

THE COMPREHENSIVE BOOK

THE COMPREHENSIVE BOOK
ON THE SUNNAH, COURTESY, WISDOM,
MILITARY EXPEDITIONS AND HISTORY

A translation of *Kitab al-Jami'* by

Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah
Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani
(d. 386 AH)

translated by

Abdassamad Clarke

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CHAPTER I

SUNNAHS THE OPPOSITE OF WHICH ARE INNOVATIONS, ON BEING
LED AND FOLLOWING, THE MERITS OF THE COMPANIONS AND
ABOUT SHUNNING THE PEOPLE OF INNOVATION

PRAISE BELONGS to Allah Who encompasses people with His blessings, and Who sent Muhammad as the last of the Messengers by His mercy as a bearer of good news and a warner, inviting to Allah by His permission and as an illuminating lamp. Allah, mighty is He and majestic, guides whomever He loves to guide. He sent him while they were upon the edge of a pit of the Fire and He rescued them by him (Surah Ali 'Imran 103). So he, the blessings of Allah upon him and His *barakahs*, undertook to discharge Allah's right upon him among the slaves until Allah took him back to Him praiseworthy after Allah had perfected and completed His *deen* by him, and he had conveyed the messages of his Lord, made every problem clear, and unveiled every enigma. He left the Book of Allah, mighty is He and majestic, for his nation as a clear light, and his Sunnah as a protecting fortress, and his companions as a strong rope.

THE BOOK AND THE SUNNAH

The Messenger ﷺ said, "I have left among you two matters which, as long as you hold on to them, you will never go astray: The Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet."¹

BID'AH – INNOVATION

He also said ﷺ "You must have my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the *khulafa* who take the right way after me; bite on it with the molar

¹ Malik ibn Anas in the *Muwatta*.

teeth.² Beware of newly introduced matters, for every newly introduced matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray.”

TRIALS AND SECTS

He ﷺ warned against trials, erroneous opinions, innovations and against the slip of a man of knowledge. He said ﷺ “You will mount up on the sunnahs of those who were before you.”³ He ﷺ described the Khawarij⁴ and he declared them, because of their innovation, to be those who pass swiftly through the *deen*.⁵ The traditions concerning the Khawarij, the Qadariyyah,⁶ the Murji’ah⁷ and the Rafidah⁸ came consecutively.

The seventy-two groups have branched off from the above-mentioned, those which the Messenger ﷺ warned us against, saying that there would be in his Ummah those who separated themselves off from it.⁹

‘AQIDAH

The Ummah is unanimous on the following matters of the *deen*

² Ahmad narrated this hadith in a different wording in his *Musnad*.

³ Ibn Majah narrated the meaning of this hadith in a different wording from Abu Hurairah.

⁴ The Khawarij seceded from both Sayyiduna ‘Ali and Sayyiduna Mu‘awiyah, may Allah be pleased with both of them. Their *bid’ah* was that they counted any Muslim of wrong action a disbeliever. They also said that any of the Muslims could be the Khalifah.

⁵ From the hadith of Abu Sa’id in the *Muwatta*.

⁶ The Qadariyyah are those who propound the free-will of man as opposed to predestination and the decree of Allah.

⁷ The Murji’ah are those who say that only faith in the heart matters, as opposed to action. They are thus willing to overlook serious wrong action.

⁸ The Rafidah are the ‘Rejectors’ i.e. the Shi’ah, because they reject the khalifates of the first three *khulafa*. The beliefs of all of the above groups are most systematically described in Shahrastani’s *al-Milal wa’n-Nihal*.

⁹ As narrated by Abu Hurairah in the hadith transmitted by Ibn Majah.

and sunnahs, the contrary of which are innovations and error: that Allah, blessed is His name, has the most beautiful names and most exalted attributes and He has never been without any of His attributes. He encompasses in knowledge all of that which He creates before its being brought into being and He creates things by His will. His saying is, “*His command when He wills a thing is only that He says to it ‘Be!’ and it is.*” (Surah Yasin, 81).

His speech is one of His attributes and it is not created and thus perishing, nor is it an attribute of a created being and thus perishing. Allah, mighty is He and majestic, spoke to Musa by His essence and He made him hear His speech, not a speech which subsisted in other-than-Him.

