

# Sharh Us-Sunnah Explanation of The First 12 Principles

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## Author's Preface (Muqaddimah)

All praise is due to Allah alone, Lord of all that exists. I begin this humble work with the sincere intention to seek His pleasure alone, to serve His Book and the guidance of His Messenger , to teach myself and my fellow believers, and to deepen my own understanding of His Revelation. I remind myself, before anyone else, that this writing is not for status, fame, nor recognition — but solely to seek His Face, His acceptance, and His forgiveness.

This reminder is for my own heart before it is for others, and I ask Allah to purify my intention from any hidden desires or worldly attachments, and to make every word a testimony for me and not against me on the Day when no soul will benefit except by what Allah has accepted from them.

#### Du'ā:

O Allah, I ask You by Your Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes to make this work sincerely for Your sake, and to accept it from me even with its shortcomings and deficiencies. Make it a means for me and those who read it to draw nearer to You, to reflect deeply upon Your Words, and to act upon what is contained therein.

O Allah, grant us beneficial knowledge, hearts that are humbled before You, and actions that are pure and righteous. Do not make this knowledge a proof against us, but rather a light in our graves, a companion in our loneliness, and a witness for us on the Day we meet You. Ameen.

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- 7. The First Principle: Know that Islam is the Sunnah and the Sunnah is Islam and that one of them cannot be established without the other.
- 8. The Second Principle: From the Sunnah is clinging to the Jamaa'ah. (Clinging to the Jamaa'ah is part of the Sunnah). Whoever desires other than the Jamaa'ah (is averse to the Jamaa'ah) and departs/abandons it then he has thrown off the yoke of Islam from his neck and is astray, leading (and will lead others) astray.
- 9. The Third Principle: The foundation upon which the Jamaa'ah is built is the Companions of the Messenger of Allah . They're Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah (The people of the Sunnah and the Community). Therefore, whoever does not take (his Religion) from them has certainly gone astray and innovated and every innovation is misguidance and misguidance and its people (and followers) are in the Hell-Fire.
- 10. The Fourth Principle: Umar ibn al-Khattab (RadiyAllahu'anhu) said "There is no excuse for anyone regarding a form of misguidance (going astray) which he embarked upon thinking it to be guidance. Nor regarding (true) guidance (Sunnah, Sahabah) which he abandoned thinking it to be misguidance. Since the affairs/matters have been made clear/explained, the proof established and the excuse cut off/ceased. That is because the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah have consolidated and safeguarded all of the Religion. It has been made clear (everything has been clarified) to the people, so it is upon the people to comply/conform/fulfill and follow.
- 11. The Fifth Principle: Know, May Allah have mercy upon you that the Religion is what came from Allah, The Blessed and Most High, it is not something left (or founded) to the intellects and opinions of men. Rather,

knowledge of it is what comes from Allah and His Messenger . So do not follow anything based upon/with your desires and so deviate away from the Religion and leave Islam. For indeed, there is no proof (and) excuse for you since Allah's Messenger explained the Sunnah to his Ummah and made it clear/clarified it to his companions and they're the Jamaa'ah, and they're the main body (as-Sawaad al-A'dham). And As-Sawaad al-A'dham is the truth and its followers. Therefore, he who contradicts/opposes the Companions of Allah's Messenger in any of the affairs/matters of the Religion then he has fallen into disbelief.

- 12. The Sixth Principle: Know, that the people never introduced an innovation/bid'ah until they abandon it's like from the Sunnah! Be aware of forbidden matters (newly invented matters (and due to desire)) because every newly invented matter is an innovation and every single innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance and its people will be in the Fire!
- 13. The Seventh Principle: Beware of small innovations because they grow (returns back) until they become large, this was the case with every innovation introduced into this Ummah. At the beginning, it was something small in resemblance to something looking like the truth much (and was little in opposition), which is why those who entered it (never enter it!) were misled/deceived by it. Then they were unable to leave it/come out of it! (it became their practice) So it grew/became big! And became (taken as) the Religion which they followed/and worship is made! Thus, deviated/contradicted the straight path and then left Islam!
- 14. The Eighth Principle: May Allah have mercy upon you! Examine (be critical) and careful at everyone who's speech you hear, particularly/ especially in your time. So, do not act in haste (anything to it, accepting) and do not enter/go into anything from it until you ask and see: Did anyone of the Companions of the Messenger speak about it or any of the Scholars? So, if you find a narration from them (Sahabah, the A'immah, Imaams of the Sunnah) about it (from them), cling/hold on to it, do not go beyond/leave it for anything and do not give precedence and preference to anything over it and thus fall into the Fire!
- 15. The Nineth Principle: Know that leaving/departing/deviation from the right/correct path happens in (only) 2 ways. Firstly, that a man strays from the correct path intending and desiring nothing but good. So, his error (any error) is not to be followed! Since/because it leads to destruction! Secondly a man who deliberately opposes/defies (challenges/rebels/ resists) the truth! And acts contrary/disagrees to the pious ones who came before him. He is astray leading others astray; he is a rebellious devil within the Ummah. It is a duty/incumbent upon those who know of him to warn the people

