

Tagleed In The Sunnah

http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/458_18-10-2010/tagleed-in-the-sunnah.html

The Sunnah, correspondingly to the verses in the Quran, are replete with references to Tagleed, a few are mentioned below.

Hudaifah (ra) said that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said **"I do not know how long I will remain with you. So follow these two people (Who will remain) after me : Abu Bakr and Umar."** (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Ahmed) [20]

In this Hadith, special attention should be given to the word "Iqtidaa" (follow) which is used in the Arabic text. "Iqtidaa" is not used to mean following in the organizational sense, but rather it is used to refer to religious following. Ibn Manzoor, the famous expert on the Arabic language writes:

"The words Qudwah and Qidwah are used for people who are followed in their traditions. `Qudwah means Uswah (an example or a role model).' [21]

This word has been used in the Quran to mean following prophets and good people in religious affairs: **"Those are the ones whom We guided, so follow their guidance."** (Surah Al-An'aam: 90)

The following Hadith narrated during the last moments of the Prophet's (saw) life is ample proof of this approach:

"Abu Bakr was following the prayer of the Prophet and people were following the prayer of Abu Bakr." (Bukhari)

Imam Ahmed has narrated in his Musnad from Abu Wail:

"I sat with Shaibah the son of Uthman who said: **`Umar sat in this very place where you are sitting. Umar said: `sometimes I want to distribute every piece of gold and silver that is here in the Ka'bah.'** I[Shaibah] asked him [Umar]: **"Don't you have the authority to do so?" Umar said: "Your two companions [the Prophet and Abu Bakr] preceded you and did not do so. They are two great personalities who should be followed.'** [22]

Imam Ahmed, also, narrated in his Musnad from Anas (ra) that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam was sitting in a gathering and stated:

"A person who is entitled to Paradise will shortly enter this gathering"

So a person from the Ansaar entered. The next day, the same incident occurred and the third day, the same thing happened. Abdullah ibn Amr (ra) decided to follow the Ansaari one day and observe him. Abdullah assumed that the Ansaari was absorbed in worship during the

night, but the only thing he noticed was that the Ansaari made some

Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and went to sleep until Fajr. In the morning Abdullah said to the Ansaari:

"I wanted to spend the night with you to see your actions so that I could follow you., But I

did not see you excessive in worship." [23]

In all of these instances, the word "Iqtidaa" has been used to mean following someone in a religious sense - especially in the first two Ahadith where the word has been used for Abu Bakr (ra). The Hadith in question **"...follow these two people after me...."** speaks about following Abu Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra) in religious issues, which is the essence of Taqleed.

Abdullah ibn Amr (ra) narrated that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said:

"Allah will not snatch away knowledge abruptly from people, but rather He will snatch knowledge by removing scholars. This will happen to the extent that when no scholar remains, people will take ignorant leaders as their guides. These leaders will be asked and they will give opinions (Fatwas) without knowledge. So they will be misguided and they will misguide." (Bukhari and Muslim)

This Hadith clearly states that giving religious and legal opinions (Fatwas) is the occupation of a scholar. People enquire concerning religious and legal issues and act according to the answers received. This is the gist of Taqleed. The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam foretold that there would come a time when scholars will become extinct and ignorant people will issue Fatwas. In this scenario, where there are no living scholars to refer to and hence there will remain none to extract rules from the Quran and Sunnah directly, what other process will there be for people to follow the Quran and Sunnah except to rely upon the decisions of previous scholars. This Hadith informs that as long as the Mujtahids remain, reference should be directed to them alone and when no scholar remains, instead of resorting to the incompetent and unqualified for solutions, Taqleed should be made of previous scholars.

Abu Hurairah (ra) said that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said:

"Whoever gives a Fatwa (legal opinion) without knowledge, the sin will be on the one who gives the Fatwa" (Abu Dawood) [24]

This Hadith is also very clear about the validity of Taqleed. If Taqleed was not permissible, then just as there is a sin for offering an opinion without knowledge and investigation, there should be an equal amount of burden on the person asking if he did not persevere to reach his own conclusions, but the Hadith states that the burden is on the one giving the Fatwa and not on the one asking. It indicates that the responsibility of a person who is not a scholar is to ask someone who has knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. If that knowledgeable person gives him an erroneous Fatwa, the burden of sin is on the Mufti and not on the questioner.