He hears and He sees, and He constricts and expands, and His two hands are widespread, “*and the earth will be in His grasp on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand*” (Surat az-Zumar, 64).

He will come on the Day of Resurrection, although He does not [literally] ‘come’ – and the angels will be rank upon rank (a reference to Surat al-Fajr, 24) – in order to review the nations, to reckon them and punish and reward them. He will forgive whomever of the wrongdoers He wishes, and punish whomever of them He wishes.

He is pleased with those who are obedient and He loves those who turn [to Him] in repentance, and He is displeased with whoever rejects Him and is angry with them, and nothing can withstand His anger.

THE THRONE AND THE FOOTSTOOL

He is above¹⁰ His heavens over His throne¹¹ apart from His earth,¹² and He is in every place by His knowledge. Allah, glorious is He and exalted, has a Footstool (*Kursi*) as He said, mighty is He and majestic, “*His footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth.*” (Surat al-Baqarah, 255)

Of that which is narrated in the hadith literature is that Allah, glorious is He, will place His Footstool on the Day of Resurrection to decide the judgement.¹³

Mujahid said, “They used to say, ‘What are the heavens and the

¹⁰ “Aboveness is an expression for the fact that a thing is higher than another, and is used literally about bodies such as when you say, ‘Zayd is on (*fawq*) the roof,’ but used metaphorically for meanings, such as when you say, ‘The master is superior to (*fawq*) his slave.’ The aboveness of Allah, exalted is He, over His ‘*arsh* is in the sense of a meaning, by which it is meant in terms of honour, and it is in the sense of rule and kingship, and it refers to the meaning of control.” ‘Ali ibn Khalaf al-Manufi al-Maliki al-Misri, *Kifayat at-talib ar-rabbani*

¹¹ “The ‘*arsh* is a luminous physical entity which encompasses all physical entities, whose reality we cannot categorically detail. It is the first of all created things, according to the most correct view, and is above the heavens. The *kursi* is beneath it between its legs. Linguistically it refers to every thing that is high.” Ahmad ibn Ghanim an-Nafrawi, *al-Fawakih ad-dawani ‘ala Risalah Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani*

¹² “For Imam Abu Muhammad ‘Abdullah Muhammad ibn Mujahid had said, ‘Of that which they agreed unanimously about asserting unqualifiedly is that He, exalted is He, is above His heavens over His ‘*arsh* apart from His earth, unqualifiedly according to the *shari’ah*, and nothing is narrated in the *shari’ah* that He is in the earth, and for that reason he said, “‘Apart from His earth.’”’ ‘Ali as-Sa’idi al-‘Adawi al-Maliki al-Misri, *Hashiyat al-‘Adawi ‘ala Kifayat at-talib ar-rabbani*.

¹³ See a hadith narrated by Jabir in *Sunan Ibn Majah*.

earth compared to the Footstool but like a ring cast in the desert?”

THE VISION OF ALLAH

Allah’s close friends will see Him, glorious is He, in the next life with the eyes which are in their faces and they will not be wronged or defrauded with respect to His vision, as He said, mighty is He and majestic, in His Book (“*Faces on that Day will be bright, towards their Lord gazing*” Surat al-Qiyamah, 23), and upon the tongue of His Prophet. The Messenger ﷺ spoke about His words, glorious is He, “*For the ones who do excellently well there is the best and increase,*” (Surah Yunus, 26). He said, “The best is the Garden and the increase is gazing towards the face of Allah, exalted is He.”¹⁴

Allah will speak to the slaves on the day of Resurrection without there being an interpreter between Him and them.

THE GARDEN AND THE FIRE

The Garden and the Fire have already been created; the Garden is prepared for people of *taqwa* and the Fire for those who cover over [the truth]; neither of them will pass away or perish.

THE DECREE

One must have Iman in the decree, the good of it and its evil; all of that our Lord has decreed and His knowledge enumerates it. The decreeing of affairs is in His hands, their source is His specific decree. He is gracious to whoever obeys Him and He guides him, makes Iman beloved to him, makes it easy for him, expands his breast for him and guides him, “*and whomever Allah guides is guided.*” (Surat al-Isra’, 97). He disgraces whoever disobeys and rejects Him, and He forsakes him, eases him to that path, veils him and makes him go astray, and whomever Allah leads astray then you will never find a guide for him (see Surat al-Kahf, 16). Everyone comes to that which He already knows and there is no escape from that for anyone.

