

Which Sunnah, if Abandoned, Deprives One of Intercession?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: We have heard a hadith in which the Noble Prophet ﷺ stated: "Whoever abandons my Sunnah will not receive my intercession." The question about this is that we have heard that some acts are Sunnah, yet there is no sin in leaving them. So, if leaving them is not sinful, then why has the hadith mentioned deprivation of intercession for doing so? Please guide us regarding this.

Answer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

There are two types of Sunnahs of the Prophet ﷺ:

(1) **The Sunan Huda**, which is also known as Sunnah Mu'akkadah. These are the Sunnahs which the Prophet ﷺ performed regularly, but he also left them occasionally to demonstrate its permissibility, or those Sunnahs which He ﷺ emphasized, but He didn't totally disallow leaving them. There is great emphasis in shari'ah on performing these Sunnahs, to the extent that the one who skips them once is deserving of reproach. The one who leaves it habitually is a fasiq; their testimony is rejected, and they deserve punishment.

(2) **The Sunan Zawa'id**, which are also known as Sunnah Ghair-Mu'akkadah. Although it is disliked by shari'ah to leave these Sunnahs, leaving them does not entail a warning or sin, even if it is left habitually, regardless of whether the Prophet ﷺ practiced them regularly or not. Performing these Sunnahs is rewardable. If one leaves them, even if they do so habitually, there is neither reproach nor any consequence for it.

Now, the answer to the question is that the hadith mentioned in the question and other similar narrations in which those who leave a Sunnah are reproached or warned, are only for the one who leaves the Sunnah Mu'akkadah. These warnings are not for the one who leaves Sunnah Ghair-Mu'akkadah.

Sadr al-Shari'ah, Badr al-Tareeqah, 'Allamah Maulana Mufti Muhammad Amjad 'Ali A'zami عليه رحمة الله القوي mentions the definitions of Sunnah Mu'akkadah and Ghair-Mu'akkadah and their rulings as follows:

سنت مؤکده : وہ جس کو حضور اقدس صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم نے ہمیشہ کیا ہو، البتہ بیانِ جواز کے واسطے کبھی ترک بھی فرمایا ہو یا وہ کہ اس کے کرنے کی تاکید فرمائی مگر جانبِ ترک بالکل مسدود نہ فرمائی ہو، اس کا ترک اساءت اور کرنا ثواب اور نادر اترک پر عتاب اور اس کی عادت پر استحقاقِ عذاب۔ سنت غیر مؤکده : وہ کہ نظرِ شرع میں ایسی مطلوب ہو کہ اس کے ترک کو ناپسند رکھے مگر نہ اس حد تک کہ اس پر وعید عذاب فرمائے عام ازیں کہ حضور سید عالم صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم نے اس پر مداومت فرمائی یا نہیں، اس کا کرنا ثواب اور نہ کرنا اگرچہ عادتاً ہو موجبِ عتاب نہیں۔

Translation: Sunnah Mu'akkadah: That which the Prophet ﷺ performed regularly but sometimes left it to demonstrate its permissibility. Or that which He ﷺ emphasized,

but He didn't totally disallow leaving it. Leaving this is Isa'at. Performing it is rewarding. Leaving it occasionally is reproached, and leaving it habitually makes one deserving of punishment. Sunnah Ghair-Mu'akkadah: It is desirable by shari'ah such that leaving it is disliked, but not to an extent that leaving them entails a warning of punishment, regardless of whether the Prophet ﷺ regularly performed it or not. Performing this is rewarding, and leaving it, even habitually, is not punishable. (Bahar-e-Shari'at, Vol. 1, p. 283, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madinah, Karachi)

The warning in the hadith is for the one who leaves a Sunnah Mu'akkadah, as stated in *Hashiyah al-Tahtawi 'Ala Maraq al-Falah* and *Radd al-Muhtar* with reference to the book *al-Talweeh 'Ala al-Tawdeeh* of 'Allamah Sa'd-Uddin al-Taftazani رحمه الله تعالى عليه:

ترك السنة المؤكدة قريب من الحرام يستحق حرمان الشفاعة، لقوله عليه الصلاة والسلام: من ترك سنتي لم ينل شفاعتي

Translation: Leaving Sunnah Mu'akkadah is close to haram. The one who leaves it will be deprived of intercession because He (ﷺ) stated: "The one who leaves my Sunnah will not attain my intercession." (Radd al-Muhtar, Vol. 1, p. 232, Publ. Quetta)

It is similarly stated in *Fatawa Razawiyyah*:

سنن مؤکدہ کے ترک میں سخت ملامت ہوگی اور عیاذ باللہ شفاعت سے محرومی بھی وارد۔

Translation: There will be severe reproach for abandoning a Sunnah Mu'akkadah, and it is also reported that it will deprive one of intercession, (Allah forbid). (Fatawa Razawiyyah, Vol. 10, p. 796, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

Similarly, Sadr al-Shari'ah, Mufti Muhammad Amjad 'Ali A'zami رحمه الله القوي states in *Bahar-e-Shari'at*:

سنتیں بعض مؤکدہ ہیں کہ شریعت میں اس پر تاکید آئی۔ بلاعذر ایک بار بھی ترک کرے تو مستحق ملامت ہے اور ترک کی عادت کرے تو فاسق، مردود الشہادۃ، مستحق نار ہے۔ اور بعض ائمہ نے فرمایا: کہ "وہ گمراہ ٹھہرایا جائے گا اور گنہگار ہے، اگرچہ اس کا گناہ واجب کے ترک سے کم ہے۔" "تلوخ میں ہے، کہ اس کا ترک قریب حرام کے ہے۔ اس کا تارک مستحق ہے کہ معاذ اللہ! شفاعت سے محروم ہو جائے کہ حضور اقدس صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: "جو میری سنت کو ترک کریگا، اسے میری شفاعت نہ ملے گی۔"

Translation: Some Sunnahs are classified as Mu'akkadah because the shari'ah has placed great emphasis upon them. If one leaves it even once without a valid reason, they deserve to be reproached. The one who makes a habit of leaving it is a fasiq; their testimony is rejected, and they deserve punishment. Some scholars have stated: They are declared misguided, and they are sinful, though this sin is less than the sin of leaving a wajib. It is stated in *al-Talweeh* that, "leaving this is close to haram. The one who leaves this deserves to be deprived of intercession, (Allah forbid), because the Noble Prophet ﷺ said: "The one who leaves my Sunnah will not attain my intercession." (Bahar-e-Shari'at, Vol. 1, p. 662, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madinah, Karachi)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger ﷺ knows best.)

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Ref No: Fsd-9283

Date: 28th Sha'ban Al-Mu'azzam 1446 AH/ 27th February 2025



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