Ibrahim ibn Abdur Rahman narrated that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said:

"Reliable people from each succeeding generation will carry this knowledge. They (the reliable people) will refute the distortions of those who exaggerate and the (erroneous) explanations of the ignorant." (Bahiqi in Madkhal) [25]

This Hadith condemns the erroneous explanations of the ignorant and makes it

clear that the refutation of these explanations is the responsibility of the scholars. Again, this shows that those who do not possess the acumen of a Mujtahid should not venture into explaining the Quran and Sunnah according to their own understanding. Rather they should refer to the scholars in order to understand the correct meanings of the Quran and Sunnah. It is recognized that in order to explain the Quran and Sunnah a person needs to be extraordinarily qualified. Rudimentary knowledge of the Arabic language does not qualify one as a Mujtahid and hence such explanations by a non-professional would be regarded as spurious.

Imam Bukhari has narrated as a suspended narration and Imam Muslim has narrated with his chain of narrators from Abu Saeed Khudri (ra) that certain Companions made it a habit to join prayers late. The Prophet (saw) emphasized that they should come early and join the first row and then said:

"Follow me (by observing what I do) and those who come after shall follow you (by observing what you do)."

This Hadith has multifarious interpretation, one possible interpretation is that those in the front row should observe what the Prophet (saw) is doing and follow him in prayers and those who are behind should follow the front row. A further possible meaning of this Hadith is that the Companions were advised to come early so that they could observe The Prophet's prayer in totality. Those who come after the Companions will learn their prayers by observing and following them.

Ibn Hajar writes in the commentary of this Hadith:

"It is said that the meaning of this Hadith is that the Companions should learn the rules of Islam from the Prophet (saw) and those who follow the Companions (the Tabi'een) should follow the Companions and so on until the world comes to an end." [26]

Imam Ahmed narrates in his Musnad that Sahal ibn Sa'd (ra) narrated from his father that:

"A woman came to the Prophet and said: **"My husband has gone out in war and I used to follow him in his prayer when he prayed and in all other affairs. Show me an act which will match his act of jihad until he returns"** [27]

In this Hadith, the lady has explicitly informed the Prophet (saw) that she follows her husband - not only in prayer but in all acts. The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam did not see any reason to rebuke her actions.

Imam Tirmidhi narrates that Abdullah ibn Amr (ra) narrated from the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam:

"Whoever has two qualities in him, Allah will make him a grateful and patient person. (The first quality) Whoever looks towards someone who is higher than him in religion and follows him and (the second quality) whoever looks towards someone who is lower than him in the world and then praises Allah" [28]

The Hadith praises the quality of adhering to others; there is not an inkling of

disapproval within this Hadith to following the good in others.

Notes:

20 Mirqaatul Mafateeh - vol. 5, page 549

21 Lisaanul 'Arab - vol. 20, page 31 under the root word Qada

22 Musnad Ahmed - vol. 3, page 410

23 The Ansaari replied that although he did not do a lot of formal worship, he never kept any grudges

against a muslim, nor did he envy anyone. Narrated with a sound chain in Musnad Ahmed - vol.3 page 166

24 Mishkatul Masaabih - the chapter of knowledge, page 27

25 ibid: page 28

26 Fathul Bari - vol. 2, page 171. Printed by Meeriyah 1300 H

27 Musnad Ahmed - vol. 3, page 439 Al-Haithami has also narrated it (in Majma'uz Zawaid) and then says: Ahmed has narrated it from Dhabban ibn Faid whom Ibn Hatim has classified as weak. Everyone in

the chain is reliable. (Fathur Rabbani - vol 14, page 16)

28 Jami' Tirmidhi with Ibn Arabi's commentary - vol. 9, page 31