

Al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dī karib narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1

Perhaps someone is told a hadith I have said when he is reclining on his couch and he says: 'Here is God's Book between us: whatever we find in it to be permissible we will accept as permissible and whatever we find in it as forbidden we will accept as forbidden'.

2

Know that what God's Messenger has forbidden is just as God has forbidden.

3

In Abu Dāwūd's version: Know that I have been given the Book and its like with it.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority. If you are in dispute over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you truly believe in God and the Last Day. This is the best [for you], and most suitable for final determination.﴾ (4: 59)
- ﴿He who obeys the Messenger obeys God thereby. As for those who turn away – We have not sent you to be their keeper.﴾ (4: 80)
- ﴿We have now bestowed on you the reminder so that you may elucidate to mankind all that has been bestowed on them, and that they may take thought.﴾ (16: 44)
- ﴿Say: 'Obey God, and obey the Messenger'. But if you turn away, he will have to answer only for whatever he has been charged with, and you, for what you have been charged with. If you obey him, you shall be rightly guided. The Messenger is not bound to do more than clearly deliver his message.﴾ (24: 54)
- ﴿He does not speak out of his own fancy. (3) That [which he delivers to you] is nothing less than a revelation sent down to him.﴾ (53: 3-4)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)

The Narrator

Abu Karīmah al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib ibn 'Amr al-Kindī was one of the Prophet's companions. He visited the Prophet in Madinah and stayed there for forty days. He later lived in Homs in Syria. Yaḥyā and al-Ḥasan, Jābir's sons, reported hadiths from him, as did 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abi 'Awf. He died in Syria in Year 87 AH 706 CE.

Summary

The Prophet makes clear that no one should deny the status of the Sunnah, claiming that the Qur'an is sufficient. Like the Qur'an, the Sunnah is part of the revelations given to the Prophet.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4604; al-Tirmidhī (his text), 2664; Ibn Mājah, 12.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns his community against following their own whims in religious matters. He sets the example of a man who is bereft of knowledge, turning away from scholars and their circles, preferring a life of comfort and laziness, reclining on his couch and giving a blanket verdict on religion. He says: the Qur'an is enough for us as it sets God's commandments and prohibitions. Whatever is stated as permissible in the Qur'an is lawful and permissible, and whatever is stated as forbidden is certainly prohibited.

This has taken place in the Muslim community, with the emergence of al-Khawarij, the Shia, the ones who reject everything other than the Qur'an, the secularists and similar groups. These stick to the Qur'an and its apparent meaning, refusing to consider the Prophet's Sunnah. In their ignorance, they refuse to implement authentic hadiths and turn away in blind arrogance.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) criticizes their attitude. He states that the Prophet's orders and prohibitions are binding on Muslims and must be obeyed in the same way as God's orders and prohibitions. He does not speak out of his own fancy. Far from him. His Sunnah is part of the faith and must be implemented, as God says: 'Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution'. (59: 7)

