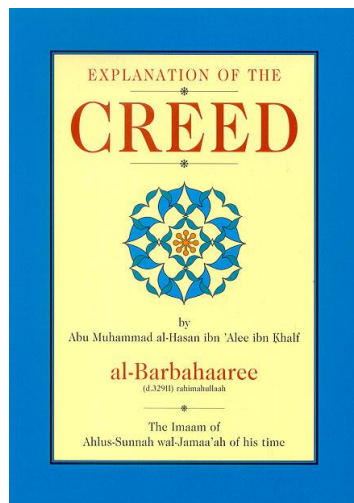


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A Glimpse at the Classic Works of Islam: *Sharh al-Sunnah* by Imam al-Barbahari
Abu al-Hasan Malik al-Akhdar



Sharh al-Sunnah (*The Explanation of the Creed*) has been a thorn in the sides of the people of desires for generations. The author, Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ali b. Khalaf al-Barbahari (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), was a Hanbali scholar known for his firmness upon the Sunnah and his sternness against *bidah* and its people. He penned this monumental work to clarify the creed of the Saved Sect and to repudiate the doubts of misguided groups like the *Khawarij*, the *Rafidah*, the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah*, etc. Doubts that lead to the Fire. And as for those who minimize the gravity of innovation, *Imam* al-Barbahari writes,

Beware of small innovations because they grow until they become large. This is the case with every innovation introduced in this *Ummah*. It began as something small, bearing resemblance to the truth which is why those who entered it were misled and then were unable to leave it. So it grew and became the religion which they followed and thus deviated from the Straight Path and left Islam.¹

The treatise, founded upon the Book and the Sunnah, comprises more than a hundred points, primarily covering matters of belief, including: the belief that if a person becomes ill, Allah will reward him accordingly; the belief in the punishment of the grave; the belief that *Iman* is a statement, an action, and an intention, and that it increases and decreases; the belief that Allah spoke to Musa, etc. Faith in these matters is the distinguishing characteristic of the people of Sunnah, and anyone who negates these beliefs or distorts them can never be counted among them. Thus, “[i]t is impermissible for anyone to say so-and-so is a person of Sunnah,” al-Barbahari states, “until he possesses the attributes of a *Sunni*.”

Additionally, the treatise covers important issues like following the narrations of the *Salaf*, honoring the companions, and being obedient to the Muslim rulers. Further, it touches on matters of worship like paying Zakat and on social interactions like buying and selling in the marketplaces.

There are currently several explications and commentaries of the text available, including: *al-Allamah* Ahmad al-Najmi's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) commentary *Irshad al-Sari ila Sharh al-Sunnah li al-Barbahari*; *al-*

¹ Al-Hasan al-Barbahari, *Explanation of the Creed*, trans. Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank (Birmingham: al-Haneef Publications, 1995), 28-29.

Allamah Rabi b. Hadi al-Madkhali's (حَفِظَهُ اللهُ) explication *Ann al-Bari bi Bayan ma Tadammnanahu Sharh al-Sunnah li al-Imam al-Barbahari*; and al-Allamah Salih al-Fawzan's (حَفِظَهُ اللهُ) commentary *Ithaf al-Qari bi Ta'liqat ala Sharh al-Sunnah li al-Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ali b. Khalaf al-Barbahari*.

And gratefully, the book was meticulously rendered into English close twenty-five years ago by the noble brother Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ). May Allah place it in his scales of good. Since then, by Allah's Permission, the translation has remained in print and has been widely read and taught in *Salafi* mosques, centers, and homes worldwide.

Concerning the importance of this work, the author himself writes, "Do not hide this book from anyone of the people of the *Qiblah*. Perhaps through it, Allah will bring a confused person out of his confusion or an innovator out of his innovation or a misguided one out of his misguidance, and he may be saved through it."² This means, as al-Allamah Salih al-Fawzan mentioned, that the book should be spread and disseminated among the Muslims, "because this is from spreading beneficial knowledge and advising with truth; and it is incumbent upon us to spread beneficial works."³

In sum, *Sharh al-Sunnah* by Imam al-Barbahari is an essential work on the creed of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. No library is complete without it.



² Ibid, 77.

³ Salih al-Fawzan, *Ithaf al-Qari bi Ta'liqat ala Sharh al-Sunnah li al-Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ali b. Khalaf al-Barbahari*, vol. 2 (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1429 AH/2008 CE), 95.