nafi that Abdullah ibn Umar used to raise his hands to the level of his shoulders when he began the prayer and when he raised from the ruku he would raise them less than that." (see *Muwatta* section 3.4, no. 17 and 21, pg. 27, trans. by A. Abdarahman and Y. Johnson). The above Hadith has also been related by Imams Bukhari and Muslim in their respective collections, besides many other books of Hadith with slight variations in wording and description.

The above Hadith has been one of the main proofs used to prove the performance of Raful-Yadayn by some great scholars. But, the Hanafi and Maliki schools put forward some of the following arguments to explain their contention.

The **Imam Abu Dawood** (Rahimahullah) reported a Hadith very similar to the one above, he said that Imam Nafi said on the authority of Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) that when he began his prayer, he uttered the Takbeer (Allah is most great) and raised his hands; and when he bowed (he raised his hands); and when he said: 'Allah listens to him who praises Him,' (he raised his hands); and when he stood up at the end of two rak'ahs, he raised his hands. He (Ibn Umar) traced that back to the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him). Abu Dawood then said: **"What is correct is that the tradition reported by Ibn Umar does not go back to the Prophet** (may peace be upon him)." Abu Dawood then said: "The narrator Baqiyyah (found in the Isnad) reported the first part of this tradition from Ubaid Allah and traced it back to the Prophet (may peace be upon him); and the narrator al-Thaqafi reported it from Ubaid Allah as a statement of Ibn Umar himself (not from the Prophet). In this version he said: 'When he stood at the end of two rak'ahs he raised them up to his breasts. And this is the correct version.'" Abu Dawood then said: "This tradition has been transmitted as a statement of Ibn Umar (and not of the Prophet) by alLayth ibn Sa'ad, Malik, Ayyub, and Ibn Juraij; **and this has been narrated as a statement of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) by Hammad ibn Salamah alone on the authority of Ayyub.** Ayyub and Malik did not mention his raising of hands when he stood after two prostrations, but al-Layth mentioned it in his version. Ibn Juraij said in his version: I asked Nafi, "Did Ibn Umar raise (his hands) higher for the first time?" He said, 'No.' I said, 'Point out to me.' He then pointed to the breasts or lower than that.'" (see *Sunan Abu Dawood*, 1/740, pg. 191, English ed'n).

Now, the Hadith related by Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) stated that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) **"used to"** perform Raful-Yadayn; although Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) quoted this particular Hadith it does not necessarily mean that he himself, as well as Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) performed Raful-Yadayn! In fact we have to remember that Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (Peace be upon him), **"used to"** perform Raful-Yadayn. I say this because we have many other Ahadith which have been related from Abdullah Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) himself which prove that he did not always perform Raful-Yadayn, as well as indicating that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) himself stopped performing Raful-Yadayn; but Allah knows best! Here follows a few of these Ahadith from Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him):-

(A) The Imam of Hadith, **Abu Awaanah** (Rahimahullah) related in his **"Sahih"** (vol. 2, pg. 90) from **Sufyan ibn Uyayna**, who related from **Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri**, who related from **Salim ibn Abdullah**, who related from his father **Abdullah ibn Umar**, who said: **"I saw the Prophet (Peace be upon him) raise**

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both his hands up to the shoulders when starting Salah, but he did not raise his hands when going into rukoo, or when rising from it; not even between the prostrations (sujud)."

(B) The Imam of Hadith and teacher of Imam al-Bukhari, **Abdullah Ibn Zubair al-Humaidi** (Rahimahullah) related in his "*Musnad*" (2/614, pg. 277) from **Sufyan ibn Uyayna**, who related from **Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri**, who related from **Salim ibn Abdullah**, and he from his father **Ibn Umar**: "*I saw the Prophet (Peace be upon him) raise both his hands at the beginning of Salah up to his shoulders, but when going into Rukoo and when raising his head from rukoo he did not raise his hands, not even between the prostrations.*"

(C) The Hanafi scholar of Hadith, **Imam Yusuf al-Zaylai** (d. 762 AH; Rahimahullah) quoted in his book "*Nasb ar-Rayah*" (vol. 1, pg. 404), a narration from **Abdallah ibn al-Kharraz**, who related from **Imam Malik**, who related from **Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri**, and he from **Salim ibn Abdallah**, who related from **Ibn Umar**, who said: "*The Prophet (Peace be upon him) raised his hands when beginning Salah, and he never repeated again.*"

(D) The two well known scholars of Hadith, **Imam Tahawi** and **Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah** (Allah's mercy be upon them), related that **Imam Mujahid** (the disciple of Ibn Abbas; Allah be pleased with them) said: "*I prayed many times behind Ibn Umar, but he raised his hands only once at the beginning.*" (see **Ja'al Haqq**, pg. 55, by Mufti Ahmad Y. Khan)

These four narrations give strong evidence in favour of the Hanafi and Maliki views that Raful-Yadayn has been abrogated. So now ask yourselves, "Can the opinions of al-Albani be relied upon, if he does not base his opinions from the books of the Hanafi and Maliki Schools, plus the proofs used by them for not performing Raful-Yadayn?"

Now, I leave it to you to decipher for yourself, why certain Imams decided to perform Raful-Yadayn and others not to; but before I finish on this issue let me relate to you a famous incident that took place between the Imams Abu Hanifah and al-Awzai (Allah's mercy be upon them) of Syria, when they met in Makkah. The purpose of the following debate is to show that even though the two great Imams had different narrations to prove their particular opinions, they did not abuse or despise each other in the derogatory way that some of us have become accustomed to! Insha'Allah, we should respect each other's opinions, if it has a sound basis from the sources of the Shari'ah.

Imam al-Awzai said, "Why do you not raise your hands just before rukoo and after?" **Imam Abu Hanifah** replied, "There is no recorded word or action of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), to authenticate this (any longer)." "How so?", replied **al-Awzai**, "When al-Zuhri has reported this to me on the authority of Salim and that of his father (Ibn Umar) who said that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to raise his hands at the beginning of the Salah and before and after rukoo?" **Abu Hanifah** also reported, "Hammad related to me through Ibrahim, through Alqamah, through al-Aswad, and through Ibn Masood, that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), only raised his hands at the beginning of the Salah and did not repeat this action again." **Al-Awzai** then suggested that his authorities were more reliable than those of **Abu Hanifah**, who countered, "Hammad was more knowledgeable than al-Zuhri, and Ibrahim was more knowledgeable than Salim. And if Ibn Umar is to be credited as a Companion of the Prophet, then al-Aswad has many merits. And the merits of Abdullah ibn Masood speak for themselves." At this, **al-Awzai** remained silent. (Vide: '*The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*' pg. 59-60, by Taha Jabir al-Alwani; also see '*Imam Abu Hanifah: Life and Work*' pg. 66-67, by Shibli Numani). This incident has also been recorded with slight variations by Hafiz Ibn al-Humam in his '*Fath al-Qadir*'; and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi's '*Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*'. Allah knows best.

THE ABROGATION OF PERFORMING PRAYER SITTING: BEHIND A SITTING IMAM

Al-Albani stated in ‘*Sifah Salah an-Nabee*’ (pg. 4): ‘He (Peace be upon him) prayed sitting during the illness of which he died. He also prayed sitting on another occasion before that, when he was injured, and the people behind him prayed standing; so he indicated to them to sit, so they sat (and prayed). When he finished, he said, *You were going to do as the Persians and the Romans do : stand for their kings who sit. So do not do so, for the Imam is there to be followed: When he makes ruku, make ruku, when he rises, rise, and when he prays sitting, pray sitting (all of you).*’ (See **Sahih Muslim**, 1/824, pg. 227, English ed’n).

The above statement made by al-Albani seems to indicate his lack of knowledge about the Hadiths on this rare issue; or to be safe we may say that again he has given us half of the ‘story’. According to **Shah Waliullah Dehlawi** (Rahimahullah), the above command is concerned with the earlier period when the present mode of prayer was made obligatory. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) stressed this point with a view to effacing out of the minds of his people the undue respect and reverence which the neighbouring people of Persia and Rome showed to their kings. They kept standing before them in all humility and dared not sit down before them. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not approve of this type of respect which is against the dignity of man. He, therefore, in contravention of the practises amongst the Romans and the Greeks, ordered them to sit down when the Imam was sitting and not to observe this type of ceremonious respect. But when the sense of human dignity and equality took hold of the minds of the Muslims, then this practise was abrogated and the Muslims were permitted to say their prayer standing behind a sitting Imam, when there is no valid reason for it, as standing in prayer is part of prayer and it should not be abandoned in normal circumstances (*Hujjatullah-al-Baligha*, vol. 2, pg. 27, quoted in the English translation of **Sahih Muslim**, vol. 1, fn. 633, pg. 227).

The proof against al-Albani’s opinion is found in the Sahih collections of **al-Bukhari and Muslim**; and it is of greater authority as evidence than the Hadith quoted by al-Albani. **I say: so much for al-Albani giving his followers the most authentic Sunnah, when he himself has contradicted the authentic Sunnah by not realising that his opinion has been clearly abrogated by a later practise of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him)! Imam Muslim** has a chapter heading titled: ‘The Imam is authorised to appoint one as his deputy when there is a valid reason for it (for example, illness or journey or any other), and if an Imam leads the prayer sitting as he cannot do so standing, his followers should say prayer standing provided they are able to do it and there is an abrogation of saying prayer sitting behind a sitting Imam.’ (see **Sahih Muslim**, vol. 1, pg. 228, English ed’n). The actual Hadith that proves our point is found in a long narration reported from **Ubaidullah ibn Abdullah ibn Utba** (Rahimahullah) from **Aisha** (Allah be pleased with her); the most important part of the Hadith is as follows: “*Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) was leading the people in prayer. When Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) saw him (the Prophet, peace be upon him), he began to withdraw, but the Apostle of Allah (Peace be upon him) told him not to withdraw. He told his two (companions) to seat him down beside him (Abu Bakr). They seated him by the side of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) said the prayer standing while following the prayer of the Apostle (Peace be upon him) and the people said prayer (standing) while following the prayer of Abu Bakr. The Apostle (Peace be upon him) was seated.*” (for full Hadith see **Muslim**, 1/832, pg. 228-229 and **Bukhari**, 1/655, pg. 371-372) **NB- Imam Bukhari** (Rahimahullah) said, “The Imam is appointed to be followed. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) in his fatal illness led the people in prayer while he was sitting (and the people were standing)...” (see **Bukhari** vol. 1, chapter 51, pg. 370, English ed’n).

THE ABROGATION OF PERFORMING PRAYER SITTING...

Imam al-Bukhari (Rahimahullah) also quoted **Imam al-Humaidi** (Rahimahullah) as saying: “*The saying of the Prophet (Peace be upon him): ‘Pray sitting, if he (Imam) prays sitting’ was said in his former illness (during his early life) but the Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not order them to sit. We should follow the latest actions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him)*” (see *Bukhari*, 1/657, pg. 373).

Finally, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi said in his footnotes to *Sahih Muslim* (vol. 1, footnote 632, pg. 226): “According to **Imam Awzai** and **Imam Malik**, this mode is essential in offering (i.e according to al-Albani’s opinion). **Imam Shafi’i** and **Imam Abu Hanifah** (as well as al-Bukhari, Muslim and many others) are of the opinion that it is not advisable to say prayer sitting behind an Imam who has not been obliged to say prayer in a sitting posture due to illness or some other reason...” But according to Shams al-Haqq Azimabadi in *Awn al-Ma’bood* (1,233-234), **Imam Malik** does not allow anyone to lead the prayer sitting! (see *Abu Dawood*, vol. 1, fn. 266, pg. 159 English ed’n).

GOING DOWN INTO PROSTRATION (SAJDAH): HANDS OR KNEES FIRST?
**GOING DOWN INTO PROSTRATION (SAJDAH):
HANDS OR KNEES FIRST?**

Al-Albani is of the firm opinion that when one goes into Sajdah, he or she should place his hands onto the ground before his knees. He stated in ‘*Sifah Salah an-Nabee*’ (pg. 52): “He (the Prophet, peace be upon him) used to place his hands on the ground before his knees.” Then al-Albani said in the footnote of the same page (pg. 52, fn. 2): “Ibn Khuzaimah (1/76/1), Daraqutni and Hakim, who declared it Sahih and Dhahabi agreed. All the Ahadith which contradict this are **inauthentic**. This way has been endorsed by Malik, and similar is reported from Ahmad in Ibn al-Jawzi’s *al-Tahqeeq* (108/2). Also, al-Marwazi quoted with a Sahih isnad Imam al-Awzai in his *Masaa’il* (1/147/1) as saying: ‘I found the people placing their hands before their knees.’ Then al-Albani continued on the same page: “He used to instruct likewise, saying: When one performs Sajdah, he should not kneel like a camel, but should place his hands before his knees.” (related by **Abu Hurayra**, see **Abu Dawood**, 1/839, pg. 215 English ed’n).

Al-Albani has quite categorically claimed that the Ahadith which prove that one should place one’s knees down before one’s hands are all ‘**Inauthentic**’ according to his ‘classification’ standards. But as usual when there seems to be ‘contradictory’ Ahadith, al-Albani fails to tell his readers that many other scholars of Hadith and even the Mujtahid Imams like Abu Hanifah and al-Shafi’i (Allah’s mercy be upon them) are indifference to his view of placing the hands on the ground before the knees!

In fact **Sayyid Sabiq** said in *Fiqh-us-Sunnah* (vol. 1, pg. 151): “**Most scholars prefer that one place his knees on the floor before his hands. Ibn al-Mundhir** related this from **Umar (ibn al-Khatab), an-Nakhai, Muslim ibn Yasar, Sufyan al-Thauri, Ahmad** (ibn Hanbal, according to one of two views reported from him), **Ishaq** (ibn Rahwaih) and other jurists including Ibn al-Mundhir himself. **Abu at-Tayyeb** said that most jurists agree with this. **Ibn al Qayyim** (al-Jawziyya, the disciple of **Ibn Taymiyyah**) said: ‘When the Prophet, upon whom be peace, prayed, he would place his knees (on the floor) before his hands, then his hands, his forehead and nose. This is what is authentic and has been related by Shuraik from Asim ibn Kaleeb on the authority of his father from **Wa’il ibn Hajr** (Allah be pleased with him) who said: I saw the Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace, while prostrating, place his knees (on the floor) before his hands. Upon getting up, he would raise his hands before his knees. I never saw him do otherwise.’” (see **Abu Dawood**, 1/837-838, pg. 215). Sayyid Sabiq then gave the opinion of Malik, al-Awzai, Ibn Hazm, and Ahmad (according to his other opinion) whose opinions coincide with al-Albani’s.

The Hadith from Wa’il ibn Hajr and Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with them) can also be found in the English translation of *Mishkat-ulMasabih* (see vol. 2, no’s 898-899, pg. 172) where it says: “**Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi** (d. 388/998; Rahimahullah) said that the tradition of Wa’il ibn Hajr is more sound than this (i.e the Hadith of Abu Hurayra) and it is also said that it is an **abrogated** one (i.e the Hadith of Abu Hurayra). Also the author of *Awnal-Ma’bood* (vol 1, 311-312), **Shams al-Haqq Azimabadi** said in his commentary to Abu Dawood; after quoting the opinions held by some scholars that the hands should be placed before the knees: “But al-Khattabi is of the opinion that the tradition of Wa’il ibn Hajr is better established because it is supported by several other sound traditions (which have not been quoted by al-Albani). **Ibn Khuzaimah** (a Shafi’i scholar of Hadith, d. 311/924; Rahimahullah) observes that the tradition of Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) has been abrogated. He reports a tradition on the authority of **Sa’ad ibn Abi Waqqas** (Allah be pleased with him): “*We used to place our hands (on the ground) before our knees, but later on we were commanded to place our knees before our hands!*” The Hadith of Wa’il ibn Hajr is also found in **Imam Tirmidhi**’s Sunan, where Imam Tirmidhi said that the Hadith was **Hasan Gharib** (see *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* 2/268, edited by Ahmad Shakir). The author of *Awn al-Ma’bood* also said: “**Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi’i** and **Ahmad** (according to his second view) maintain that one should place his knees before his hands. And this seems more convenient (see *Sunan of Abu Dawood*, vol. 2, fn. 383-384, pg. 215 English ed’n).”

AHADITH ON INTERPRETING THE HOLY QUR'AN WITHOUT SOUND KNOWLEDGE

There are a number of Hadith related to the issue of interpreting the Holy Qur'an without sound knowledge. Two of them are found in the collection of Ahadith known as *Mishkatul Masabih* by Imam al-Tabrizi (ash-Shafi'i), one from Ibn Abbas and the other from Jundub (Allah be pleased with them):-

(A) Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: ***“He who speaks about the Qur'an on the basis of his personal opinion (only) would find his abode in Hell fire.”*** In another version: ***“He who speaks about the Qur'an without sound knowledge of it would find his abode in Hellfire.”*** (Tirmidhi).

(B) Jundub (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: ***“He who speaks about the Qur'an on the basis of his personal opinion (by any accord) he commits an error, even if he is right.”*** (Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood). (See *Mishkatul-Masabih*, 1/234-235, English ed'n)

The above two Hadiths have also been quoted by Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya in his *Muqaddima fi usool al-Tafseer* (English trans'n by M.A.H. Ansari under the title: *'An Introduction to the Principles of Tafseer'*, pg. 60) where he said after quoting Jundub's (Allah be pleased with him) version: ***“Al-Tirmidhi thinks that this Hadith is rare (gharib). Other scholars of Hadith are not sure about the voraciousness of Suhayl ibn Abi Hizaam, who is one of its transmitters (in the Sanad). However a number of scholars from the companions and others have been reported to have condemned in the same vein the effort to explain the Qur'an without knowledge.”*** But in the footnotes on the same page of the above book (no's 158 and 159) it was stated that al-Albani had declared both Hadiths (A) and (B) above to be **DAEEF** in his checking of *Mishkatul-Masabih*. I say: this is only one opinion out of many on the status of the above Ahadith. It seems that even Ibn Taymiyya after quoting the Hadith from Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) accepted it, (although he had reservations about the Hadith from Jundub) since he kept quiet about declaring it inauthentic; but Allah knows best.

In fact Imam al-Tirmidhi classified the Hadith reported from Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) to be **Hasan Sahih** (see *Ulum al-Qur'an*, pg. 132, fn. 20, by Ahmad Von Denffer) and the Hadith related from Jundub (Allah be pleased with him) was classified to be **Hasan**, by the great scholar of Hadith, Imam al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505; Rahimahullah) in his *al-Jami al-Saghir*. This classification was also said to be **Hasan**, by al-Imam Munawi (d. 1031/1622; Rahimahullah) in his checking and commentary of Imam Suyuti's above-named book; due to the existence of other variant narrations that strengthen it. (vide: *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami al-Saghir*, vol. 6 pg. 191-92, by Imam al-Munawi). Other narrations on this issue are as follows:-

Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying three times: ***“Opinion based arguments (controversing) about the Qur'an are Kufr.”*** Then he said: ***“What you know of it, act upon it; and what you are ignorant of, refer to one who knows (e.g. a qualified Mufassir).”*** (related by Imams Ahmad and Abu Ya'la, see also *Sunan Abu Dawood*, 3/4586; English ed'n for half of the narration)

Anas ibn Malik (Allah be pleased with him) said: ***“I will give an exemplary punishment to any man brought to me who is not knowledgeable in Arabic yet interprets (tafsir) Allah's Book.”*** (related by Imam al-Bayhaqi, see Hafiz al-Dhahabi's *at-Tafsir wa'l Mufasiroon*, vol. 1, pg. 274)

Imam Mujahid (Rahimahullah) the disciple of the great Companion Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) said: ***“It is not permissible for anyone who believes in Allah and the last day to interpret Allah's Book if he is not knowledgeable in the Arabic language.”*** (vide: *Mabahith fi Uloom al-Qur'an*, pg. 331, by M. al-Qattan)

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I leave it to the noble reader to decide whose classification you would prefer! May be those ignorant people who go around interpreting the Holy Qur'an without the requisite qualifications (as amongst the generality of the "Salafiyya") in their 'study' circles, may take heed of the above Hadiths and their classifications by the great scholars of Hadith.

TARAWEEH PRAYER: 8 OR 20 RAK'AHS?

In a handout by al-Albani's followers in England, by the title "Some common questions answered" (dated October 1990), there appeared the following question and answer (No. 22):

- (a) Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) reports that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) never prayed more than 8 rak'aats in Taraweeh, so how come nobody disapproves of 20?
- (b) Is it true that Umar (Allah be pleased with him) introduced it?

Ans.22

- (a) As regards the Taraweeh prayer - people agree that the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the best way is 11 rak'aats. As regards any addition - then this is **DISAPPROVED** of and **DECLARED AS A BID'AH** (A bad innovation) by **Shaykh al-Albani** and by a few earlier scholars - that being reported from Imam Malik, Ibn ul-Arabee and as-San'aanee (see *Salat-ut-Taraweeh* of Shaykh al-Albani).
- (b) It is not true that Umar (Allah be pleased with him) either prayed or ordered 20 rak'aats. Rather he ordered **Ubayy ibn Ka'b** to lead the people with 11 rak'aats (al-Muwatta 1/137, with a Sahih Isnad).

I do not wish to go into much detail on this issue, but Insha'Allah a separate publication is what is really required, to show which opinion is the most correct. But any way it should be said that the vast **MAJORITY** of the scholars of Hadith, Fiqh, and even the four Mujtahid Imams are in agreement that 20 rak'ahs are the most appropriate, followed by 3 rak'ahs of Witr, and this is also the opinion of the Imam of the "Salafiyya", **Ahmad ibn Taymiyya!**

First, it should be said that the Hadith reported from Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) about 11 rak'ahs is not at all to do with Taraweeh, according to the majority of scholars, but in fact concerns the number of rak'ahs of **TAHAJJUD** prayer! The Hadith in question is as follows:-

Narrated **Abu Salama ibn Abdur Rahman** that he asked Aisha (Allah be pleased with her). "How was the prayer of Allah's Apostle (Peace be upon him) in Ramadan?" **She replied, "He did not pray more than eleven raka'at in Ramadan or in any other month. He used to pray four raka'at - let alone their beauty and length - and then he would pray four - let alone their beauty and length - and then he would pray three rak'aat (witr)." She added, "I asked, 'O Allah's Apostle! Do you sleep before praying the Witr?' He replied, 'O Aisha, My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.'"** (Bukhari, 3/230, English ed'n)

According to the author of "*Fatawa Rahimiyyah*", **Mufti Abdur Rahim Lajpuri** (vol. 1, pg. 275); in his defence of 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh: "The commentator of al-Sahih al-Bukhari and the erudite traditionist, **Shaykh Shamsud-Din al-Kermani** (d. 786 AH; Rahimahullah) said: '*In the Hadith (above), the Tahajjud prayer is meant. Abu Salama's question and Hadrat Aisha's answer concerned the Tahajjud.*' He adds further: '*If the Tahajjud prayer is not meant, then this tradition will be at variance with the tradition that states that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) led twenty rak'ahs each for two nights, and in the case of such clash the tradition of twenty rak'ahs which is affirmative (muthbit) shall have precedence because according to the principles of Hadith, the affirmative takes precedence over the negative (naaf)*' (vide: *Al-Kawakib ud-Durari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 9, pg 155-156). I say, does this not mean that people who perform 8 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, should pray 20 rak'ahs instead? Since according to the principles of Hadith (as affirmed by al-Albani), "The affirmative takes precedence over the negative in certain cases."

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A great fact that should also be noted by the reader is that the Imams of Hadith have placed the Hadith from Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) under the section of Tahajjud prayers, which indicates their belief that the Hadith applies to Tahajjud only. The **Imam al-Muhaddithin al-Bukhari** (Rahimahullah) has placed the Hadith from Aisha under at least two sections of his Sahih, first under the section of '**21: The Tahajjud Prayer at Night**' (see *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, chapter 1, no. 248, English ed'n) and then under the section of '**32: The Book of Taraweeh Prayers**' (see *Sahih al-Bukhari* 3/230, pg. 128 English ed'n). This means that Imam Bukhari believed that the prayer mentioned by Aisha was that of Tahajjud only, and since the Tahajjud prayer is performed also in Ramadan, then Imam Bukhari also quoted the same Hadith under '*The book of Taraweeh prayers*', but Allah knows best. **Imam Muslim** (Rahimahullah) has also placed the Hadith from Aisha under the *Tahajjud prayer section* (see *Sahih Muslim* 1/1607, pg. 356, English ed'n). Also **Imam Malik** (Rahimahullah) has placed Aisha's Hadith under the '*Book of Tahajjud*' (see *Al-Muwatta*, Book 7, section 7.2, no. 9, pg. 5, English ed'n). The **Imam Abu Dawood** (Rahimahullah) has also placed the same Hadith under the chapter '*On the number of Rak'ahs of prayer at night (Tahajjud)*' (see *Abu Dawood* 1/1336, pg. 351, English version). Even Imams **Tirmidhi and Nisai** (Allah's mercy be upon them) placed Aisha's Hadith under the Tahajjud section (see **Tirmidhi**, vol. 1, pg. 58 and **Nisai**, vol. 1, pg. 154). Even one of the most prominent Imams of the 'Salafiyya', **Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya** placed the aforementioned Hadith in the section of Tahajjud prayers in his book *Zaad al Ma'ad* (vol. 1, pg. 86)!

