

# Hadith: An Objective Analysis

Edited by : Adv. Abdul Samad

## INDEX

SL	TOPICS	PAGES	PAGES
1	The Source And The Development Of The Hadiths	5	15
2	Weaknesses In The Methodology Of Chain - Reporters	15	20
3	The Effects Of The Hadiths	20	26
4	The Coherence Theory Of The Hadiths	26	32
5	Refutation Of The Traditionalist's Theory		
5(a)	Argument One: `Sunna Is Revelation'	33	38
5(b)	Argument Two: `Obey The Messenger' Means `Uphold The Hadith'	38	42
5©	Argument Three: `Hadith Interprets The Qur`ān'	42	47
5(d)	Argument Four: `The Example Of The Prophet'	47	52
5(e)	Argument Five: `Hadith Indispensable to carry out the Practice of Salaat'	52	57
6	A Scientific Methodology For Understanding The Qur`ān	57	61
6(a)	The Punishment For Adultery (Zina).	61	67
6(b)	The Punishment For Theft	67	70
6©	Misinterpretation of the Verses 59:7 and 4:65	70	72
6(d)	The Myth of Intercession	72	73
6(e)	The Punishment for Apostacy	73	75
6(f)	The Belief in the Miracles of the Prophet Muhammed	75	78
7	Conclusion: Return To Prophet Muhammed`s Original Teaching – The Qur`ān	78	84
8	References	84	85

# Hadith: An Objective Analysis

Edited by: Adv. Abdul Samad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the truth which has been revealed, and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation before, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard?” (Qur’ān, Ch.57: Ver.16)

Our present knowledge on the factors, which contributed to the rise and fall of nations, is that they are ideological, political, economic, social, cultural, historical, psychological, demographic, geographical, scientific, technological and military in nature. We are also quite certain that within this multiplicity of factors, not all of them play equal roles in the important outcomes. Technological advancement can surmount geographical limitations, military strategy can overcome deficiency in numbers, and better political leadership can offset economic weakness and so on. Turning to the Holy Qur'an as our infallible guide we find the following statements:

“GOD does not change what is in a people unless they themselves decide to change. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient. - (8:53)

“Leave alone those who take their religion to be mere play and amusement and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts” - (6:70)

“O, you who believe! If you help [the cause of] God, He will help you, and will make firm your steps;” - (47:7)

“Do not give up and do not be downhearted. You shall be uppermost if you are believers.” (3: 139)

“Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength Exalted in Might.” - (22:40)

“Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe: verily Allah loveth not any that is a traitor to faith or shows ingratitude. - (22:38)

“We will certainly help Our Messengers and those who believe both in the life of this world and on the Day the witnesses appear.” (40:51)

“He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse.” - (9:33)

All the above Verses from Holy Qur'an point to the very fact that the Ideology based on Touheed (Monotheism) is the most important component in determining our fate. It means

that as long as a people imbued with scientific, dynamic and progressive ideology inspired by Touheed, they will continue the climb up higher and higher on the ladder of success. Conversely, so long as a people revert to static, anti-scientific, and regressive ideology, they are doomed to degeneration. The strong and unambiguous statements about victory being granted to believers in both worlds necessarily follow from the definition of believers as those possessing and practicing scientific ideology based on pristine divine unity.

The rapid rise of the Arab nation from its dark period of paganism prior to Prophet Muhammad, to become the most powerful civilized nation in the world within a short period of time was due to the new, inspiring, powerful and dynamic Ideology of Islam revealed through The Prophet Muhammed, the Messenger of Allah. The Arabs, under his guidance and the unflinching support provided by his able companions, discarded their erstwhile life-style based on polytheism and superstitions. They rallied under their leader, guided by the Holy Qur'an, to establish a just social order. Because the struggle was based on the Divine truth and justice as contained in the Qur'an, it was invincible. It blossomed into a great social movement, bringing forth outstanding political, military and intellectual leaders who helped to bring forth a scientific-spiritual culture for the first time in the history of humanity.

The new and young Muslim society and nascent state set up by Prophet Muhammad and his companions in the early part of the seventh century Arabia, scaled the heights of civilization and intellectual development so rapidly - bringing into its fold in the process - the empires of two superpowers of Byzantium and Persia, astounded the world. Muslims at that time witnessed an intellectual growth unparalleled in the history of Arabia or even the world at that time. Even today, historians and philosophers marvel at how the most backward and barbarous people became the most advanced, most civilised in such a short time. It is this supreme achievement of the early Muslim civilization that made the famous British historian, G. Sarton, remark:

"The main task of mankind was accomplished by Muslims. The greatest philosopher, Al-Farabi, was a Muslim, the greatest mathematicians, Abu Kamil and Ibrahim ibn Sinan, were Muslims, the greatest geographer and encyclopedist, Al-Mas`udi, was a Muslim; the greatest historian, al-Tabari, was a Muslim."

Yet, sadly enough, today, instead of being astonished, we are perplexed at how the succeeding Muslim generations came to lose that glory. The Muslim polity, science and civilization, great though they were in their formative period, are glorious history and things of the past. The Muslims had long lost their intellectual and political leadership of the world. The unity of the Muslims had since long vanished and there is no semblance of unity, not even the sort of unity generally found among other communities. The Muslim world as disunited as never before had to succumb to the ideological onslaught and domination of the world power-blocs. Their economies are stagnant and backward. Their knowledge of science and technologies are dismal. Militarily they are weak and dependent on the big powers for their self-defence. There seems to be an abysmal divide between great predecessors of the early centuries and present-day Muslims.

### **What Went Wrong?**

The time is ripe for us and for mankind in general, to undertake a detailed and critical study of this great human tragedy. At some point somewhere, we have gone wrong. What went wrong? Why did we lose the political and intellectual leadership of the world? What are the causes of our disintegration? Why are we split into Sunnites, Shi'ites and numerous other sects? Why are we on the heels of others? Islam sponsors eternal truth and is capable of keeping abreast of the times, but why did it come to a dead stop after a while? Moreover, why is Islam not yielding the same fruits as it did for the Prophet Muhammad and his companions?

All these questions are very important and deserve to be seriously considered and satisfactorily answered.

The answers to the above questions are attempted in this work. When we delve in the subject, at the very outset, it becomes abundantly clear that the underlying root-cause is that Muslims have deserted the Deen, the way of life bequeathed to us by God. The true teachings of God are contained in His last and final Testament, The Holy Qur'an. The early Muslims rose to the pinnacles of success precisely because they were in possession of and practiced the powerful and dynamic Islamic ideology as preached in the Qur'an. They applied their newly acquired knowledge both, native as well as alien, to the discriminative teachings of the Qur'an. So long as they stuck to this, they progressed. When Divine teachings of the Holy Qur'an were relegated to the back seat, other ones, local and foreign, gained the upper hand and submerged the Qur'an, as witnessed by the following Qur'anic prophecy:

“Then (on that day) the Apostle will say: "O my Lord! Truly my people took this Qur'an for just foolish nonsense." Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy among the sinners: but enough is thy Lord to guide and to help”. - (25:30-31)

It is time for us to examine objectively the Qur'anic prophecy mentioned above and it must serve us with an important clue in our effort to understand the reason for the fall and decline of the Muslims. This, as opposed to the Modernist or the Traditionalist theses, appears to be the most supportive to our effort to understand the history of the decline of the Muslims. The modernist thesis, in brief, states that the Muslims declined because they had remained traditional and have not modernized themselves in accordance with Western secular values. The Traditionalist thesis, on the other hand, blames the secularisation and the neglect of the man-made orthodox teachings as the major cause of Muslim decline.