¹⁴ In *Sahih al-Bukhari* there is that the increase is forgiveness, and in another saying some say that it is gazing towards the face of Allah.

IMAN

Iman is a word on the tongue, sincerity in the heart, and action with the limbs. It increases with obedience and decreases through disobedience with a decrease from the realities of completion and perfection not in a way which invalidates Iman. There is no [use for] speech without action, and there is no [use for] speech and action without intention, and there is no [use for] speech, action and intention without compliance with the Sunnah.

MAJOR WRONG ACTIONS

None of the people of the *qiblah* becomes a *kafir* through a wrong action even if it is a major one, and nothing invalidates Iman except for associating partners with Allah, as He said, glorious is He, “Definitely if you associate others [with Allah] your action will come to nothing.” (Surat az-Zumar, 65). Allah does not forgive anything being associated as partner with Him, and He forgives apart from that whomever He wishes (See Surat an-Nisa’, 48).

RECORDING ANGELS

There are guardian recorders [angels] over the slaves writing their actions, as our Lord said, blessed is He and exalted, in His Book (Surat al-Infitar, 10), and nothing of that escapes His knowledge.

DEATH

The angel of death takes all the spirits by the permission of Allah, as He said, glorious is He, “Say, ‘The angel of death who has been entrusted with you will take you back.’” (Surat as-Sajdah, 11)

People die at their appointed times, and of them there are the spirits of the people of happiness who remain in bliss until the day they are raised up, and the spirits of the people of grief who remain in Sijjin [in the Fire], tormented until the Day of Reckoning.

THE SHUHADA – WITNESSES

The *shuhada*’ (‘witnesses’ – those who have died in the way of Allah) are alive with their Lord, provided for (Surah Ali ‘Imran, ayah 169).

THE GRAVE

The torment of the grave is true. The believers will be tried [by the questioning of Munkar and Nakir] in their graves. They will be squeezed and tested. Allah will strengthen the word of whomever He wishes to strengthen.

THE RESURRECTION

The Trumpet will be blown so that whoever is in the heavens and the earth will lose consciousness except for whomever Allah wills. Then later it will be blown another time, and then they will be there standing gazing; just as He originated them they will return, naked, barefoot and uncircumcised.

The bodies which obeyed and disobeyed are the ones which will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection in order for them to be recompensed [for their good and bad actions]. The skins which they had in the world are the ones which will bear witness, and the tongues, hands and feet are the ones which will bear witness against them on the Day of Resurrection, against whomever of them they bear witness.

THE SCALES

The scales will be set up to weigh the slaves' actions. Whoever's scales are heavy will succeed and whoever's scales are light will fail and lose. They will be given their pages [on which are the records of their deeds], and whoever is given his book in his right hand will be taken to account with an easy reckoning. Whoever is given his book in his left hand will roast in a blazing fire.

THE SIRAT

The Sirat is a bridge to which they will come, over which the slaves cross according to the measure of their actions, so that there are those who are saved – at different speeds of crossing over – from the fire of Jahannam, and there are people whose actions bind them in the Fire. Whoever has any Iman in his heart will come out of the Fire.

INTERCESSION

Intercession will be made for people of great wrong action among the believers. A people from his Ummah will come out of the Fire by the intercession of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ after they have already become charred, then they will be cast into the river of life and will sprout as grain does.

THE BASIN (*hawd*)

Iman includes belief in the basin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to which his Ummah will come to drink. Whoever drinks from it will never thirst again, and whoever changed and altered [the *deen*] will be chased away.

THE NIGHT JOURNEY

Iman includes belief in what has been narrated about the Night Journey of the Prophet ﷺ to the heavens according to the authentic narrations, and that he saw the greatest sign of his Lord. (It can also mean that he saw some or one of the greatest signs of his Lord. The reference is to Surat an-Najm, 18).