Mufti Abdur Rahim said about Aisha's Hadith: "And if this tradition may have been quoted in some book under the devotions of Ramadan along with the Taraweeh. **Like the taraweeh, the Tahajjud, too, is a prayer of Ramadan**, and because of this affinity, it can be mentioned along with the Taraweeh (as Imam Bukhari did). Hence, supposing it may have been mentioned in some book, it cannot be made thereby a categorical argument. 'When uncertainty creeps in, the argument is falsified.' Moreover, **Hafiz al-Hadith Imam Qurtubi's** (d. 671/1273; Rahimahullah) statement regarding this Hadith (of Aisha) should not be overlooked that, '**many a man of knowledge considers the aforesaid Hadith mudtarib** (i.e. confounded).'" (vide: *Imam Ayni in his Sharh Sahih al Bukhari*, vol. 2, pg. 187).

In short, the aforesaid report is in no way a proof for eight rak'ahs of Taraweeh. In contradistinction to this, **as regards the twenty rak'ahs the Companions Consensus (Ijma-as-Sahaba) has taken place over the approval of Ibn Abbas' Hadith (about 20 Rak'ahs being performed by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him) and practically the majority of Ulama have accepted it.**" (*Fatawa Rahimiyah*, vol. 1, pg 276-277).

Although Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) had said: "He did not pray more than 11 Raka'at," we also have reports from her that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) also prayed more than 11 Raka'ats! The proof for this was given by her in another narration involving Abu Salama ibn Abdal Rahman (Rahimahullah). Abu Salama asked Aisha about the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), she said, "**He observed 13 Raka'ahs (in the night prayer). He observed 8 raka'ahs and would then observe (three rak'ahs of) witr and then observe two raka'ahs sitting (nafl prayer), and when he wanted to bow he stood up and then bowed down, and then he observed two raka'ahs in between the Azan and Iqama of the dawn prayer (i.e. fajr).**" (See *Sahih Muslim* 1/1603, pg. 357 and also al-Albani's *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, appendix 7, pg. 110). **So does this not mean that the 'Salafiyya' should perform 13 Raka'ats of Taraweeh in Ramadan?**

Now, the statement 'the best way is 11 rak'aats' is only the opinion of a small group of the ulama, in fact there are more than 50 opinions to say that the best way is 20 rak'ahs according to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions (Allah be pleased with them all) practise! What is more interesting to note is that the four great Mujtahids, **Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal** (Allah's mercy be upon them) are in agreement that the Taraweeh consists of twenty Rak'ahs. The statement that Imam Malik approved of eight Rak'ahs needs to be proved, most likely this ascription was made to him because he quoted the Hadith which is used to prove eight Rak'ahs of Taraweeh in his *al-Muwatta* (see

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Muwatta, 6.2, no. 4, pg. 48) by a small group of scholars. Although Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) quoted this Hadith in his book, it has no bearing on what his actual opinion and practise was, on the contrary Imam Malik believed in thirty-six rak'ahs of Taraweeh (i.e. 20 Rak'ahs and 16 rak'ahs of extra nafl prayers, see later for the official verdict of the Maliki Madhhab)! Also the Hadith which seems to prove 11 Rak'ahs of Taraweeh (including three rak'ahs of Witr) in Imam Malik's Muwatta has been explained away by many other convincing arguments.

Recently I came across a booklet by the title, *“Is Taraweeh 20 Rakaats?”* (Published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville, SouthAfrica, author unknown). In this booklet the Hadith quoted from the Muwatta of Imam Malik (Rahimahullah), about 11 rak'ahs of Taraweeh (including three Witr) was quite eloquently analysed.

The actual Hadith in question was related by **Yahya ibn Yahya al-Laythi**, who related from his teacher **Imam Malik**, who related from **Muhammad ibn Yusuf**, who said that **as-Saaib ibn Yazid** said, *“Umar ibn Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim ad-Dari (Allah be pleased with them) to watch the night in prayer with the people for eleven rak'ahs. The reciter of the Qur'an would recite the Mi'in (a group of medium sized surahs) until we would be leaning on our staffs from having stood so long in prayer. And we would not leave until the approach of dawn.”* (see above reference in al-Muwatta).

It was stated in the aforementioned booklet (chapter 7, pg. 20), after quoting the above narration, “If we analyse the chain (Isnad) of this Hadith, we notice that Muhammad ibn Yusuf narrates from Saaib ibn Yazid. Muhammad (ibn Yusuf) has 5 students and the narration of each student differs from the next (i.e. the text of the Hadith is different from each student). The five students are:

- (1) **Imam Malik**
- (2) **Yahya ibn Qattan**
- (3) **Abdul Aziz ibn Muhammad**
- (4) **Ibn Ishaq and**
- (5) **Abdur Razzaq**

Their narrations are as follows :

(1) **Imam Malik** says that Umar ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim Dari to perform 11 rakaats. **(What practise occurred thereafter is not mentioned, nor is Ramadaan mentioned).**

(2) **Yahya ibn Qattan** says that Umar made the people gather with Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim Dari and both of them began performing 11 rakaats. **(Hadrat Umar's command is not mentioned, nor is any mention of Ramadaan made).**

(3) **Abdul Aziz** (ibn Muhammad) says that we used to perform 11 rakaats in the era of Umar. **(Neither is the command mentioned, nor is Ubayy ibn Ka'b or Ramadaan mentioned).**

(4) **Ibn Ishaq** says that we used to perform 13 rakaats in Ramadaan during the era of Umar. **(Neither is the command of Umar mentioned. Instead of 11 rakaats, 13 are mentioned).**

(5) **Abdur Razzaq** says that Umar gave the command of 21 rakaats. **(In this narration 21 rakaats are mentioned instead of 11).**

Besides the narration of Imam Malik (Rahimahullah), 11 rakaats cannot be established from the other narrations. Due to this difference, the narrator **Ibn Ishaq gave preference to 13** while **Ibn Abdal Barr al-Maliki preferred 21** (from the narration of Abdur Razzaq). Therefore this narration is **Mudtarib** (A

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Hadith that is transmitted in different manners, so that the contents of each transmission differ, and it is not possible to give preference to any particular transmission) **with regard to the number** (of rak'ahs) and **hence unacceptable**.

The above was an analysis of Muhammad ibn Yusuf's narration via Saaib ibn Yazid. Now let us examine the narration of **Yazid ibn Khaseefah** via **Saaib (ibn Yazid)**, which is mentioned in the **Sunan al-Kubra of al-Bayhaqi** (vol. 2, pg. 496): **Abu Zi'b** narrates from **Yazid ibn Khaseefah**, who reports from **Saaib ibn Yazid** that *the people used to perform 20 rakaats in the month of Ramadaan during the era of Umar*.

Imam Nawawi, Iraqi and Suyuti (all three were great scholars of Hadith) amongst others have accepted the authenticity of this Hadith (see *Tuhfatul Akhyaar*, pg. 192 and *Irshaadus Saari* pg. 74, (by **Imam al-Qastallani**)).

Muhammad ibn Jafar (another narrator in the chain) has quoted the statement from **Yazid (ibn Khaseefah)** as **Abu Zi'b** (had). This narrative is mentioned in **Marifatul Sunan of al-Bayhaqi**. **Allamah Subki** and **Mullah Ali al-Qari** have stated in **Sharh Minhaaj** and **Sharh Muwatta** respectively that the chain of narrators of this Hadith are correct. (*Tuhfatul Ahwazee*, vol. 2, pg. 75).

From the above narration we can clearly see that both the students of Yazid (ibn Khaseefah), unanimously narrate the fact that during Umar's (Allah be pleased with him) era 20 rakaats was the standard practise. On the contrary, the 5 students of Muhammad ibn Yusuf quote Saaib (ibn Yazid) differently.

In such a situation the correct approach would be to rely on the narration of **Yazid ibn Khaseefah**. However the Ahl al-Hadith (another name for the "Salafiyya") have unjustly discarded this narrative and adopted the doubtful one of Muhammad ibn Yusuf, which has differing versions. This goes against the principles of Hadith." Here ends the quote.

Another Hadith that is used by the protagonists of eight rak'ahs of Taraweeh has been related by **Jabir ibn Abdullah** (Allah be pleased with him): *"The Prophet (Peace be upon him) led the people in prayer during Ramadan with 8 rak'ahs and the Witr. We gathered in the Mosque the following night hoping that he would come again. We remained waiting till the next morning (until he came out). The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, I feared that the Witr may become incumbent on you."* (related by **Ibn Nasr al-Marwazi** in *Qiyamul Layl*, pg. 90, *al-Tabarani and Ibn Hibban* - see below for the actual Hadith)

The above Hadith has been analysed by Shaykh Abdur Rahim in his *"Fatawa"* (vol. 1, pg. 278-9) with the conclusion that the Hadith is **Daef**. The Shaykh said: "The strange thing about this Hadith is that its chain of authorities (Isnad) is not trustworthy. Please examine the statements of the Imams of this science concerning the narrators of this chain. In this chain one narrator is **Ibn Hameed Razi**, about whom the opinions of the great and august critics of Hadith are as under:

- (1) 'He is weak.' - *Hafiz al-Dhahabi* (see his *Mizanul I'tidal*, vol. 3, pp. 49-50)
- (2) 'He narrates many disowned (munkar) Hadiths.' - *Ya'qub ibn Shaybah*
- (3) 'He is objectionable.' - *Imam Bukhari*
- (4) 'He is a liar.' - *Abu Zur'ah*
- (5) 'I testify that he is a liar.' - *Ishaq Kausaj*
- (6) 'He narrates Hadiths about everything; I have not seen a man bolder than him vis-a-vis God.' - *Sauleh Jazrah*
- (7) 'By God! He is a liar.' - *Ibn Kharash*
- (8) 'He is not reliable.' - *Imam Nisai*

Now, about the second narrator, **Ya'qub ibn Abdullah Ash'ari al-Qummi**:-

- (1) 'He is not strong.' - *Daraqutni* (see *Mizanul I'tidal*, vol. 3, pg. 324).

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About the third narrator, **Isa ibn Jariyah**:-

- (1) 'He has had disowned (munkar) Hadiths.' - *Ibn Ma'een*
- (2) 'His Hadiths are disavowed.' - *Nisai*
- (3) 'His Hadiths are rejected (matruk).' - *Nisai*
- (4) 'His Hadiths are disavowed.' - *Abu Dawood* - synopsis
- (5) 'He is counted among the weak.' - (see *Mizanul-I'tidal*, vol. 2, pg. 311, by Hafiz al-Dhahabi)." Here ends the quote.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (Rahimahullah) has reported a similar narration to the above Hadith in his *Bulugh al-Maram min Adillat al-Ahkam* (no. 396, pg. 159), on the authority of **Hafiz Ibn Hibban** (Rahimahullah): "Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him): *Allah's Apostle (Peace be upon him) prayed during the night in Ramadan; the people waited for him on the next day, but he did not come out; and he said, 'I feared that the Witr might be enjoined on you.'*" Note the above narration does not even state how many rak'ahs were performed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him)!! The above two Hadiths can not be used as justifiable proof in favour of 8 rak'ahs of Taraweeh on their own.

Al-Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) has in fact quoted a Hadith which proves the performance of 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh in Ramadan; and that is as follows:-

Yahya related to me from **Malik** that **Yazid ibn Ruman** said, "*The people used to watch the night in prayer during Ramadaan for 23 rak'ahs* (i.e. 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, followed by 3 rak'ahs of witr) *in the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab.*" (vide: **al-Muwatta**, 6.2, No. 5, pg. 48, English ed'n)

Although the above Hadith is Munqati (a link is missing in the chain) and has thus been declared to be Da'ef by some scholars (including al-Albani), it nevertheless has been used as proof. Besides, the Hadith has been given a full Isnad (chain) by either **Imam Ibn Abdal Barr al-Maliki** (d. 463/1071; Rahimahullah) or **Shaykh Muhammad Habibullah ibn Mayabi ash-Shanqiti** (Rahimahullah), in their thorough research to complete all the chains of transmission (Isnad) which have an incomplete chain; as found in the Muwatta of Imam Malik!

In fact the latest edition of the English version of **al-Muwatta** (translated by A. A. at-Tarjumana and Yaqub Johnson) says (pg. xxxiv): "**Ibn Hajar (al-Asqalani)** said, '**The book of Malik is sound by all the criteria that are demanded as proofs in the mursal, munqati** (two types of Hadith which have a missing link) **and other types of transmission.**' Then **as-Suyuti** followed what Ibn Hajar said here; and said, 'The mursal Hadith in it are a proof with him (i.e. ash-Shafi'i) as well because the mursal is a proof with us when it is properly supported. Every mursal in the Muwatta has one or more supports as will be made clear in this commentary (i.e. Suyuti's commentary on al-Muwatta called *Tanwir al-Hawalik*). It is absolutely correct to say that the Muwatta is sound without exception.'

Ibn Abdal-Barr collected together all the mursal, munqati and mu'addil Hadiths in the Muwatta and said that the total number of Hadiths in the Muwatta which do not have an Isnad are sixty one. He stated that he found the isnads of all of them in other sources with the exception of four Hadiths. The erudite scholar of Hadith, **Shaykh Muhammad Habibullah ibn Mayabi ash-Shanqiti** says in *Ida'a al-Halik* that he had found witnesses for these four Hadith and he then mentioned these witnesses. He said, 'Some of the people of knowledge made these Isnads complete.' He mentioned from Ibn Abdal-Barr that there was **no munkar** (rejected) **Hadith in the Muwatta, nor anything fundamentally refuted.**"

In the light of what the erudite scholars of Hadith have said above, we may emphatically state that the apparently 'munqati' Hadith from Yazid ibn Ruman has a complete Isnad; hence it may be used as a proof, since Imam Ibn Abdal-Barr has said that there is, "No munkar Hadith in the Muwatta nor anything fundamentally rejected." Hence, many scholars of Hadith and Fiqh have used the above Hadith as a proof in favour of 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh.

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The quote from "Some common questions answered," also claimed that, "**Rather he (Umar) ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the people with 11 rakaats.**" I say, this is half of the truth, since it is clearly stated in al-Muwatta : "**Umar ibn Khattab ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b AND Tamim ad-Dari....** (see **Muwatta**, 6.2, no. 4, pg. 48)!!

Al-Albani has said that if anyone performs more than 11 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, then he or she is basically committing a Bid'ah (a very bad innovation)! We seek refuge in Allah from such a disgusting statement! Since this tantamountally means that the foremost Imams of the saved sect (**al-Firqat an-Najiyah**) of **Ahl-al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah** have been committing a gross innovation (Allah forbid). Al-Albani seems to be implying that the venerable Companions (mayAllah be pleased with them and increase their rank), the four great Mujtahid Imams (Allah's mercy be upon them), as well as the foremost scholars of Hadith and Fiqh of the last 1400 years have 'innovated' the practise of 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, if considered in the light of penetrative elaboration, implicitly and covertly! What alternative conclusion can one derive, if the "Albani Madhhab" says, "As regards any addition (to 11 rak'ahs) - then this is disapproved of and declared as a bid'ah by 'Shaykh' al-Albani?"

I ask you, are the so called "Salafiyya" in the true path of the original and true Salaf-as-Salihin (the pious predecessors of the first three generations of Islam), when they have declared the practise of 20 rak'ahs to be a bid'ah, even though the Salaf have been reported to have practised 20 rak'ahs?

The actual Hadith which states that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) performed 20 rak'ahs of taraweeh has been reported by **Ibn Abbas** (Allah be pleased with him). He said, "**Verily, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the month of Ramadaan, used to perform 20 rak'ahs and the witr prayer (afterwards) without congregation.**" (Reported in *al-Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, vol. 2, pg. 496, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, *Kabiri of Imam al-Tabarani*, *Ibn Aadi in his Musnad*, and by *Imam Baghawi in his Majmua-as-Sahabah*)

Although some scholars have declared this Hadith to be Da'eef on its own, it does not mean that it should be whole heartedly rejected; since Da'eef does not mean Maudu (fabricated). Please refer to the next section on Da'eef Hadiths, and when they are acceptable to scholars for further elaboration. The Hadith related from Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) is supported by many other narrations coming from great Companions like **Uthman, Ali, Ibn Masood...** (Allah be pleased with them all), as well as their successors (Tabi'in). Besides, some of the scholars of Hadith have even declared some weak Ahadith to be Sahih, if it has a **firm basis**. It was stated in the book "*Criticism of Hadith among Muslims with reference to Sunan Ibn Maja*," (pg. 131, by one of the leading "Salafi" Shaykhs in Britain, Suhaib Hasan): "**Shafi'i** also recognises a weak Hadith as authentic (sahih) if it is found to be accepted by the whole Ummah (see al-Sakhawi: Fath al-Mugith). But he does not accept Malik's view of restricting the practise to the people of Madinah. According to the later scholars of the Hanafi school like **Ibn al-Humam**, a Hadith will be declared Sahih, if it is supported by the practise of the Ummah (see Abdal Rashid Nu'mani : Ma tamassu ilay he al-Haja, pg. 18). Among traditionalists, Tirmidhi often remarks, after quoting a less authentic Hadith: 'It is being practised by the people of learning (Ahl al-Ilm).' **Suyuti** deduces: 'It indicates that the Hadith is supported by the sayings of the people of learning. **More than one scholar has said that a Hadith is declared Sahih if supported by the sayings of the people of learning, even if it lacks a proper Isnad** (see Suyuti: al-Ta'aqubat, folio 20)."

As stated above, the great research scholar (Muhaqqiq) **Hafiz Kamal ibn al-Humam** (d. 861/1457; Rahimahullah) had actually said: "One of the factors from which the authenticity of a Hadith is known is that the learned (Ulama) may conform to it, which is a proof of its being sound (vide: **Fath al-Qadir**, vol. 3, pg. 349).

There are many quotes from scholars which prove a near universal juridical acceptance of 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, but I content myself by quoting a select few from some of the foremost scholars of the

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Ahl-as-Sunnah, as well as the Imam of the "Salafiyya" (when it suits their whims and desires), Ahmad ibn Taymiyya.

(1) Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852/1449; R.A.)

The Hafiz of Hadith, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has reproduced from **Imam Rafi'i** (Allah's mercy be on him): **"For two nights the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) led twenty rak'ahs of prayer each night; on the third night the people gathered but the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not come out. Then the next morning, he told the people, 'It so occurred to me that it would be made obligatory for you, and you would not be able to discharge this obligation.'"** After reproducing this tradition, Hafiz Ibn Hajar said: **"All the traditionalists (Muhaddithin) are unanimous about the soundness of this report."** (see *Talkhis al-habir fi takhrij ahadith al-Rafi'i al-Kabir*, vol. 1, pg. 119, by Hafiz ibn Hajar).

(2) Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifah (d. 150 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was stated in *Fayd ul-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (by Shaykh Anwar Shah Kashmiri): **"Imam Abu Yusuf** (Rahimahullah) asked **Imam Abu Hanifah** (Rahimahullah), 'Did Hadrat Umar (Allah be pleased with him) have any compact from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) for 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh?' The Imam replied, 'Hadrat Umar was not one to invent on his own; certainly he had some proof with him for this!'" (also found in *Maraqih ul-Falah*, pg. 81, by **Imam al-Shurunbulali** and *Bahr ur Ra'iq*, vol.2, pg. 66, by **Imam ibn Nujaimal-Misri**).

(3) Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892; Rahimahullah)

Imam Tirmidhi said: **"Umar, Ali** as well as other Companions (Allah be pleased with them all) and **Sufyan al-Thauri, Ibn al-Mubarak** and **Imam al-Shafi'i** (Allah's mercy be upon them), all believed in 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh, and Imam Shafi'i has stated that he had seen the people of Makkah saying 20 rak'ahs (see *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 1, pg. 99).

(4) Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was written in the most authentic book on Maliki Fiqh, *al-Mudawwanah* (vo. 1, pg. 193-94), by **Qadi Sahnun** (Rahimahullah): **"Ibn al-Qasim said, 'The rak'ahs (of Taraweeh) with witr are 39.' Imam Malik said, 'This is what the people have agreed upon from amongst the predecessors, and the people have not stopped doing it.'"** (For an explanation of why it was 36 rak'ahs see the quote below from Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri).

(5) Hafiz Ibn Humam (d. 861/1457; Rahimahullah)

Allamah Ibn Humam asserts that it has been established from genuine authority that the Companions and their Successors (tabi'in) used to say twenty rak'ahs of Taraweeh during the auspicious time of Umar (Allah be pleased with him); this authority of Yazid ibn Ruman has been reported from Sa'ib ibn Yazid that, 'during Umar's auspicious time we used to say twenty rak'ahs.' The genuineness of this authority has been verified by **Imam Nawawi** in the synopsis (see *Fath al-Qadir*, vol. 1, pg. 407 and *Nasb-ur-Rayah*, vol. 1, pg. 294, by **Hafiz al-Zaylai**). Hafiz Ibn Humam also said in *Fath al-Qadir* (vol. 1, pg. 470): **"At last unanimity was formed on 20 rak'ahs of prayer and this alone is in succession."** This last statement has also been said in similar words by **Ibn Taymiyya** in his *Minhaj us-Sunnah* (vol. 2, pg. 224).

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(6) Imam Ata ibn Abi Rabah (Rahimahullah)

The august successor (Tabi'in) and Mufti of Makkah in his time said: "I have seen the Companions, and other people in Makkah saying 23 rak'ahs, including the witr." This report is **Hasan** (good). (see *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, pg. 406, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 4, pg. 219, of Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Qiyam ul-Layl*, pg. 91, by Imam Ibn Nasr al-Marwazi).

(7) Imam Muwaffaq al-Din Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 620/1223; R.A)

The Imam of the Hanbalis in his time, Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi, said in his book *al-Mughni* (vol. 1, pg. 803): "**There has been the Companion's consensus (Ijma-as-Sahaba) on 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh.**"

(8) Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d. 1352 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was stated in his published lecture, *Tirmidhi al-ma'ruf ba-Arfa'sh-Shazzi* (vol. 1 pg. 329): "**Not even one of the the four Imams believed in less than 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh;** the practise and belief of the majority of the Companions was also this. Imam Malik (Allah's mercy be upon him) believes in more than 20 rak'ahs; he is positive that they are 36. According to Imam Malik's practise only 20 rak'ahs of Taraweeh will be said in congregation, but the general practise and method of the citizens of Madinah was that during the brief rest interval (after every 4 rak'ahs), when the Imam sat down after 4 rak'ahs, they used to perform 4 more rak'ahs. The men who said the Taraweeh in the sacred mosque at Makkah, used to circumambulate (Tawaf) the Ka'ba during this brief recess. The people of Madinah, naturally, could not circumambulate the Ka'ba and hence, instead, they used to perform 16 rak'ahs more (in total) during these brief recesses."

(9) Imam al-Ayni (d. 855/1451; Rahimahullah)

Allamah Ayni wrote in his Sharh al-Bukhari: "The number of rak'ahs in the Taraweeh is twenty. Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmed (Allah's mercy be upon them) assert the same thing. Their proof is the report which Bayhaqi has, with genuine authority, narrated from Sa'ib ibn Yazid. The great Companions, including Umar, Uthman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them), as also the revered Successors (Tabi'in), used to perform twenty rak'ahs." Then he said: "The most excellent and the most advisable course to conform to is that of the Holy Prophet's and his (Peace and blessings be upon him) Companions (practise)." (*Umdat ul-Qari Sharh-al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, pg. 178).

(10) Hafiz Taqi-ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya al-Hanbali (d. 728/1328)

He has said in his *Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya* (vol. 1, pg. 191): "**It has been proven without doubt that Ubayy ibn Ka'b** (Allah be pleased with him) **used to lead the Companions, during Ramadan, for 20 rak'ahs and 3 rak'ahs of witr. Hence it is the principle (maslak) of most of the Ulama that this is the Sunnah, because Ubayy ibn Ka'b led 20 rak'ahs of prayer in the presence of the Muhajirin (the emigrants) and the Ansars (the helpers) and not a single Companion repudiated it!**"

So please ask yourselves: "Who are the 'Salafiyya'; are they the people who conform to the way of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and their successors (this includes the four Mujtahid Imams, Allah's mercy be upon them) consensus on 20 rak'ahs, or is it the likes of al-Albari and his followers?" May Allah guide them.

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**DA'EEF AHADITH AND THEIR APPLICABILITY
TO ISLAMIC DECREES (FATAWA)**

I now wish to convey to you the honourable reader, a short but detailed explanation of what is a Da'eef (weak) Hadith, and when they can be applied and practised by the dictates of Islamic Jurisprudence. The reason for writing this account is simply due to a very common misunderstanding amongst many of the so called "Salafiyya" and other ignorant people, who have not even scratched the surface of the Science of Hadith, and the way scholars rate Hadith (tasheeh), as well as differences of opinion (Ikhtilaf) in the final classification of Hadith; hence they are generally incapable of knowing when a Da'eef Hadith can be used in Islamic rulings, even though many of the prominent Mujtahid Imams themselves used to do so in the absence of an authentic narration.