- against him and to explain his condition to them so that no one falls into his innovation and is destroyed.
- 16. The Tenth Principle: May Allah have mercy upon you! Know that the Islam of a slave will not be complete until he follows (Mutebi), attests and submits to (accepts) the Quran and Sunnah/truth. So, anyone who claims (assumes) that there is something left/remains (anything) from Islam not sufficiently explained (failed to suffice) by the Sahabah of Allah's Messenger , has denied them, falsely accused them, spoken ill of them (has lied upon and attacked them) and has split from them. And this alone is sufficient factionalism (in Islam) and defamation against them. He is an innovator, astray and leading others astray introducing into Islam that which is not from it.
- 17. The Eleventh Principle: Know, May Allah have Mercy upon you that there is neither qiyas (analogy) in the Sunnah nor reasoning with examples/similitudes for it, and desires are not to be followed in it! Rather, it is belief and (just a case of) affirming the narrations from the Messenger of Allah without kayf (asking how), or sharh (explanation that contradicts the correct meaning), it should not be asked why or how.
- **18.** The Twelfth Principle: Rhetoric (speculative speech), Debating, arguing and disputing are innovations which throw doubt into the heart, even if the person by way of it reaches the truth and the Sunnah (it is still an innovation).

#### Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, the One who completed His religion, perfected His favour, and has made the path of guidance distinct from the path of misguidance. We praise Him, seek His help, and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Him from the evil of our own souls and from the consequences of our actions. Whomever Allah guides, none can misguide; and whomever He allows to go astray, none can guide. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger—sent as a mercy, a bringer of glad tidings, a warner, and a caller to Allah by His permission, and as a lamp spreading light.

## To proceed:

Indeed, the greatest gift that Allah bestows upon His slave is guidance to the path of the Sunnah and the way of the Salaf—the saved sect, the aided group (which is the true, untainted Islam) - those who traverse the clear and unbroken path of the Prophet and his Companions. The obligation of adhering to the Sunnah is not a matter of preference or luxury; it is a divine mandate, the lifeline of salvation, and the essence of Islam preserved through chains of trust, narration, and loyalty.

In every age, the people of Sunnah are few, but they are the firmest. Their strength is not in number but in faith, sincerity and clarity. Their light is not borrowed from innovation but shines from revelation. And their loyalty is not tied to groups, parties, personalities or slogans—but to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the understanding of the noble Companions, free from distortion, addition, and subtraction.

The scholars of the past would say: "The Sunnah is like the Ark of Nūḥ—whoever boards it is saved, and whoever turns away from it is drowned." And Ibn al-Qayyim عند said: "There is no path to Allah except through the gate of the Messenger." (Madārij as-Sālikīn)

Thus, understanding and adhering to the Sunnah is not limited to outward actions, nor does it consist solely of dress, speech, or gestures. Rather, it is a complete methodology: in 'Aqīdah, 'Ibādah, Mu'āmalāt, Akhlāq, Da'wah, and Wala' wal-Barā'. It is a binding code of belief and behavior.

In this work, we embark upon the explanation of the first 12 foundational principles of the Sharh us-Sunnah of al-Barbahari (rahimahullaah), as preserved by the early imāms of guidance. These principles are not time-bound. They do not bend to modern reinterpretation. They are not subjected to cultural pressure or reformation.

These principles are extrapolated origin from the divine, prophetic in explanation, and safeguarded by the Salaf against deviation, distortion, and sectarianism.