SAYYIDUNA ‘ISA, THE DAJJAL AND THE SIGNS OF THE HOUR

And [Iman] is required in that which is firmly established of the appearance of the Dajjal and the descent of ‘Isa ibn Maryam ﷺ and his [‘Isa’s] killing him [the Dajjal]; and in the signs which will occur before the Hour: the rising of the sun from its place of setting, the appearance of the beast, etc., of those things about which there are authentic narrations.¹⁵

¹⁵ It is noteworthy that in this work as in many other works of *Aqidah* the author does not mention the Mahdi as a significant sign of the Hour. That reflects the fact that few of the narrations about the Mahdi are dependable, as Ibn Khaldun demonstrated, although the sheer volume of them compensates somewhat for their individual weakness.

THE CLEAR (*muhkamah*) AND THE AMBIVALENT
(*mutashabihah*)

We affirm that which has come to us from Allah, mighty is He and majestic, in His Book, and that which is firmly established from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of his news. It requires that one act according to that of it which is clear and unambiguous, and we acknowledge that the explanation of the texts which are ambivalent and allegorical and of every reality which is hidden from us belongs to Allah, glorious is He. Allah knows the interpretation of the allegorical [*ayat*] of His Book. Those firmly established in knowledge say, “*We believe in it, all is from our Lord.*” (Surat Ali ‘Imran, 7). Some people say, “*The ones who are firmly established [in knowledge] know*” its problematic parts, but the former is the saying of the people of Madinah, and the Book indicates it.¹⁶

THE BEST GENERATIONS

The best generations are the generation of the Companions, then the ones who followed them (the Followers), then the ones who followed them (the Followers of the Followers), as the Prophet ﷺ said.¹⁷

The best of the Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthman, then ‘Ali. It has also been said, “then ‘Uthman and ‘Ali”, may Allah be pleased with them, and one refrains from preferring one [‘Uthman or ‘Ali] over the other. That has been narrated from Malik, and he said, “I have never found anyone whom I emulate preferring one of them over the other” and his view was that one should withhold oneself from [asserting a preference] for either of the two of them. The first statement has also been narrated

¹⁶ The people of Madinah and most of the people of the Sunnah read the above *ayah* as, “*No one knows its interpretation but Allah. And those firmly established in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord.’*” However, some, among them Ibn Rushd the author of *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, read it as, “*No one knows its interpretation but Allah and those firmly established in knowledge...*” – Trans.

¹⁷ *Sahih al-Bukhari.*

from him, and from Sufyan and others, and it is the saying of the people of hadith. Then after them are the rest of the ten [Companions who were promised the Garden], then the people of Badr of the Muhajirun and then of the Ansar, and then all of his Companions according to [their] emigration, precedence and merit.

Everyone who accompanied him [the Prophet], if only for an hour, or who saw him, if only one time, then by that token he is better than the best of the Followers.

One must refrain from mentioning the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ except in the best way. They are the people who have most right to have their good qualities made public. One should seek the best excuses for them, and hold the best opinions of them. The Messenger ﷺ said, “Do not harm me in my companions, for by the One in Whose hand is my self! even if any of you were to spend the like of Uhud in gold he would not equal a double cupped handful or a half of any one of them.”¹⁸ He also said ﷺ “When my companions are mentioned then restrain yourselves.” The people of knowledge say, “They are only to be mentioned in the best way.”

LISTENING TO THE LEADERS OF THE MUSLIMS AND OBEYING THEM

No one may rise up against anyone who takes command of the Muslims whether with their consent or by force, and then becomes oppressive, whether he is personally good or bad, whether he is unjust or just. One must fight enemies and perform the Hajj along with him. Paying Zakat to him, if he demands it, will discharge one's obligation. One must pray the Jumu'ah and the two 'Eid prayers behind him.

More than one of the people of knowledge and Malik, said, “One must not pray behind any of them who are innovators unless you fear him, and in that case you can pray and there is a disagreement as to whether one must repeat [the prayer later when one is alone].”

¹⁸ *Sahih Muslim*

FIGHTING OTHER MUSLIMS AND PEOPLE OF THE DHIMMAH

There is no harm in fighting the Khawarij, thieves from among the Muslims, and people of the Dhimmah who oppose you, in defence of your life and property.