Instead many ignorant people have been causing an unjustifiable fitna (mischief), by accusing usually the ignorant believers of following "Da'eef Ahadith", and I say, this is due to their ignorance of all the available channels of transmission (Asanid) for a particular Hadith. Since many a time a Hadith may be classified as being Da'eef through one particular Isnad, and just because of this, many of the ignorant members of the "Salafiyya" become absolutely convinced that whoever follows, and practises this particular "Da'eef" Hadith is an innovator (Mubtadi)! This I believe is the "wrong" approach to classifying Ahadith, because other chains of transmission (Sanad) must be considered, and if this is done, a singular Da'eef Hadith through one Isnad could even eventually reach the level of **Hasan li ghairihi** (a good Hadith due to other narrations supporting and strengthening it). This is also the chief reason why the 'Salafiyya' and their "scholars of Hadith and Fiqh", are trying to demolish the Taqleed of the Mujtahids. They claim that the followers of the four schools of Fiqh are "contradicting" the authentic Sunnah by following many Da'eef Ahadith based rulings! Usually, what is found amongst such people who claim to be scholars of Hadith, is that they don't always try their utmost to find other supporting narrations to give a more realistic, and acceptable classification. For example, when I compared the list of Ahadith declared to be Da'eef in the **Riyadh us-Salihin** (by **Imam Nawawi**), as checked by al-Albani and **Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arnaoot** (from Amman, Jordan) separately; I noticed that Shaykh al-Arnaoot took greater pains to declare many Da'eef Hadith to be Hasan Li Ghairihi, whereas al-Albani hardly bothered to raise the rank of a singular Da'eef Hadith to Hasan Li Ghairihi by investigating other supporting routes of narration! Insha'Allah we should all follow the authentic Sunnah when it is definitely proven and cannot be explained away by other authentic interpretations and evidences.

The following discussion has been derived from the English translation of **Umdat al-Salik wa Uddat al-Nasik (The Reliance of the Traveller and Tools of the Worshipper**, by **Shaykh Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri** [d. 769/1368; Rahimahullah], trans. by **Noah Ha Mim Keller**, W48.0, pg. 954-957). NB- the abbreviations for the following quote are:-

A=Shaykh Abdal Wakil Durubi, N=Shaykh Nuh Ali Salman, n=translators remark

“(A:) *Weak* (da'eef) is a term for any Hadith with a chain of transmission containing a narrator whose memory was poor, one who was not trustworthy, not identified by name, or for other reasons. But *weak* cannot simply be equated with false. Were this the case, mere analysis of the transmitters would be the universal criterion for the acceptance or rejection of particular rulings based on hadiths. While scholars do use this measure in upgrading the work of preceding generations of legal authorities, they have not employed it as a simplistic expedient to eliminate every piece of legal information that is connected with a weak hadith, because of various considerations. One of these is that when a piece of information is received through a means of transmission that may or may not be trustworthy, we generally have doubts

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about it. But when one and the same piece of information reaches us through several completely different channels, even though each one may or may not be trustworthy, the logical probability of the information's falsity is much reduced. And if we receive the very same information from ten such channels, the possibility of its falsity does not usually even come to mind. This verificatory principle has two important implications, one being the obligatory nature of belief in Hadiths that are *mutawatir*, and the second being the weight that Hadith scholars give to multiple means of transmission, which can raise a Hadith from well authenticated (*hasan*) to rigorously authenticated (*sahih*), or from weak (*da'eef*) to well authenticated, as described in the following account of a Hadith's reclassification by a major specialist in Hadith forgeries.

(‘Ali Qari:) The Hadith “*I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its gate,*” was mentioned by **Tirmidhi** in his *Jami*’, where he said it was unacknowledgeable. **Bukhari** also said this, and said that it was without legitimate claim to authenticity. **Ibn Ma’in** said that it was a baseless lie, as did **Abu Hatim** and **Yahya ibn Sa’id**. **Ibn Jawzi** recorded it in his book of Hadith forgeries, and was confirmed by **Dhahabi**, and others in this. **Ibn Daqiq al-‘Eid** said, “This Hadith is not confirmed by scholars, and is held by some to be spurious.” **Daraqutni** stated that it was uncorroborated. **Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani** was asked about it and answered that it was well authenticated (*hasan*), not rigorously authenticated (*sahih*), as **Hakim** had said, but not a forgery (*mawdu’*), as Ibn Jawzi had said. This was mentioned by **Suyuti**. The Hadith master (*hafiz*) **Abu Sa’id ‘Ala’i** said, “**The truth is that the Hadith is well authenticated (*hasan*), in view of its multiple means of transmission, being neither rigorously authenticated (*sahih*) nor weak (*da’if*), much less a forgery.**” (*Risala al-mawdu’at*, 26).

(A:) Thus, when the person who has related a Hadith is an Islamic scholar of the first rank, it is not enough for a student or popular writer to find one chain of transmission for the Hadith that is weak. There are a great many Hadiths with several chains of transmission, and adequate scholarly treatment of how these affect a Hadith's authenticity has been traditionally held to require a master (*hafiz*), those like **Bukhari, Muslim, Dhahabi, Ibn Kathir, or Suyuti** who have memorized at least **100,000** Hadiths - their texts, chains of transmission, and significance - to undertake the comparative study of the Hadith's various chains of transmission that cannot be accurately assessed without such knowledge. Today, when not one Hadith master (*hafiz*) remains in the Muslim Community, we do not accept the judgement of any would-be reclassifiers of Hadith, no matter how large their popular following, unless it is corroborated by the work of previous Hadith masters.

Another reason why *weak* cannot simply be equated with *false* is the fact that *weak* is an attribute of the Hadith's chain of transmission, while *false* is an attribute of the Hadith's text. These are two different things, and the relationship between their respective reliabilities is a probabilistic expectation (*istinbat*) that is neither strictly casual, nor yet a necessary logical implication (*lazim*), there being four logical possibilities for any Hadith:

- (1) A sound text and sound chain of transmission, as with well-authenticated (*hasan*) and rigorously authenticated (*sahih*) Hadiths;
- (2) A sound text and an unsound chain of transmitters, reflecting the possibility that a transmitter with poor memory, or unknown to the person who recorded the Hadith, or one not trustworthy, is in principle capable of relating the Hadith correctly;
- (3) An unsound text and unsound chain of transmitters, as with Hadiths that are forged (*mawdu’*);
- (4) or an unsound text and a sound chain of transmitters, reflecting the possibility that one of those who classify the personalities and reliability of various Hadith transmitters could in principle make an error in their *ijtihad* regarding a particular person.

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Because of the distinction between text and transmission, forms of evidence other than the authenticity rating of the chain of narrators are sometimes admissible, as when there is a consensus of legal scholars who have received the Hadith with acceptance, which is an acknowledged form of corroboration for Hadith of the second type mentioned above.

(Isma'il Ansari:) Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani says: "Among the characteristics that necessitate acceptance is for scholars of Sacred Law to have concurred on applying implications of a Hadith. Such a Hadith is acceptable, even obligatory to apply, as a number of the Imams of fundamentals of Islam (usul) have explicitly stated. **Shafi'i**, for example, says, 'What I have said about water when its taste, odour, and colour change, has been related from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) through a channel of transmission that Hadith scholars do not confirm the like of, but it is the position of all scholars without a single dissenting voice I know of.' And he said of the Hadith, 'There is no bequest to an estate division heir' - 'Scholars of Hadith do not corroborate it, but all scholars receive it with acceptance and apply it.'"

Ibn al-Qayyim, in his *I'lam al-muwaqqi'in*, when discussing the Hadith of Mu'adh about judgements (A: in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked Mu'adh ibn Jabal when dispatching him to Yemen how he would judge, to which Mu'adh replied that he would judge first by the Koran, then the Sunna, and then by his own reasoning (ijtihad)), says, "Legal scholars accept it and employ it as evidence, from which we learn that they hold it to be rigorously authenticated (sahih), just as we learn of the Prophet's saying (Allah bless him and give him peace):

(1) "There is no bequest to an estate division heir.'

(2) "[The Hadith about the sea,] Its water is purifying.'

(3) "When buyer and seller differ about the price they have agreed upon and the merchandise still exists, each swears [N: that his side of the story is correct] and [N: they cannot agree] they cancel the sale.'

(4) "The killer's extended family is responsible for the indemnity.'

"Even if these Hadiths are unauthenticated in their chains of transmission, since virtually all scholars have related them, the Hadiths' authenticity, which they accept, eliminates their need to verify the channels of transmission, and so it is too with the Hadith of Mu'adh: the fact that all scholars have adduced it as evidence eliminates the need for their checking its means of transmission."

And **Ibn 'Abd al-Barr** says in *al-Istidhkar*, concerning Tirmidhi's having related that **Bukhari** said of the Hadith of the sea "Its water is purifying" that it was rigorously authenticated (sahih)- "Hadith scholars do not consider Hadiths with the like of its chain of transmission to be rigorously authenticated (sahih), though I hold it to be so, because scholars have received it with acceptance." (*al-Isaba fi nusra al-Khulafa' al-Rashidin wa al-Sahaba*, 11. 8-9).

(A:) Among the primary textual evidence for the admissibility of such Hadiths is the word of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): **"Allah will never make my Community concur upon misguidance, and Allah's hand is over the group."** (This is a Sahih Hadith related by Imam al-Hakim).

So it is inadequate for someone who proposes to annul a ruling of Sacred Law to adduce that the Hadith supporting it has a weak chain of transmission, unless he can establish both that there are not a number of similar variants or alternate channels of transmission that strengthen it,

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confirming this by means of a text by a Hadith master (hafiz); and that the meaning of the Hadith has not been received with acceptance by the scholars of the Muslim Community.”

Let me now quote the opinion of one the foremost Shaykh's of the “Salafiyya”, **Taqi ad-Deen Ahmad ibn Taymiyya**. He said in his recently translated book “*Muqqaddima fi Usool al-Tafseer*” (*An Introduction to The Principles of Tafseer*’, trans. by Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, pg. 38): “**The point we are making is that multiple means of transmission, without prior discussion or agreement between the reporters usually guarantee the validity of the content of the Hadith transmitted.** However, those who are acquainted with the lives of transmitters can make better use of the Hadith. They can also use the Ahadith which are reported by transmitters who are not well known or who are quite weak in their memory, as well as the Ahadith which are mursal (a Hadith where the name of the Companion is missing, but attributed to the Prophet by a disciple of a Companion). Many scholars have noted down Ahadith of this type. They think that even though by themselves these Ahadith do not prove anything, **they can nonetheless be used to strengthen other Ahadith.**” Then Ibn Taymiyya said later on the same page: “**The scholars of Hadith often use a Hadith which suffers from error caused by weakness of memory as supporting evidence.** They have even considered some Ahadith reported by reliable (thiqah), true (siddeeq) and correct narrators (al-dhabt) to be weak in which they are able to find out some defects. The science that discusses these reasons is called ‘ilm ‘ilal al-Hadith, the science of the hidden defects of Hadith, which is one of their noblest disciplines....”

Insha’Allah the above discussion may help to alleviate the great misunderstanding amongst the non-specialists of the Science of Hadith. Is it not true that: “Only a fool speaks about a subject without knowledge; leading himself astray, and those who listen to his false decrees even further astray?” May Allah keep us on the Straight Path!

IJTIHAD, TAQLEED AND THE “SALAFIYYA” SECT

I would now like to briefly explain some grave misconceptions surrounding the important Islamic concepts of Ijtihad and Taqleed, and the people who are in opposition to the very concept of Taqleed, namely this new movement called the “Salafiyya”. They are also known by the names, ‘Wahhabi’, (one group of the Wahhabis also claim to follow the Hanbali Madhhab; see later) ‘La-Madhhabiyya’, ‘Ghayr-Muqallidin’ or ‘Ahl al-Hadith’ (this name has been adopted by them from the original and authentic group of the pious predecessors of Islam) by the opposition as well as themselves occasionally. Let it be known that the above names are all usually representative of the same thing in beliefs (with some minor discrepancies and different interpretations within their fold), concepts, and usually the practise as well, although they have no coherent jurisprudence; all this has led to divisions and subdivisions within them. This is usually derived from the works and beliefs of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah when it suits their mode! Before I delve into the actual subject matter, I feel it is wise to define what is Ijtihad and Taqleed respectively, and who do they apply to in principle and practise.

According to the divine law of Islam, **Taqleed** is the acceptance of a statement or juristic ruling of an Imam (**Mujtahid**) of the highest calibre, intelligence, learning, as well as piety, on the conviction that the accepted statement has been derived in accordance with hard facts, and proofs from the fundamental sources (Usool) of Islam; namely the Holy Qur’an, Sunnah, Ijma (consensus; of which there are various types) or even Qiyas (analogical deduction). In short it is the following of qualified and verified scholarship of an absolute (Mutlaq) Mujtahid, as well as the opinions derived by the scholars within the Madhhab (school of Islamic jurisprudence) of the Mujtahid Mutlaq. Hence one who follows the opinions of a particular Madhhab and its scholars is known as a **Muqallid**.

The scholars have said that it is not necessary for the common (ammi) Muslim to have to ask or know the proofs of things that are prescribed by the Shari’ah in terms of practise (Amal), but no scholar has said that it is forbidden to know the proofs (dalil) of a qualified scholar or authoritative books if one wishes to do so. What I have just described applies to one category of Muqallids, and that is the lot of the common Muslim who has not gained the requisite qualifications to follow an independent method of deriving laws from the sources of the Shari’ah (see the quotes from scholars later). The other type of Muqallid is one who is still a follower of a particular school of jurisprudence, but he acquaints himself with the evidence used by the Mujtahids of his Madhhab as far as possible; hence he is known as a **Muqallid Muttabi’a**. The Muqallid Muttabi’a is usually a man of knowledge (‘Alim) who is qualified in his own right to convey the rules and laws of Islam, but he is not yet qualified to derive new laws from the sources of the Shari’ah independently, i.e. he is not a Mujtahid.

The scholars have said that Taqleed is only permissible in things that are to be practised (Amal) according to the divine Shari’ah, but it is impermissible (haram) in the facts that need to be believed in, thus one must know the fundamental beliefs of Islam (Aqeedah, I’tiqad or Iman). For example, **Shaykh Ahmad al-Sirhindi** (d. 1034/1624; Rahimahullah) said in his *Maktubat* (vol. 2, 67th letter): “*Among the 73 sects, only the Madhhab of the Ahl-as-Sunnah wal Jama’ah will be saved from Hell. Each Muslim has to learn the belief of the Ahl as-Sunnah and correct his Iman accordingly. The majority of Muslims who have spread over the world for centuries have been in the Ahlas-Sunnah Madhhab.*” It is the Taqleed of wrong beliefs (Aqa’eed) which has been condemned by the Qur’an and the Sunnah; and this may lead one to the fire of hell, even if one claims to be a believer. Let it be known that the vast majority of believers amongst the pious predecessors (Salaf as-Saliheen), scholars after them and even ordinary folk, have had the correct beliefs held by what is regarded as the saved sect from Qur’anic and Hadith based evidence; and that is only the sect of the Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama’ah. The question that may be asked by an inquisitive reader is, “Who are the Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama’ah (Sunni Muslims)?” For the answer and the characteristics of the saved sect (**Firqat an-Najiiyyah**) please see later for the scholarly opinions.

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Now, the opposite of a Muqallid is one who is known as a **Mujtahid**. A Mujtahid is a scholar of the highest rank, piety and learning, who has gained the requisite qualifications to independently strive, derive, and extract the laws of Islam from the fundamental bases (namely the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma and Qiyas); and this process is known as **Ijtihad** (independent reasoning). In doing so, the absolute Mujtahid does not usually follow the opinions of others without knowing their evidences, as well as their justifications. In fact some scholars have said that it is forbidden (haram) for a qualified Mujtahid to make Taqleed of others (see below).

Let me now give you just four quotes from some well known scholars, and their declarations on Taqleed and Ijtihad:

(A) It was stated in the book: “**Imam Abu Hanifah: Life and Work**”, by the well known Historian of India, **Allamah Shibli Numani** (pg. 117): “The word *Mujtahid* has been defined as follows by scholars of Hadith like **Baghawi** (d. 510/1117), **Rafi’i** (d. 623/1226), **Nawawi** (d. 676/1277) and others; thus: “*A Mujtahid is one well versed in the Qur’an, Hadith, the early schools of law (Madhhabs), lexicology and analogical reasoning (Qiyas), that is to say, one who knows all or practically all Qur’anic passages, established Traditions (Ahadith) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and sayings of the early generations pertaining to legal problems, has the necessary lexical learning and is acquainted with all the methods of analogical reasoning (this is only a summary of the actual requirements). If a man is deficient in any of these things, he cannot be called a Mujtahid and should conform to one or other of the recognised schools of law (i.e; only the Hanafi, Malik, Shafi’i or Hanbali schools today).*”

(B) **Imam Abdal Ghani an-Nablusi** (d. 1143/1733, he was an author of nearly 500 works; Rahimahullah) said in his well known book, *Khulasat-ut-Tahqiq*: “**A Muslim has either become a Mujtahid or has not reached the grade of Ijtihad. A Mujtahid is either Mutlaq (absolute) or Muqayyad (belonging to a Madhhab). It is not permissible for a Mutlaq Mujtahid to follow another Mujtahid (i.e; he does not make Taqleed); he has to follow his own Ijtihad. However, a Muqayyad Mujtahid follows his own Ijtihad which he employs in accordance with the methods of the Madhhab of the Mutlaq Mujtahid. The one who is not a Mujtahid should follow whichever he likes of the four Madhhabs; and when doing an Ibada (worship) in accordance with a certain Madhhab, he has to fulfil all the conditions required by that Madhhab for it to be Sahih (correct). If he does not fulfil one of these conditions, his Ibada will not be Sahih. It has been informed unanimously by the Ulama (Ijma-al-Ulama) that such an Ibada will be in vain (batil). Though it is not a must for him to believe that his Madhhab is superior (rather they are all equal), it will be good if he believes so. Talfiq, that is, to do any Ibada or any deed in accordance with those words of the four Madhhabs that disagree with one another means to go out of the four Madhhabs and to make up a fifth Madhhab. This Ibada of his will be in vain, and he will have made a game out of Islam, because this Ibada will not be Sahih according to any of the four Madhhabs.**”

(C) **Imam Abdal Wahhab ash-Sha’rani** (d. 973/1565; Rahimahullah) said in his book, *al-Mizan al-Kubra*: “**An ‘alim in the grade of Ijtihad, that is, a scholar who can infer rules from the sources (of the Shari’ah), is not permitted to follow somebody else. However, according to the Ulama, it is Wajib (incumbent) for the ordinary Muslim to follow a Mujtahid. They said that if a non-Mujtahid Muslim did not follow a Mujtahid, he would deviate from the right path. All Mujtahids inferred rules from the documentary evidences they found in Islam. No Mujtahid has ever talked out of his own opinion on the religion of Allahu ta’ala. Each Madhhab is like a tissue woven with the threads of the Book (of Allah) and the Sunnah. Anybody who is not in the grade enabling him to employ Ijtihad has to choose and follow any one he likes of the four Madhhabs, because they all show the way leading to Paradise.**

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A person who speaks ill of any of the A'immat al-Madhahib (founders of the Madhhabs) shows his ignorance (and this is common amongst the ignorant members of the La-Madhhabi groups today)."

(D) **Shaykh Sulayman ibn Abdal Wahhab**, rahimahullah (he was the brother of Muhammad ibn Abdal Wahhab, the founder of the “Wahhabi” sect) said in his book, *As-Sawa'iq al-Mahiyya fir raddi 'alal-Wahhabiyya*, after mentioning the qualifications of a Mujtahid: “*Only such a personage who has all these excellences can be followed (Taqleed) and can issue Fatwas. If he lacks one of these qualities, he cannot be a Mujtahid and may not be followed. He himself should follow a Mujtahid. Hence, a Muslim is either a Mujtahid or a Muqallid. There is not a third one. It is necessary for Muqallids to follow a Mujtahid. This has been said unanimously. Even Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) whom the Wahhabis praise as an allamah (very knowledgeable scholar), whose every word is document, said in his I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in, 'A person who does not fulfil the requirements of Ijtihad is not permitted to draw any conclusion from the Qur'an al-Karim or the Hadith ash-Sharif.'* (If this statement is authentic; then it clearly demolishes the way of the modern day “Salafiyya”, who are experimenting with their own Ijtihads without being qualified to do so!). The men of the present age regard as scholars those who recite Ayats and Hadiths, and who give meanings to them in accord with their points of view. They do not listen to those who quote Ahl as-Sunnah scholars in their speeches and books. Ignorant and heretical people who do not fulfil even a single requirement of Ijtihad are taken to be men of religious authority today. May Allahu ta'ala protect Muslims against their calamity! Amin!”

Al-Shaykh Abdal Rahman Ba'alawi (d. 1251/1835; Rahimahullah) said in his *Bughyat al-mustarshidin fi talkhis fatawa ba'd al-a'imma min al-muta'akhhirin* (The goal of guidance-seekers: a summary of the formal legal opinions of certain later Imams), pg. 8: “**Ibn Salah** (d. 643/1245; a scholar of Hadith; Rahimahullah) reports that **there is scholarly consensus (Ijma) on its being unlawful to follow rulings from schools other than those of the four Imams**, meaning in one's personal works, let alone give court verdicts or formal opinions to people from them, because of the untrustworthiness of the ascription of such rulings to the scholars who reportedly gave them, there being no channels of transmission (asanid) which obviate the possibility of textual corruption and spurious substitutions. The Zaydis, for example, who trace themselves to **Zayd ibn Ali ibn Hussain** (son of Ali and Fatima), the beatitude of Allah be upon them, despite the fact that Zayd was one of the Imams of the religion and a renowned figure well qualified to give guidance to those seeking it, his followers identify him with extreme permissiveness on many questions, ascriptions based on failure to check as to what his positions actually were (by naming the intermediate transmitters and establishing their reliability). It is quite otherwise with the four schools, whose Imams (Allah reward them) have spent themselves in checking the positions of their schools, explaining what could be rigorously authenticated (Sahih) as the position of the person it was attributed to, and what could not be. Their scholars have thus achieved safety from textual corruption and have been able to discern the genuine from the poorly authenticated (and this is in complete contradistinction to today's “Salafis”). [Translation taken from *The Reliance of the Traveller*, pg. 25-6, by N.H.M. Keller].

Today we live in an age where the very concept of Taqleed has been made “haram” by the ignorant non-scholars of Islam, as well as some people who are regarded as scholars. It has become a source of heated debate and repudiation by many a “man of knowledge”, as well as like minded non-scholars who act and behave as absolute Mujtahids, even though they have not acquired an iota's worth of Islamic knowledge. It is these very people who are calling for the abandonment of Taqleed of the four existing schools of Islamic jurisprudence (The Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali), and in return are calling for everyone to derive one's own rulings from the divine sources of Islam (viz. Qur'an and Sunnah). Thus they have embarked upon the path of performing Ijtihad without the requisite qualifications set down by the

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well known scholars of Islam; hence many of them behave as though they are absolute Mujtahids (may Allah protect us from their fallacious interpretations)!

It is these very people who claim to be on the path of the pious predecessors of the first three generations of Islam (Salaf as-Salihin) in terms of Aqeedah, methodology and practise. But in reality they are clinging on to the Aqeedah and Fatawa of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Hazm al-Zahiri, Ibn Abdal Wahhab, ash-Shawkani, Ibn Baz, al-Albani and the like minded people when it suits their whims and desires. Hence, they claim to be the followers of the pious predecessors, but in reality they have formed an incoherent Fiqh called the “Salafiyya Madhhab”, even though this very name was unknown to the original Salaf as-Salihin!