After about three hundred years, extraneous harmful teachings, though not taught by Prophet Muhammad but skilfully attributed to him, gradually gained a foothold in the Muslim community resulting in turning them away disastrously from the dynamic and invincible ideology as preached in the Qur'an which initially brought them to success. This pseudo ideology, as we shall presently see, is precisely the Hadith, a teaching in principle attributed to Holy Prophet Muhammad, and not sanctioned by Allah and his messenger.

### **Recurring Weakness of Mankind**

History bears true testimony for the events of the bygone era. So let us have peep into our history. God sent Prophet Jesus to the children of Israel with the Gospel, to teach them to worship the God and to obey Him with absolute submission. However, some three hundred years after Prophet Jesus' death, he was transformed from a human messenger to a son of GOD and just to complete the package, a simple amazing story was invented stating that GOD sent HIS own beloved son to die on the cross to wash the human sin and therefore whoever believes so will attain salvation and go to heaven and that is how Jesus have been worshiped for many centuries now!

Before Jesus, God had sent Prophet Moses to the tribe of Israel with Torah, the Divine scripture. However, a few centuries after Moses, their religious leaders created Mishnah (Oral) and Gemarrah (Traditions) declaring them holy and upheld them. They invented canon laws based on them rather than the Torah (Revealed word of God). What is more amazing is what the "Samiry" did after Moses left the people for just few days, he created the golden calf and had the gullible people worship it!

Ironically, in spite of all these historical facts, Muslims committed the same sort of mistakes knowingly or otherwise. Allah sent the prophet Muhammad – the last in the chain of messengers – to mankind with His Last and Final Testament, the glorious Qur'an, to correct

once and for all the deviations that had been made by the followers of the earlier scriptures including Jews and the Christians. However, no sooner did the Prophet Muhammad die, they contrived to make it appear falsely that the Prophet brought two books and, after bitter quarrels, they legislated, two hundred and fifty years later, that Muslims must uphold not only the Qur'an but also the Hadith. However, in practice, since then, they followed the Hadith rather than the Qur'an. It is significant to note that the Muslims called this new doctrine as Hadith and Sunna, similar to those of Jews, who believed in a revelation that could be written and the other that is not written (transferred through traditions). In this way, the Muslims relegated the last and final testament, the Quran, intended for the guidance of humanity, to ritualistic role rather than the guide. Thus, history repeated itself!

### **Avoiding Misunderstanding**

It is difficult to avoid misunderstanding from both sides while raising such a fundamental issue as this. The secular side, being more open-minded and tolerant, will simply dismiss the call to return to the Holy Qur'an as antiquated, outmoded and irrelevant. Most of them will not consider it at all saying that it is only trivial. On the other hand, the Traditionalist, being close-minded and intolerant of dissenting views will cry foul and shoot-out slanderous accusations. Authoritarianism will be their culture.

We are not discouraged and on the contrary accept it as part of the social struggle to expose falsehood and confirm the truth. It may be claimed that inviting people back to the Holy Qur'an will create a new sect in addition to many sects already in existence. This is standing the argument on its head. The Muslim society have already been confused and divided to the maximum. Since the Qur'an is accepted as the guide and the basic creed of all the sects, it is anti-sectarian and it will, on the contrary, eliminate all the existing sects and reunite all Muslims. This is precisely what Muslims should do. History proves that under the Prophet Muhammad, the young Muslim society was completely united and there was no sect whatever.

It will be also claimed that by rejecting the Hadith as a source of law, we will be rejecting the role of the Prophet and ultimately lead to the rejection of the Qur'an! As for the first part of the claim, the open truth is that it is only through the Prophet Muhammad that mankind received the Qur'an from God Almighty. That was his primary role — God's messenger — indeed his only role, as the Qur'an stressed several times. Was not this role great enough for Prophet Muhammad? Surely, it was.

“The Messenger’s duty is nothing but to proclaim the message”. - (5:99)

“What is the mission of the Messengers other than to preach the clear message?”- (16:35)

“We only send the Messengers to give glad tidings and to give warnings: but the Unbelievers dispute with vain argument in order therewith to weaken the truth and they treat My Signs as a jest as also the fact that they are warned!” - (18:56)

As for the second part, it is too ridiculous even to think of it. How can anyone, after calling the people back to the Qur'an, then subsequently reject the Qur'an? If that he does, which means reverting to disbelief, how can that benefit him? He would lose everything, where as the people, on the contrary, would attain salvation by going back to the Qur'an.

Rejecting the authority of the Hadith does not mean denying its existence. Many true reports of what the Prophet said and did outside the Qur'an as leader of his community and as an ordinary man must have been preserved. Such reports deserve to be treated as any other historical account whose authenticity must be judged against other historical accounts, against the higher authority of the Qur'an, and against well exercised reasoning criteria. While

pronouncements from the Qur'an are divine and eternally binding on believers, those of the Prophet in his capacity as leader must be treated in accordance with the Qur'anic injunction regarding politico-social authority, i.e. that they are only conditionally binding. The conditions are that they do not contradict the Qur'an, they are binding only for the community of that time, and that for other communities of other times they only constitute, as precedents to be followed or bypassed as and when deemed essential.

## (1) THE SOURCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HADITHS

The word "Hadith" is a verbal noun derived from the Arabic root word 'hadatha' which means to occur, to relate, to speak, and to report. Thus the term literally means "a saying", "a report", and "an account". Within the Islamic circle and literature, the term Hadith is used to identify a text that is related to a "re-narrated" saying or account of deeds or approval by the Prophet. The Ahadiths- as the Hadith literature is commonly called – can be classified roughly in four categories:

1. What the Prophet Said.
2. What the Prophet did.
3. What the Prophet silently approved of, in others.
4. Hadiths that give descriptions of what the Prophet was like.

The word 'Hadith' in all its forms is used thirty-six times in the Qur'an, eleven of which refer to the Qur'an, while none refers to the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. A review of the use of the word 'Hadith' in the Qur'an will convince a sincere believer that God wants us to follow no other Hadith but His.

These are the portents of Allah which We recite unto thee (Muhammad) with truth. Then in what fact [Hadith], after Allah and His portents, will they believe? (45:6)

“In what message [Hadith] after this (Qur'an) will they then believe? (7:185)

“God sent down the best Hadith, (ahsan-al-Hadith) a scripture that is consistent, repeating.”(39:23)

The first two verses quoted above clearly forbid us from accepting anything other than the Qur'an as a source of guidance and criterion for evaluating things religious. The third refers to the Qur'an as being the best Hadith. To further clarify any doubts Allah says;

“Some people uphold vain Hadith (lahw'al-Hadith) in order to divert others from the path of God without knowledge, and to create a mockery out of it. These have deserved humiliating retribution”. - (31:6)

Here Allah uses the word 'Hadith' in two contradictory contexts, as ahsan'al-Hadith (the best Hadith) and lahw'al-Hadith (Vain Hadith), to impress upon us the basic difference between His teachings and the teachings of those who deny Him.

The word Sunna means 'law,' 'system,' 'custom' or 'behaviour.' Sunna literally means the 'trodden path' and this word was used by the pre-Islamic Arabs to denote the model behaviour established by the forefathers of a tribe. It therefore has two elements, (a) an (alleged) historical fact of conduct and (b) its normativeness for the succeeding generations. Although in the Hadith literature both the terms Sunna and Hadith are interchangeably used, but there is nevertheless a difference in the sense that whereas a Hadith as such is a mere report and something theoretical, the Sunna is the very same report when it acquires a normative quality and becomes a practical principle for the Muslims.

In this context, it is pertinent to note that the terms like ‘Hadith of the prophet’ or ‘Sunna of the prophet’ are nowhere to be found in the Qur'an. This fact alone is sufficient to conclude that such concepts are later developments in Islam. In total contrast, we notice that Qur'an at many places uses the terms ‘Sunna of Allah’ [Sunnat illah] in the Qur'an. Here Sunna means, the Law and Practice of Allah that is immutable or unchangeable [Wa lun tajida li Sunnat illah tabdila] (48:23). A few other verses in which the word Sunna appears are given below.