This book is a humble attempt to revive, clarify, and return to what was pure and protected before the splitting of the Ummah. Its purpose is to remind, realign, and reconnect the Muslim with the path of safety, especially in an age of confusion, betrayal, and the glorification of misguided ideologies.

It is upon every Muslim who seeks salvation to ask themselves: **Am I truly upon the Sunnah?** The Sunnah is clarity. The manhaj is precise. And the road of the Salaf is free from the fog of blind-following, partisanship, and emotional appeal.

We ask Allah to make this work sincere, beneficial, and heavy on the scales on the Day when wealth and lineage will not benefit—except he who comes to Allah with a saleem heart.

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## Sharh us-Sunnah: Explanation of The First 12 Principles

#### The Author

## His Name, Kunyah, and Lineage

He was the noble Imām, the mujahid upon the Sunnah, a towering scholar of his era and a prominent authority in the Ḥanbalī madhhab: Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Khalaf al-Barbahārī.

The title "al-Barbahārī" is said to be derived from the name of a type of medicinal herb. Some scholars, including Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān (ḥafizahullāh), have mentioned that this name may indicate that he was involved in the preparation or sale of medicine. Regardless, his true legacy lies not in trade, but in his resolute defence of the Sunnah, his leadership among the scholars of Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and his fierce opposition to innovation and misguidance in the Ummah.

## His Birth and Upbringing

Imām al-Barbahārī (حمه الله was born in the year 253 AH, during the caliphate of al-Mu'taz Billāh Muḥammad ibn al-Khalīfah al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh, also known as Ja'far ibn al-Mu'taṣim Billāh al-'Abbāsī. He had assumed the caliphate in Sāmarrā' in the month of Muḥarram, 251 AH, at just nineteen years of age, under the dominance and political manipulation of the Turkic military elite who held considerable influence over the Abbasid throne during that period.

This was a time of political turbulence and instability, but also an era that still belonged to the first three noble generations of Islam—a time praised by the Prophet and favored for its scholarly output and clarity upon the Sunnah. His birth occurred approximately twelve years after the passing of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal win 241 AH, whose legacy in theology and ḥanbalī jurisprudence would heavily influence the course of Barbahārī's life and teachings.

He was born in the city of Baghdād, which, at the time, was a global center of learning and a stronghold of the Sunnah. The environment was rich with scholars, students, and the spread of authentic knowledge. It was during this period that the esteemed

compilers of ḥadīth such as Abū Dāwūd as-Sijistānī and Ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī رحمهما were active in compiling their respective *Sunan* works.

Many renowned imāms and transmitters of the Sunnah were alive and active during his early years, including Ḥanbal ibn Isḥāq, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hānī, and Abū Bakr al-Khallāl—all of whom were among the pillars of the Ḥanbalī tradition and carried the direct legacy of Imām Aḥmad himself.

From this noble soil, al-Barbahārī would rise—shaped by the legacy of truth, surrounded by the companions of great imāms, and committed to reviving and defending the pristine Sunnah in an age of emerging innovation and political turmoil.

#### His Teachers

Imām al-Barbahārī رحمه الله was closely connected to the senior-most and distinguished students of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رحمه الله, and he benefitted from the companionship of some of the greatest scholars of his era—those known for their firmness upon the Sunnah, mastery in fiqh, and excellence in ḥadīth. Among these noble figures was Imām Abū Bakr al-Marwudhī (Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Marwodhī (حمه الله الله المعاقبة)—a leading authority in ḥadīth, jurisprudence, and a direct inheritor of the legacy of Imām Aḥmad.

It was from scholars like al-Marwudhī and others that al-Barbahārī acquired his deep knowledge, noble character, and unwavering commitment to the creed of the Salaf. His upbringing among such luminaries firmly rooted him in the 'aqīdah and methodology of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.

The renowned historian and biographer Ibn Abī Yaʿlā—in his classic work Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah (The Ranks of the Ḥanbalī Scholars)—said regarding Imām Abū Bakr al-Marwudhī: "He was the foremost among the companions of Imām Aḥmad due to his waraʿ (scrupulousness), piety, and virtue. Imām Aḥmad used to enjoy his company and feel at ease with him."

It was this same Marwudhī who had the honor of closing the eyes of Imām Aḥmad at his death, and who performed his ghusl (ritual washing)—a testimony to both his closeness and his trustworthiness. He passed away in the year 275 AH, approximately 34 years after the death of Imām Aḥmad, when al-Barbahārī was about 22 years old, allowing ample time for direct learning and transmission.