The President of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Taha Jabir al-Alwani, said with regards to the “Salafiyya” in his recently published book, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, (pg. 119): *“In retrospect, we can see that the leading scholars of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence had reasons to justify their differences of opinion and lessen their impact. The master perpetrators of disagreement in our own times, however, do not have a single plausible basis for justifying their differences. They are not Mujtahidun or persons capable of independent reasoning or analytical thought. They are, rather, unthinking followers (muqallidun) of those among them who raise their voices to proclaim that they are not in fact ‘followers’ nor do they believe in the ‘duty to follow.’ They claim that they derive their rulings and opinions directly from the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be on him. In reality, they cling to some books of Hadith and follow in the footsteps of their authors in all matters pertaining to the authenticity of a Hadith and the trustworthiness and reliability of its narrators (I say: this is exactly what is done by the followers of al-Albani, and other like minded people; and this is also Taqleed, no matter how much one may deny it). Some of them claim knowledge of the science which studies the biographies of Hadith reporters and the extent of their reliability. On the basis of studying a single book on this vast subject, a person cannot justifiably elevate himself to the position of a Mujtahid (as is usually found amongst the members of the “Salafiyya” who derive rulings from the Qur’an and Sunnah without sound scholarship).”*

The South African based *Majlis al-Ulama*, said with regards to the Islamic concept of Taqleed (*The Majlis, vol. 7 No. 10, pg. 7*): *“Taqleed, the Islamic concept of following the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen (the highest class of Fuqaha-Islamic Jurists) is being subjected to much scorn, ridicule and rejection by modernist Muslims schooled in the liberal culture of the West while being largely uneducated in terms of the Shari’ah. There exists also another group apart from the modernists, which has likewise considered it fashionable to argue away the vital Shar’i requirement of Taqleed. This group comes in the group of Ulama of Islam. They have adopted a similar attitude of rejecting Taqleed by virtue of external un-Islamic influences which they have acquired as a result of them deviating from the Path of the Sunnah. Western liberalism has undoubtedly captured their minds, hence they labour to create some kind of harmony between the rigid demands of Islam and the so-called rational dictates of modern reason. Such modern learned men operating under the designation of Ulama and occasionally donning even the external garments of Ulama to create a deceptive appearance of piety, pose the greatest danger to the Imaan of untainted laymen. Most of the “Islamic” colleges in the Middle Eastern countries and some of such Madrasahs in other parts of the world pour out members of this hybrid class of “Ulama” who find it difficult to distinguish between right and left. They are saddled with the problem of harmonizing Islam with modernism and in the process of their evil pursuit they are constrained to abandon any Islamic demand which thwarts or impedes their ungodly mission. One of the greatest impediments in the endeavour to modernise Islam to conform to western standards of reason is the Shar’i demand of **Taqleed**. Taqleed is a thorn in their flesh and it has to be eliminated for the attainment of their pernicious goal.*

Self-conceit and self opinion are the products of western liberalism and materialism. These diseases, gripping many Muslims in this age, have lamentably disturbed the equilibrium of Muslim intelligence. The ailing Muslim intelligence of these times has been so drastically jarred, that it is incapable of discerning

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the dangerous abyss it is slipping into by shunning the vital and compulsory injunction of **Taqleed**. It fails to understand that the ultimate consequence of admuT-Taqleed (abandonment of Taqleed) is the abdication of Imaan. Those who shun Taqleed hover on the brink of kufr (then some evidences were provided in favour of Taqleed from the Qur’an, but I have decided not to give the documentary proofs and arguments at the moment since it is not really part of the aims of this work; what is really required is a comprehensive book of its own to explain the reality of Taqleed and its proofs).

Those who seek to abandon Taqleed are dwelling in self-deception. They deceive themselves into believing that they possess adequate ability and qualification to embark on the process of deducting Shar’i Masaa’il (legal problems of the Shari’ah). But, they grope lamentably in darkness. There is not a single rule which they are capable of deducting without resorting to the works of this or that Imam. If it is a matter of Fiqh, they are constrained to refer to the works of Fuqaha (scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence). If it is about Tafseer, they have to refer to some work of the Mufasssireen (commentators of the Qur’an). If it is a question pertaining to Hadith, they have no option other than making Taqleed of the Hadith Kitaabs (books) of such Ulama who themselves were Muqallideen (followers of Imams). In order to ascertain the authenticity of a Hadith, there is no alternative other than making Taqleed of the Aimmah-e-Hadith (Imams of Hadith). At no stage can anyone be independent of Taqleed (unless one is a Mujtahid). But, the negators of Taqleed dupe themselves by seeking to satisfy their desires in flitting from Madhhab to Madhhab, in picking and choosing rules and opinions which conform to their whimsical desires and fancies.

The votaries of admuT Taqleed (abandonment of Taqleed) consider it below their dignity to be hitched to any specific Madhhab of the Shari’ah; they advocate a policy of picking and choosing from the various Madhhabs, when it suits them they accept a mas’alah from the Hanafi Madhhab; when a mas’alah in the Shafi’i Madhhab appears more in consonance with laxity and desire, they switch over to that Madhhab, when something more appeasing is discerned in the Maliki Madhhab, they opt for that mas’alah. They wonder aimlessly in this deception, deluding themselves. They fail to understand that even in their unlawful policy of **talfeeq** (this is the taking of the easy rulings of all the Madhhabs), they have to follow the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. Indispensability of the Fuqaha is accepted by the opponents of the Imams, albeit in an implied and subtle way. They are totally incapable of formulating a single mas’alah without resorting to aid from the illustrious authorities among the Fuqaha, Muhaddithin and Mufasssireen. But, they childishly trumpet the bugle of the validity of talfeeq, a concept which is unanimously unlawful.” Here ends the quote.

In his “refutation” against the Taqleed of the four schools of Fiqh, **al-Albani** quoted some sayings from the four main Mujtahid Imams apparently “forbidding” Taqleed; and this at first seems to be strong proof in defence of his case (see *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, pp. viii-xiv). But the learned reader should know that these quotations are out of context and garbled! **The greatest proof in favour of my statement, is that nearly every scholar who was supposed to have quoted these apparently Taqleed “forbidding” statements as given in the footnotes of al-Albani’s above mentioned book, was himself affiliated and in the process of promulgating one of the four Madhhabs themselves!** Is this not a great deception on al-Albani’s part? This is a great shame on those who fight against Taqleed, but on the other hand “blindly” accepted al-Albani’s suppositions and claims without research; as well as the so-called independent methodology they claim to be clinging on to!

Recently, I came across a book entitled: “*Blind Following of Madhhabs*,” by one of the late Shaykhs of the “Salafiyya”, **Muhammad Sultaan al-Ma’soomee al-Khajnadee**; edited by one of al-Albani’s foremost students (Saleem al-Hilaalee). In the above named book, al-Khajnadee tried his best to refute Taqleed, but in reality he failed quite miserably in his refutation of what he calls “Blind Following!” After reading this book of garbled interpretations, slanders, and even lies, I came to the conclusion that al-Khajnadee seemed to have been a confused and contradicting personality! Now, let me elaborate my claim by quoting and commenting on just a few selected pages from the actual book.

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It seems that the translation of the whole book was incomplete, since the editor, **Abu Usaamah Saleem al-Hilaalee** said on pg. iii, “**I also noticed some places containing that which was superfluous, so I left it out.**” I wonder what these ‘superfluous’ statements were?

On page ix of the above named book, it was written that al-Khajnadee met “**Shaykh Muhammad Rasheed Ridaa**. He helped with *al-Manaar* magazine (this was edited by the last named person), and bought all of its back issues and the works of **Shaykh Muhammad Abdah** and likewise what had been printed from the works of **Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah** and his student **Ibn ul-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah**.” From this last quote, those of us who have heard and read what the people of knowledge have said about the above named Shaykhs, will realize straight away that all four of them had corrupt beliefs (Aqeedah) on certain controversial points, like the attributes of Allah Subhana wa Ta’ala, as well as being famous for erring on many legal points of the Shari’ah!

It is a well known fact that Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935) and his teacher Muhammad Abdah (he was the Mufti of Egypt in his day, d. 1905) were both Freemasons, who strove to reinterpret the Shari’ah with their own whims and desires by claiming to “reform” Islam from “impurities”, and this led to their call for the abandonment of Taqleed; hence the need for the abolishment of the four schools of Fiqh. These two enemies of Islam strove hard in their Freemasonic plot to “reform” Islam, but in reality they fought against Islam from within; this was realized by many scholars within their day as well as after them by examining their “Fatwas” and speeches. Hence, many a man of knowledge (e.g. Shaykh Muhammad Bakhit al-Muti’i - the grand Mufti of Egypt and one of the leading Hanafi scholars of his time, d. 1354/1935; Rahimahullah) exposed them for what they were, as well as warning the sincere believers to be on their guard from their “sweet poison” (refer to *The Evolution of Fiqh*, pg. 114, by A.A. Bilal Philips). Thus, it is not hard to realise that al-Khajnadee himself may have been strongly influenced by the above named Freemasons, after imbibing ‘knowledge’ from their sweet poisoned chalice! As for Ibn Taymiyya and his loyal disciple Ibn al-Qayyim, please see later for the scholarly judgments on their views and ideas.

Saleem al-Hilaalee said on page 13, “For example, the Maalikees leave their arms at their side, during the *Salaah* and read *Qunoot* in Fajr, whereas we find Maalik-*rahimahullah*-quotes in al-Muwatta; “Chapter: placing the two hands; one upon the other in Prayer... **But the later Maalikees use as evidence that Maalik used to pray with his hands hanging at his side, this is ignorance with regards to the *madhhab* which they follow.** Since Ja’far ibn Sulaymaan, the governor of al-Madeenah lashed the Imam in the year 146H and stretched out his arms until his hands became dislocated and so he was not able to place his hands one over the other in Prayer...”

The above statement by al-Hilaalee claimed that those who follow the Maliki Madhhab only left their hands unfolded in Salah, since Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) had to leave his arms unfolded after being lashed!! He also claims that this is “ignorance with regard to the madhhab which they follow.” But in reality, it is he who has fallen into the abyss of ignorance on this issue by ‘blind’ supposition! Although Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) related two Hadiths supporting the folding of the right hand on the left in Salah in his al-Muwatta, this does not mean that Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) himself always folded his hands in Salah. As you may have read in the section on “*The Placing of Hands in Prayer*”, I quoted the most authoritative position of the Maliki madhhab, as well as what Imam Malik himself said about placing the hands in Salah. Here is the quote again for good measure; and for the displacement of ignorant claims: “In **al-Mudawwanah** (vol. 1, pg. 75-76), Imam Malik has been recorded to have said, ‘*Putting the right hand on the left in salah, I have no knowledge of it in the compulsory (Fard) prayer, it is thus disliked (Makrooh). But in the supererogatory (Nafl) prayer there is no harm (in folding the hands), it is left to the individual to decide.*’ Please ask yourselves who is ignorant, al-Hilaalee or the Maliki scholars?!

Al-Khajnadee claimed on page 47, that the book al-Mudawwanah was by Imam Malik! In fact, as I have said on more than one occasion previously, al-Mudawwanah is the compilation of **Qadi Sahnoon!** It is

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strange how al-Hilaalee did not correct al-Khajnadee in his editorial footnotes; do they want us to accept their claims ‘blindly’?

On page 22, al-Khajnadee quoted the well known Hadith from Irbaad ibn Saariyah (Allah be pleased with him) where the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) ordered us to, “*Keep to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Khulafaa, cling to that with your teeth.*” Thus it is incumbent to cling to the rightly guided Khulafaa; and they are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all). But, as is the habit of men of his ilk, he contradicts himself by saying on the very next page: “Neither, Imaam Abu Haneefah or Maalik said, ‘Keep to my saying’ or ‘Follow my madhhab’, not even Abu Bakr or ‘Umar-radiallaahu ‘anhum-rather they all forbade that.” Thus, is he saying that we should not keep to the sayings of Abu Bakr or Umar (Allah be pleased with them) even though it is a command of the Prophet (Peace be upon him)?

In fact al-Albani himself quoted two statements in “**Sifah Salah-an-Nabee**”, from Imams Abu Hanifah and Malik (Allah’s mercy be upon them) which permitted Taqleed of their views, so long as they agreed with the Qur’an and Sunnah! On page ix **Imam Abu Hanifah** (Rahimahullah) has been quoted as saying, “*When I say something contradicting the Book of Allah the Exalted or what is narrated from the Messenger (peace be upon him), then ignore my saying.*” Does this not mean that if any of Imam Abu Hanifah’s Fatwas does not contradict the Qur’an and the Sunnah, may be taken by way of Taqleed; after the research scholars within the Hanafi school had shown that it had a basis?

Similarly, **Imam Malik** (Rahimahullah) was quoted by al-Albani to have said (see ‘Sifah’, pg. x): “*Truly I am only a mortal: I make mistakes (sometimes) and I am correct (sometimes). Therefore, look into my opinions: all that agrees with the Sunnah, accept it; and all that does not agree with the Book and the Sunnah, ignore it.*” Again, Imam Malik has given us the right to take his opinions, so long as they agree with the Qur’an and Sunnah; Is this not in favour of Taqleed after the verifying scholars of the **Maliki Madhhab** proved which verdicts of Imam Malik were in harmony with the Shari’ah?

Also, al-Albani quoted Imam al-Shafi’i (see ‘Sifah’, pg. xi) as saying; “*If you find in my writings something different to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), then speak on the basis of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and leave what I have said.*” Hence, whatever contradicts the authentic Sunnah in Imam al-Shafi’i’s writings was carefully examined by the research scholars within the Shafi’i Madhhab. This means that whatever did not contradict the Sunnah in Shafi’i’s writings may be taken by way of Taqleed; does it not?

On page 33, al-Khajnadee said, “***Taqleed in the Sharee’ah is referring back to someone’s saying for which there is no proof and that is prohibited in the Sharee’ah. Ittiba*** is that for which the proof is established. *Taqleed* in Allah’s deen is not correct and *ittiba* is binding.” This statement shows that al-Khajnadee did not even know what the correct definition of Taqleed was! He has definitely confused the meanings of the two words Taqleed and Ittiba. As I had said at the beginning of this section, Taqleed is the acceptance of a Mujtahid’s fatwa for which the proof has been established! How could it ever be said that Taqleed is the referring back to a “saying for which there is no proof?” Surely, this is not Taqleed but the following of mere opinion. What al-Khajnadee said about Ittiba is in reality the true extent of Taqleed! So, please beware of this cunning deception my dear brothers and sisters.

On page 37, al-Khajnadee made, a blatantly false statement by saying nonsensically, “**If you look into the matter carefully it will be clear to you that these madhhabs were spread, promoted and made attractive by the enemies of Islam in order to split the Muslims and cause discord amongst them. Or they were started by the ignorant in conformity with the Jews and Christians and in imitation of them, as they do in many matters.**” By Allah, this is a grave calumny, a highly nefarious aspersion and a blatant misrepresentation of historical facts! Only one who lacks a speck of analytical deduction and investigation into historical facts could say such a crass thing! In reality, these madhhabs were spread by the founders of these very schools, and especially by those amongst their disciples, and then those who succeeded them... So that eventually a full chain of transmission (Isnad) was built up and

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recorded by the succeeding scholars in their works, just as in the science of Hadith. Even today, some scholars have an unbroken chain going back to the scholars of Hadith and Fiqh of the first generations of Islam!

The great scholar of Islam, **Qadi Iyad** (d. 544/1149 Rahimahullah), has quite beautifully and eloquently explained how the Madhhabs arose, and why one should make Taqleed of them. He said: “This Ijtihad and the handing down of rules and Shari’ah, on the basis of it-**there are very few, very few who have the capacity. Indeed they are fewer than the few after the first generation (of Muslims),the upright Salihun, and the first three praiseworthy generations.** Now since this is the nature of the matter, any human being burdened with the moral responsibility to obey Allah, but not having attained the status of being able to know the Shari’ah, on his own, is necessarily required to get that knowledge from someone else.

He must take the knowledge of every act of worship he has been commanded to do-every application of the Shari’ah that has been made responsible for him to perform directly, from that man who can give it to him straight from the source and who will make him know exactly what to do. That man must be the staff by which he stands in his own transmission to others, in the knowledge he acquires, and in the Shari’ah parameters by which he lives. **This is Taqleed.** And this is precisely the position of the ordinary people, indeed the vast majority of all people. Since this is the case, what is required of you is that in all such matters, you do Taqleed of the ‘alim in whom you have complete trust. If such Ulama are many, then follow that one who is most knowledgeable. This is the portion of Ijtihad which falls to the lot of the Muqallid with regard to his deen. And it is not fitting that the Muqallid should abandon the most knowledgeable (Mujtahidun) in favour of someone else, even though that other person is also busy with knowledge. The Muqallid must therefore ask at that time about those things which he does not know until he has knowledge of them, just as Allah, Glory be to Him, has said, **‘Then ask the people of Remembrance if you do not know.’ (Qur’an 16:43 and 21:7)**

And the one upon whom we ask Allah’s blessings and peace commanded the Khalifs after him and his Companions be emulated. The one upon whom we ask blessings and peace also sent his Companions out among the people to give them understanding in the deen, to teach them what had been made incumbent on them, and Allah urged on the entirety of them to go out, ‘From every group among you let there be a group who will develop understanding of the deen and who will give warning to their people when they return to them.

Now since this matter is something necessary, and there is no way around it, and since they who most deserve to be followed by the uniformed ordinary man, the beginner, who has taken it on himself to worship, or the student seeking right guidance and knowledge of Fiqh in the deen of Allah, and those who have the greatest right to be followed are the Fuqaha of the Sahaba of Rasulullah (Peace be upon him), they are those who took their knowledge directly from him, who knew the circumstances of the Revelation of the commands and prohibitions, the various prophecies of the different aspects of the Shari’ah, the exact pronunciation of the Prophet’s words, may Allah bless him and give him peace, who themselves witnessed the accompanying circumstances of these ayats, who spoke to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, directly, about most of it, who asked him about it despite the extensive knowledge from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) which they themselves already had, and their knowledge of the meanings of Arabic speech, the illumination of their hearts, and the openness and receptivity of their hearts, such that they were, without the least contention, the most knowledgeable of Imams, and they were those of the Imams most worthy of being followed by Taqleed.

Nevertheless, they only spoke about a few of the problematic events that happened among them, and large numbers of answers to Shari’ah questions did not branch out from them in detail. They did not speak about the Shari’ah, except with regard to the basic teachings, and certain things that actually happened. Most of their pre-occupation was with the putting into practise of what they knew and the active defence of the entire deen, the laying down of the firm foundation of the Shari’ah of the Muslims. There was

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among them a degree of difference of opinion in some of the things which they discussed which could keep the Muqallid in a perpetual state of confusion, and require of him the kind of reflection and review for which he is not yet prepared. And indeed the full elaboration of questions, resolving of problems, and setting out the discussions, only came about in response to those matters, the appearance of which had been anticipated after the Sahaba were gone.

Consequently, the Tabi'in, the Followers (like **Imams Abu Hanifah, an-Nakhai, Hammad, al-Zuhri, Hasan al-Basri, Sha'bi...**), came and reflected on the differences of opinions of the Companions, and built on the foundations which they had laid down. Then after them came the Ulama from among the Followers of the Followers (like **Imams Malik, Shafi'i, Ibn Hanbal, Dawood al-Zahiri...**). By that time, the occurrences which had happened already became many and the problematic events had already occurred, while Fatwas regarding all of this had branched out into many details. Therefore they gathered together the opinion of them all, and they committed their Fiqh to memory.

They sought out differences of opinion of the earlier generations as well as their areas of agreement, but they were cautious about the matter of this disagreement spreading and of its getting out of control. Therefore they did Ijtihad regarding all these parts of the Sunnah, and of the precise articulation of fundamental principles. They asked questions and they got answers. They built up the foundations of the basic precepts and they made accessible the basic principles. Upon them were delineated the solutions to problems and events and they were put down in writing for the people, and organised. Each of them worked on the basis of the inspiration he was given and the accomplishment to which Allah had guided them. So they became the ultimate in the science of Usool and of the specific details of the Shari'ah in the matters of agreement and disagreement. And on the basis of this knowledge which had come to them, they made Qiyas, analogy, according to the indications, and the similarities that they had got. May Allah be pleased with all of them and may He give them the full extent of the reward of their Ijtihad.

Therefore it is an individual obligation that falls on the ordinary Muqallid and the student of knowledge in his beginning stages, to take recourse in his Taqleed to these great men, or the explicit texts regarding the problems and events that befall him. Recourse must be had to them regarding all of these matters which are problematic because of the fact that they were immersed in knowledge of the Shari'ah and it literally revolved around them. They alone have precise understanding of the schools, of who had gone before, and the earlier generations, and that knowledge is enough for all who have come after them in later generations. **Nevertheless, it is simply not possible that all of these earlier Fuqaha can be simultaneous objects of Taqleed regarding the most difficult problems and the majority of questions, because of their differences among themselves caused by conflicting opinions about the fundamental principles upon which they built. Moreover, it is not valid for the Muqallid to do Taqleed of any among them merely on the basis of personal whim, or chance that he has come upon a decision on the basis of what he happened to find the people of his region doing, or his family doing (and this is quite common today; is it not?)**

Again therefore, the portion of Ijtihad that falls to his lot in this case, is that he seek to discover by reflection which of them was the most knowledgeable, and come to know which of them is most worthy of being an object of Taqleed from among all of them, so that in his practise and his Fatwas, the ordinary man can trust him and rely on him and trust that in his acts of worship, he had taken on himself only what the Mujtahid had and discerned as correct. **The ordinary man therefore must give to the most knowledgeable (scholars) among the adherents to the schools of these earlier Fuqaha, the status which by right, he deserves.** It is not permissible for him that he go beyond them in his seeking of Fatwas to one who does not follow the opinion of his school (NB-There are certain conditions which need to be fulfilled before one can take opinions from other schools, these principles have been explained by scholars like *Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami*). For as some of the Shaykhs have said, 'The Imam is with regard to one who adheres to his school, to his way, like the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, is with regard to his Ummah.' It is not permissible for him to go against his Imam (unless one

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has become a Mujtahid within the school or in specific issues). This has been expressed quite correctly, and the correct way will become clear to those who have insight, and eyes with which to see, on the basis of what we have elaborated and the stipulations we have laid down.” (quoted from *Root Islamic Education*, pp. 82-7, by *Shaykh Abdal qadir al-Murabit*).

So please ask yourselves, “Were these great scholars the enemies of Islam (Allah forbid), who imitated the ways of corrupt Christians and jews?” I say, never could these madhhabs have ever existed if the well known scholars did not spread them; is this not the basic and fundamental truth?

One of the most well known scholars of Hadith in our time, *Shaykh Shu’ayb al-Arnaoot* (b. 1928 in Albania, presently residing in Amman, Jordan), said with regard to Taqleed and the founders of the madhhabs, “*They are explainers, not popes; but in each of their schools there afterwards followed a hundred or more scholars who refined and added to their work, men whose stature in Islamic knowledge was like mountains, any one of whom could put fifteen of the scholars available today in his pocket.*”

Another imbecilic statement was made by al-Khajnadee on page 56, where he said, “They have taken a path opposite to that of the people of knowledge, their late-comers have inverted the way of the Salaf and turned the foundations of the Deen upside down. So they **declare the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (Peace be upon him), the sayings of his Khulafaa and the rest of the Companions-radiallaahu ‘anhum-to be false.**” Again, he made a wicked declaration by claiming that the followers of these madhhabs declared the, “Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him), the sayings of his Khulafaa and the rest of the Companions-radiallaahu ‘anhum-**TO BE FALSE.**” I ask you which scholar within the four madhhabs, let alone the ‘blind followers’ declared it “To be false?” Would it not be true, that if one declared the above sources to be “false” he or she may automatically go out of the fold of Islam (especially the first two sources), let alone be a follower of a Madhhab (and only Allah knows best)? How could the ‘blind followers’ declare something to be false, when the great scholars have said that it is impermissible to take the “Ijtihad” of non-Mujtahids as documentary proof? May Allah guide the people who believe in what al-Khajnadee proclaimed!

There are many other vile statements made by al-Khajnadee in his above named book, but this is not the time and place to outline them in detail; rather a well grounded scholar could easily refute his nonsensical slanders and lies by way of logical proofs from the sources of the Shari’ah. This book of his was meant to be “sound” advice for some prospective Japanese converts to Islam. It seems al-Khajnadee wanted his Japanese readers (not to mention the generality of the Muslim readership) to accept everything he said “blindly” and without research; thus he may not have been advising the Japanese questioners, but instead confusing them even more deeply by not explaining the meanings of many of the statements and their ramifications, let alone the Shari’ah terminology he had used! Besides that, he as well as his friend al-Albani (in his ‘Sifah Salah an-Nabee’), failed to tell their readers that nearly every scholar they quoted from were the adherents of one of the four existing schools! This is a great trick of the most knowledgeable of “Salafi” scholars; they seem to deceive themselves as well as their readers when it comes to proclaiming this undeniable fact!

Rather, al-Khajnadee and al-Albani should have tried to disprove the evidences used by the scholars within the Madhhabs (from the Qur’an, Sunnah and even the Ijma), which documents and allows Taqleed to all non-Mujtahids! The following is a list of some of the scholars quoted by al-Albani and al-Khajnadee in their books, and the Madhhab they were in:

THE HANAFI SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Abidin (d. 1252/1836; al-A’lam, 6.42 [viii, 15, 221]), Hafiz Ibn al-Humam (d. 861/1457; al-A’lam, 6.255 [viii, 22, 32]), Imam Ibn al-Shahnah al-Kabeer [viii], Imam Zufar (d. 158 AH [viii]), Imam

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Abu Yusoof (d. 182/798; al-A’lam, 8.193 [viii, 14]), Imam Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 189/804; al-A’lam, 6.80 [ix, 14]), Imam al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH, [5]), Imam ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi [17], Imam ibn Nujaim al-Misri (d. 970 AH [34]), Shaykh Ali al-Qari (d. 1014/1606; al-A’lam, 5.12 [35]), Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Dehlawi (d. 1052 AH [36]), Allamah Abdal Hayy al-Lucknawi (d. 1304 AH; also known as Abul Hasanat [ix]), Shaykh Abul Hasan as-Sindee al-Hanafi [5], Shaykh Aafiyyah ibn Yazeed [viii].

THE MALIKI SCHOLARS

Hafiz Ibn Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071; al-A’lam, 8.240 [x, 5]), Imam Ibn Wahb (d. 197/812 [x]), Imam Abdullah ibn Abee Zaid al-Qairwane al-Maliki (d. 389 AH [16]).

