

## The Duty To Follow The Sunnah Of The Messenger Of Allah (Saw)

### BELIEF IN MUHAMMAD (SAW)

Allah has associated belief in Muhammad (SAW) with the belief In Him for Allah, The Supreme and Glorified has said:

*"The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and who when they are with him on some common affair do not go away until they seek his permission." (24:62)*

### DUTY TO OBEY HIS SUNNAH

Allah has said in the Book:

*"It is He who has raised up a Messenger among the untutored people, one of their number to recite to the His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though formerly they had been in manifest error." (62:2)*

And Allah said:

*"Allah has sent down to thee the Book and the Wisdom, and has taught thee what thou did not know before; the bounty of Allah towards thee is ever great." (4:113)*

The Book is the Quran and the Wisdom is the Sunnah, and all are in agreement with this.

Allah said in Quran:

*"When Allah and His Messenger (Rasool) have decreed a matter, it is not for a believing man or woman to exercise a choice in a matter affecting him; whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger has deviated into manifest error." (33:36)*

*"O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. If you should quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and fairer in the issue." (4:62)*

### OBEDIENCE TO THE PROPHET IS OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH

*"Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah." (4:82)*

Thus Allah has commanded obedience to the Rasool (SAW), and has informed us that obedience to him is obedience to Allah.

### THE SUNNAH FALLS INTO THREE CATEGORIES

The first category constitutes actions in conformity with a verse of Quran. In other words, the Messenger of Allah has merely specified clearly what is in the Quran.

The second category, the Messenger of Allah laid down on Allah's behalf a Sunnah clarifying the meaning implied by Allah in the text of Quran. this case the Rasool (SAW) would specify what kind of duty Allah imposed, for example whether it is a general duty or particular to certain people, and how the duty should be performed.

The third category consists of what the Rasool (SAW) has laid down in the Sunnah concerning which there is no text in the Quran.

So the role of the Sunnah, as texts and actions, is to explain the revelation of Allah. Allah said

*"... and We have revealed unto thee the remembrance that thou explains to mankind that which has been revealed them." (16:44)*

### THE SUNNAH DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE QURAN

The Sunnah which the Messenger of Allah laid down on matters for which a text is to be found In the Quran Is always in full agreement with that text and clarifies on Allah's behalf a general text. The Rasool's specification is more explicit then the Quran.

Such an example is that Allah has imposed the duties of prayer and zakat (alms) in the Quran; but Rasool Allah (SAW) specified the method of performing the prayer, the number of prayers and the time for performing them each day. Similarly, he specified the amount of the zakat to be paid, the time of payment and the commodities exempted from zakat.

Sometimes the Sunnah appears to contradict the text of Quran because the literal meaning of the text is apparently a general one, whereas the reported Sunnah appears not to follow the general communication. For example, Allah says:

*'As for the thief, male and female, cut off their hands.'* (5:42)

Thus, one might say all thieves should have their hand cut, but the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) is Actually, those who claim the Sunnah contradicts that the cutting of the hand is the penalty for theft if the Book of Allah, betray their lack of knowledge the amount exceeds a certain value. This is not a about the Sunnah. contradiction with the text of Quran. Rather the Sunnah indicated that Allah implied in the text of Quran a particular category of thief.

In such a case, we say that the text of the Quran was general and intended to be particular. The Sunnah, therefore, explained the particular.

A similar example concerns the following verse:

*"When you stand up for prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles."* (5:8)

Some unlearned people, therefore, argue that the Prophet's (SAW) Sunnah of wiping the shoes contradicts this verse. The truth is that the Sunnah indicates that the duty of the washing or the wiping of the feet was obligatory on some of those who perform the duty of ablution (wuzu), not others. The Sunnah specified that whoever is in a state of purity,

and who has not subsequently polluted, is under no obligation to fulfil this duty of washing the face, etc., when he stands up in prayer; it also specifies that the duty of washing the feet is obligatory only on him who had not worn the two shoes in complete purity. Thus, the Sunnah clarifies on Allah's behalf the meaning intended by Allah. The Sunnah always follows the Book of Allah. The authentic Sunnah cannot be contradictory to the Book of Allah.

Some people cite the following hadith as proof that the Sunnah may contradict the Quran :

*"Compare whatever is related on my authority with the Book of Allah if it agrees with it I have said it, but if it does not agree, I have not said it."*

However, most of the scholars agree that this is a weak, i.e. defected hadith and does not constitute proof at all.

Indeed, it contradicts the Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) narrated on the authority of Abu Daud.

*"Let me find no one of you reclining on his couch, who, when confronted with an order of permission or prohibition from me, says: I do not know (whether this is obligatory or not), we will follow only what we find in the Book of Allah."*

Hence the Messenger of Allah urged men never to reject his orders, because Allah imposed the duty that they should obey his orders.

## THE ABROGATION OF A SUNNA

Allah has declared that He abrogated verses of the Quran only by means of other verses in it, i.e. Quran can only be abrogated by another text of Quran.

*"For whatever we abrogate or cast into oblivion to forget, we bring a better or the like of it. Knowest thou and not that Allah is powerful over everything?"*

Similarly nothing can abrogate the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) save another Sunnah of the Messenger (SAW).

If Allah were to reveal a communication on a matter which the Rasool (SAW) had provided a Sunnah different from what Allah had addressed to him, he would provide a Sunnah in conformity with whatever Allah had communicated to him. Thus, he would make clear to men that he had provided a Sunnah that abrogated earlier or contrary to it.

People cannot use the argument that the Sunnah has been abrogated by the Book of Allah, and thereby reject the Sunnah. If this was so the Muslims would have abandoned the wiping of the shoes. It would be possible to hold the opinion that the Prophet (SAW) laid down the Sunnah concerning the cutting off of the thief's hand if the value of the stolen article exceeds the decreed amount before the command of Allah "*The thief, male and female, cut off their hands,*" (5:42) was revealed. Thus, everyone in this category would have his hands cut off. Many more examples could be given. However, the person who holds such an opinion would invalidate most of the Sunnahs of the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

The Sunnah can only be abrogated by another Sunnah. If Allah abrogated any of His commands, the Rasool (SAW) would have had to abrogate his Sunnah by another in conformity with Allah's new command.

An example of such an abrogating and abrogate Sunnah is the hadith of Aysha :

*"A few people from the desert came [to Makkah] during the Day of sacrifice in the time of the Prophet, who said 'You may preserve [the meat of sacrifice] for three days and give the rest to the poor.' She said [a year] later the Prophet was asked: 'O Messenger of Allah ! Men were accustomed to make use of their sacrifices : They took its fat and used its [skins] to carry water.' So the Rasool inquired: 'Why not ?' 'You have prohibited preserving the meat of the sacrifice after three days, they replied. ' I have prohibited that only for the sake of those who came [to the city] during the Day of sacrifice. Surely you may eat of it; give it to the poor and preserve the rest."*

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