

# Al-Qawlul Mufeed

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Indeed all Praises are for Allah alone. We praise Him, seek His assistance, and seek His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Him from the evil of our own selves and the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allah guides, there is no one to lead him astray, and whomever is lead astray, there is no guide for him. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, who is alone without any partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and final messenger. To proceed:

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## How to Distinguish between Sunnah and Arab Culture (Part 2)

Ash-Shaikh Al-Muhaddith  
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(رحمه الله)

Now we shall mention some current examples, because many of the youth, and all praises belong to Allah, shorten their garments not allowing them to flow long with the intent of following the Sunnah. So is this a Sunnah that is custom or a Sunnah that is worship? If we looked at this action (shortening the garment) of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) separately from some of his statements then perhaps we would waver between connecting this action to the Sunnah that is worship or the Sunnah that is custom. But when the traditions containing the statements of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) came such as the narration where he said, 'The izaar of the believer is to the midway point of the shin and if it is longer then let it go to the ankles and if it is

longer then it is in the fire.' This (narration) puts and end to the wavering between whether this action is a Sunnah of worship or a Sunnah of custom and it is certain that this is a Sunnah of worship because when he described the method of clothing as it relates to the believer he said it is to the middle of the shin and if it is longer then there is no problem if it goes to the ankle but as for what is longer than that then it is in the fire. Opposite to this is a Sunnah that has been affirmed for the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) which is him having long hair. Sometimes his hair would reach his earlobes and if it was longer then it would reach the top of his shoulders. Rather, it has been confirmed that when the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) entered Mecca he had his hair in four braids. So is growing the hair long firstly, and then putting it into braids secondly, a

Sunnah of worship or a Sunnah of custom? The answer as I see it, there is nothing here that calls to, justifies, or can be construed to cause any wavering concerning as to whether this is a Sunnah or custom or worship. Why? Firstly, because the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) was not the one who started this Sunnah, rather this was present before the Messenger was born, not to mention before he became a prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam)! This was the custom of the Arabs; they used to grow their hair long. And some of the youth to this day, like the youth in the deserts of Syria that we have witnessed, bunch their hair and put it into braids. Therefore this is a custom that was not started by the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) rather he just continued upon the customs of the Arabs letting his hair grow and when he entered Mecca he put it into four braids. There is nothing here that would hurt us if

we considered this Sunnah a Sunnah of custom, as opposed to a Sunnah of worship.

Another example: The prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to wear white; is this a Sunnah of custom or a Sunnah of worship? If his statement had not been narrated, "The best clothes for you are white clothes, therefore dress your living in white clothes and bury your dead in white clothes" we would have said this was his preference as the Messenger (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to love white clothes just as he used to love honey for example and he used to hate lizard meat. But when his statement came, 'the best clothes for you are white', and then he ordered with wearing it, and at the least a command shows that it is recommended, saying dress your living in white clothes and bury your dead in white clothes, it left from being a Sunnah of custom and became a Sunnah of worship.

With this standard and criterion it is obligatory for us to weigh the actions of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam). Therefore what he started having nothing in its context making us believe it is a Sunnah of custom then it is a Sunnah of worship. As for his actions (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) which are consistent with the customs of the Arabs then these actions are from the Arab customs and it is no problem for the one who does them just as it is no problem for the one who leaves them. Likewise are his actions (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) that dealt with his disposition or his personal taste which also have no connection to the affairs of worship. As for the

mentioned example, the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to love honey, and it's possible that we will find some people who hate honey but we can't say they have opposed the Sunnah!! Eating honey is not worship. Therefore if it is not easy for a person to eat honey or if they have no desire to eat honey then we don't say they have opposed the Sunnah rather they have opposed the disposition of the Prophet which was that he loved honey. From a different angle, the Prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to hate lizard meat and the Arabs found it to be pleasant, and when it was put on the table of the Prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) and he was told that it was lizard meat he didn't touch it.

Once in front of him was one of the famous companions, none other than Khalid ibn Walid and he used to eat it with great desire such that it would cause people to look at him; he would eat and the juices would stream down his beard. So when he saw that his prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) was not eating he said, "O Messenger of Allah is this (lizard meat) haram?" because he felt a shock inside of himself, he's eating ravenously and the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) is not reaching his hand towards the food; so he said, 'is this haram'. The prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "No, but this was not in the land of my people so I find that I detest it." Therefore we don't say to the person that loves lizard meat, "you have opposed the Sunnah", because the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to hate lizard meat and we also

don't say this to the one who does not like honey. And you will find those who don't like honey, and I have found that one of my sons does not like honey. I love honey and I love all sweets in general, but one of my sons hates honey; but I don't say to him, 'You have opposed the Sunnah', because this has no connection to worship. And like this, it is incumbent upon us to look at the actions of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam).

Many of the people, especially the students of knowledge, during this time period are heedless of these specifics and some of them go to extremes. So you find some of the youth intending to grow their hair long believing that this is the Sunnah of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam). Yes, I say this is from the actions of the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) but there is no proof that it is better. Rather the Prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) announced as is found in Sahih Muslim, 'shave it all or leave it all'. Therefore if the hair is grown long it is not a Sunnah of worship rather it is only a Sunnah of custom. So if a person continues to shave his head his entire life it can not be said that he is opposing the Sunnah of the prophet because the prophet (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) grew his hair his entire life; with the exception being during the Hajj and Umrah because he (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) used to shave his head during this time.

To Be Continued...

Translated by Rasheed Barbee