THE SHAFI’I SCHOLARS

Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458/1066; al-A’lam, 1.116 [xi, 6]), Shaykh Abu Yusoof al-Buweeti [xii], Shaykh Abul Qasim ad-Daariki [xii], Hafiz Ibn as-Salah (d. 643/1245; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 8.326 [xii]), Imam Taqi ad-Deen al-Subki (d. 756/1355; al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya, 114 [xii, 14]), Imam Abu Nu’aym (d. 430/1038; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 4.18 [xii, 52]), Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256/870; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 2.212-14 [6]), Imam Muslim (d. 261/875; Siyar a’lam al-nubala, 12:557-61 [6]), Imam Abu Dawood (d. 275/889; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 2.293 [xiii, 14]), Imam Nisai (d. 309/915; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 3.14-16 [6]), Imam Tirmidhi (d. 279/892; Siyar a’lam, 13.270-73 [6]), Imam ibn Majah (d. 209/824; al-A’lam, 7.144 [6]), Imam al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505; al-A’lam, 3.301-2 [5]), Hafiz Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311/924; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 3.109 [16]), Imam ash-Sha’rani (d. 973/1565; al-A’lam, 4.180-1 [viii, 35]), Imam Hakim (d. 405/1014; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 4.155 [xi, 39]), Imam ibn Asakir (d. 571 AH [xi]), Hafiz Khateeb al-Baghdadi (d. 463/1072; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 4.29 [xi, 52]), Hafiz al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 9.100 [18]), Hafiz al-Iraqi (d. 806/1404; al-A’lam, 3.344 [18]), Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360/971; Siyar a’lam, 16.119-23 [18]), Imam al-Izz ibn Abdas Salam (d. 660/1262; al-A’lam, 4.21 [27]), Imam ibn Hibban (d. 354/965; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 3.131 [39]), Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852/1449; al-A’lam, 1.178 [39]), Hafiz al-Haythami (d. 807/1405; al-A’lam, 4.266 [40]), Imam al-Haramayn (d. 478/1085; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 5.165 [41]), Imam Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 465/1072; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 5.153 [50]), Imam al-Razi (d. 606/1210; Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya, 8.81-89 [59]), Imam al-Baghawi (d. 510/1117; al-A’lam, 2.259 [59]), Imam Abu Shamah (d. 665 AH [78]), Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277; al-A’lam, 8.149 [xi, 15]).

THE HANBALI SCHOLARS

Hafiz ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328; al-A’lam, 1.144 [30]), Hafiz ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350; Siyar a’lam, 7.202 [xiii, 42]), Hafiz ibn al-Jawzi (d. 508/1114; al-A’lam, 3.316 [xii, 53]), Hafiz ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 795/1393, [xiv]).

NB- The contents in the brackets (after the names of the above scholars), stand for the following abbreviations:-

(i) ‘**d.**’ the year of the scholar’s death, usually in Hijri and Christian dates.

(ii) ‘**al-A’lam**’- This is a well known biographical dictionary by **Khayral-Deen al-Zirikly** (see bibliography for full details).

(ii) ‘**Tabaqat al-Shafi’iya**’- This is a very well known dictionary listing all the famous Shafi’i scholars up till the death of its author-**Imam Tajal-Deen al-Subki** (rahimahullah).

(iv) ‘**Siyar a’lam al-nubala**’- This is a biographical dictionary by the famous scholar of Hadith-**al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi** (rahimahullah).

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(v) ‘**al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya**’- This is a well known collection by the great scholar of Islam-**Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami**(rahimahullah).

(vi) Whatever appears in square brackets- [], refers to the page number in al-Albani’s ‘Sifah Salah an-Nabee’ (only in roman numerals) and al-Khajnadee’s ‘Blind Following of Madhhabs.’

So now my dear reader, you should be asking yourselves the simple question: “Why did the above-named scholars adhere to one of the four schools, but today people like al-Albani etc; are calling for the abandonment of the Taqleed of the four schools?” **Even two of the most prominent Imams of the neo-”Salafiyya”, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim were Hanbali in Fiqh** (but their Aqeedah has been questioned by many scholars). **One may have also noticed that not one of the 6 main Imams of Hadith (al-Bukhari, Muslim, AbuDawood, Tirmidhi, an-Nisai and Ibn Majah) were out of the four schools;** and this fact may astonish the so called “Salafiyya” who claim to be on the path of the scholars of Hadith! If this fact seems unconvincing to the lay reader, then one should read their biographies in the above named dictionaries, or their actual books! Thus, without even writing a refutation against the likes of al-Albani and al-Khajnadee, the above named scholars (not to mention thousands of other scholars) stand as a witness against their false claims on the Islamic concept of Taqleed. The “Salafiyya” claim to be on the path of the scholars of Hadith; but I ask you, who were the scholars of Hadith? The answer to this question may be found in their biographies, but just for the record, **one should never forget that the vast majority of the scholars of Hadith were usually in one of the four schools of Fiqh after their founding; and this may be called the way of the traditional and classical scholars, indifference to the modern day “Salafiyya”.** I ask you now, what is there to stop one from adhering to one of the four schools, when so many great scholars did so?

Al-Albani and many of the other “Salafiyya” Shaykhs try to refute Taqleed by quoting statements coming directly from the four Imams themselves, which apparently ‘forbid’ Taqleed of their Fatwas! In fact the scholars have explained each one of these apparently Taqleed forbidding statements quite explicitly. The bottom line of these statements has led the scholars to conclude, that these statements refer to the forbiddance of one Mujtahid taking the Ijtihad of another Mujtahid without knowing his documentary evidence (refer to the previous pages for some statements on this issue); but not the forbiddance of non-Mujtahids taking the Ijtihads of the Mujtahids, and this is precisely Taqleed of the allowable type. If Allah wills, the true meanings of these statements may be collated and annotated by way of reference to the classical scholars of Islam; instead of receiving garbled and incontextual quotations from the four Mujtahids (Allah’s mercy be upon them) by the likes of al-Albani.

Now, I have explained briefly what is Taqleed, and who it applies to. The question now remains on who are the “Salafiyya”? To answer this question in brief, I feel that it is incumbent to give a biography of the Imams of the “Salafiyya”, what the scholars said about these persons, and most importantly the creed they are clinging onto (aqeedah). The last one of which is very important, since it is the creed of a believer (as well as the actions) which will lead one to the gardens of Paradise or to the pits of Hell in the hereafter! The modern day “Salafiyya” claim to take their name from the famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him); where he said: **“The best of people are my generation, thereafter those who follow them, thereafter those who will follow them. Then will come such people that one’s testimony will outrun his oath, and one’s oath, his testimony.”** (Vide: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, pg. 18-9, Trans. by M. Asad; also see *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pg. 1345-7, English ed’n). These three generations of the true believers are known as the **Salaf-as-Salihin** (the pious predecessors); hence they have derived an epithet from this Hadith to call themselves “Salafis” or the “Salafiyya”.

Shaykh Ustad ibn Khalifa Alawi, said in his book ‘**Aqidat as-Salafi wal-Khalaf**’: “As **Allamah Abu Zahra** (d. 1974; he was a famous scholar from al-Azhar University, Egypt; Rahimahullah) writes in his book ‘**Tarikh al-Madhabibil Islamiyya**’, some people who dissented from the Hanbali Madhhab, named themselves ‘Salafiyyin’. **Abul Faraj ibn al-Jawzi** (d. 508/1114) and other scholars in the Hanbali Madhhab, too, by proclaiming that those **“Salafi’s” were not the followers of the Salaf-as-Salihin but**

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were the owners of *bid'ah* (heretical innovations), belonging to the group of **Mujassima** (a deviant sect who believed that Allah was a material body; we seek refuge in Allah), prevented this mischief from spreading. In the seventh century (after Hijri) **Ibn Taymiyya** waged this fitna (mischief) again.” Let me now give you a biography of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and his teacher Ibn Taymiyya; as well as what the great scholars of Islam said about them and their Aqeedah.

Hafiz Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya

(may Allah have mercy on him and forgive him)

Ibn al-Qayyim is Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ayyub ibn Sa'd, Abu Abdullah al-Zura'i Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, born in Damascus in 691/1292. He was a Hanbali Hadith scholar and author who wrote a number of works, among them *Zad al-ma'ad* [The provision for the return] in Hadith, and *I'lam al-mawaqqi'in* [The instruction for those who sign formal legal opinions] in fundamentals of Islamic law. His most significant contribution however, was his editing and preparing for publication the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, whose devoted pupil he was. He went to prison with his Shaykh in the citadel of Damascus and suffered with him until Ibn Taymiyya's death in 728/1328, when he was released. He thereafter worked to spread and popularize the master's ideas, as dedicated to him after his death as he had been in life, supporting him in what was right and what was wrong. A specimen of the latter is Ibn al-Qayyim's *al-Qasida al-nuniyya* (Ode rhyming in the letter *n*), a lengthy poem on tenets of faith (aqeedah) that is filled with corrupt suggestions about the attributes of Allah, which **Imam Taqi al-Din al-Subki** (d.756/1355, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami described him as being 'the Mujtahid Imam whose Imamate, greatness, and having reached the level of Ijtihad are agreed upon'; Rahimahullah) analyses in detail in his *al-Sayf al-saqil* [The burnished sword], giving the verdict that the poem's anthropomorphisms of the Divinity are beyond the pale of Islam. The poem could not be openly circulated in Ibn al-Qayyim's lifetime but only secretly, and it seems that he never abandoned it (it is still used as a reference by the 'Salafi' scholars today), for the Hanbali historian and biographer Ibn Rajab heard it from its author in the year of his death.

A second unfortunate peculiarity the poem shares with some of Ibn al-Qayyim's other works on Islamic faith is that it presents the reader with a **false dilemma**, namely that one must either believe that Allah has eyes, hands, a descending motion, and so forth, in a *literal* (haqiqi) sense, or else one has nullified ('attala) or negated (nafa) these attributes. And this is erroneous, for the *literal* is that which corresponds to an expression's primary lexical sense as ordinarily used in a language by the people who speak it, while the above words are clearly intended otherwise, in accordance with the Qur'anic verse, '**There is nothing whatsoever like unto him**' (Qur'an 42:11), **for if the above were intended literally, there would be innumerable things like unto Him (Allah) in such respects as having eyes, hands, motion, and so forth, in the literal meaning of these terms. The would-be dilemma is also far from the practise of the early Muslims, who used to only accept such Qur'anic verses and Hadiths as they have come, consigning the knowledge of what is meant by them-while affirming Allah's absolute transcendence above any resemblance to created things-to Allah Most High alone, without trying to determinately specify how they are meant (bi la Kayf), let alone suggesting people understand them literally (haqiqatan) as Ibnal-Qayyim tried to do.**

While granting that his other scholarly achievements are not necessarily compromised by his extreme aberrances in tenets of faith (aqeedah), it should not be forgotten that depicting the latter as a 'reform' or 'return to early Islam' represents a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah*) on his part that appeared more than seven centuries after the time of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and his Companions (Sahaba). A particularly unsavoury aspect of it is that in his attempts to vindicate the doctrine, Ibn al-Qayyim casts aspersions upon the Islam of anyone who does not subscribe to it, at their forefront the

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Ash'ari school, whom his books castigate as 'Jahmiyya' or 'Mu'attila,' implying, by equating them with the most extreme factions of the Mu'tazilites, that they deny any significance to the divine attributes, a misrepresentation that has seen a lamentable recrudescence in parts of the Muslim world today. Whether such views are called 'fundamentalism' or some other name, the scholars of the Muslims remember history, and that it was Abu Hanifah (Rahimahullah) who first observed, 'Two depraved opinions have reached us from the East, those of Jahm, the nullifier of the divine attributes, and those of Muqatil (ibn Sulayman al-Balkhi, d. 150 AH), the likener of Allah to his creation.' To make of these two an either-or for Muslims, or depict the latter as 'Sunnah' when it has been counted among heresies and rejected by the Muslim Community for the first seven centuries of Islam that preceded Ibn al-Qayyim and his mentor Ibn Taymiyya, is to say the least difficult to accept, and it would seem fitter to simply acknowledge that Ibn al-Qayyim was a talented author in fundamentals of law, Hadith, and other fields, but unfortunately enamoured with his teacher to the extent of following him in innovations (bid'ah) in tenets of faith (aqeedah) and misrepresenting the positions of those who opposed them. He died in Damascus in 751/1350. (vide: *al-A'lam*, 6.56, by al-Zirikly; *al-Sayf al-saqil*, 2-192, by Imam Taqi ad-Din al-Subki; *Sharh al-Qasida al-nuniyya*, 1.268-88, by H.M. Khalil; *Siyar a'lam al-nubala*, 7.202, by Hafiz al-Dhahabi, taken from *The Reliance of the Traveller*, pp. 1058-9, Trans. by N.H.M. Keller).

Hafiz Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya

(may Allah have mercy on him and forgive him)

Ibn Taymiyya is Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim ibn Abd al-Salam ibn Abdullah, Abu al-Abbas Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya al-Harrani, born in Harran, east of Damascus, in 661/1263. A famous Hanbali scholar in Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, and jurisprudence, Ibn Taymiyya was a voracious reader and author of great personal courage who was endowed with a compelling writing style and a keen memory. Dhahabi wrote of him, "I never saw anyone faster at recalling the Qur'anic verses dealing with subjects he was discussing, or anyone who could remember Hadith texts more vividly." Dhahabi estimates that his legal opinions on various subjects amount to three-hundred or more volumes.

He was imprisoned during much of his life in Cairo, Alexandria, and Damascus for his writings, scholars of his time accusing him of believing Allah to be a corporeal entity (a body) because of what he mentioned in his *al-Aqeedah al-Hamawiyya*, and *al-Wasitiyya* and other works, such that Allah's 'hand', 'foot', 'shin', and 'face', are literal (haqiqi) attributes, and that **He is upon the Throne in person**. The error in this, as mentioned above, is that **suggesting such attributes are literal is an innovation and unjustifiable inference from the Qur'anic and Hadith texts that mention them, for the way of the early Muslims was mere acceptance of such expressions on faith without saying how they are meant, and without additions, subtractions, or substituting meanings imagined to be synonyms, while acknowledging Allah's absolute transcendence beyond the characteristics of created things, in conformity with the Qur'anic verse, 'There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him' (Qur'an 42:11; also Allah says: 'Walam yakul-la Huu kufu wan ahad': 'And there is none comparable unto Him', Qur'an 112:4)**. As for figurative interpretations that preserve the divine transcendence, scholars of tenets of faith have only had recourse to them in times when men of reprehensible innovations (bid'ah), quoting Hadiths and Qur'anic verses, have caused confusion in the minds of common Muslims as to whether Allah has attributes like those of His creation or whether He is transcendentally beyond any image conceivable to the minds of men. Scholars' firmness in condemning those who have raised such confusions has traditionally been very uncompromising, and this is no doubt the reason that a number of the Imams of the Shafi'i school, among them **Taqi al-Din Subki, Ibn Hajar Haytami, and al-'Izz Ibn Jama'a, gave formal legal opinions that Ibn Taymiyya was misguided and misleading in tenets of faith, and warned people from accepting his theories**. The Hanafi scholar **Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari** has written,

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“Whoever thinks that all the scholars of his time joined in a single conspiracy against him from personal envy should rather impugn their own intelligence and understanding, after studying the repugnance of his deviations in belief and works, for which he was asked to repent time after time and moved from prison to prison until he passed on to what he’d sent ahead.”

While few deny that Ibn Taymiyya was a copious and eloquent writer and Hadith scholar, his career, like that of others, demonstrates that a man may be outstanding in one field and yet suffer from radical deficiencies in another, the most reliable index of which is how a field’s Imams regard his work in it. By this measure, indeed, by the standards of all previous Ahl al-Sunnah scholars, it is clear that despite a voluminous and influential written legacy, **Ibn Taymiyya cannot be considered an authority on tenets of faith (aqeedah), a field in which he made mistakes profoundly incompatible with the beliefs of Islam, as also with a number of his legal views that violated the scholarly consensus (Ijma) of Sunni Muslims.** It should be remembered that such matters are not the province of personal reasoning (Ijtihad), whether Ibn Taymiyya considered them to be out of sincere conviction, or whether simply because, as **Imam Subki said, ‘His learning exceeded his intelligence.’** He died in 728/1328. (vide: *al-A’lam*, 1.144, by al-Zirikly; *al-Durar al-Kamina*, 1.144-55, by Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani; *al-Rasa’il al-Subkiyya*, 151-52, edited by K.Y. al-Hut; *al-Sayf al-saqil*, 6, by Imam al-Subki; Shaykh Hasan Saqqaf; taken from *The Reliance of the Traveller*, pp. 1059-60, Trans. by N.H.M. Keller).

There are many quotes available to us today coming from the works of many well known scholars, in their refutation of Ibn Taymiyya’s beliefs, legal opinions and his very personality! As I have indicated earlier, today’s “Salafi’s” and other like minded people have come to the conclusion that he is the Imam to be “followed” in terms of Aqeedah; since the Aqeedah that one clings to determines which sect of Islam one is adhering to, and the “Salafiyya” claim that the Aqeedah of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim etc.; is the Aqeedah of the ‘*Firqat an-Najdiyyah*’ (The Saved Sect as described in the Ahadith), and that alone is the Aqeedah of the ‘Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama’ah’ to them! I wish to convey to the honourable reader some of the opinions held by the great scholars on Ibn Taymiyya, and in particular what his disciple al-Hafiz al-Dhahabi said about him; since he had first hand contact with Ibn Taymiyya which can be relied upon very highly. The quote from Shaykh Ibn Battuta (see below) is quite significant, since it clearly demonstrates the anthropomorphic ideas that Ibn Taymiyya had with regards to Allah’s attributes!

(1) Al-Imam Taqi ad-Din al-Subki (d. 756/1355; Rahimahullah)

Imam al-Subki wrote tracts refuting Ibn Taymiyya’s Aqeedah and works, for example *Al-Durra al-Mudiyya fi al-Radd ‘ala Ibn Taymiyya* (edited by Shaykh al-Kawthari) and *al-Rasa’il al-Subkiyya fi al-Radd ‘ala Ibn Taymiyya wa tilmidhihi Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (edited by Shaykh Kamal al-Hut). Besides these refutations, he admitted that Ibn Taymiyya was a deeply knowledgeable scholar in his own right. *Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani* (Rahimahullah) has recorded the following letter written by Imam al-Subki to Hafiz al-Dhahabi, the eminent disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, in his *al-Durar al-kamina fi a’yanal-mi’a al-thamina* (1, 169): “As for what you say with regard to al-Shaykh Taqi al-Din (Ibn Taymiyya), I am convinced of the great scope, the ocean-like fullness and vastness of his knowledge of the transmitted and intellectual sciences, his extreme intelligence, his exertions and his attainments, all of which surpass description. I have always held this opinion. Personally, my admiration is even greater for the asceticism, piety, and religiosity with which Allah has endowed him, for his selfless championship of the truth, his adherence to the path of our forebears, his pursuit of perfection...” Some people may call this an over exaggeration on Imam Subki’s part, since he has been noted to have said that Ibn Taymiyya was ‘**a Khawarij** (the first extreme sect which seceded from Islam during the Sahaba’s time) **from Islam!**’ As well as saying that ‘his learning exceeded his intelligence’. But Allah knows best.

(2) Al-Hafiz al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348; Rahimahullah)

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Hafiz al-Dhahabi was a special case when it came to giving his opinions on his teacher Ibn Taymiyya. His praise of Ibn Taymiyya is routinely eulogistic in nature, but it is invariably filled with strong and somewhat harsh criticisms as well. Imam al-Subki had criticized al-Dhahabi for being influenced by Ibn Taymiyya, when he said: “The group comprised of al-Mizzi, al-Dhahabi, al-Birzali, and many of their followers were clearly harmed by Abu al-Abbas ibn Taymiyya, who led them to gross acts of no little consequence and drew them to things that they should have avoided...” (vide: *Tabaqat al-Shafi’iyya al-Kubra*, 6, 254). Anyhow, al-Dhahabi himself seemed to have had mixed feelings for Ibn Taymiyya, as we shall see in the next few paragraphs. The most explicit criticism of Ibn Taymiyya as a scholarly figure may have come in an epistle entitled *al-Nasiha al-Dhahabiyya li-Ibn Taymiyya* (al-Dhahabi’s advice to Ibn Taymiyya); apparently from the pen of Hafiz al-Dhahabi. Some people have doubted the authenticity of this document in its ascription to Hafiz al-Dhahabi; but even if it was not by al-Dhahabi we may assume that it was a blistering attack by some ‘unknown’ scholar! The document has been preserved in the *Bayan Zaghal al-’Ilm* (edited by Shaykh Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari, pp. 31-34).

Here are a few excerpts from this document (pg 32): “Blessed is he whose fault diverts him from the faults of others! Damned is he whom others divert from his own faults! How long will you look at the notes in the eye of your brother, forgetting the stumps in your own? How long will you praise yourself and your prattling phrases while disparaging the Ulama and pursuing other people’s weaknesses? (Pg. 32-33): By Allah, you must leave us alone! You are contentious and are endowed with a learned tongue which does not pause or rest! Beware of captious questions in religions... Too much talk without proof hardens hearts.... (pg. 33) By Allah, we have become the laughing stock of creation! How long will you dig up intricate philosophical blasphemies for us to refute with our brains? You have repeatedly swallowed the poison of the philosophers and their works; the body becomes addicted to the frequent use of poison so that it is secreted, by Allah, in the very bones. Your followers help you and fight for you in word and deed but are your secret enemies in their hearts! Are not most of your disciples crippled and bound, of facile intelligence or blind, liars, stupid, strange, crafty, or dessicated, virtuous without understanding? If you don’t believe me, inspect them, weigh them with justice... (Pg. 34): I do not expect you to accept my words or hearken to my admonition; instead you will strive to produce volumes in refutation of this one page. You will snip off the tails of my words relentlessly, until I retreat into absolute silence! If this is your attitude towards me - someone who regards you with love and affection - how will you treat your enemies, among whom, by Allah, are righteous men, intelligent and virtuous...? I will be content if you curse me in public as long as you heed my words in private.”

The Muhaddith, **Hafiz al-Sakhawi** (d. 902/1497; Rahimahullah), said that he had seen the above work attributed to al-Dhahabi. Nevertheless, al-Sakhawi quotes, without identifying, another treatise in which al-Dhahabi criticised Ibn Taymiyya in the following words: “Though I have spent long years considering and investigating Ibn Taymiyya, I have found that the only reasons why the Egyptians and Syrians hated him, scorned him, and called him a liar or even an unbeliever, were his pride, his vanity, and his pretensions, his passion to head his fellow Shaykhs, his contempt for the great, and his love of publicity.” (vide: *Al-I’lan bi al-Tawbikh li-Man Dhamma al-Tarikh*, pg. 136).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852/1449; Rahimahullah) recorded al-Dhahabi as saying in his *al-Durar al-Kamina* (1,161): “People who know him well sometimes accuse me of failing to do justice; his opponents sometimes charge me with puffery. I have been abused by both parties-his supporters and his adversaries. (His hair and beard were salt-and pepper coloured, containing little grey, his hair reaching his ear lobes. His eyes were like eloquent tongues. Of medium height, he was broad shouldered and had a loud, expressive voice and was quick of speech). Though anger would sometimes grip him, he would conquer it with forbearance. I have not seen his like for supplications and appeals and for his abundant concern for others. But I do not believe him to be infallible; indeed, I disagree with him on both basic and secondary issues. For, despite his vast learning, his extreme courage, his fluid mind, and

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his regard for the sanctities of religion, he was but a man.” Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani also recorded al-Dhahabi as saying in *al-Durar al-Kamina* (1, 161): “In discussion he would be possessed by rage, anger, and hostility against his adversaries, which implanted enmity in their spirits. If he had only treated his antagonists with civility, they would have been reconciled with him, for the most notable of them deferred to his learning, acknowledged his ardent zeal, and agreed that his lapses were few.”

(3) Imam Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti (d. 911/1505; Rahimahullah)

Imam as-Suyuti wrote in his book *Kam' al-mu'arid*: “Ibn Taymiyya was arrogant. He was self-conceited. It was his habit to represent himself as superior to everybody, to slight the person whom he talked to and to make fun of great Muslims.”

(4) Hafiz al-Sakhawi (d. 902/1497; Rahimahullah)

Hafiz al-Sakhawi (a student of Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani) stated in his *al-I'lan* (English translation in ‘A History of Muslim Historiography’, pg. 284, by F. Rosenthal): “There are also those scholars of great learning, austerity, and asceticism whom people avoided and whose knowledge they were careful not to utilize, because of their loose tongue and lack of tact, which caused them to talk and criticize excessively. Such men were Ibn Hazm and Ibn Taymiyya.”

(5) Shaykh Muhammad Ali Beg (Rahimahullah)

Shaykh al-Beg from Damascus wrote in his book *Hittat ash-Sham*: “Ibn Taymiyya and the (Christian) Priest Luther’s aims were alike. While the Christian reformer was successful, the reformer of Islam was unsuccessful.”

(6) Shaykh Muhammad Ziyauallah (Rahimahullah)

Shaykh Ziyauallah from Siyalkut, Pakistan, wrote in his work *The Truth of Wahhabism*: “Mawlana Abd al-Hayy Lucknawi (d. 1304 A.H; al-Albali has quoted from him in his ‘Sifah Salah an-Nabee’), the great alim of India and the author of hundreds of invaluable books known to the world, said in his book *Ghais al-ghamam*, ‘Like the predecessor Ibn Taymiyya al-Harrani, the successor *ash-Shawkani* (d. 1250/1834; see later for his views) was very learned but less intelligent. The latter was exactly alike, even more inferior than the former.’”