Among the other distinguished scholars connected to Imām Aḥmad—and whose influence reached Imām al-Barbahārī—was Imām Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh at-Tustarī رحمه, a man of immense worship and zuhd (asceticism), whose reputation for spirituality was matched by his firm orthodoxy. He died in the year 283 AH.

Also from this noble generation was Imām al-Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf رحمه الله, of whom Imām Aḥmad is reported to have said: "Khurāsān has never produced the likes of al-Fath ibn Shukhruf."

He passed away in 273 AH, further indicating the depth of the scholarly reservoir from which al-Barbahārī drew. These were not merely names in a lineage, but living examples of the correct 'Aqīdah and Manhaj, whose knowledge and uprightness were publicly known, whose creed was preserved, and whose loyalty to the Book and the Sunnah was unwavering.

Thus, the path that Imām al-Barbahārī would carry forward—one of sound creed, clarity in da wah, and firmness against innovation—was not an isolated position, but the well-trodden path of his teachers and the imāms before them. It is a testimony that the truth is one, that the Sunnah is preserved through people of precision and trust, and that this manhaj is none other than the pure and complete Dīn of Islām.

## His Pursuit of Knowledge and Standing in the Religion

The noble scholars with whom Imām al-Barbahārī رحمه الله studied had a profound and lasting impact on his character, methodology, and dedication to the Sunnah. He excelled in his pursuit of knowledge from an early age, driven by a sincere and fervent desire to attain it. And indeed, Allah—the Most Generous and All-Wise—granted him not only knowledge but barakah (blessing) in it, raising him in both understanding and status.

He became a towering Imām of the Sunnah, firmly grounded in the authentic narrations, a da'ī (caller) to the truth, and a reviver of the prophetic path in a time of confusion and innovation. He was not only a master of ḥadīth and āthār (narrations of the Salaf) but also deeply rooted in both the fundamentals (uṣūl) and the detailed branches (furū') of the Ḥanbalī madhhab. His knowledge was well-recognized by the scholars and people of his era, to the extent that he was titled: "Shaykh of the Ḥanbalī Madhhab in 'Irāq."

He possessed deep insight, dignity, and courage, known for speaking the truth regardless of consequence. His gatherings were filled with students of knowledge and scholars alike, eager to benefit from his precision in fiqh, narrations, and his clear refutations of innovation. He would openly speak, write, and warn against Ahl al-Bid'ah wal-Hawā (the people of innovation and desires), and it is narrated that they feared him for his clarity, firmness, and the influence of his voice.

Alongside his scholarly stature, Imām al-Barbahārī was known for his zuhd (detachment from the world), wara' (scrupulousness), and deep taqwā (Godconsciousness). He lived simply and ascetically, distancing himself not only from

doubtful matters but even from much of the permissible out of fear of falling into what is impermissible.

One of the remarkable signs of his wara' is that he once refused a lawful inheritance from his father, rejecting money that was rightfully his—choosing instead to remain free of dependency on worldly possessions. His heart was filled with reverence for Allah, and he implemented the prophetic guidance described in the hadīth reported by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah: "A servant will not reach the level of the muttaqīn (those who truly fear Allah) until he abandons what is harmless out of fear of falling into that which is harmful." (Reported by al-Tirmidhī who graded it ḥasan gharīb).

His commitment to the Sunnah and refusal to compromise put him in direct confrontation with the innovators of his time, many of whom persistently worked to turn the ruling powers against him. During the caliphate of al-Rāḍī, these opposers managed to provoke the Caliph into hostility toward Imām al-Barbahārī. Yet despite this political pressure and the widespread efforts to silence him, he remained firm and unwavering, continuing to teach, advise, and warn—until his influence became undeniable.

As time passed, his students began to spread and stand out—known for their clarity, defense of the Sunnah, and rejection of Ahl al-Bid ah. They carried the torch of truth, censuring innovation, and upholding the creed and methodology of the Salaf. His legacy grew beyond his circle and time, establishing him as one of the most influential revivers of Sunnah-based orthodoxy in the 4th century AH.

The scholar Abū 'Abdillāh al-Faqīh beautifully summarized his stature, saying: "If you find a person in Baghdād who loves Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Bashshār and Abū Muḥammad al-Barbahārī, then know that such a person is upon the Sunnah."