Ch. 33: Verse 62: [...] never will you find any change in Allah's way [Sunna]!

Ch. 35: Verse 43: [...] no change will you ever find in Allah's way [Sunna]; yes no deviation will you ever find in Allah's way [Sunna].

### **The Structure of Hadith**

The following is an example of what a Hadith looks like:

Musaddad told us that Yahyaa informed him from Shu’bah, from Qataadah from Anas from the Prophet that he said: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” Collected by al-Bukhari

This means that the Hadith scholar Muhammad ibn Ismaa’el al-Bukhari recorded in his book of the collection of Hadith called Sahih al-Bukhari the statement: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself,” which he heard from his Hadith teacher Musaddad, who heard it from his teacher Yahyaa, who was informed by his teacher Shu’bah that he heard it from his teacher Qataadah, a student of the Prophet’s Companion, who heard it quoted by the Sahabi (Companion) Anas ibn Maalik from the Prophet Muhammad

A Hadith consists of two main parts: (a) the Sanad and (B) the Matn

The Sanad or Isnad is the chain of narrators that leads to the text of the Hadith. The Sanad consists of all those who narrated the text, starting with the last narrator (who records the Hadith in his book) and ending with the Prophet. The Sanad is thus the most important part of the Hadith, as it is the bridge leading to the Hadith itself whereas the Matn refers to the actual contents or the text of the Hadith. Following is the Sanad of the Hadith mentioned before:

[Al-Bukhari> Musaddad> Yahyaa > Shu’bah > Qataadah > Anas > Prophet Muhammad]

Briefly, the two major classifications of Hadith are ‘Ahadith Shareef’ and ‘Ahadith Qudsi’; the vast Majority of Hadiths falls into the first category. The ‘Ahadith Shareef’ are further classified into three, ‘sahih’ (intact), ‘hassan’ (good) and ‘da’eef’ (weak or defective). However, both Al-Bukhari and Muslim recognize the first and the last only. Hadith Qudsi refers to the collection of Hadiths said to be Allah Himself speaking in the first person but issuing from the mouth of the Prophet Muhammad.

‘Hadith Sahih’ describes those Hadiths reported by an unbroken chain of reporters whose integrity is judged, by the compilers, to be beyond reproach.

‘Hadith Hasan’ refers to those Hadiths which do not conform to the conditions laid down for ‘Sahih’ in that their chain of reporters are good but contain one weak though honest reporter.

‘Hadith Da’eef’ are those Hadiths that do not meet the requirements adopted for the other two classes. They have one or more defects in the chain of reporters and they are classified into

several sub-classes ranging from the 'acceptable' to the 'fraudulent' depending on the type and gravity of the defect in the chain of transmission.

Hadiths are also classified according to the number of reporters involved in each stage of Isnad. Three such types are identified: Mutawatir, Mashhur and Ahad.

A Mutawatir tradition is one that has been transmitted throughout the first three generations of Muslims by such a large number of narrators that the possibility of fabrication presumed be entirely discarded. Opinions differ on the number of transmitters necessary for tawatir to be attained during each of the three generations. Some authorities fix it as seven, some at forty, some at seventy and others at still higher numbers.

A Mashhur Hadith is one that, although transmitted originally in the first generation by two, three or four transmitters, was later transmitted, on their authority, by a large number in the subsequent two generations.

Ahad are traditions, which were transmitted during the first three generations of Muslims by one (or two, three, or four) narrator(s) only.

It is to be emphasized that all the above classifications of the Hadiths are based exclusively on the 'Sanad', chain of transmission, and do not address the 'Matn', content or substance of the Hadith.

### **The Importance of Hadith**

Almost all the Sunni Scholars hold the view that every action as well as saying of the Prophet as narrated in the Hadith are religiously significant in character and must literally be followed by every Muslim. According to them, Hadith and Sunna compliment each other. It means that Hadith and Sunna are one and the same. According to this school, the terms 'Book and Sunna' mean 'Qur'an and Hadith'.

On the contrary, some of the Scholars make a distinction between what the Prophet had said and did in his capacity as a Prophet, and what he said and did as an 'ordinary human being' since the latter according to them, having no sacred character and hence no consequent duty of obedience. Maulana Maudoodi narrates in his book 'Risayal aur Masayal' Volume 1, page 314, that:

"We find a few characteristics that are bonded to the Messenger's personal habits and social customs of those times. Those were not, according to the Hadith literature, intended for 'Sunna', nor it is argued that these principles, of the social customs of a certain culture at a certain period in history, were sent to be applied to whole of the human kind for all times"

If anyone includes these acts also in the sphere of Sunna, then he says:

"I am of opinion, that to call these acts and deeds as 'Sunna' of the Messenger and insist on it is a conspiracy against Deen; it had had adverse effects in the past and shall prove dangerous in future also". - (Page 308)

Before this he wrote:

"To call those deeds, that he performed as a matter of habit and have them applied on all humankind was not the intention of Allah and His Messenger. This is a bifurcation of Islam". - (Page 300)

From the above controversial reviews, it can be inferred that our scholars have yet to search for a common definition of 'Sunna'. What one considers a 'Sunna' is thought to be an act of bifurcation of Islam by another.

### **The Development of the Hadith Literature**

One must sift through the history of Islam for about 250 years after the time of our Prophet to understand the background to the development of the Hadith literature. It is towards the end of this period that the Hadith literature was produced. The problem has been that there are many conflicting historical accounts about what was happening at that time. The picture one gets is more of Muslim political history highly coloured than the real history of Islam.

History has recorded the fact that whole of the Qur'an, had been carefully written down and arranged in a sequence as directed by the Prophet himself before his demise in the 11th year of the Hijra (632 AD). During the first caliph Abu Bakr's administration, Abu Bakr, on taking over the administration of the republic as the first Commander of the Faithful, ordered the Prophet's secretary, Zaid ibn Thabit, to compile the Qur'an into book form. Zaid had also been Prophet's scribe all during his entire prophetic life and made himself available round the clock to record the Verses of the Qur'an as and when it is revealed. Zaid's personal supervision and Ameer Abu Bakr Siddiq's proclamation that it is the authentic and original copy of Al Qur'an in its entirety, is the most authentic testimony. The Islamic republic had expanded far and wide beyond the Arabian Peninsula by the time Umar al Farooq took over the administration. He ordered four copies of the Holy Book to be made and the responsibility was placed again on Zaid ibn Thabit. These were again declared as true copies and were sent out to regional Capitals of the republic. When the third Caliph, Uthman bin Aff'an launched a programme to have one hundred copies made and certified personally by him. These copies were made with the diacritical marks so that non-Arabs can also read with correct phonetics. All these were manuscript copies duly certified by the Caliph himself. Two copies of the original manuscripts out of the four made at the instance of Ameer Umar are available today with us. One copy is available in the Topkapi museum in Istanbul and the other in the Museum at Tashkent. All the copies of now circulated all over the world carry the certificate of Zaid ibn Thabit and Ameer Uthman to the effect that it is the true reproduction of the original. Thus, the copy of the Holy Qur'an with us today fully satisfies the requirements of a well-corroborated text.