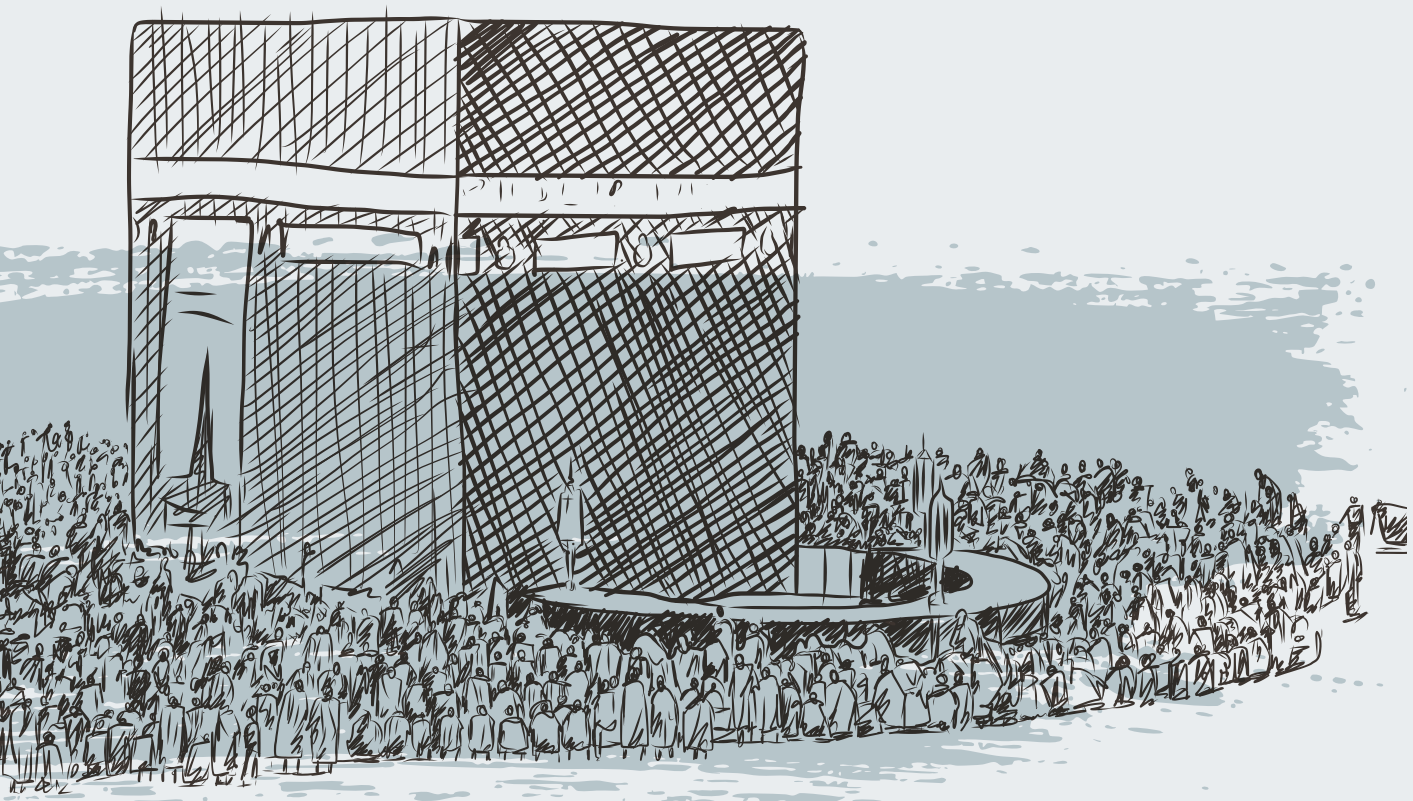
3

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that God, Exalted and Mighty, has given him the Qur'an, revealed to him through the Angel Gabriel. It is God's Book whose recitation is an act of worship, and which has been transmitted in the highest and most authentic way. It is an eternal challenge, and this challenge applies to every surah of the Qur'an. The Prophet further states that God has given him the Sunnah, which explains the Qur'an and gives details of its rulings and teachings. God says: 'We have now bestowed on you the reminder so that you may elucidate to mankind all that has been bestowed on them, and that they may take thought'. (16: 44) Thus, God describes the Sunnah as 'the reminder', and He tells us that He has revealed it to His Messenger.



The Sunnah is distinguished by the fact that it sets out rulings that the Qur'an does not mention. These include the prohibition of wearing gold by men, the choice available to buyer and seller in commercial transactions, the prohibition of marrying a woman and her aunt, paternal or maternal, at the same time, the prohibition of eating donkey meat, the permissibility of eating dead fish and locusts, etc.

None of these rulings is given by the Prophet's own decision. They are stated as revelation sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The difference is that the Qur'an is revelation in word and meaning, while the Sunnah is revelation in meaning only, and the Prophet expresses this meaning in his own words. God says: 'He does not speak out of his own fancy. (3) That [which he delivers to you] is nothing less than a revelation sent down to him'. (53: 3-4)



Implementation

1

Learning about religion is necessary for every Muslim. Therefore, turning away from it and refusing to listen to scholars as they explain religious matters is an attitude of arrogance. It is the cause behind the emergence of deviant creeds.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned against turning away from his Sunnah. Every Muslim should heed this warning.

3

This hadith implies a strong reproach to those who reject the Sunnah, claiming to adhere to the Qur'an only. Needless to say, the reproach is even stronger in the case of those who place reason ahead of the Prophet's hadiths. When such a person is informed of an authentic hadith, he claims that he need not implement it as he has a different view on its subject matter.

4

No Muslim may take a complacent attitude about what the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibits or commands. His prohibition has the same force as a prohibition by God, and incurs the same punishment for its violation. Besides, denying the Prophet's legislation incurs its own consequences.



5

Rejecting what the Prophet says means rejecting what God says and refusing to obey His commandments. Every Muslim should beware of doing so.

6

Like the Qur'an, the Sunnah is divine revelation. Whatever is authentically stated of the Sunnah is binding on us to believe in and implement.

7

How can a person claim to believe in the Prophet and refuse to follow him?

8

It is not a condition that an authentic hadith should set exactly the same limits as the Qur'an. Many statements by the Prophet add details to what is in the Qur'an. When a hadith is authentic and attributed to the Prophet, it must be implemented.

9

Had it been the case that it is not obligatory to obey the Prophet in what is additional to the Qur'an, then the order to obey him becomes superfluous. If our duty is to obey him only in what is the same as the Qur'an, but not what is beyond it, then there would be no specific order to obey him. Yet God clearly says: 'He who obeys the Messenger obeys God thereby'. (4: 80)