(7) Imam al-Safadi (d. 764/1363; Rahimahullah)

Imam al-Safadi has preserved an anecdote on Ibn Taymiyya’s childhood in his *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat* (vol. 7, pg. 17-8). When he was studying with members of another prominent Hanbali family of Damascus, Ibn Taymiyya inadvertently shows us that the violent temper and the presumptuousness noticed by al-Dhahabi was evident at an early age: “When Ibn Taymiyya was a little boy, studying with the Banu Munajja, they supported something that he denied, where upon they produced the text. When he had read it, he threw it down in fury. They said, ‘How bold you are to cast from your hand a volume that contains knowledge!’ He quickly replied, ‘Who is better, Moses or I?’ ‘Moses’, they said. And which is better-this book or the tablets on which the ten commandments were inscribed?’ ‘The tablets’, they replied. Ibn Taymiyya said, in words to this effect, ‘Well when Moses became angry, he threw down tablets.’” Another anecdote from al-Safadi serves to confirm al-Dhahabi’s observation that Ibn Taymiyya was oblivious to his

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worldly surroundings. This one tells how once Ibn Taymiyya consumed, without complaint, a squash which his mother had discarded because it was too bitter to eat!

What seems to be more indicative of Ibn Taymiyya’s complete absorption in his religious cause, is his profession of indifference to the various forms of punishment which might be inflicted upon him; as has been recorded by the Hanbali historian **Hafiz Ibn Rajab** (d. 795/1393; Rahimahullah), in his *al-Dhayl ‘ala Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2, 402): “What can my enemies do to me? My Garden is in my heart; wherever I go, it goes with me. My prison is solitude! My death is martyrdom! Exile is a journey”!

(8) Ibn Battuta (d. 779/1377; Rahimahullah)

The well known travelling scholar of Islam, Ibn Battuta, has judged Ibn Taymiyya in the following words: “Among the chief *Hanbali fuqaha* in Damascus was Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya who, although he enjoyed great prestige and could discourse on the scholarly disciplines, had a screw loose (illa anna fi ‘aqlihi shay’an). The people of Damascus held him in extreme respect. He used to preach to them from the minbar and once had discoursed in a manner which the *fuqaha* found reprehensible, so they reported him to Malik al-Nasir, who ordered him to be sent to Cairo. There the *qadis* and *fuqaha* were convoked in the sultan’s council chamber, where they were addressed by Sharaf al-Din al-Zuwawi, who said, ‘This man said such-and-such’, spelling out the reprehensible statements of Ibn Taymiyya and producing depositions to that effect which were placed before the chief *qadi*. When the latter asked for Ibn Taymiyya’s reply, he said, ‘There is no Allah but Allah’, responding in a like manner when the *qadi* repeated the question. Al-Malik al-Nasir ordered him to be put into prison, where he remained for some years and wrote a book of Qur’anic commentary which he entitled *al-Bahr al-Muhit* in almost forty volumes. Later, his mother complained before al-Malik al-Nasir, and he ordered his release. But then the same thing happened again while I was in Damascus. I was in attendance on a Friday when he was preaching to the people and exhorting them from the minbar of the cathedral mosque. In the course of his speech he said, **‘Allah comes down to the sky of this world just as I came down now’, and he descended one step of the minbar.** A Maliki faqih known as Ibn al-Zahra remonstrated with him and denounced what he had said, whereupon the congregation rose against this *faqih*, striking him with their hands and shoes until; his turban fell off, exposing a silk skull cap on his head. They rebuked him for wearing this and bore him to the house of Izz al-Din ibn Musallam, the *qadi* of the Hanbalis, who ordered him to be imprisoned and then flogged. But the Maliki and the Shafi’i *fuqaha* denounced this punishment and carried the matter to Malik al-Umara Sayf al-Din Tankiz, one of the good and virtuous *amirs*, who wrote to al-Malik al-Nasir about the matter and sent a legal deposition against Ibn Taymiyya on such reprehensible matters as the following: ‘He who pronounces triple divorce with one phrase is bound only by one divorce’; ‘The traveller who sets out to visit the Hallowed Tomb (may Allah increase its perfume) may not reduce his prayers’; and the like. He sent the deposition to al-Malik al-Nasir, who ordered Ibn Taymiyya to be imprisoned in the citadel. There he remained until he died.” (vide: *Ibn Battuta, Travels in Asia and Africa*, 1325-1354 C.E; pp. 67-8, 1929 ed’n; *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 1325-1354 C.E; 1,135-36, by H. Gibb; *Tuhfat an-nuzzar*, pg. 9, by Ibn Jazi; also quoted in *Jawahir al-bihar*, by Shaykh Yusuf an-Nabahani, d. 1350/1932).

The above account given by Ibn Battuta has been discounted by certain people; especially by Ibn Taymiyya’s supporters, simply because they believe that Ibn Taymiyya would never have made the anthropomorphic statement, ‘Allah comes down to the sky of this world just as I came down now’, and then he allegedly took a step down the pulpit to demonstrate how Allah descends (nuzul). Even if one was to denounce Ibn Battuta’s account as being a false and fabricated statement, one may wish to know that the greatest scholar of Hadith in his time, **Shaykh al-Islam al-Hafiz Ahmad ibn Hajar al-Asqalani** (Rahimahullah) has reported an incident in *al-Durar al-kamina* (1, 164) where **again Ibn Taymiyya descended the steps of the minbar in order to illustrate his understanding of how Allah descends**

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(nuzul) as early as the year 705/1305 AH (some 21 years before Ibn Battuta’s account). Hafiz Ibn Hajar’s source for this incident was one of Ibn Taymiyya’s own disciples by the name *Sulayman Najm al-Din al-Tufi al-Hanbali* (d. 716/1316). Besides these incidents involving Ibn Taymiyya’s views on Allah’s attributes, other statements regarding Ibn Taymiyya’s views on this topic have been recorded by Ibn Abdal-Hadi (d. 744/1343-44) in his *Uqud al-Durriyya min Manaqib Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya* (pp. 198-232) and Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373) in his *Bidaya* (14, 38).

(9) Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami al-Makki (d. 974/1567; R. A.)

The Shafi’i Imam of his time, al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Haytami gave an official Fatwa on the heresy of Ibn Taymiyya in his book *al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya*: “Allahu ta’ala made Ibn Taymiyya lapse into heresy and perdition. He made him deaf and blind. Many scholars have informed that his deeds were corrupt and his words were false, and they proved it with documents. Those who read the books of the great Islamic scholar Abul Hasan as-Subki and his son Taj ad-din as-Subki and the books of Imam al-Izz ibn Jama’a, and those who study the statements said and written in response to him by the Shafi’i, Maliki and Hanafi Ulama living in his time, will see that we are right.. As well, Ibn Taymiyya slandered and cast nefarious aspersions upon the great scholars of the Sufi path. And further! He did not hesitate to attack Sayyidina Umar (Allah be pleased with him) and Sayyidina Ali (Allah be pleased with him), Islam’s archstones. His words overflowed the measure and the rules of decorum, and he threw arrows even at steep cliffs. He stigmatized the scholars of the right way as innovators, heretics and ignoramuses...

A letter written to Ibn Taymiyya in 705/1305 C.E; says ‘O my Muslim brother, who considers himself to be a great scholar and the Imam of his time! I loved you for Allah’s sake. I disapproved the scholars who were against you. But hearing your words unbecoming to love has puzzled me. Does a wise person doubt that the night begins when the sun sets? You said that you were in the right way and that you were enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. Allah ta’ala knows what your purposes and intentions are. But sincerity will be seen in a person’s deeds. Your deeds have torn off the cover from your words. In the wake of those who follow their inner desires and whose words are unreliable, you have not only defamed those living in your time but also stigmatized the deceased as disbelievers. In addition to attacking the successors of the Salaf as-salihin (the first three pious Muslim generations), you have slandered the Sahaba, especially the greatest ones. Can’t you imagine in what situation you will be in when those great people ask their rights on the day of Resurrection? On the pulpit of the Jami al-jabal in the Salihyya city you said that Umar (ibn al-Khattab; Allah be pleased with him) had had some wrong statements and disasters. What were these disasters? Which of these disasters did the Salaf as-salihin tell you about? You say that Ali (ibn Abi Talib; Allah be pleased with him) had more than 300 hundred errors! Supposing the case had been with Sayyidina Ali, could you have one right word then? Now I am beginning to act against you. I shall try to protect Muslims against your villainy. For, you have overflowed the measure. Your torture has reached the living and the dead. Believers must shun your evils.’

Taj ad-Din as-Subki (Rahimahullah) states that Ibn Taymiyya disagrees with the Salaf as-salihin in the following matters:

- (1) He said, ‘Talaq (divorce) does not become actual; (in case it happens) it is necessary to pay kaffara (equal to that which is paid) for an oath.’ None of the Islamic scholars that came before him said that kaffarat must be paid.
- (2) He said, ‘Talaq given to a menstruating woman does not become actual, nor does Talaq given during the time of her purity become actual.’
- (3) He said, ‘It is not necessary to make up (qada) for a Salah omitted deliberately.’ (This is definitely true; it was also the view of Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Hazm al-Zahiri).
- (4) He said, ‘It is permissible (mubah) for a menstruating woman to go around the Ka’ba. (If she does so) she will not have to pay any kaffara.’

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- (5) He said, ‘One Talaq given in the name of three Talaqs is still one Talaq.’ Whereas, before saying so, he repeatedly said for many years that the consensus of the Muslims was not so.
- (6) He said, ‘Taxes incompatible with Islam are halal to those who demand them.’
- (7) He said, ‘When taxes are collected from tradesmen, they stand for Zakah (charity) even if they do not intend (for zakah).’
- (8) He said, ‘Water does not become impure when a mouse or the like dies in it.’
- (9) He said, ‘It is permissible for a sexually defiled (junub) person to perform supererogatory Salah without making ghusl (bath) at night.’
- (10) He said, ‘Conditions stipulated by the waqif (person who devotes property to a pious foundation) are not taken into consideration. Something devoted for Shafi’is is spent for Hanafis.’
- (11) He said, ‘A person who disagrees with the Ijma al-Ummah (consensus of the Muslim community) does not become a disbeliever or a sinner.’
- (12) He said, ‘Allah ta’ala is mahall-i hawadith. He is made up of particles coming together.’
- (13) He said, ‘The Qur’an a-Karim was created in the Dhat (essence, person) of Allahu ta’ala.’
- (14) He said, ‘The ‘alam, that is, all creatures are eternal with their kinds.’
- (15) He said, ‘Allahu ta’ala has to create good things.’
- (16) He said, ‘Allahu ta’ala has a body and directions; he changes His place and is as big as the Arsh (throne).’
- (17) He said, ‘Hell is not eternal; it will go out at last.’
- (18) He denied the fact that Prophets (Peace be upon them all) are impeccable.
- (19) He said, ‘Rasulullah (Peace and blessings be upon him) is no different from other people. It is not permissible to pray through his intercession (tawassul).’
- (20) He said, ‘It is sinful to go to Madinah with the intention of visiting (the grave of) Rasulullah (Peace be upon him).’
- (21) He also said, ‘It is haram to go there to ask for intercession (shafa’a).’
- (22) He said, ‘The Tawra and the Injil (two former revelations) did not change in vocabulary but in meaning.’

Some scholars said that most of the above quoted statements did not belong to Ibn Taymiyya, but none of them denied that he had said, ‘Allah had directions and is a composition of particles coming together.’ However, it was declared by consensus that he was rich in Ilm, jalala and in diyana. A person who has Fiqh, knowledge, justice and reason must first observe a matter and then decide about it with prudence. Especially, judging a Muslim’s disbelief, apostasy, heresy or that he must be killed requires very minute observations and utter circumspection.”

It was written in the book *Aqeedah wal Islam* (pg. 78, author unknown): “Before those two people (Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim), there was not a Madhhab called ‘Salafiyya’, nor even the word ‘Salafiyya’; how could they have said to have tried to enrich the Madhhab of the Salaf as-salihin, which was named Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama’ah? Ibn Taymiyya tried to distort this right Madhhab and invented many bid’ahs (bad innovations). The source of the books, words and heretical, corrupt thoughts of today’s la-Madhhabi (anti-Madhhabites) people and religion reformers is only the bid’ahs invented by Ibn Taymiyya. In order to deceive Muslims and to convince the youth that they are on the right path, these heretics devised a horrible stratagem; they forged the name ‘Salafiyya’ from the term ‘Salaf as-salihin’ so that they may justify Ibn Taymiyya’s bid’ahs, corrupt ideas and drift the youth into his wake. They attached the stigmas of philosophy and bid’ah to Islamic scholars, who are the successors of the Salaf as-salihin, and blamed them for dissenting from their invented name ‘Salafiyya’. They put forward Ibn Taymiyya as a Mujtahid, as a hero that resuscitated the ‘Salafiyya’. Actually, the Ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah, who are the successors of the Salaf as-salihin, defended the teachings with respect to I’tiqad (belief) of the Ahl al-Sunnah, which was the Madhhab of the Salaf as-salihin; in the books which they have written up to our time and which they are

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still writing today, they inform that Ibn Taymiyya, ash-Shawkani and the like have dissented from the way of the Salaf as-salihin and have been drifting Muslims towards perdition and Hell.”

Many of us who are practising Muslims or otherwise, are familiar with the epithet ‘Wahhabi’. The founder of this sect was **Muhammad ibn Abdal Wahhab** (d. 1206 AH), from the Najd area of ‘Saudi’ Arabia. He is also known as Shaykh an-Najdi by his opponents and his followers have been labelled as either ‘Najdis’ or ‘Wahhabis’ by the Ahl al-Sunnah. He claimed to be a Hanbali in Fiqh. It is well known that he fully digested the aqeedah and ideas of Ibn Taymiyya. The scholars of his time warned the Muslims to be on their guard from accepting his ‘reformatory’ ideas; and this work is still existent among the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah even today. The neo-‘Salafis’ of today respect Ibn Abdal Wahhab quite highly by bestowing upon him such great titles like ‘Shaykh al-Islam’. I do not want to say much about his movement and activities, but a few quotes from the well known scholars should suffice for now.

(1) The foremost Hanafi scholar of his time, **Imam Muhammad Amin ibn Abidin** (d. 1252/1836 Rahimahullah) said in his celebrated work *Hashiyya radd al-Mukhtar* (vol. 3, pg. 309): “In our time Ibn Abdal Wahhab (Najdi) appeared, and attacked the two noble sanctuaries (Makkah and Madinah). He claimed to be a Hanbali, but his thinking was such that only he alone was a Muslim, and everyone else was a polytheist! Under this guise, he said that killing the Ahl as-Sunnah was permissible, until Allah destroyed them (Wahhab's) in the year 1233 AH by way of the Muslim army.”

(2) **Shaykh Zayni Dahlan** (Rahimahullah) said in his book *Futuh al-Islamiyya* (vol. 2, pg. 268): “The sign of the Khawarij (the first deviant sect that appeared in the time of the Companions) concerning the shaving of the head, was not found in the Khawarij of the past, but only in the Najdis of our time!”

(3) **Shaykh al-Islam Hussain Ahmad al-Madani** (Rahimahullah) said in his book *ash-Shihab as-saqib* (pg. 42): “Ibn Abdal Wahhab arose in the beginning of the thirteenth Islamic century in the Najd. His thinking was false, and his beliefs were corruptional; on these grounds he opened the way for killing the Ahl as-Sunnah.”

(4) **Abdal-Hakim Murad** (translator of Imam al-Bayhaqi’s *Seventy seven Branches of Faith*) said in a recent contribution to the journal *Islamica* (pg. 9): “Ibn Abdal Wahhab, however, went far beyond this (i.e; of Ibn Taymiyya). Raised in the wastelands of Najd in Central Arabia, he had little access to mainstream Muslim scholarship (I say: This may be disputed by his supporters). In fact, when his da’wah appeared and became notorious, the scholars and muftis of the day applied to it the famous hadith of Najd: Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: ‘*Oh God, bless us in our Syria; O God, bless us in our Yemen.*’ *Those present said: “And in our Najd, O Messenger of God!” But he said, ‘O God, bless us in our Syria; O God, bless us in our Yemen.’ Those present said, “And in our Najd, O Messenger of God” Ibn Umar said that he thought that he said on the third occasion: ‘Earthquakes and dissensions (fitnah) are there, and there shall arise the horn of the devil.’* (Sahih al-Bukhari). And it is significant that almost uniquely among the lands of Islam, Najd has never produced scholars of any repute.

The Najd-based da’wah of the Wahhabis, however, began to be heard more loudly following the explosion of Saudi oil wealth. Many, even most, Islamic publishing houses in Cairo and Beirut are now subsidised by Wahhabi organisations, which prevent them from publishing traditional works on Sufism, and remove passages in other works considered unacceptable to Wahhabist doctrine.

The neo-Kharijite nature of Wahhabism makes it intolerant of all other forms of Islamic expression. However, because it has no coherent *fiqh* of its own - it rejects the orthodox *madhhabs* - and has only the most basic and primitively anthropomorphic ‘*aqidah*, it has a fluid, amoebalike tendency to produce divisions and subdivisions among those who profess it. No longer are the

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Islamic groups essentially united by a consistent *madhhab* and the Ash’ari ‘*aqidah* (see later). Instead, they are all trying to derive the *Shari’ah* and the ‘*aqidah* from the Qur’an and the Sunnah by themselves. The result is the appalling state of division and conflict which disfigures the modern *salafi* condition.”

Another person who is a reference for today’s neo-”Salaf’s”, is **Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sinawkani** (d. 1250/1834). He was a leading scholar of the Zaydi (Shi’ah) sect found mainly in Yemen. He claimed to have departed from his old Shi’ite ways and joined the Ahl al-Sunnah. He was attacked by the scholars of his day for saying Taqleed was completely haram, as well as other important issues. Some scholars had accused him of still holding on to his deviant Zaydiyyah-Mu’tazilite (rationalistic thinking that was propounded by one of the first deviant sects of Islam) thinking, while pretending to be within the fold of orthodox Sunni Islam; but Allah knows best! It is a well known fact that he denied the consensus of the Companions (Ijma as-Sahaba), as well as rejecting the validity of the Fatwa of a Companion! One may refer to Anwar Ahmad Qadri’s book *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Modern World* (pg. 142) for a lengthier discussion.

Many scholars have noticed the extreme tendencies within the “Salafiyya” sect around the world, for its lack of respect for the scholars of the four Madhhabs, its Aqedah and some untenable juristic positions it has produced over a short period of Islam’s history. The scholars have not been afraid of declaring the neo-”Salafis” to be neo-Kharijites in their behaviour and attitude to other Muslims. Note, the scholars are not saying that the neo-”Salafis” are Kharijites, but rather they seem to have certain traits which were only found amongst the Kharijites of the past. One of the most striking things I have noticed amongst these ‘neo-Kharijites’, is their direction of Qur’anic verses that were revealed specifically for the unbelievers, as referring to the believers who do not seem to have their way of thinking! This was a well known practise of the Kharijites of old; as we shall see below.

A well known scholar of the “Salafiyya”, **Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi** (who has himself been attacked by other members of the “Salafiyya”, especially for holding some untenable positions in his book *al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam*) said in his book *Islamic awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (pg. 41-3): ‘Imam al-Shatibi (Rahimahullah) wrote (in his book *al-I’tisam*, 2. 182-4): ‘Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) was right. When a person knows the reason behind a certain verse or surah, he knows how to interpret it and what its objectives are. However, ignorance of that leads people to misinterpret it and to have different opinions, without an insight and knowledge which could lead them to the truth, and prevent them from indulging ignorantly in such matters with no support providence from *al Shari’ah*, and therefore go astray and lead people astray. This can be demonstrated by what is reported by Ibn Wahab from Bakir who asked Nafi’: What does Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) think of al-Haruriyyah (i.e; al-Khawarij who were also called al-Haruriyyah after the place -Harawra- where they gathered and were found by Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Companions of the Prophet [may Allah be pleased with them all] who supported him)? Nafi’ answered: He thinks they are the most evil of people. They applied the verses which pertain to the kuffar on the believers.’ (NB- **Imam al-Bukhari** has recorded Ibn Umar as saying in his *Sahih* (vol. 9, pg. 50; *English edn*): ***These people (the Khawarij and heretics) took some verses that had been revealed concerning the disbelievers and interpreted them as describing the believers.***)

Al-Qardawi also said (pg. 42): One of the causes of such shallowness is that extremists never listen to people who hold different views (and I can personally testify to that), never accept any dialogue with them or imagine that their own views could be tested in the light of others, and may thereby be either accepted or rejected. Most of them have not been taught by reliable Muslim *ulama* who are specialised in the field. Rather, they have received semi-knowledge directly from books and newspapers without any opportunity for revision or discussion which could test the learner’s understanding and analyze the depth of his knowledge. They simply read, ‘understand’, then deduce what they wish. However, their reading, understanding, and deduction may well be wrong or deficient. There might be someone somewhere who opposes their opinions on stronger and more valid bases, but they are not aware of that because nobody

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has drawn their attention to such a possibility. These devout young people have ignored the facts that if they want to study *al Shari'ah*, they must seek the help of reliable Muslim scholars. They cannot venture into this extensive and entangled discipline without the guidance of reliable Muslim scholars who can interpret and explain obscurities, define terms, and point out the relationships between the parts and the whole and also equate similarities. Those who venture into it alone will meet with the same catastrophic results which could certainly befall the unskilled swimmer who ventures into dangerous waters. Proper knowledge of *al Shari'ah* cannot be perfected without practice and close contact with the experts, especially in those areas where opinions diverge, evidences seem to contradict each other, and certain matters seem to be under suspicion. This is why our venerable '*ulama*' have warned us not to seek to study and understand al Qur'an al Karim through a person who has only memorized it without any knowledge of its contents, nor to seek knowledge through a person who has acquired his own "knowledge" from reading newspapers and journals only, without being properly instructed by reputable and qualified scholars."

This topic began with a brief discussion on Taqleed and I would like to finish with the following two questions for you to ponder over. (A) Would it not be classified as being Taqleed if one were to accept the classifications of Hadiths, exegesis of the Qur'an etc; by a renowned Islamic scholar, if one was not to go back to the original sources which are used to authenticate the Hadith and so on? (For example, if a scholar claimed that a Hadith found in the Sunan of Imam Abu Dawood was Sahih and you accepted it as being Sahih - since you trust him, then are you not practising Taqleed; if you, yourself do not go back to the original sources used to classify the Hadith in question, since sometimes a Hadith classified to be Sahih by one scholar can be classified as being Da'eef by another!). (B) Is it not true that those who are calling for the abandonment of Taqleed, are calling for the Taqleed of their own books and speeches; hence creating their own little 'Madhhabs'?

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Many people today like to classify themselves as belonging to the Saved Sect (*Firgatun-Najiyah*) - *Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*; but do these people really know which is the Saved Sect, from the many sects we have today? The following is an attempt to clarify some misconceptions by way of definitive proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as quotes from the profoundly learned Classical Scholars of Islam. Know that there is only one Saved Sect in Islam, and this is the original pristine form of Islam that has been transmitted to us by Allah Subhana Wa Ta'ala in his Qur'an, his Rasul (Peace and blessings be upon him), the blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) and the great scholars of Islam (Allah's mercy be upon them all) who have been following their Straight Path for more than one thousand years of Islam's history.

The first question that should be raised is: "What differentiates one sect from another sect?" The answer to this is simple and definitive! Know that the chief characteristic that distinguishes one sect from another, lies not in the differences of opinion that its scholars have attained by making Ijtihad from the sources of the Shari'ah (this leads to the formation of the Madhhabs), but rather the actual belief (Aqeedah or I'tiqad in Arabic) that the scholars and laity of the sect in question are clinging onto - since the founding of their respective sects.

According to the unknown author of the book *Belief and Islam* (pp. 78-9), the faith of the People of the Sunnah and Jama'ah was spread as follows: "Nowadays, some mouths frequently use the name of "Salafiyya". Every Muslim should know very well that in Islam there is nothing in the name of the Madhhab of Salafiyya but there is the Madhhab of the **Salaf as-salihin** who were the Muslims of the first two Islamic centuries (i.e; the Companions, their successors and the followers of the successors) which were lauded in a Hadith sharif. The ulama of Islam who came in the third and fourth centuries are called **Khalaf as-sadiqin**. The i'tiqad (belief) of these honourable people is called the Madhhab of Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah. This is the Madhhab of Iman, tenets of faith. The Iman held by the Sahaba al-Kiram (may Allah be pleased with them all) and by the Tabi'un (Allah's mercy be upon them all) was the same. There was no difference between their beliefs. Today most Muslims in the world are in the Madhhab of Ahl as-Sunnah (i.e; most Muslims claim to be Sunnis). All the seventy-two heretical groups (see later for the actual Hadith and its commentary) of bid'ah appeared (mainly) after the second century of Islam. Founders of some of them lived earlier, but it was after the Tabi'un that their books were written, and that they appeared in groups and defied the Ahl as-Sunnah.