The Qur'an itself proclaimed the completion of Islam and of the Prophet's mission with the following famous verse:

"Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you and I have chosen Islam as a religion for you." - (5:3)

"Al Islam" was chosen, made complete and perfect as a religion by Allah, the day when the above verse was revealed. Here it is pertinent to note that the prophet had only one book in his hand when the above proclamation was made. We have no knowledge of the prophet ever giving to the Muslims the Hadiths in the form of a book and coming down to us through the generations. On the contrary, the prophet himself had expressly prohibited his people not to write any of his Hadiths! According to Muslim and ibn Hanbal:

Abi Saïd al Khudri reported that the Prophet said, "Do not write down anything from me except the Qur'an. Whoever writes down anything other than the Qur'an must erase it." (Muslim, Zuhd 72; Hanbel 2/12, 21, 39)

Hadith scholars are of the view that the prohibition was made in order to prevent Prophet's followers from getting it confused with the Qur'an, which was still being revealed at that time. It was later repealed they argued, when the danger of mixing the Qur'an with the Hadith no

longer existed. However, this appears to be a rather lame excuse to justify the writing of the Hadith. Even after the Prophet's death and even very much after the Qur'an had been carefully bound into its proper form, the true followers of the Prophet still refused to write down anything of the so-called Hadith. Here is the text that has been recorded in the Sunan of Abu-Dawood under Hadith No.3640:

Al-Muttalib ibn Abdullah ibn Hantab said: "Zaid ibn Thabit entered upon Mu'awiyah and asked him about a tradition. He ordered a man to write it. Zaid said: The Apostle of Allah ordered us not to write any of his traditions. So he erased it."

According to the history books written on Islam, the ban on Hadith was lifted 80 years after the Prophet had passed away by Omer Ibn Abdul Aziz, the grandson of Umar Ibn- Al-Khattab. This pious and righteous man instituted several memorable 'reforms'. First, he banned the despicable custom of cursing Ali Ibn Abi-Talib from the pulpits of the mosques, which had been imposed by Mu'awiya, and he attempted to eliminate the ongoing disputes regarding the companions of the Prophet by decreeing that none of them is to be maligned from the pulpits; they were to be praised instead. Then he lifted the ban on reducing the Hadiths to writing. He appointed learned scholars like Imam Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shibab al-Zuhri (d.124/742) to compile Hadith literature. Umar's intentions are not in question, but in this particular case, the road, literally, to Hell is paved with good intentions. In fact, the irony of the matter is that his grandfather Omer Ibn Al-Khattab himself was vehemently opposed to writing of any religious books except the Qur'an.

Regarding Hazrat Umar, Allama Ibn-e-Abdul Barr has copied a tradition in his reputed book, Jamey Biyan-ul-Ilm: Hazrat Umar said: 'I wanted to write the traditions (Sunan), and I remembered a people who were before you, they wrote other books to follow and abandoned the book of God. I will never, I swear, replace God's book with anything. (Tadveen-i-Hadith, p.394)

The first comprehensive and systematic compilation of Hadith was undertaken by Imam Malik ibn Anas (d.179/795). This was during the first part of the second century of the Prophet's era. He collected Hadiths mainly for legal purposes, as he was only interested in application of Hadith in law. His work is known as Muwatta.

The next important collection is by Hanbal (d.241/855) in the third century. There is a gap between his writings and those of Malik's, during which there was tremendous number of Hadiths in circulation, not in writing, only by word of mouth, among which there had accrued many clearly false ones. So the question arose: how to distinguish good Hadiths from the bad? Ahmed Ibn Hanbal resolved this to his own satisfaction by apparently tracing each Hadith right up to the source (i.e., right up to the period when the Prophet was alive) and each Hadith was accordingly called Masnad (i.e. a Tradition which is traceable). His writings are known as Masnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.

The next important collection was in the third century, by Bukhari (d.256/870). He collected 7275 Hadiths out of some 600,000 that he is supposed to have gathered. His collection is known as Sahih Al-Bukhari. He was first to arrange Hadiths in chapters, and the chapters were divided according to the subject matter. A contemporary of Bukhari was Muslim (d.261/875). He collected 4348 Hadiths out of supposedly 300,000. Four other collections were written more or less towards the end of the third century Hijra. These are by Abu Dawud (d.275/888), Ibn Maja (d.273/886), Tirmidhi (d.270/883) and al-Nasa'i (d.303/915). These six collections together are known as Al-Sihah al-Sittah [The Six Authentic Books of Hadith]. It may be noted that all these collections were by Sunnites and the Shiites have their own collections that are different.

A study of the compilers of Al-Sihah al-Sittah [The Six Authentic Books of Hadith] shows that all the collectors came from Iran. None of these scholars were from Arab descent. We also notice that all of them were born in the third century Hijra. Their collections were words of mouth gathered from various cities and villages and after giving their own judgment or approval these religious scholars selected some and discredited others on their own. We will discuss later the weaknesses and flaws in the methodology they followed in the selection of Hadiths. There were also many Hadiths that are included in their collection go against the teachings of the Prophet. This discussion also will be taken up later.

Several modern Hadith scholars claim that they possess evidence to prove that the Hadith were written down at the time of the Prophet. They were memorized and handed down from generation to generation until the second and third Islamic centuries when the official compilations were made. However, the unanswered question, even if we were to accept the claim, is this: Why was the official (or unofficial) compilation not made earlier, especially during the time of the righteous caliphs when the first reporters, i.e., the eyewitnesses, were still alive and could be examined? It should be noted that, by the end of the caliphate period, there wasn't a single copy of Hadith that was compiled under the supervision of the rulers. If the prophet and the Caliphs had ever considered the Hadith to be a part of the Deen of Islam, they would have adopted the same measures to collect and preserve the hadiths as they had taken in the case of the Holy Qur'an.

The scholars of Hadith, after much struggle, brought out a collection of Hadith linked to an earlier period under the title of Hamam ibn Munabbih's Manuscript. Dr. Hameedullah of Paris published this several years ago from Hyderabad. It is believed that Hamam ibn Munabbih was the student of Abu Huraira. Hamam ibn Munabbih died in Hijra 131. In his manuscript, there are 138 Hadiths in total, which its author states were compiled before the death of his teacher Abu Huraira. His teacher was believed to have died in Hijra 58. In other words, we can say that this manuscript was compiled before Hijra 58. We notice that when Imam Munabbih wrote these Hadiths before Hijra 58 in Medina, he was able to obtain only 138 Hadiths, whereas in Hijra 250, the year in which Imam Bukhari decided to collect Hadiths, Bukhari alone gathered about six hundred thousand hadiths!!

The reason given by the scholars for prohibition of collection of the Hadiths by the prophet to avoid confusing the hadiths with the Qur'an is not at all satisfactory. It contradicts their own claim that Hadiths were already being recorded during the lifetime of the Prophet. Several documents of the Prophet such as the Medina Charter, his treaties and letters, had been written on his orders. The Hadith necessary for posterity too could have been written down by indicating specifically that they were Hadiths and not to be confused. This is especially, when we recall a statement allegedly made by the Prophet in his sermon during his farewell Pilgrimage, heard attentively by tens of thousands, (which we will prove as a fabrication) exhorting his followers to hold on to the Qur'an and his Sunna, it is most unreasonable not to expect the earlier great caliphs to order the writing down and compiling of the Prophet's sayings. None of them did so could only mean that the Prophet never made such a statement, and that it was a later invention attributed to him.