Such was the clarity of his position, the soundness of his creed, and the weight of his legacy. He stood as a fortress for the people of truth, unwavering in the face of hardship, and honored by those who walked the path of the Salaf.

Certainly, Yahya. Here is a refined and dignified version of the section on **His Students**, crafted with clarity, flow, and scholarly tone appropriate for your book:

#### His Students

Among the most notable of Imām al-Barbahārī's رحمه الله students were distinguished scholars, many of whom would go on to become respected imāms and carriers of the Sunnah in their own right. His knowledge did not remain confined to his time; rather, it spread through the hearts and tongues of his students, many of whom stood firm in creed and character.

From his students was the well-known Imām:

Abū 'Abdillāh Ibn Bāṭṭah al-'Ukbarī رحمه الله, the author of al-Ibānah, a foundational work in clarifying the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah. He was one of the most prominent transmitters and defenders of the Hanbali-Salafi legacy after al-Barbahārī.

Also from his students were:

- Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Baghdādī,
- Abū al-Husayn ibn Saʿūd,
- and Muḥammad ibn Ahmad, the son of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رحمه الله.

May Allah have mercy upon them all and reward them for their service to the Sunnah and their stand against innovation.

Through these upright men and their transmission of his teachings, Imām al-Barbahārī's voice continued to echo across generations, and the methodology of the Salaf was preserved with clarity and precision.

#### His Trials and Death

As is often the case with the bearers of the truth, Imām al-Barbahārī حمه الله was not spared from trials. His unwavering stance against innovation and his public refutation of falsehood made him a target for the people of desires (Ahl al-Ahwā')—those who sought to distort the religion and bend it to their own ideologies. Rather than facing him in knowledge, they incited the rulers against him, stirring fear and hostility toward a man who stood only for the Sunnah. Due to intense pressure and continuous threats from these opposers of the truth, Imām al-Barbahārī was forced into seclusion and went into hiding. He remained in a concealed state, cut off from his students and the public, and was eventually afflicted with a severe illness while in hiding.

He passed away—alone, yet honored with firmness upon the Sunnah—in the house of his sister in the year 329 AH, at the age of approximately 76 or 77 years old. This was over 1,100 years ago, yet his voice continues to resonate today among the ranks of those who cling to the methodology of the Salaf.

Though it is most likely that he authored more works, the only surviving text we have from him today is his monumental treatise: *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*—a legacy so powerful that it has outlived political oppression, historical decay, and the efforts of Ahl al-Bid'ah to erase his name. Through this work, his creed, his clarity, and his warning against falsehood remain preserved, becoming a guidepost for those who seek the truth in every era.

His life and death are a stark reminder that truth may be fought, but it cannot be extinguished—and that the path of the Sunnah often comes with loneliness, hardship, and resistance. Yet it is the path that leads to the pleasure of Allah and the honor of standing with the Prophet and his Companions on the Day of Judgment. "Indeed, the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets..." (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 3641 – ṣaḥīḥ).

May Allah have mercy upon Imām al-Barbahārī, elevate his rank, and join us with him and those like him in Jannat al-Firdaws.

## The Original Text and Attribution of Sharh al-Sunnah

The original text of *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* by Imām al-Barbahārī مرحمه الله can be traced through early biographical and manuscript sources. One of the most notable references is found in Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, Volume 2, page 18, compiled by Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, where both the biography of al-Barbahārī and portions of *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* are preserved. This source serves as one of the earliest known references for the work and has long been relied upon by later scholars and researchers.

A known manuscript of *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* is preserved in al-Maktabah al-Zāḥiriyyah in Damascus, traced through the handwriting of Imām Abū al-Qāsim 'Ubaydullāh ibn Hamzah, who passed away in the year 550 AH—approximately 221 years after the death of Imām al-Barbahārī. This lends further historical credibility to the transmission of the text and its survival through reliable chains.

Furthermore, the ascription of *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* to Imām al-Barbahārī has been affirmed and upheld by major scholars, including:

- Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله
- and Imām al-Dhahabī رحمه الله, among others.

Their affirmations reflect the scholarly consensus on the authenticity and significance of this text as a genuine expression of Salafi 'aqīdah and methodology—making it one of the most important and authoritative summaries of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā 'ah.