

أنواع السنّة

Classifications and types of the Sunnah

A- Classification of Sunnah as according to its nature من حيث ماهيتها

1) Verbal Sunnah or the Sunnah by word (al-Sunnah al-Qawliyyah): It is the sayings of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) meant for legislation and legal rules. The Sunnah in this sense is synonym of Hadith. A large number of the Sunnah is of this type.

2) Practical or actual Sunnah (al-Sunnah al-Fi'liyyah): It is the actions of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) having legal content such as his prayer, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca.

3) Tacit Sunnah (al-Sunnah al-Taqririyyah) or the Sunnah by the tacit approval or disapproval of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him):

- It is the commission of certain acts, by word or deed, by some Companions and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) keeps silent. His silence and not objecting to the word or deed of Companion is called tacit Sunnah. Meaning that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) allows them to continue to do the act and confirmed the validity of their words and deeds.
- E.g. The Prophet does not object the playing of spear by two boy in the mosque.
- The eating of lizard (iguana) by the companions.

B- Classification of Sunnah as according to its manner of

transmission من حيث ورودها

1) Sunnah with continuous chain (al-muttasilah) : A Sunnah whose chain of transmitters is continuous and not broken.

2) Sunnah with broken chain (ghayr muttasilah): A Sunnah whose chain of narrators is not continuous but broken.

Sunnah with continuous chain

- According the majority of Muslim jurists, there are two types of the Sunnah with respect to the continuous chain: Sunnah Mutawatirah and Sunnah Ahad.
- The Hanafi jurists added a third category in between these two. It is called Sunnah Mashhurah.
- It is to be noted that the classification of the Sunnah into mutawatirah, mashhurah and ahad is based on the transmitters of the three periods i.e. the period of the Companions, the period of the Successors and the period of the Followers of the Successors.
- This is because the Sunnah was compiled after the period of the Followers of the Successors and all the Sunnahs become well-known.

• **Sunnah Mutawatirah:** "is one narrated by such a large number of people whose secret agreement on lie is usually impossible, and that is from the beginning of the chain to its end."

The position of Sunnah Mutawatirah is definitive with respect to its transmission or establishment. This means that we are sure and certain about its attribution to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). In this respect, it is similar to the Qur'an.

- **Sunnah Mashhurah (well known Sunnah):** is one whose number of narrators does not reach the level of tawatur in the first generation but reaches this extent after that. The position of the Sunnah Mashhurah is lesser in strength than the Sunnah Mutawatirah but is stronger than Sunnah Ahad.

On the other hand, according to majority of Muslim jurists, this type of Sunnah is considered as Sunnah Ahad and thus it is probable in its establishment.

- **Sunnah Ahad (solitary sunnah):** is one narrated by one, two or more narrators from the beginning of the chain to its end.

The position of the Sunnah Ahad is probable with respect to its transmission and establishment.