Let us study the Hadith that records the Prophet's last sermon during his final pilgrimage. This Hadith has two chains of reporters:

“Jabir ibn Abdullah reported during his farewell sermon the Prophet said, **"...I have left among you the Book of Allah, and if you hold fast to it, you would never go astray.** And you would be asked about me (on the Day of Resurrection), (now tell me) what would you say? They (the audience) said: We will bear witness that you have conveyed (the message), discharged (the ministry of Prophethood) and given wise (sincere) counsel. He (the narrator) said: He (the Holy Prophet) then raised his forefinger towards the sky and pointing it at the

people (said): "O Allah, be witness. O Allah be witness,"(Muslim, Book 7.2802, 2802A) (emphasis added)

The second record of this same event is attributed to Anas ibn Malik (a companion). It records as:

**"I have left you two things**, so long as you hold tightly to them both, you will never stray – Allah's **Holy Qur'an and the Sunna of His Messenger**" (Muwatta, 46.3) (emphasis added)

Look at another sermon attributed to the prophet in the same context, Hadith No.5920, collected by Muslim:

"Yazid ibn Hayyan reported: I went with Husayn ibn Sabrah and Umar ibn Muslim to Zaid ibn Arqam.....Zyed said: "One day Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) stood up to deliver a sermon at a watering-place known as Khumm, situated between Mecca and Medina. He praised Allah, extolled Him, delivered the sermon, exhorted (us) and said: Now to our purpose, O people: I am a human being. Perhaps I am about to receive a messenger (the angel of death) from my Lord, and I, in response to Allah's call, (shall bid good-bye to you). **But I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah** in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it. He exhorted (us) (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah, and then said: **The second are the members of my household**; I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family". (Emphasis added)

Anyone can see how various Hadiths differ on such a crucial matter attributed to the Prophet. The first Hadith quoted above is very clear that the Prophet instructed us to hold on to the Qur'an only. The third Hadith exhorting Muslims to hold on to the Qur'an and the members of the Prophet's family must be a fabrication from the 'Shi'a' side, still it is astonishing how it found a place in a Sunni Tradition!

Had the 'Hadith', placing the 'Sunna' on a par with the Quran and enjoining us to follow both, been true, the noble Sahabas, Hazrat Abu-Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali would have made arrangement for the compilation of Hadiths. However, none of them ever even attempted to compile any such collection proves that the prophet never referred to the Hadith in his Farewell Sermon.

It is interesting to note that even the books of Hadiths corroborate the fact that the prophet never instructed Muslims to hold on to his hadiths. Here is one hadith Narrated by Ali, recorded by Bukhari in Vol. 3, book 30, Hadith no. 94 (Also Hadith 8.747 and 4.397).

**"We have nothing except the Book of Allah and this written paper from the Prophet** (wherein is written) Medina is a sanctuary from the 'Air Mountain to such and such a place, and whoever innovates in it an heresy or commits a sin, or gives shelter to such an innovator in it will incur the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people, none of his compulsory or optional good deeds of worship will be accepted. And the asylum (of protection) granted by any Muslim is to be secured (respected) by all the other Muslims; and whoever betrays a Muslim in this respect incurs the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people, and none of his compulsory or optional good deeds of worship will be accepted, and whoever (a freed slave) takes as his master (i.e. befriends) some people other than his real masters without the permission of his real masters incurs the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people, and none of his compulsory or optional good deeds of worship will be accepted." (Emphasis added)

## **Reasons for the development of the Hadith**

We learn from the Holy Qur'an that a community did not break up into sects after the coming of Divine revelation to them except due to jealousy and vested interests. When jealousy and considerations of vested interests overcame them, divisions occurred and sects emerged:

“He has decreed for you the same religion decreed for Noah, and what is revealed herein, and what was decreed for Abraham, Moses and Jesus. `You shall uphold the one religion, and do not be divided.' It is simply too difficult for the idol worshipers to accept what you advocate. God is the one who brings towards Him whomever He wills; He guides towards Himself those who submit. They became divided after knowledge had come to them due to sheer jealousy. If it were not for a predetermined decision, they would have been judged immediately. Even those who inherited the scripture continued to harbour doubts. You shall preach and uphold this scripture as commanded and do not follow their wishes”. (Qur'an 42:13-14)

“You shall hold fast to the rope of God, all together, and do not be divided. Be appreciative of God's favours upon you; you used to be enemies and He reconciled your hearts. By His grace, you become brethren. God thus explains His revelations for you that you may be guided. Let there be a community among you who preach goodness, advocate righteousness and forbid evil. These are the winners. Do not be like those who became divided and disputed among themselves, despite the profound revelations that had come to them”. - (Qur'an 3:103-105)

The above verses explain two things. Firstly, the divine revelations to Prophet Muhammad and other messengers, although true and beneficial, were hard for the idol worshipers to accept. They accepted them for a while and then lapsed into their former condition. Secondly, they reverted to their former condition because of jealousy towards one another and because of their love of material things. In short, human propensity for materialism and jealousy for one another made it difficult for them to follow the teachings of the Prophet-messengers, including Prophet Muhammad. These are the factors that initiate the division into sects after the teachings had come to them.

We shall see that many Hadith began to emerge and multiply at the same time as the emergence of divisions in the early Muslim community in three civil wars, beginning under Ali's rule right up to the end Mu`awiya's rule. The relations between these two phenomena were direct: power struggles giving rise to divisions leading to the fabrication of Hadith to support each contending group, which in turn, further deepened the divisions.

From the time of Mu`awiya's rule (661-680) until the end of the second century Hijra when the Hadith were officially compiled, the fabrication of Hadith was done on a wider scale. The Hadith became the medium of stories, weapons and shields for various political factions and theological sects to defend or claim support for their sectarian positions.

It may be appropriate to discuss, now, some of the avenues through which the fabrication Of Hadith came about:

### **A. Political Differences**

The problems started from the assassination of Hazrat Uthman and later aggravated during the administration of Hazrat Ali. This was a period much to be blamed for fabrication in Hadith. Sayings (Hadith) in favour of or against Ali and his family on the one side and similarly of Mu`awiya and his supporters on the other side, acquired importance to get people to their respective side to get political support among Muslim public away from the scene of intrigues in and around Medina as the republic is expanded far and wide to North Africa in the west, Asia Minor in the north and Iran in the east. The Shi'a-Ali [the group supporting Ali] strongly

felt that the Caliphate should devolve to Ahl-al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet) and thus held that Ali was the legitimate successor to the Prophet. They therefore fabricated Hadiths i.e., they attributed many sayings to the Prophet in which mention was made that Ali should succeed him. Others also fabricated many Hadith in support of their views.

### **B. Philosophical/Religious Differences**

During the latter part of the Umayyad Khilafat and throughout the 'Abbasid period a number of philosophical issues arose relating to Eman (Faith) and Sifat (Attributes of Allah). This resulted in the creation of various philosophical sects such as the Qadariyah, Jabariyah, Mu'tazilah, etc. Scholars belonging to these different sects made deliberate changes to the texts or Isnad (chain of narrators) of certain Hadith, and fabricated many Hadiths to lend support to their views.

### **C. Al-Qussas (storytellers)**

It was common practice during early Islam for the people to be entertained by storytellers. These Qussas related their stories to the common people, who had a liking for amusing stories. Thus, their main object was to please the public who handsomely rewarded them. To this end, they invented many amusing anecdotes that appealed to the masses and in the process fabricated many Hadiths.

### **D. Al-Wai'zun (The Preachers)**

The Wai'zun were alarmed at the spiritual bankruptcy of the masses. In order to rectify this they fabricated Hadith relating to morality in order to encourage people to do good deeds. They thought that by this means they would be better equipped to guide others

### **E. For Personal Gain**

Fabrication of Hadith was used as a means of procurement of personal gain or of earning goodwill of the caliph in power. The favourites of later Caliphs and Ameer, made traditions and used them as means of getting closer to top officials.

### **F. Inclusion of Jewish myths**

Inclusion of Jewish myths, a process, which was stimulated by the popular sense of curiosity and the people's interest in the lives and times of former prophets, are very much popular. Such imaginative accounts are replete in narrations regarding the lives and deeds of prophets.

These were the main causes by which false and fabricated Hadiths spread among the Muslims. Beyond all these, the damage caused by political groups, who wanted to win the hearts of the public by using Islam was also devastating. They made and concocted Hadiths and spread it everywhere. Those who fabricated Hadiths to display their knowledge and to gain respect from the hearts of their people did great damages.