THE SALAF

One must submit to the sunnahs. They are not to be contradicted by personal opinions nor are they to be opposed by analogical reasoning. That which the right acting first generations interpreted, we take as our interpretation, that which they acted upon we act upon, and that which they abandoned we abandon. We are permitted to grasp hold of that which they grasped hold and to follow them in that which they made clear, and to emulate them in that which they derived [by *ijtihad*] and what they thought [to be correct] concerning events, and that we should not leave their group over that about which they disagreed or its interpretation.

Everything which we have mentioned above is from the words of the people of the Sunnah and the Imams of the people in fiqh and hadith according to what we have explained. All of it is the word of Malik, some of it textually and some of it is well known as his way.

THE SUNNAH

Malik said, “Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said, ‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the ones who were responsible for affairs after him laid down sunnahs taking hold of which affirms the Book of Allah, makes obedience to Allah complete and makes one strong in the *deen* of Allah. No one may exchange them or alter them, nor investigate that which contradicts them. Whoever models himself on them will be guided, and whoever seeks help through them will be helped. Whoever abandons them and follows anything other than the way of the believers, Allah will entrust him to that which he has turned and roast him in Jahannam and evil it is as a destination’.” Malik said, “Umar’s determination in that seemed wonderful to me.”

‘AMAL – THE PRACTICE – AND AHADITH

Malik said, “The practice is more firmly established than hadiths. One whom I emulate said, ‘It is distressing that it should be said concerning the like of that, “So and so related to me from so and so”’: Some men of the Followers used to receive hadiths from others and they would say, ‘We are not unaware of these, but the practice is contrary to this.’” Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Hazm’s brother said to him, “Why did you not give judgement according to such and such a hadith?” He said, “I did not find people practising it.”

An-Nakha’i said, “Even if I had seen the Companions making *wudu*’ up to the wrists I would have performed *wudu*’ like that although I recite it ‘*Up to the elbows*’ (Surat al-Ma’idah, 7). That is because they cannot be suspected of abandoning sunnahs. They were the masters (*arbab*) of knowledge and the most eager of Allah’s people to follow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The only one who thinks that of them is someone who has a doubt about his *deen*.”

‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi, “A preceding Sunnah from the Sunnah of the people of Madinah is better than hadith.”

Ibn ‘Uyaynah said, “Ahadith are misleading except to people of *fiqh*,” meaning that others may interpret a thing according to its obvious meaning but it may have an interpretation which derives from another hadith, or it may have an indication which is hidden from one, or it may be a hadith which is abandoned, the reason for that only being comprehended by someone who is very extensive in his knowledge and his *fiqh*.

Ibn Wahb said, “Every man of hadith who has no Imam in *fiqh* is astray. If Allah had not rescued us by Malik and al-Layth we would have gone astray.”

It has been narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “There will carry this flag from every succeeding generation its just and equitable ones; they will remove the alterations of the excessively strict, the borrowings of the falsifiers, and the interpretations of the ignorant from it.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibn ‘Adi narrated it in a number of versions which are all weak but the

Ibn Mas‘ud said, “Whoever takes on a Sunnah then let him take the Sunnah of those who have died, those Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. They were the best of this Ummah, the most solicitously considerate for others in their hearts, the deepest of them in knowledge and the least talkative of them. They were a people whom Allah chose for the company of His Prophet and to establish His *deen*. Acknowledge their superiority and follow them in their sayings. Cling to that of their characters and their biographies of which you are able because they were on the straight path.”

Malik said, “Umar said, ‘Sunnahs have been established for you and obligations obligated upon you, and you have been left with something absolutely clear unless you deviate with people to right and left.’”

Malik said, “The ways are plainly apparent and the matter is clear.”

That man [Ibn ‘Umar] said, “I am more afraid for you of that which you do intentionally than I am of mistakes.”

Malik said, “Things are only corrupted when their proper stations are exceeded.”

Malik said, “This arguing about the *deen* is nothing at all.”

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said, “Whoever makes his *deen* a target for altercations will have to change his position a great deal. The limits of the *deen* are clear; it is not an affair in which personal opinion has any standing.”

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said, “I am not an innovator, but I am a follower.”

Malik said, “It used to be said, ‘Do not give someone with a deviant heart authority over your ears, for you do not know what he will teach you.’ An Ansari from the people of Madinah heard something from someone who believed in free-will and it attached itself to his heart. He came to his brothers whom he reckoned sincere advisers. When they forbade him he said, ‘How is it with that which has attached

very number of different narrations lends it some authenticity.

itself to my heart? If I knew that Allah would be pleased if I threw myself down from this minaret I would do it’.”

