



Who first used the term, “Ahlus Sunnah”

Transcribed & compiled by: Akram an-Najdee

Source: Shaykh Saaleh Aal ash-Shaykh, Explanation of ‘Aqeedatut Tahaawiyyah (pnt. 2)

Version 1.1

“This is a term that was used at the end of the second hijree generation...”

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Ibn Abil ‘Izz al-Hanafee said in his explanation of ‘Aqeedatut Tahaawiyyah of Imaam Aboo Ja’far at-Tahaawee:

This is a mention of clarification of the Beliefs of Ahlus Sunnah Wal-Jamaa’ah

His statement ((*Ahlus Sunnah Wal-Jamaa’ah*)), Ahlus Sunnah Wal-Jamaa’ah: this is a term that was used at the end of the second hijree generation for those who follow the narrations and oppose the different sects that left the way of the Sahaabah and the Taabi’een.

The first to use it were some of the Shaykhs of Imaam al-Bukhaaree – may Allaah have Mercy upon them all – and they combined two terms, “Sunnah” and “Jamaa’ah”, because there are those who call to following the Sunnah but not with the Jamaa’ah (group) and there are those who call to the Jamaa’ah without following the Sunnah.

So then the way of the Hadeeth and Athaar, the followers of the Salaf as-Saalih (righteous predecessors) is based on two things: *Following the Sunnah and the Jamaa’ah*.



In reality, all of them necessitate the other. Following the Sunnah is following the Jamaa’ah, and following the Jamaa’ah is following the Sunnah and like that because the Prophet – may the Peace and Blessings of Allaah be upon him- said, as it is authentically reported from him in the Hadeeth recorded in the Sunan:

وَسَتَفْتَرُقُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةَ عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً. كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا وَاحِدَةً. وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ

“And this Ummah will split into 73 sects, all of them in the Fire except for one, and they are the Jamaa’ah”¹

So the sects will enter the fire. Meaning, they are promised with entry into the fire, and the saved ones are a single sect and it is the Jamaa’ah. And they are those who follow the Sunnah, imitating the statement of the Prophet – may the Peace and Blessings of Allaah be upon him -:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا، وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا

بِالنَّوَاجِذِ

“Upon you is my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khaleefahs after me, hold fast to it, and grip onto it with your molar teeth.”² ... to the end of the hadeeth.

¹ Aboo Daawood (4596), at-Tirmidhee (2640), and Ibn Maajah (3993)

² Aboo Daawood (4607), at-Tirmidhee (2676), and Ibn Maajah (42)



If Ahlus Sunnah were singled out and called them to be the opposite of the Raafidhah Shee’ah, because the term, “*Ahlus Sunnah*” is general and the intent with it is what opposes the Shee’ah and is generally referred to as the People of Hadeeth and Athar. Due to this, “Jamaa’ah” was added to the “Sunnah”. Both of them necessitate one another so that there is specification to the generality of it. So the intent will generally be what opposes all the sects: the Rawaafidh, Khawaarij, Jahmiyyah, Murjiyyah, Qadariyyah, and Jabariyyah, to the rest of the sects.

We mentioned to you in the start of the explanation of Waasitiyyah the detailed meaning of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa’ah, and the meaning of Jamaa’ah, and the Jamaa’ah of the religion and the Jamaa’ah and what returns to it.