### **Establishment of the Sources of Law in Islam**

In order to stop the continued fabrication of the Hadith and contain further divisions of Muslim society at that time, there arose a movement to fix the sources of law in Islam and to standardize the Hadith. This is the main social determinant, which gave rise to the major jurisprudence figure in Islam in the person of Imam Shafi (d.204/819). He laid down the basic laws of classical jurisprudence with his theory that the sources of Islamic law are: first the Qur'an, second the Sunna of the Prophet as communicated in the Hadith, next Ijma' or consensus of religious scholars to be exercised through Qiyas or analogical reasoning.

Imam Shafi made a vigorous plea for the acceptance of Hadith material on a massive scale. According to him the Hadith and Hadith alone would represent the Sunna, not the 'living Tradition' (practice of the community evolved without the help of the Hadith) or 'Ijma' (consensus of the scholars) as advocated by some of the other law schools during his period. He tirelessly argued in favour of acceptance of Ahad Hadiths ('Isolated Hadiths', i.e. Traditions transmitted through one or two channels only) into law. Against these Hadiths, the law schools upheld their 'Ijma' during his period. Imam Shafi would fill the whole vacuum with the Hadith. And thus, the Hadith was declared as the final and conclusive argument on everything after the Qur'an.

Imam Shafi consistently argued that it will be disagreement and not 'Ijma' or consensus that would result, if Ijtihad were to be practiced and it is impossible to reach Ijma through original thinking or Ijtihad. Imam Shafi came up with his neat little idea to freeze everything as it were. In other words, he came to the view that all opinions existing at that time would be acceptable, but nothing more than that – no new thinking could be allowed. The use of creative thought or ijthad, for all practical purposes, was abolished and Ijtihad got relegated to a subsidiary place cut off from Ijma. The Ijma arrived at then was declared final and the door to "Ijtihad" was slammed shut. It came to be known in later years as 'the closing of the door of ijthad' and the dawn of the regime of taqlid or blind imitation of the great masters. Thus the idea of ijma' first and ijthad later was crystallized and given an official authority. In the words of Fazlur Rahman, "one of the most creative epochs of intellectual history came to a sudden end".

If Imam Shafi's aim was to contain the process of disunity in Muslim society, it was obvious that he failed miserably. Disunity continued to prevail in theology and law. By institutionalizing the Hadith to achieve what he termed as consensus, he killed the creative thought in one stroke within the Muslim society. Fazlur Rahman rightly observed:

"It is clear that Imam Shafi'i's notion of Ijma' was radically different from that of the early schools. His idea of Ijma' was that of a formal and a total one: he demanded an acceptance that left no room for disagreement ... But the notion of Ijma' exhibited by the early schools was very different. For them, Ijma' was not an imposed or manufactured static fact but an ongoing democratic process; it was not a formal state but an informal natural growth which at each step tolerates and, indeed, demands fresh and new thought and therefore must live not only with but also upon a certain amount of disagreement. We must exercise Ijtihad, they contended, and progressively the area of agreement would widen; the remaining questions must be turned over to fresh Ijtihad or Qiyas so that a new Ijma' could be arrived at. But it is precisely the living organic relationship between Ijtihad and Ijma' that was severed in the successful formulation of Imam Shafi'i."

Thus, by reversing the natural order, Ijtihad-Ijma' into Ijma'-Ijtihad, their organic relationship was severed. Ijma', instead of being a process and something forward-looking — coming up on a free Ijtihad — degenerated to be of something static and backward-looking. The thing instead of having to be worked out to accomplish is already accomplished in the distant past.

The process of substituting ijthad (creative thought) with the Hadith was a complex process, which took two centuries to complete. The social and historical factors made it happen are still not clear to us. There is no doubt that anti-Islamic forces from the nations conquered by the Arabs, especially from the non-believing Persians and Jews, had infiltrated various groups and played their subversive role to divert the early Muslims from the true teachings of the Prophet, i.e. the Qur'an, to other teachings in order to destroy them from within.

However, looking at the matter from our modern perspective, we cannot help but being amazed as to why the conservative and indeed reactionary forces were able to defeat the

dynamic and progressive forces, despite the constant prodding of the Qur'an for human creative role and the freedom of a community to administer its affairs.

## (2) Weaknesses in the Methodology Of Chain-Reporters or 'Isnad'

The Hadith writers are fond of saying that the collection and collating of the Hadith was undertaken with much care and accuracy, especially by Bukhari and Muslim – two of the Hadith writers held in the highest regard by their own followers. Bukhari and Muslim are supposed to have used strict and meticulous techniques to criticize and evaluate the sources of their Hadith prior to writing them down.

The Hadith writers launched a whole new branch of learning called *Ilm-al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* (the science of accepting and rejecting narrations) whereby the narrators are examined for their honesty and integrity. Analysis focused on the transmitter's date and place of birth, familial connections, teachers, students, journeys, moral behaviour, religious beliefs, literary output, date of death, etc. In addition to this biographical analysis (*ilm al-rijal*), the cohesion (*ittisal*) of the *isnad* was examined. Although we must appreciate and praise them for the labour they had put into the task, we cannot turn a blind eye to the basic weakness of their methodology.

We note that the majority of the Hadith only appeared during the time of the *tabi`in*, i.e. successors to the Companions, and the time of the *tabi` tabi`in* (successors to the successors of the Companions). Who were the *tabi`in* and the *tabi` tabi`in*? The *tabi`in* were the generations that succeeded the Companions of the Prophet. This is two and a half to four generations or 70 to 120 years after the Prophet. The *tabi` tabi`in* were those people who succeeded the aforementioned group, that is, four and a half to six generations or around 130 to 190 years after the Prophet. That means the majority of the Hadith surfaced around a hundred to two hundred years after the Prophet.

However accurate the methodology of the *Isnad*, the scholars first started talking about it and started writing it down only about 150 - 200 years after the death of the very last of the *tabi`i-tabi`in*. This means that when the research to establish the *Isnad* got started, none of the Companions, the succeeding generation or the generation coming after them was available to provide any kind of guidance, confirmation or rebuttal. Therefore, the authenticity of the statements cannot be vouched for at all.

It is not our intention to say that Bukhari, Muslim and others were fabricators. However, even students of elementary psychology or communication will testify that a simple message of, say, 15 words will get distorted after passing through only about five messengers. When we take into consideration that the transmission is not immediate but takes days or months between individuals involved. (Our readers are welcome to try out this experiment). Keep in mind that the Hadith contains thousands of detailed and complex narrations — on items divergent from ablution to jurisprudence. These narrations passed through hundreds of narrators who were spread out over thousands of miles of desert, and spanned over two to three hundred years of history. All this at a time when news travelled at the speed of a camel gait, recorded on pieces of leather, bone, and scrolls in a land that had neither paper nor the abundance of scribes to write anything down!

Even today in this modern age there have been major historical events, which although well documented, still elicit much controversy. We cite, for example, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy — an event that is surrounded by much mystery. We also have the controversy surrounding the exact causes of the First World War. In every family there are always conflicting stories or versions of stories to explain certain events that happen within families.

Suppose a witness testifies in a court of law that he himself did not see the actual crime, but that he is just recounting whatever he heard from another person. The court would throw out his testimony. This is because facts (and not hearsay) constitute acceptable testimony. Then how can the hearsay of several narrators spread over 200 years become reliable testimony? Consider a scenario where the prophet's companion heard him say or utter something and reached his own conclusion and delivered it to another companion in a different tone. The second one tried to understand it and conveyed it to another companion. Now imagine this going on, not for one day or two days, one or two months, not even one year or two years, this went on for a crucial period of two or two and a half centuries. And these centuries, mind you, were full of conspiracies and intrigues against the Islamic ideology. How much truth is left, when sentences have been moving from one mouth to another for this prolonged period of time we leave it for you to imagine?