Rasulullah (Peace and blessings be upon him) brought the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah. The Sahaba al-kiram (may Allah be pleased with them all) derived these teachings of Iman from the source (the Qur'an and Sunnah). And the Tabi'un (successors), in their turn, learned these teachings from the Sahaba al-kiram. And from them their successors learned, thus the teachings of Ahl as-Sunnah reached us by way of transmission and tawatur (through many undeniable chains of transmission). These teachings cannot be explored by way of reasoning. Intellect cannot change them and will only help understand them. That is, intellect is necessary for understanding them, for realizing that they are right and for knowing their value. All the scholars of Hadith held the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah. The Imams of the four Madhhabs in deeds, too, were in this Madhhab. Also, al-Maturidi and al-Ashari (Allah's mercy be upon them), the two Imams of our Madhhab in beliefs, were in the Madhhab of the Ahl as-Sunnah. Both of these Imams promulgated this Madhhab. They always defended this Madhhab against heretics and materialists, who had been stuck in the bogs of ancient Greek philosophy. Though they were contemporaries, they lived in different places and the ways of thinking and behaving of the offenders they had met were different, so the methods of defence used and the answers given by these two great scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah were different. But this does not mean that they belonged to different Madhhabs (rather they were both from the Ahl as-Sunnah). Hundreds of thousands of profoundly learned

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ulama and awliya (friends of Allah) coming after these two exalted Imams studied their books and stated in consensus that they both belonged to the Madhhab of the Ahl as-Sunnah. The scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah took the nass (Qur'an and Sunnah) with their outward meanings. That is, they gave the ayats and Hadiths their outward meanings, and did not explain away (ta'wil) the nass or change these meanings unless there was a darura (necessity) to do so. And they never made any changes with their personal knowledge or opinions. But those who belonged to heretical groups and the la-Madhhabi (those who do not belong to one of the four Madhhabs) did not hesitate to change the teachings of Iman and Ibadat (worship) as they had learned from (the books of) Greek philosophers and from sham scientists, who were Islam's adversaries."

Let us now see what the definition of Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah was according to the classical scholars of this aided, Victorious sect (Tai'fatul-Mansoorah) of Islam.

(1) Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 974/1567; R.A.)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haytami defined the Sunni Muslims as follows in his book *Fath al-jawad*: "A Muftadi (innovator) is the person who does not have the faith (Aqeedah) conveyed unanimously by the Ahl as-Sunnah. This unanimity was transmitted by the two great Imams Abul Hasan al-Ashari (d. 324/936; Rahimahullah) and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333/944; Rahimahullah) and the scholars who followed their path." Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haytami also said in his book *al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya* (pg. 205): "**Man of bid'ah means one whose beliefs are different from the Ahl as-Sunnah faith. The Ahl as-Sunnah faith is the faith of Abul Hasan al-Ashari, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi and those who followed them. One who brings forth something which is not approved by Islam becomes a man of bid'ah.**"

(2) Imam Ahmad Shihab ad-Din al-Qalyubi (d. 1069/1659; R.A.)

Imam al-Qalyubi wrote on the fourth volume of his marginalia to the book *Kanz ar-raghibin*: "**One who departs from what Abul Hasan al-Ashari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Allah's mercy be upon them) reported is not a Sunni.** These two Imams followed the footprints of Rasulullah (Peace be upon him) and his Sahaba (may Allah be pleased with them all)."

(3) Imam Abdullah ibn Alawi al-Haddad (d. 1132 AH; Rahimahullah)

Imam al-Haddad stated in *The Book of Assistance* (pg. 40): "You must correct and protect your beliefs and conform to the pattern of the party of salvation, who are those known from among the other Islamic factions as the "People of the Sunnah and Jama'ah" (Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah). They are those who firmly adhere to the way of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and of his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all).

If you look with a sound understanding into those passages relating to the sciences of faith in the Book (Qur'an), the Sunnah, and the saying of the virtuous predecessors, whether they be Companions or followers, you will know for certain that the truth is with the party called the **Ashari** (NB-the Maturidis are also upon the truth), named after the Shaykh Abul Hasan al-Ashari, may Allah have mercy on him, who systematized the foundations of the creed of the people of the truth, and recorded its earliest versions, these being the beliefs with the Companions and the best among the followers agreed upon."

(4) Imam Abdal Ghani an-Nablusi (d. 1143/1733; Rahimahullah)

Imam an-Nablusi stated in his book *al-Hadiqat an-Nadiyya* (vol.2, pg. 103): "Jama'ah is rahma, that is, the union of Muslims on truth brings Allahu ta'ala's Compassion. Tafriqa is adhab, that is, separation from

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the Community of Muslims brings about punishment from Allahu ta'ala. Hence, it is necessary for every Muslim to unite with those who are on the right path. He must join and believe like them even if they are only a small group. The right path is the path of as-Sahaba al-Kiram. Those who follow this path are called Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. It should not confuse us that many heretical groups appeared after the time of as-Sahaba al-Kiram. **Al-Imam al-Bayhaqi** (d. 458/1066; Rahimahullah) said, **'When Muslims go astray, you should follow the right path of those who came before them! You should not give up that path even if you are left alone on the path!'** **Najm ad-Din al-Ghazzi** (d. 1061/1651; Rahimahullah) wrote: 'Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah are those ulama who keep on the right path of Rasullullah (Peace and blessings be upon him) and as-Sahaba al-Kiram. **As-Sawad al-Azam**, that is, **the majority of Islamic scholars, have followed this right path.** The Firqatun-Naajiyah which was defined to be the group of salvation among the seventy three groups is this true Jama'ah.' The Qur'an al-Karim declares, 'Do not disunite!' This ayat means 'Do not disunite in I'tiqad, in the teachings of beliefs!' Most ulama, for example, Abdullah ibn Masood (may Allah be pleased with him), interpreted this ayat as above and said that it meant, 'Do not deviate from the right path by following your desires and corrupt ideas.' **This ayat does not mean that there should be no disagreement in the knowledge of Fiqh. It forbids separation which causes discord and dissension in the knowledge of I'tiqad** (see Imam al-Qurtubi's opinion later). The disagreement in the knowledge (of Fiqh) derived through Ijtihad in the field of practices (Amal) is not a discord, because such disagreement has brought to sight the rights, the fards and the subtle teachings in Amal and Ibadah (worship). As-Sahaba al-kiram (Allah be pleased with them all), too, differed from one another in those teachings that explained daily life, but there was no disagreement among them in the knowledge of I'tiqad."

(5) Allamah Sayyid Ahmad at-Tahtawi (d. 1231/1816; Rahimahullah)

Allamah Sayyid Ahmad at-Tahtawi; a great Hanafi Fiqh scholar of Egypt, wrote on the subject of 'Zabayih' in his *Hashiya al-Durr al-Mukhtar*. "According to the majority of scholars of Tafsir, the ayat, 'They parted into groups in the religion,' referred to the people of Bid'ah who would arise in this Ummah. In a Hadith reported by Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), Rasulullullah (Peace and blessings be upon him) said to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), 'The ayat about the partitions into groups in the religion refers to the people of Bid'ah and to the followers of their nafs who would arise in this Ummah.' Allah declared in the 153rd ayat of Surah Al-An'am, **'This is My Straight path, so follow it! Follow not other ways, lest you be parted from His way!'** (that is, Jews, Christians, and other heretics departed from the right path; you should not part like them!). In the 103rd ayat of Surah Ali 'Imran, Allah declares, **'And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah, and do not separate!'** (see later for a brief commentary). Some scholars of Tafsir said that Allah's rope meant Jama'ah, unity. The command, 'Do not separate', shows that it is so and the Jama'ah are the possessors of Fiqh and Ilm (knowledge). One who descends from Fuqaha (scholars of Fiqh) as much as a span falls into heresy, becomes deprived of Allah's help and deserves Hell, because the Fuqaha have been on the right path and have held on to the Sunnah of Rasulullullah (Peace and blessings be upon him) and on to the path of al-Khulafa ar-Rashideen, the Four Khaliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). **As-Sawad al-Azam, that is, the majority of the Muslims, are on the path of Fuqaha.** Those who depart from their path will burn in the fire of Hell. O believers! Follow the unique group which is protected against Hell! And this group is the one that is called Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. For, Allah's help, protection and guidance are for the followers of this group, and His wrath and punishment are for those who dissent from this group. **Today, this group of salvation comes together in the Four Madhhabs, namely the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.'**

It is very important to have unity in the Ummah, and to achieve this goal of unity it is incumbent that the whole Ummah has the correct and preserved Aqeedah of the Salaf as-salihin (may Allah be pleased with them all); since Allah will no doubt ask us about our Aqeedah if it is not in conformity with the divine

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revelation and what his Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) transmitted to us. The way of the Salaf as-salihin is the way of the saved sect of the Ahlas-Sunnah wal Jama'ah. And we should all know that the Jama'ah is the sect which has the most correct and united Aqeedah out of all other Jama'ahs. To know what is the real Jama'ah, one must look into the Qur'an and Hadith for evidence. If one was to look deeply into this matter with an open and scholarly mind, one will come to the conclusion that this great Jama'ah is the one which is composed of the foremost scholars of Qur'anic commentary, Hadith, Fiqh and other Islamic sciences; it is no doubt the Jama'ah which has had the greatest following throughout Islamic history in terms of scholars and laity, and this alone is the main body of Islam which represents the views of the great mass of believers (as-Sawad al-Azam) as we shall see from the Hadith evidence below. Let us now see what Allah ta'ala has said about unity and schism in the Holy Qur'an.

QUR'ANIC EVIDENCE

(1) Surah al-Imran (3:103):

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah and be not divided.”

Imam Sayf ad-Din al-Amidi (d. 631/1233; Rahimahullah) said in his *al-Ihkam fi usul al-ahkam* (The proficiency: on the fundamentals of legal rulings, pg. 295) with regard to the above Qur'anic verse: **“Allah has forbidden separation, and disagreement with consensus (Ijma) is separation.”** Hence, if Allah has forbidden separation then surely we must all unite on the unanimously accepted Aqeedah of our pious predecessors. And I have already quoted Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (Rahimahullah) as saying: **“This unanimity (in aqeedah) was transmitted by the two great Imams Abul Hasan al-Ashari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Allah's mercy be upon them) and the scholars who followed their path.”**

Mahmoud Ayoub wrote in *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters* (vol. II, 275-6): **“Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373; Rahimahullah) interprets the ‘rope of God’ in verse 103 as ‘The covenant of God,’ citing in support of this interpretation verse 112 below (in Surah Ali Imran). Another view, he adds, is that ‘The rope of God’ here refers to the Qur'an, as reported on the authority of Ali (Allah be pleased with him) who said that ‘The Qur'an is God's strong rope and the straight way.’ He cites another Hadith, on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah be pleased with him), where the Prophet (Peace be upon him) declared, ‘The book of God is God's rope stretched from heaven to earth.’ Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) reported -that the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) said, ‘Surely this Qur'an is God's strong rope, manifest light, and beneficial source of healing. It is protection for those who hold fast to it, and a means of salvation for those who abide by it.’**

Ibn Kathir interprets the injunction, ‘and do not be divided’ to mean strict adherence to unity among Muslims. He reports on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, **‘God will be pleased with three acts from you, and wrathful with three others. He wishes that you worship Him alone without associating anything with Him; that you hold fast all together to the rope of God and be not divided; and that you show loyalty to those whom God has set in authority.’ (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, II, pp. 83-4)**

Qurtubi (d. 671/1273; Rahimahullah) agrees with Tabari (d. 923 CE; Rahimahullah) and Ibn Kathir regarding the meaning of ‘the rope of God’ in verse 103. He cites with approval the famous traditionalist Ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181/797; Rahimahullah) who said, **‘Surely unity is God's rope; therefore hold fast all together to its firm handle’** (see Qur'an 2:256). Qurtubi adds that ‘God enjoins concord and forbids dissension, for in disunity is perdition, and in unity salvation.’

Qurtubi offers two possible interpretations of the phrase ‘And be not divided’: ‘Be not divided in your religion as were the Jews and Christians divided in their religions’ and ‘Be not divided in following

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different false opinions and purposes. Rather, be brothers in God's religion.' As a jurist, Qurtubi observes that, 'There is no indication in this verse of the prohibition of disagreement in the branches (*furu'*) [of *fiqh*] as this in reality is not dissension. This is because true dissension is one wherein concord and unity become virtually impossible. As for disagreement in judgements based on personal effort (*ijtihad*), it is due to differences in deducing obligations (*fara'id*) and the minutiae of law.' On page 279, Imam al-Razi (d. 606/1210; Rahimahullah) was quoted as saying in conclusion to his commentary on the above ayat: 'If a person going down into a well must hold fast to a rope in order that he may not fall in, so also the Book of God, His covenant, religion and obedience to Him, as well as unity and harmony among the people of faith are means of security for anyone who holds fast to them from falling into the bottom of Hell.'"

(2) Surah Ali Imran (3:105):

"And be not like those who separated and disputed after the clear proofs had come unto them: For such there is an awful doom."

(3) Surah Ali Imran (3:110):

"Ye are the best community that has been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin the good and forbid the evil; and ye believe in Allah"

(4) Surah Al-An'am (6:159):

"As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou have no part in them in the least: Their affair is with Allah. He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did."

(5) Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:52-53):

"And verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah and I am your Lord, so keep your duty unto Me. But they have broken their religion among them into sects, each sect rejoicing in its tenets."

(6) Surah Al-Rum (30:32):

"Those who split up their Religion, and become Sects, each sect exulting in its tenets."

(7) Surah Al-Nisa (4:115):

"He that disobeys the Apostle (Muhammad) after guidance has been made clear to him and follows a way other than that of the believers, We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned, and expose him unto Hell - a hapless journey's end!"

(8) Surah Al-An'am (6:153):

"This is My Straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way. This has he ordained for you, that ye may ward off (evil)."

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(1) **Imam Abu Dawood** (Rahimahullah) has quoted the well known Hadith concerning the division of the Muslim Ummah into seventy-three sects in his *Sunan* (3/4580, English ed'n): Abu Amir al-Hawdhani said, "Mu-awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with him) stood among us and said, 'Beware! The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) stood among us and said': ***'Beware! The People of the Book before (you) were split up into 72 sects, and this community will be split up into 73, seventy-two of them will go to Hell and one of them will go to Paradise, and it is the majority group (Jama'ah).'***' Another version of the above Hadith has been reported by Hafiz Ibn Kathir (Rahimahullah) in *The signs before the day of Judgement* (pg. 14): "Awf ibn Malik reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, ***'The Jews split into 71 sects: one will enter Paradise and 70 will enter Hell. The Christians split into 72 sects: 71 will enter Hell and one will enter Paradise. By Him in Whose hand is my soul, my Ummah will split into 73 sects: one will enter Paradise and 72 will enter Hell.'*** Someone asked, ***'O Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), who will they be?'*** He replied, ***'The main body of the Muslims (al-Jama'ah).'*** Awf ibn Malik is the only one who reported this Hadith, and its isnad is acceptable." And in another version of this Hadith the Prophet (Peace be upon him) goes on to say that the saved sect, ***'...Are those who follow my and my Sahaba's path'*** (Tirmidhi, vol. 2, pg. 89)

Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad al-Sirhindi (d. 1034/1624; Rahimahullah) who is regarded by many people in the Indian sub-continent as a great renovator of the Tenth Islamic Century (Mujaddid alf Thani) wrote in his *Maktubat* (Vol. 3, Letter 38): "It was declared in a Hadith that this Ummah would part into 73 groups, 72 of which would go to Hell. This Hadith informs us that the 72 groups will be tormented in the Fire of Hell. It does not inform us that they will remain in torment eternally. Remaining in the torment of Hell Fire eternally is for those who do not have Iman. That is, it is for disbelievers. The 72 groups, on account of their corrupt beliefs, will go to Hell and will burn as much as the corruptness of their beliefs. One group, the 73rd, will be saved from Hell Fire because their belief is not corrupt. If among the members of this one group there are those who committed evil deeds and if these evil deeds of theirs have not been forgiven through repentance or intercession, it is possible that these, too, will burn in Hell as much as their sins. All of those who are in the 72 groups will go to Hell. But none of them will remain in Hell eternally. Not all of those who are in this one group will go to Hell. Of these only those who have committed evil deeds will go to Hell. The 72 reported groups of Bid'ah, which will go to Hell, should not be called disbelievers, because they are Ahl al-Qibla (people of the Qibla in prayer). But, of these, the ones who disbelieve those facts in the Deen that are indispensably required to be believed, as well as those who deny the rules of the Shari'ah which every Muslim has heard and knows, become disbelievers." In another letter (vol. 1, letter 80) he said: ***'There is no doubt whatsoever that the sect that made conforming to the conduct of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) necessary, that alone is the Ahl as Sunnah wal Jama'ah.'***

Shaykh Abdal Qadir al-Jilani (d. 561/1166; Rahimahullah) stated in his commentary to the above Hadith in *Ghunyat at-Talibin* (pg. 90), "The Believer should adapt himself to the Sunnah and to the Jama'ah. The Sunnah is the way shown by Rasulullah (Peace be upon him). The Jama'ah is composed of the things done unanimously by the Sahaba al-Kiram who lived in the time of the four caliphs called Khulafa' ar-Rashidin (and others in their path). A Muslim must prevent the multiplication of the men of bid'ah and keep away from them, and should not greet them (as given in many Hadith on this issue). Ahmad ibn Hanbal (rahimahullah), the Imam of our Madhhab, said that greeting a man of bid'ah meant loving him since it had been declared in a Hadith, "Disseminate (your) greeting (salaam)! Love one another in this way!" He also said (pg. 143): ***'The title, Ahl as-Sunnah, which the innovators have expressed for themselves is not appropriate for them.'***

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Although **Ibn Taymiyya** was accused of holding certain corrupt points in his Aqeedah, which led so many scholars to denounce him for his heresy, he nevertheless hit the right point when he described those who are the real Sunnis in his *Aqeedat-il-Wasitiyyah* (pg. 154): “Their creed is the religion of Islam which was sent to the world by Allah through the Prophet (Peace be upon him). But the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, ‘My Ummah will get divided into 73 sects and each one will go to Hell save one and that one is the Jama’at.’ Also in one Hadith he said, ‘They are those people who will follow this path which I and my Sahaba follow today.’ Therefore they have caught hold of Islam unalloyed from every adulteration and these are the people of Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama’ah. **This group includes the truthful, the martyrs and the virtuous; it includes the minarets of guidance, lamps in the darkness and owners of such superiorities and virtues who have been already mentioned. It includes the saints and also those Imams on whose guidance Muslims are unanimous.** It is this successful group about which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has said: ‘One group from my Ummah will always remain dominant with truth; the opponents will never be able to harm its members or afflict them up to the Doomsday.’”

(2) **Imam Muslim** (Rahimahullah) has collected a number of variant Hadith on the saved sect. He has related a longer version of the last Hadith quoted above: “Abdal Rahman ibn Shamasa al-Mahri said: ‘I was in the company of Maslama bin Mukhallad and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas (may Allah be pleased with them).’ Abdullah said, ‘*The Hour shall come only when the worst type of people are left on the earth. They will be worse than the people of pre-Islamic days. They will get whatever they ask of Allah.*’ While we were sitting, Uqba ibn Amir came, and Maslama said to him, ‘Uqba, listen to what Abdullah says.’ Uqba said, ‘He knows, so far as I am concerned, I heard the Prophet (Peace be upon him) say: **A group of people from my Ummah will continue to fight in obedience to the Command of Allah, remaining dominant over their enemies. Those who will oppose them shall not do them any harm. They will remain in this condition until the Hour overtakes them.**’ (At this) Abdullah said, ‘Yes. Then Allah will raise a wind which will be fragrant like musk and whose touch will be like the touch of silk; (but) it will cause the death of all (faithful) persons, not leaving behind a single person with an iota of faith in his heart. Then only the worst of men will remain to be overwhelmed by the Hour.’” (*Sahih Muslim*, 3/4721, English ed’n, see also *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9/414, English ed’n)

Imam Nawawi (d. 676/1277, Rahimahullah) said in his *Sharh Muslim* (vol. 2, pg. 143): “**The group of people (mentioned in the above Hadith) consists of scholars, jurisprudents, authorities on Hadith, those who enjoin Good (Maroof) and forbid Evil (Munkar) and all such persons who do good deeds. Such righteous persons may be found spread all over the world.**”

Imam al-Tirmidhi (Rahimahullah) said: “The explanation of al-Jama’ah according to the people of knowledge: **They are the people of Fiqh, knowledge and Hadith.**” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4/2167; Ahmad Shakir ed’n)

Imam Bukhari (Rahimahullah) stated in his *Sahih* (vol. 9, chapter. 10, English ed’n), “The statement of the Prophet (Peace be upon him): ‘A group of my followers will remain victorious in their struggle in the cause of the Truth.’ **Those are the religious(ly) learned men (Ahl ul-Ilm).**”

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Rahimahullah) said about this group: “**If it is not the people of Hadith, then I do not know who they may be.**” (*Sahih Muslim Sharif-Mukhtasar Sharh Nawawi*, vol. 5, pg. 183, *W. Zaman*)

Qadi Iyad (Rahimahullah) said in *ash-Shifa* (pg. 188): “In a Hadith from Abu Umama (Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, ‘A group of my community will remain constant to the truth, conquering their enemy until the command of Allah comes to them while they are still in that condition.’ He was asked, Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), where are they?’ He replied, ‘In Jerusalem.’”

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(3) **Imam Muslim** (Rahimahullah) has related in his *Sahih* (3/4553) under the chapter heading **'Instruction to stick to the main body of the Muslims in the time of the trials and warning against those inviting people to disbelief'**, a Hadith on the authority of Hudhaifa ibn al-Yaman (Allah be pleased with him), who said: *"People used to ask the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) about the good times, but I used to ask him about (the) bad times fearing lest they overtake me. I said, Messenger of Allah, we were in the midst of ignorance and evil, and then God brought us this good (time through Islam). Is there any bad time after this good one?" He said, 'Yes'. I asked, 'Will there be a good time again after that bad time?' He said, 'Yes, but therein will be a hidden evil.' I asked, 'What will be the evil hidden therein?' He said, (That time will witness the rise of) people who will adopt ways other than mine and seek guidance other than mine. You will know good points as well as bad points.' I asked, 'Will there be a bad time after this good one?' He said, 'Yes. (A time will come) when there will be people standing and inviting at the gates of Hell. Who so responds to their call, they will throw them into the fire.' I said, 'Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), describe them for us.' He said, 'All right. They will be a people having the same complexion as ours and speaking our language.' I said, 'Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), what do you suggest if I happen to live in their time?' He said, **'You should stick to the main body of the Muslims and their leader.'** I said, 'If they have no (such thing as the) main body of the Muslims and have no leader?' He said, 'Separate yourself from all these factions, though you may have to eat the roots of trees until death comes to you and you are in this state.'" (NB- It is not likely that there will be an absence of a Jama'ah, since I have already quoted the Prophet, peace be upon him, as saying: 'A group of people from my Ummah will continue to fight in obedience to the command of Allah, remaining dominant over their enemies. Those who will oppose them shall not do them any harm. They will remain in this condition until the Hour overtakes them.')*

(4) **Abu Hurayra** (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) as saying: **"Who (ever) defected from the obedience (to the Amir) and separated from the main body of the Muslims - then he died in that state - would die the death of one belonging to the days of Jahiliyya** (pre-Islamic ignorance). And he who is killed under the banner of a man who is blind (to the cause for which he is fighting), who gets flared up with family pride and fights for his tribe - is not from my Ummah, and who so from my followers attacks my followers (indiscriminately) killing the righteous and the wicked of them, sparing not (even) those staunch in faith and fulfilling not his obligation towards them who have been given a pledge (of security), is not from me." (*Sahih Muslim*, 3/4557 & 4555; English ed'n)

Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458/1066; Rahimahullah) stated in his: *The Seventy-Seven Branches of Faith* (pg. 42-3), under the fiftieth branch of faith (**50 - Holding firmly to the position of the majority**): "God Most High has said: *Hold fast, all together, to the rope of God, and do not be disunited.* [3:103]. **Muslim** (Rahimahullah) relates on the authority of Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, **'Whoever is disobedient, and departs from the majority, and then dies, has died in a state of Jahiliyya.'** He also relates the following Hadith on the authority of Ibn Shurayh (Allah be pleased with him): *'After I am gone, there will come days of corruption and turmoil. When you see people damaging the unity of the Community of Muhammad (Peace be upon him), you must fight them, whoever they may happen to be.'* Abdal Hakim Murad (the translator of the above book) said in the footnote to the fiftieth branch of faith: **'Orthodoxy in Islam is defined as the doctrine of ahl al-sunna wal jama'a, the People of the Sunna and the Community. To know whether a doctrine or practise is orthodox or heretical, the Muslim is required to find out whether it is recognised by the majority of Muslim scholars** (see later for Imam al-Munawi's commentary). Thus even without looking into their theology, he will know that sects such as the Isma'ilis, the Kharijis, the Wahhabis, the

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Twelver Shi'a and others (not to mention anti-Islamic groupings such as the Ahmadiya and the Bahais) are to be repudiated.”

