89878 - The virtue of adhering to the Sunnah at times of widespread evil

the question

The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever adheres to my sunnah when my ummah is corrupt will have the reward of a hundred martyrs.” Is the hadith saheeh? If it is saheeh, what sort of deeds should a person do so that he will be regarded as adhering to the Sunnah? I live in an Arab country and the situation is obvious. Is refraining from haraam things sufficient for that?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a ship of salvation and a haven of safety. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) urged us to adhere to it and not neglect it. He said: “You must adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who come after me. Adhere to it and cling to it strongly, and beware of newly-invented matters, for every newly-invented matter is an innovation (bid’ah) and every innovation is a going astray.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (4607) and classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

When evil and corruption become widespread and innovation and fitnah prevail, the reward for the one who adheres to the Sunnah will be greater, and the status of those who follow the Sunnah will be higher, for they are living as strangers with the light that they bear in the midst of that darkness and because of their efforts to set the people’s affairs straight.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Islam began as something strange and will revert to being something strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.” It was said: Who are

they, O Messenger of Allah? He said: “Those who are righteous when the people are corrupt.” Narrated by Abu ‘Amr al-Daani in al-Sunan al-Waaridah fi’l-Fitan (1/25) from the hadith of Ibn Mas’ood; classed as saheeh by al-Albani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (1273); the hadith is also narrated in Saheeh Muslim (145).

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“Ahead of you there lie days of patience, during which being patient will be like grasping a hot coal. The one who does good deeds then will have a reward like that of fifty men who do such deeds. – And someone else added – They said: O Messenger of Allah, the reward of fifty of them? He said: “The reward of fifty of you.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (4341); al-Tirmidhi (3085) and he said: it is a hasan hadith. It was classed as saheeh by al-Albani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (494). In some reports of the hadith it says: “They are the ones who will revive my Sunnah and teach it to the people.”

Adhering to the Sunnah means several things:

1-Doing obligatory duties and avoiding haraam things.

2-Avoiding innovations in actions and beliefs.

3-Striving to do Sunnah and mustahabb deeds as much as one is able.

4-Calling people to goodness and trying to reform them as much as possible.

In a lecture by Shaykh Ibn Jibreen about the true meaning of religious commitment, he said (p. 10):

Undoubtedly the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is written down and is close at hand and easily accessible to the one who seeks it. All we have to do is look for it. If we learn a Sunnah we must act upon it so that it will be true when it is said of us that So and so is religiously-committed. We should pay no attention to those who put us down, despise us or mock us etc.

Sunnahs may be obligatory, or they may be mustahabb, or they may come under the heading of good manners or good attitude. The Muslim should do every Sunnah that he is able to, seeking reward.

The religiously-committed person is the one who, every time he hears a hadith, rushes to apply it and is very keen to act upon it, whether it is mustahabb or naafil.

So for example, you may see him going to the mosque early and feeling sad if someone else gets there before him, or you may see him striving to read more Quran and recite more dhikr than others, or you may see him doing a lot of different kinds of acts of worship, striving to ensure that all his deeds and acts of worship are in accordance with the Sunnah, with no element of bid'ah, so that these deeds and acts of worship will be acceptable to Allah, because when a deed is accepted the Muslim attains the good pleasure of his Lord. We ask Allah to make all our deeds acceptable to Him, for He is the All-Hearing, Ever-Responsive. End quote.

Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan (may Allah preserve him) said in al-Muntaqa (2/question no. 270):

You must adhere to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and follow it constantly, and not pay any attention to those who criticize you or blame you for that, especially if these sunnahs are obligatory duties that must be adhered to, and are not just mustahabb, provided you do not go to extremes. But if you go to extremes, that is not appropriate, rather it is essential to be balanced and moderate in applying the Sunnah and acting upon it, without exaggerating or going to extremes, and without being negligent or careless. This is what you should do. Whatever the case, you will be rewarded in sha Allah, and you must adhere to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). End quote.

Secondly:

As for the hadith which is mentioned by the questioner, that the one who adheres to the Sunnah when the people are corrupt will have the reward of a martyr or of a hundred martyrs, this is a da'eef (weak) hadith that is not sound. There follows some discussion about it.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever adheres to my sunnah when my ummah is corrupt will have the reward of a martyr.” Narrated by al-Tabaraani in al-Awsat (2/31) and from him by Abu Nu’aym in Hilyat al-Awliya’ (8/200).

There are two faults in its isnaad:

1 – ‘Abd al-Majeed ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Abi Rawaad was the only narrator of this hadith, and this is not acceptable.

2 – Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Adhri is unknown (majhool). Al-Haythami said in Majma’ al-Zawaa’id (1/172): I did not find anyone who wrote his biography.

Hence it was classed as da’eef (weak) by Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) in al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah (327).

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“Whoever adheres to my Sunnah when my ummah is corrupt will have the reward of a hundred martyrs.”

Narrated by Ibn ‘Adiyy in al-Kaamil (2/327). Its isnaad is very weak (da’eef jiddan). It includes al-Hasan ibn Qutaybah, who is matrook al-hadith (i.e., his hadith is not accepted). See his biography in Lisaan al-Mizaan (2/246). It was also classed as da’eef by al-Albani in al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah (326).

And Allah knows best.