It would be worthwhile to mention Maulana Abul A. Maudoodi's observation here. As far as transmitting one narration from one person to another he says in his book (Tafheemaat, volume, 1) as follows:

"Let us say for example, I am giving a speech today and many thousands are listening to me. Few hours later, after I have finished my speech (not months or years, but only a few hours later), just ask the people as to what I was saying. It will be observed that all translations will be different from each other. Everyone will emphasize a different portion of the speech. Somebody will take down word for word whereas another will interpret that sentence according to his own understanding. One person will have a better mind and will give the correct meaning of it, whereas another with limited intellectual capacity may garble the true meanings. One person maybe having a good memory and may give you a word for word translation, whereas another with a weak memory will make mistakes conveying the meaning to others."

This was in fact the way in which the statements and parables of the Messenger travelled through two or two and a half centuries. For example, I heard it from Zaid, who heard it from Umar, he got it from Bakr, he listened it from Khalid, and he listened it from Asghar, who listened from Akbar. Let us say an individual, with whom I am acquainted, illustrates a story to me. I can decide, on the basis of my opinions that I formed about him, whether what he narrated is correct or not. But he says that he heard it from Zaid, in that case, since I do not know Zaid, I am devoid of any standard by which I could decide, how far and to what extent it is correct. Now when he says that Zaid heard it from Imran, then he also, having no standards to judge from, cannot measure the truth in the story. Therefore statements that have been transmitted orally, through so many individuals, shall lose their verity between the teller and the trusted. We can only say, those through whom the statement travelled orally were very authoritative. The confidence and trust, is not based on statements, but rather on the views of contemporaries of its narrators. The trust has now become historical in essence. We can build history, but not the structure of Islam upon these statements.

Therefore, it is not likely that the various Hadith writers could have been accurate, however much they wanted to, in checking the authenticity of the Hadith, which they wrote down. A camel journey from Mecca to Damascus might take a month or two. In fact, any journey by camel between the major populated areas of the Arabian deserts took much time. It makes it highly unlikely that the Hadith writers checked out all the thousands of details personally. Otherwise, they must have spent a large part of their lives sitting on the backs of 'very fast-moving' camels. As for the camels, a camel's gait remains much the same then as it is now.

Hadith scholars make huge claims on the so-called scientific compilation of the Hadith, although there is nothing scientific about it, as it can never withstand the scientific reasoning and evaluation. The criteria presented are subjective. It is said that for a Hadith to be

considered as genuine we must check for the morals and the character of the chain of narrators. This is one of those arts, of which we can proudly boast as it is little known in any other branch of learning. The important question is, whether we can arrive at with certainty any truth by this approach? You can vouch for the individual's character who is saying the Hadith to you, how can you say with authority that all the people who handled the words of the Prophet were sincere at heart or could be depended on. It is not the question of having confidence in those narrators, but the most important aspect is, were they capable of comprehending thoroughly the import of a statement to be memorised and giving it the correct sense in transmission?

Maulana Abul A. Maudoodi has something to say on this:

“We should rank the Hadith according to the degree they have been granted. If for example when we read a stronger version, we must let go of its weaker counterpart. No doubt the material that is provided about the pioneers is of immense value for future narrators of Hadith. The only question is how far these people completely trustworthy. After all they were all but human and we must not expect them to go beyond the scope of human limits. Nor can we guarantee they can compensate for the human lacuna. (Tafheemat, Part 1, page 318)

He further writes:

“The respectful Hadith writers have provided gargantuan volumes of worthy treasure, but how can we say that it is absolutely beyond doubt. - (Page 319)

Therefore, it stands to reason that the Hadith writers depended on much story-telling to fill in the blanks. Many 'authentic' narrators whom the Hadith writers allude to in their chains of Isnad were wholly fabricated names. To overcome this type of logical criticism, the Hadith writers came up with an ingenious device to actually pull the wool over our eyes. They came up with the concept of ta`dil of the Companions. This concept states that the Companions of the Prophet are wholly protected from committing any error whenever they recall or narrate the sayings of the Prophet!

Although this concept is preposterous and defies all logic, we must note that Muslims were not the first to make such blatant claims. In fact, the Hadith writers have taken a page from the Christian books. Although Jesus did not write anything down, the disciples and followers wrote down the various books of the Bible. To lend credence to their work, these Bible writers were also deemed to have been "inspired" and without fault whenever they undertook to record 'the Word of God'. In fact, there are even parts of the Bible that appeared to one of the Bible writers in a dream while he was asleep!

According to the Hadith compilers, a Hadith becomes weak if any narrator had lied even in a single incident in his lifetime. In other words they are of opinion that the narrators of authentic Hadiths were all infallible and they have never lied! What a blasphemy! How do we confirm that the narrators never lied in their whole life? Were the collectors monitoring the whole life of each and every chain of narrators at every point? Is it humanly possible?

But what does God Almighty have to say about all these? We quote:

“Additionally we have appointed for every Prophet enemies from among the human devils and the jinn devils, who invent and narrate to each other fancy words in order to deceive. Had your Lord willed, they would not have done it. You shall disregard them and their inventions. This is God's will so that the minds of those who do not really believe in the Hereafter may listen thereto, and accept it, and to have them commit what they are supposed to commit. Shall I seek other than God as a source of law, when He revealed to you this book fully detailed? Even those who received previous scripture recognize that it came down from your

Lord, truthfully. Therefore, you shall not harbour any doubt. The word of your Lord is complete, in truth and justice. Nothing shall abrogate His Words. He is the Hearer, the Knower. If you obey the majority of people on earth, they will divert you from the path of God. They only follow conjecture, and they only guess". - (Ch. 6:Ver. 112-116)

But the Hadith writers are still insistent. According to some, at least Bukhari's Hadith is infallible. Why? Bukhari is reported to have sifted through more than 600,000 Hadiths and had picked only 7,275 to be included in his 'authentic' collection. This fact is put forward to impress upon the reader that Bukhari was meticulous and thorough in his life's work. Bukhari merely took 1.25% of all the Hadiths he came across as authentic. But a simple calculation will show that these figures are preposterous and impossible to be achieved by Bukhari or any other human being.

On the average, a Hadith consists of three simple sentences (in truth many Hadiths run into paragraphs), then if we allow one single hour to Bukhari to process each Hadith, he would have had to work non-stop for about seventy years. Each Hadith had to be traced back to the Prophet through a long chain of narrators and each narrator had to be examined for integrity, moral rectitude, truthfulness, mental alertness, and not least, soundness of memory. Add to the fact that each chain might consist of as many as six to seven individuals of successive generations all but one of them are dead! Any one can readily see the magnitude of this daunting task. This is the equivalent of researching (which include the long camel journeys to and from across the desert) and attesting to the authenticity of over 300 books, each equivalent to the thickness and complexity of a copy the book of Al-Qur'an, over a period of 17 years! (Bukhari claimed to have completed the work in 17 years).

According to another source, Ibn Hanbal reported that there were over 7 million 'authentic' Hadiths. If this were true, then working for 23 years at a pace of 18 hours a day, seven days a week, the Prophet would have had to produce one Hadith every 77 seconds! There would definitely have been no time left at all for the Prophet to have done anything like living his life and carrying out his mission as a Prophet!

The Hadith collection went through a selection procedure in which the following conditions were used for the acceptance of a Hadith.

1. Continuity of the chain (Isnad) of transmitters: The chain of transmitters had to be unbroken in order for a Hadith to be acceptable.
2. The integrity of the transmitters: The integrity of transmitters was established in terms of their outward observance of Islam.
3. Soundness of memory of the transmitters: It had to be verified through the biographical sciences of Hadith that each transmitter had a sound memory.
4. Conformity of the Hadith with other Hadith: It was important that the Hadith conform to similar Hadiths on the same topic.
5. The absence of defects in the Hadith: A defect is defined as a hidden defect in the Hadith that can only be detected after thorough investigation.

