

Who are the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah?

Q: Ilm-15: Who are the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah? Do the Deobandis or the Riza Khaan is belong to the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah? Please furnish the details.

Answer: The Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah is that successful group that follow the ways of Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. And especially the ways of the Khulafaa Raashideen. This is according to a Hadith in which Rasulullaah SAW. said. "my Ummah will divide into seventy three groups, all of whom will end up in Jahannam except one." When the Sahabah RADI. asked who this group will be, Rasulullaah SAW. replied. "Those who follow the path on which my companions and I are on." The groups mentioned will all be in Jahannam will be there because of their incorrect beliefs. As for those whose beliefs are not bordering on kufr, they will enter Jahannam only for awhile, after which they will be removed and admitted into Jannah.

Ulema have made it clear in their books that the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah are those who follow Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. and have also stated in no uncertain terms that those people who perpetrate acts of Bid'ah are not part of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah. Haddhat Abdul Qaadir Jaylaani RAH. says: "It is therefore imperative for every Mu'min to follow the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah. The Sunnah is that which Rasulullaah SAW. practised and the Jamaa'ah is all that which the Sahabah RADI. were unanimous about during the period of the four rightly guided khulafaa May the mercy of Allaah be showered upon all of them.

The title of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah can therefore not be used for people whose actions oppose those of Rasulullaah SAW. and concur rather with the customs of their forefathers. They regard these acts such as Taziawaari, elaborate weddings, prostrating to graves, making Tawaaf of tombs, making vows in the name of people other than Allaah and other such practices to be practices of the Deen. Hadhrat Ghowthe A'zam RAH. said. "The title of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah that the people of Bid'ah have adopted for themselves does not suit them at all, just as the Kuffaar gave Rasulullaah SAW. the titles of magician, poet, madman, vexed person and fortune teller. Just as these titles did nor at all suit the great personality of Rasulullaah SAW. so too the title of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah does not at ail suit the people of Bid'ah." He then also defined the hallmark of the people of Bid'ah as being people who speak ill of those who follow the Sunnah.

Sheikh Ahmad Roomi RAH. says that the people of Bid'ah call people towards Bid'ah and are not part of the general Ummah.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. has cited the following ten hallmarks of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah:

1. They perform the five salaahs in congregation
2. They do not sneak ill of any of the Sahabah RADI. and neither undermine their status

3. They never take up arms against their leader
4. They have no doubts in their Imaan
5. They believe that all good and bad is predestined by Allaah
6. They do not dispute the Deen of Allaah
7. They never label any person believing in Towheed as a Kaafir (as person cannot be labelled as a Kaafir without being convinced that he rejects any aspect of Deen that is amongst its fundamentals or that is unanimously accepted as a part of Islaam. The Fugahaa state that when there are ninety nine possibilities of interpreting something as (an act or word of) Kufr and only one possibility of interpreting it otherwise, The ruling of Kufr cannot be issued')
8. They do not forsake to perform the Janaazah salaah for any person who prays facing towards our Qibla
9. They acknowledge the permissibility of passing wet hands over leather socks (for wudhu) while on journey and at home
10. They perform salaah behind every Imaam. regardless of whether he is pious or sinful.

The gist of it all is that the Deobandis are true followers of Rasuluiaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. They are part of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah and are also Sunnis and Hanafis. This is stated in the constitution of Daarul Uloom Deoband in the following, words: "(4) Daarul Uloom Deoband treads the path of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah and are followers of the Hanafi Madh'hab. According to the teachings of its founders Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Nanotwi RAH. and Hadhrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi RAH.

Furthermore, Deobandis subscribe to the principles of belief as outlined by Imaam Abul Hasan Ash'ari RAH. and imaam Abu Mansoor Maatureedi RAH. follow the derivatives of Deen as propounded by Imaam Abu Haneefah RAH. and are also associated with the Chishtiyyah. Naqshbandiyyah, suharwardiyyah and Qaadiiriyyah schools. They also conform to all the above ten requirements listed above.

As for the opponents of the Deobandis. who are the Rizakhanis, we see that they have forsaken the Sunnah of Rasulullah SAW. and not only practise. But propagate acts of Bid'ah. When it comes to the hallmarks of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah, we observe the following:

1. They are not as particular about salaah in congregation as they are about many of the customs they practise, which are clearly opposed to the Sunnah
2. Their reverence for the Sahabah RADI. is not at all as much as their reverence for their founder Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan. In fact, it is written in their Wasaayaa Shareef'. In fact, his standard of Taqwa and abstinence was such that some eminent scholars were heard saying. "After seeing him (Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan), my fervour to meet the Sahabah RADI. has

diminished." (Allaah forbid!)

3. They regard the Saudi king to be a Kaafir.
4. They wrongly dispute about the Deen, thereby causing divisions
5. They regard all people of our Qibla and people of Towheed to be Kuffaar if they do not subscribe to their opinions
6. They claim that it is Haraam to perform the Jana azah prayer for people who do not subscribe to their opinions
7. They say that it is not permissible to bury such people in Muslim graveyards
8. They say that it is not permissible to perform salaah behind such people

The Deobandis hold no such beliefs about the Rizakhanis.

Any clear-minded person can therefore tell which group belongs to the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah. Is it the Deobandis or the Rizakhanis? May Allaah guide all people and make them members of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah in the true sense. Aameen. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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