Malik said, “A man said, ‘I have entered into all of these sects and I have not seen anything straight’. One of the people of Madinah who was knowledgeable in Kalam [rational study of ‘*aqidah*’] said to him, ‘I will tell you why that is: because you have no *taqwa* of Allah ta’ala. If you had *taqwa* of Him, He would have made a way out for you’.”

IJTIHAD AND BID’AH

One of the sayings of the people of the Sunnah is, “Whoever’s exercise of independent judgement (*ijtihad*) leads him into innovation is not excused, because the Khawarij exercised their independent judgement in interpretation and they were not excused since because of their interpretation they left the Companions. He ﷺ named them those who come out of the *deen* [like the arrow which passes right through an animal], whereas he said that the one who exercises judgement in the rulings [of the *shari’ah*] will be rewarded even if he makes a mistake.”

AL-QADARIYYAH – PROPONENTS OF FREE WILL

Malik said, “The people who believe in the doctrine of free-will (*al-Qadariyyah*) are the worst people. I see them as fickle people of shallow intelligence and innovations because of many *ayat* which are against them. For example there is the word of Allah, mighty is He and majestic, ‘*The building they built will not cease to be a cause of doubt in their hearts*’ (Surat at-Tawbah, 111). There is ‘*And He revealed to Nuh, “None of your people will believe except for he who has already believed”*’; (Surah Hud, ayah 36). He also said, ‘*And they will not give birth to any but wicked disbelievers,*’ (Surah Nuh, 27), ‘*You will entice no one to them except for him who is to roast in the Blazing Fire,*’ (Surat as-Saffat, 163) and He said, ‘*but Allah was averse to their setting out so He held them back*’ (Surat at-Tawbah, 46). There are many other *ayat*.”

INCREASE AND DECREASE IN IMAN

Malik said, “Iman is speech and action, it increases and decreases.”

In some narrations from him there is, “Give up speaking about its decrease, and Allah has mentioned its increase in Qur’an.” Someone said, “So some of it is better than others?” He said, “Yes.”

One of the people of knowledge said, “Malik only hesitated about its decrease in this narration for fear of what it would lead to, i.e. that we should interpret it that it could decrease until it is all gone which would lead to the position of the Khawarij who declare that wrong actions invalidate Iman. His position is that decrease only occurs in that in which increase can occur, i.e. action.”

Someone said to Malik, “Should I say, ‘[I am] a believer, and Allah be praised’? or ‘If Allah wills’?” He said, “Say, ‘[I am] a believer’ and do not mix anything other than it with it.” Al-Awza’i also said that. Sahnun said about “do not mix anything other than it with it” i.e. “Do not say ‘If Allah wills’ nor ‘There is no power nor strength but by Allah’ nor ‘And Allah be praised’.” Muhammad ibn Sahnun said, “Whoever does not make an exception (by saying ‘if Allah wills’) and states positively that he is a believer, has replied to your question by stating that he is a believer with Allah. Whoever makes an exception (by saying ‘if Allah wills’) and does not assert positively about himself, then we say to him, ‘You know best what is within yourself, and that of your belief which is concealed from us so tell us about what is hidden within you. If it is like this...’ and he mentioned the basic requirements of Iman, “but if it is like this then you are a hypocrite and the like.” Those of our Imams who asserted their Iman positively did not mean that they had completed and perfected their Iman, but rather they meant “a wrongdoing believer” saying “I believe in Allah and His Messengers and that which His Messengers brought, so I am a believer in that with Allah at this time and Allah knows best my conclusion.”

Malik said, “The [Muslim] people of wrong action are wrongdoing believers.”

ACTION AND IMAN

Allah, mighty is He and majestic, has named action ‘Iman’.

He said, “*Allah would not waste your Iman*” (Surat al-Baqarah, 143) meaning, “Your prayer towards the Bait al-Maqdis.”

THE QUR’AN

Malik said, “The Qur’an is the speech of Allah, and His speech does not come to an end or cease and it is not a created thing.”