(5) Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: “One who found in his Amir (the ruler of the true Islamic state; which is absent today) something which he disliked should hold his patience, for *one who separated from the main body of the Muslims even to the extent of a handspan and then he died, would die the death of one belonging to the days of Jahiliyya.*” (*Sahih Muslim*, 3/4559; English ed'n & *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9/257; English ed'n)

(6) Imams Ahmad and Abu Dawood (Allah's mercy be upon them) said that Abu Dharr (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: “*He who separates from the main body (of the Ummah) by even a hand's breadth from the Community he throws off Islam from his neck.*” (*Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, 1/185 & *Sunan Abu Dawood*, 3/4740)

NB-The following five Hadith have been mentioned by the great scholars of Hadith, **Hafiz Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi** (d. 597/1201; Rahimahullah) in his *Talbis Iblis* (section entitled: Adherence to the Sunnah and Jama'ah). A section of the above work has been translated by Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips into English, under the title: *The Devil's Deception of the Shee'ah* (pp. 4-5). Bilal Philips has put footnotes to the five Hadith that I will be quoting below (to declare some of the Hadith to be Da'eef), but one thing that should be mentioned is that he has mainly relied upon al-Albani's classification of the Hadiths in question; hence these 'classifications' of al-Albani need re-verifying! I say this because it is a well known fact that Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi was noted for his exceptional stringency in accepting Hadith, and he has been known to have declared some of the Hadith in Bukhari/Muslim to be Da'eef, as well as declaring some sound Hadith to be fabricated! Nevertheless, I would like to make it clear to those readers who are unaware of the status of Bilal Philips, that he has heavily depended on the classifications of al-Albani in most of his books! If the esteemed reader is convinced that the errors of al-Albani are most apparent, then one should beware of the status of those Hadiths that have been used by Bilal Philips (on account of his accepting al-Albani's classifications). Bilal Philips seems to be a leading critic of Taqleed who has been swept away by the tide of modern day “Salafyyism”; and it seems that he has ‘blindly’ accepted the classifications of al-Albani without himself reverifying al-Albani's classifications! I ask you, is this not a clear cut example of Taqleed? If it has been proven that al-Albani's classifications are unreliable, would it not be just for Bilal Philips to re-verify all the Hadiths that have been authenticated by al-Albani and correct any misclassifications in his books? Allah knows best.

(7) 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported that on one occasion Allah's Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) stood up among them and said, “*Whoever among you desires the centre of paradise should keep close to the Jama'ah for the Devil closely accompanies the solitary individual and is more distant from two.*” (Collected by *Imam Tirmidhi*)

(8) And 'Arfajah (Allah be pleased with him) reported (Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, as saying): “*that Allah's hand is over the Jama'ah and the Devil is with whoever deviates from the Jama'ah.*” (Collected by *Imam al-Tabarani*)

(9) 'Abdullah (ibn Masood; Allah be pleased with him) reported that once Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) drew a line in the dust with his hand and said, “*This is the straight path of Allah.*” Then he drew a series of lines to the right of it and to the left and said, “*Each of these paths has a devil at its head inviting people to it.*” He then recited (Qur'an 6:153), “*Verily this is my straight path so follow it and do*

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not follow the (twisted) paths." (Collected by *Ahmad, Nisai and Darimi*, see *Mishkat u-Masabih*, 1/166)

(10) **Mu'adh ibn Jabal** (Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said, *"The Devil is like a wolf among humans as a wolf is among sheep; it snatches the stray sheep. So beware of the paths which branch off and adhere to the Jama'ah, the masses and the masjid."* (Collected by *Imam Ahmad*; NB- The version given in *Mishkat*, 1/184, also on the authority of Imam Ahmad does not have the addition 'the masses and the masjid.')

(11) And **Abu Dharr** (Allah be pleased with him) reported from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, *"Two are better than one, and three better than two; so stick to the Jama'ah for verily Allah, Most Great and Glorious, will only unite my nation on guidance."* (Collected by *Ahmad*)

(12) **Al-Harith al-Ashari** (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: *"I bid you to do five things: to remain attached to the main body Jama'ah of Muslims, listen to your ruler (the Khalif of the Islamic state) and obey him, and migrate, and fight in the way of Allah. And he who detaches himself from the main body of the Muslims (Jama'ah) to the extent of one span of hand, he in fact, throws off the yoke of Islam from his neck, and he who calls with the call of ignorance, he is one from the denizens of Hell beyond doubt, even if he observes fast and says prayers and considers himself as a Muslim."* (*Musnad Ahmad, vide: Selection from Hadith*, no. 288; by A.H. Siddique)

(13) **Ibn Umar** (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) as saying: *"Follow the great mass (as-Sawad al-Azam) for he who kept himself away from it, in fact would be thrown in Hell Fire."* (*Ibn Majah, vide: Mishkat*, 1/174, by A.H. Siddiqui). The translator of *Mishkat-ul-Masabih* (A.H. Siddiqui, pg. 113) said in the footnote to the last Hadith: "There is a good deal of difference of opinion as to what the term Sawad al-Azam implies. **The overwhelming majority of the scholars are of the view that As-Sawad al-Azam means the largest group of the learned scholars and pious persons whose opinions are held in high esteem in Islam.**"

(14) **Imam al-Shafi'i** (Rahimahullah) said in his *Risala* (pg. 252-3): "Sufyan (ibn Uyayna) told us from Abd al-Malik ibn Umayr from Abdal-Rahman ibn Abd Allah ibn Masood from his father, that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, *'God will grant prosperity to His servant who hears my words, remembers them, guards them, and hands them on. Many a transmitter of law is no lawyer (faqih) himself, and many may transmit law to others who are more versed in the law than they. The heart of a Mushim shall never harbour vindictive feelings against three: sincerity in working for God; faithfulness to Muslims; and conformity to the community of believers (Jama'ah) - their call shall protect (the believers) and guard them from (the Devil's) delusion.'*" (vide: *Sunan al-Darimi*, vol. 1, pp. 74-6; *Ibn Hanbal*, vol. 6, pg.96; *Musnad al-Shafi'i*, vol. 1, pg. 16; *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, 1/228; and *al-Bayhaqi* in his *al-Madkhal*). Imam al-Shafi'i said (pg. 253): **"The Apostle's (Peace be upon him) order that men should follow the Muslim community is proof that the Ijma (consensus) of the Muslims is binding."**

(15) **Imam al-Shafi'i** (Rahimahullah) stated in *al-Risala* (pg. 286-7): "And Sufyan (also) told us from 'Abd Allah ibn Abi Labid from 'Abd Allah ibn Sulayman ibn Yasar from his father, who said: 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) made a speech at al-Jabiya in which he said: The Apostle of God (Peace be upon him) stood among us by an order from God, as I am now standing among you, and said: *'Believe my Companions, then those who succeed them (the Successors), and after that those who*

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succeed the Successors; but after them untruthfulness will prevail when people will swear (in support of their saying) without having been asked to swear, and will testify without having been asked to testify. Only those who seek the pleasure of Paradise will follow the community, for the devil can pursue one person, but stands far away from two. Let no man be alone with a woman, for the devil will be third among them. He who is happy with his right (behaviour), or unhappy with his wrong behaviour, is a (true) believer.” (see also *Musnad al-Shafi'i* vol. 2, pg. 187; and *Ibn Hanbal* vol. 1, pg. 112-13, 176-81). Imam al-Shafi'i said in conclusion to this Hadith: **“He who holds what the Muslim community (Jama'ah) holds shall be regarded as following the community, and he who holds differently shall be regarded as opposing the community he was ordered to follow. So the error comes from separation; but in the community as a whole there is no error concerning the meaning of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and analogy (qiyas).”**

(16) Imam Hakim (1/116) has related a Sahih Hadith from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the following words: **“My Ummah shall not agree upon error.”**

(17) Imam al-Tirmidhi (4/2167) reported on the authority of Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), who said: **“Verily my Ummah would not agree (or he said the Ummah of Muhammad) would not agree upon error and Allah's hand is over the group and whoever dissents from them departs to Hell.”** (see also *Mishkat*, 1/173)

Imam al-Azizi (d. 1070/1660; Rahimahullah) quoted Imam al-Munawi's (d. 1031/1622; Rahimahullah) commentary to the last Hadith in his *al-Siraj al-munir sharh al-jami al-saghir* (3.449), as follows:-

Allah's hand is over the group

(al-Azizi:) Munawi says, **“Meaning his protection and preservation of them, signifying that the collectivity of the people of Islam are in Allah's fold, so be also in Allah's shelter, in the midst of them, and do not separate yourselves from them.”** The rest of the Hadith, according to the one who first recorded it (Tirmidhi), is:-

and whoever descends from them departs to hell.

Meaning that whoever diverges from the overwhelming majority concerning what is lawful or unlawful and on which the Community does not differ has slipped off the path of guidance and this will lead him to hell.” (vide: *The Reliance of the Traveller*, pg. 25)

Some Anthropomorphic points from the neo - “Salafi” Aqeedah

I had promised earlier to show you some examples of the anthropomorphic nature of the neo-‘Salafite’ Aqeedah, and how it varies from the actual Aqeedah transmitted to us by the earliest generations of the Muslim Ummah. I have indicated earlier that the “Salafiyya” of today claim to have the original and pristine Aqeedah of the first three pious generations of Islam; but in reality it is the Aqeedah of the likes of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah when it comes to describing Allah's attributes and soon. The following four points have been derived directly from the works of the “Salafi” scholars (al-Harras and al-Uthaimin) themselves. In comparison to these points I have also quoted from the Aqeedah of Imam Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH; Rahimahullah) and others for you to compare and

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contrast. Imam Tahawi's Aqeedah represents the Aqeedah as transmitted by the scholars of his Madhhab (which represents in the main the Aqeedah of the Salaf as-Salihin) - Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusoof and Imam al-Shaybani (Allah's mercy be upon them) - three of the greatest Ahl as-Sunnah scholars.

(1) The vision of Allah in the Hereafter

Imam al-Tahawi (Rahimahullah) said with regard to this issue in *al-Aqeedah at-Tahaweeah* (English trans. by I.A. A'zami, under the title *'Islamic Belief'*), [no. 37]: **'Belief of a man in the 'seeing of Allah by the people of the Garden' is not correct if he imagines what it is like, or interprets it according to his own understanding, since the interpretation of this 'seeing' or indeed, the meaning of any subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to the submission. This is the *din* of Muslims, Anyone who does not guard himself against negating the attributes of Allah, or likening Allah to something else (anthropomorphism), has gone astray and has failed to understand Allah's glory, because our Lord, the Glorified and the Exalted, can only possibly be described in terms of Oneness and Absolute Singularity and no creation is in any way like Him.'**

In contrast, **Muhammad Khalil Harras** (a 'Salafi' scholar) said in his *Sharh-ul-Aqeedat-il-Wasiliyyah (of Ibn Taymiyya, pg. 73)* : **'The Mutazila deny the vision. This denial is based on refusing to accept Allah in any direction for it is necessary for a thing being seen to be in the direction of the seer.'** Thus, al-Harras claims that for Allah to be seen in the Hereafter, He (Allah) must have a direction!! In comparison, **Imam al-Shahrastani** (d. 1153 CE; Rahimahullah) said in his *Kitab al-Milal wal Nihal (Muslim Sects and Divisions, trans. by A.K. Kazi and J.G. Flynn, pg. 85)*: **"Ash'ari (Rahimahullah) says, however, that the vision of God does not entail direction, place, form, or face to face encounter either by impingement of rays or by impression, all of which are impossible."**

(2) The speech of Allah

Imam al-Tahawi (Rahimahullah) said: **"The Qur'an is the word of Allah. It came from him as speech without it being possible to say how...** (next paragraph): It is not created, as is the speech of human beings, and anyone who hears it and claims that it is human speech has become an unbeliever. Allah warns him and censures him and threatens him with Fire when He says, Exalted is He: 'I will Burn him in the Fire.' (*al-Muddaththir* 74:26) When Allah threatens with the Fire those who say 'This is just human speech' (*al-Muddaththir* 74:25) **we know for certain that it is the speech of the Creator of mankind and that it is totally unlike the speech of mankind."**

In contrast **al-Harras** stated in *Sharh-ul-aqeedat-il-wasitiyyah of Ibn Taymiyya* (pg. 87): **"His statement, voice and speech take place with letters and sounds. One to whom He (i.e. Allah) speaks he hears. This includes the refutation of the stand taken by the Asharia (e.g. Imam al-Ghazali, Rahimahullah, in his *Ihya 'ulum al-din*) that the speech of Allah is primeval and is without letter or sound."** NB- **Imam ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi** (d. 429/1037; Rahimahullah) said with regards to this issue: **"Another group (of anthropomorphists) is represented by those who draw a resemblance between God's Word and the word of his creatures. They hold that God's speech consists of sounds and letters belonging to the same species as the sounds and letters which are ascribed to mankind."** (vide: *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, English trans. by A. Halkin: as *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, vol. 2, pg. 35)

(3) Allah's hands

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Al-Harras stated without any definite proof (pg. 44, above reference): “How can ‘hand’ be interpreted to mean power when the text proves mentioning of **palm, fingers, right and left, closing, opening**, etc. which can happen only in the case of a real hand.”

Imam al-Tahawi said (no. 34): “Anyone who describes Allah as being in any way the same as a human being has become an unbeliever. All those who grasp this will take heed and refrain from saying things such as the unbelievers say, and they will know that He, in His attributes, is not like human beings.”

(4) Allah’s establishment on the Throne

Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) was asked about Allah’s establishment on the Throne; he said: “**Establishment (Istiwa) is known, the how of it is unknown, belief in it is obligatory, and questions about it are a reprehensible innovation (bid’ah).**” (see *The Reliance of the Traveller*, pg. 854). In contrast, **Muhammad as-Saleh al-‘Uthaimin** (a leading ‘Saudi’ scholar) said in *The Muslim’s Belief* (pg. 11, this work was heard and approved by the foremost ‘Saudi’ Mufti - Abdal Aziz ibn Ba’z, trans. M.H. al-Johani): “His (Allah’s) settling on the Throne’ means that **He is sitting in person** on his Throne in a way that is becoming His Majesty and greatness. Nobody except He knows exactly how He is sitting.” **Imam al-Shahrastani** (Rahimahullah) stated that the leader of the heretical sect called the **Karramites** - Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Karram declared: “God is firmly seated on the throne and that he is in person on the upper side of it...” (*Muslim Sects and Divisions*, pg. 92, trans. A. Kazi and J. Flynn).

Certain “Salafis” claim that the followers of Imam al-Ash’ari (Rahimahullah) deny Allah’s attributes. For example it was stated in the booklet *A Brief Introduction to The Salafi Da’wah* (by *Jam’iat Ihyaa’ Minhaaj Al-Sunnah*, pg. 4): “He is not (i.e. the “Salafi”) of the Ash’ariyah who deny Allah’s attributes.” This by Allah is a gross slander against the Ash’aris and far from the truth. It is an undeniable fact that the foremost scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah have been either Ash’aris or Maturidis (the difference between them is on some six minor points). It was also stated in the above named booklet (pg. 3) after quoting the Hadith: “**My Ummah will not unite upon error.** [Tirmidhee and Haakim - Saheeh] - It is not correct that this hadeeth refers to the people of later ages, since it was within the first three generations that the Ummah was free from divisions. The deviant sects separated themselves from the Jamaa’ah and from that time onwards there was disunity.”

The above statement is factually incorrect, since it was not in the first three generations that the Ummah was free from divisions; but rather divisions arose during the time of the Sahabah! The first deviant sect that arose during the time of the Sahabah was the *Khawarij*, followed by heresies like the *Mu’tazilah*, *Shi’ah*, *Qadariyya*, *Jabariyya*, *Jahnuyya*... - in the first three generations of Islam. But we must not forget that the Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama’ah were dominant at that time, in terms of scholarly numbers and the overwhelming majority of ordinary Muslims as well (as they have also been throughout Islamic history). As for the statement: “It is not correct that this hadeeth refers to the people of later ages”; then this is just one opinion out of many. But from the Hadith evidence that I have provided above (more than 15 Hadiths), certain scholars (of *Usool*) have used it as proof in favour of the Ijma (consensus) of the scholars of the *Saved sect* after the first three generations of Islam if considered deeply (in fact the scholars have mentioned when there has been Ijma after the first three generations; this includes scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Hazm al-Zahiri). It seems that to the “Salafis” (i.e. those who accept the contents of the above named booklet), the term ‘Ummah’ only refers to the first three generations!! But clearly Ummah refers to all Muslims in general; does it not?

Besides, what further goes against the above view is what their scholar - **Hafiz Ibn Taymiyya** said: “The greater part of his collection (al-Bukhari) has been found to be of this kind (i.e. Sahih), and scholars have approved of them and accepted them, **and the Ummah does not agree on something which is not true.** If the hadeeth of the purchase of the camel were in reality false and the *Ummah* approved it, it would mean

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that they agreed on approving a thing which was in fact false. **It would amount to a consensus (Ijma) on untruth, which is ruled out.**" (see *An Introduction to the Principles of Tafseer*, pg. 35, trans. M.A.H. Ansari). Also **Hafiz Ibn Kathir** said: "**Muslims are assured of divine protection from error so long as they are united** (e.g. when there is Ijma of the scholars). It was feared that they would fall into disunity and dissension, as this community has been indeed divided into 73 sects, only one of which is destined to salvation from the torments of the Fire. It is that party which has remained true to the way of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions (Allah be pleased with them)." (*Tafsir ibn Kathir*, vol. 2, pp. 83-4).

The following is a defence of the Ash'ari school by one of the foremost scholars of Hadith and Fiqh in Makkah at the moment - **Sayyid Muhammad Alawi al-Maliki** (may Allah reward him).

THE ASH'ARI SCHOOL
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Shaykh Muhammad 'Alawi Maliki: "Many sons of Muslims are ignorant of the Ash'ari school, whom it represents, and its positions on the tenets of Islamic faith (aqeedah), and yet some of them are not god-fearing enough to refrain from accusing it of deviance, departure from the religion of Islam, and heresy about the attributes of Allah. This ignorance of the Ash'ari school is a cause of rendering the unity of Ahl al-Sunnah and dispersing its ranks. Some have gone so far as to consider the Ash'aris among the categories of heretical sects, though it is beyond me how believers can be linked with misbelievers, or how Sunni Muslims can be considered equal with the most extreme faction of the Mu'tazilites, the Jahmites.

"Shall We deal with Muslims as We do criminals? How is it that you judge?" (Q. 68:35-36)

The Ash'aris are the distinguished figures of guidance among the scholars of the Muslims, whose knowledge has filled the world from east to west, and whom people have unanimously concurred upon their excellence, scholarship, and religiousness. They include the first rank of Sunni scholars and most brilliant of their luminaries, who stood in the face of the excesses committed by the Mu'tazilites, and who constitute whole sections of the foremost Imams of Hadith, Sacred Law, and Qur'anic exegesis. **Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad ibn Hajar 'Asqalani** (d. 852/1449; Rahimahullah), the mentor of Hadith scholars and author of the book *Fath al-Bari bi sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, which not a single Islamic scholar can dispense with, was Ash'ari. The shaykh of the scholars of Sunni Islam, **Imam Nawawi** (d. 676/1277; Rahimahullah), author of *Sharh Sahih Muslim* and many of other famous works, was Ash'ari. The master of Qur'anic exegetes, **Imam Qurtubi** (d. 671/1273; Rahimahullah), author of *al-Jami' li ahkam al-Qur'an*, was Ash'ari. **Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar Haytami** (d. 974/1567; Rahimahullah), who wrote *al-Zawajur 'an iqtiraf al-kaba'ir*, was Ash'ari. The Shaykh of Sacred law and Hadith, the conclusively definitive **Zakariyya Ansari** (d. 926/1520; Rahimahullah), was Ash'ari. **Imam Abu Bakr Baqillani** (d. 403/1013; Rahimahullah); **Imam 'Asqalani**; **Imam Nasafi** (d. 710/1310; Rahimahullah); **Imam Shirbini** (d. 977/1570; Rahimahullah); **Abu Hayyan Tawhidi**, author of the Qur'anic commentary *al-Bahr al-muhit*, **Imam Ibn Juzayy** (d. 741/1340; Rahimahullah); author of *al-Tashil li 'ulum al-Tanzil*, and others - all of these were Imams of the Ash'aris. If we wanted to name all of the top scholars of Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, and Sacred Law who were Imams of the Ash'aris, we would be hard put to do so and require volumes merely to list these illustrious figures whose wisdom has filled the earth from east to west. And it is incumbent upon us to give credit where credit is due, recognizing the merit of those of knowledge and virtue who have served the Sacred Law of the Greatest of Messengers (Allah bless him and give him peace). What good is to be hoped for us if we impugn our foremost scholars and righteous forebears with charges of aberrancy and misguidance? Or how should Allah give us the benefit of their scholarship if we believe it is deviance and departure from the way of Islam? I ask you, is there a single Islamic scholar of the present day, among all the PhDs and geniuses, who has done what Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani or Imam Nawawi have, of the service rendered by these two noble Imams (Allah enfold them in His mercy and bliss) to the pure prophetic sunna? How should we charge them and all Ash'aris with aberrancy when it is we who are in need of their scholarship? Or how can we take knowledge from them if they were in error? For as **Imam Zuhri** [d. 124/742; Allah have mercy on him] says, **'This knowledge is religion, so look well to whom you are taking your religion from.'**

Is it not sufficient for someone opposed to the Ash'aris to say, 'Allah have mercy on them, they use their reasoning (ijtihad) in figuratively interpreting the divine attributes, which it would have been fitter for them not to do'; instead of accusing them of deviance and misguidance, or displaying anger towards whoever considers them to be of the Sunni Community? **If Imam Nawawi, 'Asqalani, Qurtubi, Baqillani, al-Fakhr al-Razi, Haytami, Zakariyyah Ansari, and others were not among the most brilliant scholars and illustrious geniuses, or of the Sunni Community, then who are the Sunnis?**

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I sincerely entreat all who call others to this religion or who work in the field of propagating Islam to fear Allah respecting the honour of the Community of Muhammad (Allah bless and give him peace), especially its greatest sages and scholars in Sacred Law. For the Community of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) is possessed of goodness until the Final Hour, while we are bereft of any if we fail to acknowledge the worth and excellence of our learned.” (*Mafahim yajibu an tusahhaha, 38-40, see The Reliance of the traveller, W57.2, pg. 1009, trans. N. Keller*)

In conclusion, the Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah are the true followers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions (Allah be pleased with them all), followed by those who trod their path for the last 1400 years. It is in summary the followers of Imam Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Allah's mercy be upon them) in Aqeedah, and this saved sect is represented by the adherents of one of the four schools - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali only today. This is the sect which has had the largest following throughout Islamic history (as-Sawad al-A'zam) as confirmed by the Qur'anic and Ahadith based evidence I have provided in the previous pages. Insha'Allah it will remain dominant until the Hour is established.

CONCLUSION

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By the will of Allah, it has been proven without a shadow of doubt that al-Albani has fallen into the abyss of contradictions, errors, misquotes and so on. Whether these blunders of his are due to a weak memory gained through old age, or otherwise, Allah alone knows best! We know that al-Albani sincerely admits on some occasions his errors in the classification of Hadith; and this is praiseworthy. For example, he admitted in *Sifah salah an-Nabee* (pg. 28, footnote 1) about the classification of a particular Hadith: *“I used to declare this hadeeth hasan (good) in previous works, until I realised that I had been mistaken, because this hadeeth depends on Hanzalah al-Dawsi, who is da’eef, and I do not know how this was unknown to me; maybe I thought he was someone else. Anyway, praise is due to Allah who guided me to recognise my mistake, and that is why I hurried to correct it in print...”*

As far as I know at the time of writing this short exposition, al-Albani has not taken much heed to correct his errors let alone make aware to his readership his mistakes - as well as their necessary rectifications. I say this because even at the time of writing, his supporters in England are still quoting his “authentications” of Hadith in various books that have been translated into English. I have noticed quite surprisingly that most of his followers are still oblivious of the fact that Shaykh Saqqaf has publicised al-Albani’s errors; even though Shaykh Saqqaf’s books have been available in Jordan (and other countries) for more than two years!

I sincerely entreat all serious seekers of the truth to beware of al-Albani’s “classifications”, “fatwas” and his extreme revilement towards the scholars and laity within the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. This no doubt applies most strongly to those brothers and sisters who may have wholeheartedly relied on al-Albani’s classifications of Hadith by way of Taqleed; in their quest to adhere to the authentic Sunnah. It is always possible for criticism to be made by a group of people whose understanding is inadequate and who lack sufficient knowledge. But: “How many there are who find fault with a sound statement, while their trouble is due to faulty understanding!” We should all take heed of the Ayat: ***“Nay, but those who do wrong follow their own lusts without knowledge. Who is able to guide him whom Allah has sent astray? For such there are no helpers.”*** (Qur’an 30: 29)

And my last word on this subject are in the words of Imam Muhammad ibn Sirin (d. 110 AH; Rahimahullah, vide: Mishkatul-Masabih, 1/273, on the authority of Imam Muslim): ***“Verily this knowledge is the knowledge of religion. You must carefully see from whom you are receiving the knowledge of your religion.”*** The weak, meek, slave in need of Allah -

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