ALLAH’S ESTABLISHMENT ON THE THRONE

A man said to Malik, “Abu ‘Abdullah, ‘*The All-Merciful is established firmly on the Throne*’ (Surah Ta Ha, 4), how is He firmly established?” He said, “The firm establishment is not unknown, the how of it is not intelligible, asking about it is an innovation, to believe in it is a duty, and I see that you are a man of innovation; throw him out!”²⁰

THE VISION OF ALLAH

Someone said to Malik, “Will Allah be seen on the Day of Resurrection?” He said, “Yes. Allah, mighty is He and majestic, says, ‘*Faces on that day are bright gazing towards their Lord.*’ (Surat al-Qiyamah, 23) And He said, mighty is He and majestic, in another ayah, ‘*No! They on that day are veiled from their Lord*’ (Surat al-Muttaffifin, 15).” Malik said, “Abdullah ibn ‘Umar said, ‘Below Allah there are seventy thousand veils on the Day of Resurrection.’”

NARRATION OF CERTAIN AHADITH

Someone said, “What about one who narrates the hadith, ‘Allah created Adam on His form,’ and that ‘Allah will unveil His shank on the Day of Resurrection,’ and that ‘He will put His hand into Jahannam and bring whomever He wills out of it,’” and he [Malik] rejected them strenuously, and forbade anyone to narrate them. Someone said, “Ibn ‘Ijlan has narrated it.” He said, “He was not one

²⁰ Malik’s position in this is a clear example of the position of all of the *salaf* and thus has been espoused by all the people of the Sunnah since. From this it is clear that those who even delve into discussing the matter at all have thus entered into innovation.

of the people of fiqh.” Malik did not reject the hadith of ‘descent’²¹ nor the hadith of ‘laughter’. Someone said, “What about the hadith that ‘the Throne shook because of the death of Sa’d’?” He said, “It should not be narrated, and what call has a man to narrate that when he sees what danger it contains?”

Someone said, “What about the hadith, ‘Whoever says “Kafir!” to his brother has brought it upon one of the two of them’?” He said, “I think it is about the Haruriyyah.”²² Someone said, “Do you think that they are disbelievers because of that?” He said, “I do not know.”

HERETICS

Someone said, “Should someone who has the strength talk with heretics, the Ibadiyah,²³ people of the doctrine of free-will, and people of erroneous opinions?” He said, “No. The Khawarij only took exception to acts of disobedience, but these others talk about the matter of Allah. That man, meaning Ibn ‘Umar, said, ‘As for me, I am upon a clear way from my Lord. As for you, go to a doubter like yourself and argue with him’.”

Malik said, “Do not greet people of erroneous opinions, and do not sit with them unless you are tough with them. Their sick ones should not be visited, and hadiths must not be narrated from them.” Malik said, “Luqman said to his son, ‘My son, do not sit with the wicked and do not walk with them’ and he said, ‘Sit with the people of fiqh and walk with them so that if Allah sends down some mercy on them it will happen to you along with them’.”

Malik said, “I think that people of erroneous opinions and people of the doctrine of free-will should be sought to repent, then if they repent [well and good] and if not, then they should be fought.”

²¹ The hadith of ‘descent’ is the famous hadith which mentions that in the last third of the night Allah descends to the lower heaven.

²² The Haruriyyah are a sect of the Khawarij who considered a Muslim to be a kafir when he does a wrong action.

²³ The Ibadiyah are another sect of the Khawarij.

Sahnun said, “What I say is that if their dwellings are distinct and they call others to their innovation they must be fought. If their dwellings are not distinct and they call others to their innovation they must not be greeted, nor should they be married, their sick should not be visited and their funerals should not be attended, in order to teach them manners, and they should be disciplined and imprisoned until they turn back from their innovation,” meaning as ‘Umar did with Subaigh,²⁴ “yet their heirs do inherit from them. If they die, even if they had incited people, there is no harm if the prayer is said over them [i.e. they are Muslims].”²⁵

²⁴ Subaigh came to Madinah and began to ask people about the ambivalent *ayats* of the Qur’an. Sayyiduna ‘Umar beat him, and ordered Muslims not to sit with him.

²⁵ This is not licence for internecine warfare between groups each of which claims that it is orthodox and that its opponents are innovators, etc. This is the position for a genuine Muslim ruler governing by the Sunnah when confronted by heretical sects.