Considering the above five points in detail one can see a glaring omission i.e. there is no mention of the rejection of a Hadith on the basis of its contradiction with the Qur'an, the fundamental creed of the ideology! It means that the Hadith can override the Qur'an effectively. It is therefore logical to assume that the compilers were only interested in drawing a chart of the narrators that would link them as closely as possible to the Prophet. In other words, little or no attention was paid to the contents or the subject matter of the narration.

Prof. Muhammad Zaybayr Siddiqui, The late Professor of Islamic Culture, Calcutta University, gives the following explanation for this anomaly in his book 'Hadith Literature- Its Origin, Development & Special Features' (p.129).

“It is true that all the Musannaf collections of Hadith are arranged into books and chapters according to the subject matter and contain a short description of the Isnad in technical language, without much analysis presented of the character of the text. Yet in every extensive exegetic literature, the commentators do of course subject text to a close critique... It appears, however, that the function of the collection and formal Isnad Criticism of the Hadith was reserved for the collectors, while the function of their material criticism was left for the Jurists and Commentators on the various anthologies”.

Before this, at page 58 he wrote about Bukhari's Hadith:

“It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the Sahih is free of defects, or that the Muslim Scholars have failed to criticise it in certain respects. Thus it is generally accepted that like other Traditionalists, Al-Bukhari confines his criticism to the narrators of traditions, and their reliability, and pays little attention to the probability or possibility of the truth of the actual material reported by them. In estimating the reliability of the narrators, his judgment has in certain cases been erroneous, and the Muslim Traditionalists have not failed to point out this”.

Let us now examine the above five criteria used for the acceptance of the Hadith. In the first case, Bukhari is supposed to have travelled widely to establish the names of the various persons in the chain, right up to the Prophet's time. If a Hadith was to be good then the chain of transmitters had to be unbroken and one had to be able to find all the links. But how did the links come about when no Hadiths were committed to writing during the first century! The logical conclusion will naturally be that the 'links' stretching over the eight generations succeeding the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad should have been conveniently concocted. How come something that was not written down and yet which, some 250 years later, Bukhari supposedly managed to trace back to its source (i.e. the Prophet) by establishing all the links in a chain which cannot possibly have been genuinely reconstructed? Therefore, the so-called 'science of Isnad' – the touchstone of a Hadith's authenticity – has tremendous flaws in it.

The second and the third criteria to which Bukhari decided to subject his work to establish that the transmitters were honest persons in terms of their outward observance of Islam, and that each had a sound memory. This he did by apparently collecting the biography of each of the transmitters. How he managed to do this without written records, bridging a gap of about eight generations, and simultaneously establishing not only biographical data but also a compelling analysis of the mental faculties of his subjects defies credence! An example is cited here: Abu Huraira is taken as the last link in the majority of Hadiths to the Prophet. However he was not – even according to Bukhari's extraordinary method of compilation – assigned to a good memory. But even this unnecessary inconvenience was not a problem for Bukhari who found an explanation:

Bukhari (4.841): Narrated Abu Huraira: I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I hear many narrations from you but I forget them." He (the Apostle) said, "Spread your covering sheet." I spread my sheet and he moved both his hands as if scooping something and emptied it in the sheet and said, "Wrap it." I wrapped it round my body, and since then I have never forgotten a single Hadith.

Most ingenious indeed, you will agree!

The fourth criterion is overall agreement within Hadith as a whole. It means that any one Hadith should comply with similar Hadiths, which give the same sort of story, and that this should be seen as a basis for accepting it as authentic. In modern parlance, it means that the various stories should 'hang together', that one account should not in conflict with another, and if there is no conflict, we should assume that the story is, therefore, true. The intelligent and attentive reader who takes his time to read a moderate number of even so-called sahih Hadith on any subject will not need to go far before he finds a distinct failing on this count.

### **Reflections on the Definition of 'Sahaba'**

The students of Muslim history will be shocked to find different definitions given for the word 'Sahaba' (Companion) of the Prophet by the Hadith compilers so that they have a fitting reason for them to get all the Hadiths included in their book. On studying these definitions, any sincere Muslim searching for the truth can sense the confusion overtaking Bukhari and others. Here are their definitions:

(1) The definition by Imam Al-Bukhari: Bukhari defined the Sahabi (single of Sahaba) as the one who was in the company of the Prophet Muhammad or just SEEN him. Ibn Hanbal who also has a book of his own collecting more Hadiths than Bukhari accepted this definition and clarified it by adding "The Sahabi is anyone who accompanied the Prophet for a year, a month, a day or even an hour or even just seen him."

(2) The definition by Abdullah Ibn Umar Ibn Al-Khattab "anyone who has seen the Prophet Muhammad even for one hour as long as he reached the puberty, and is a known Muslim who understood his religion and accepted it."

(3) The definition of Al-Tabaey Saeed Ibn Al-Museeb; "Only those who accompanied the Prophet Muhammad for a year or two and fought with him in a battle or two should be considered Sahaba" This is a definition accepted and encouraged by Imam Al-Ghazali

Bukhari's definition that anyone who has seen the Prophet is a Sahabi has no support from the Qur'an. The Qur'an gives stories of the hypocrites and the wicked people of Medina, where the Prophet lived, who have seen the Prophet and listened to his message and his ceremonies. Undoubtedly, they cannot be considered his Sahaba (Companions), but Bukhari did view them such simply because they have seen the Prophet. Therefore it is fundamentally wrong to place our faith in or to take for granted the prevalent theory that each and everyone who lived contemporaneously with the Prophet was an honest and trustworthy companion.

### **(3) The Effects of the Hadith**

One of the most important aspects, neglected so far in any study on the Hadith, is their collective impact and effects on Muslim society. We have seen that the fabrication of Hadith took place because of the politico-religious divisions that later resulted in the emergence of sects and legal schools. The Hadith became the instrument to channel views, prejudices, customs and superstitions current in society then. Most of these views and ideas were nothing but superstitions and customs rejected by Islam.

The Qur'an tells us that God in His mercy has always sent His guidance to mankind through His messengers. He guides mankind with His revelations to the path of salvation, in this world and in the Hereafter. These Prophet-messengers began with Adam in the remote Primitive Age, through Abraham at the beginning of the Ancient Age to the last Prophet Muhammad at the dawn of the Scientific Age. Deviation from these divine revelations spells doom and destruction for the deviating society. The Qur'an tells us of the destruction of

several ancient societies and civilizations as a consequence to their deviations. The decline and fall of Muslim society must inevitably be connected with the historical deviation from divine teachings they had committed. We shall examine briefly the role of Hadith played out in this historical deviation.

### **(a) Sectarianism**

One of the first major consequences of the Hadith is the division of the Muslim community into two major sects, the Sunnites and the Shi'ites. The Sunni sect split into four major legal schools, and the Shi'ite has several of its own, each with its own political and theological beliefs. Without doubt, these divisions had their grounds in the strong Arab feeling of tribalism inherited from pre-Islamic era. Although Prophet Muhammad succeeded in breaking Arab tribalism and uniting them, this tribal spirit did not die out altogether. When Prophet Muhammad passed away, they resurrected tribalism, which led them to the power struggle vying for the position of caliph.

The Qur'an has termed as great offence, equivalent to doing shirk, to be divided into sects. Look at the following verses from the Qur'an.

“Do not be like the Mushrikeen, those who split up their religion, and who become sects, - each rejoicing in that which is with itself.” - (30:31-32)

“As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you (Muhammad) have no part in them in the least.” - (6:159)

Because of the very strong Qur'anic prohibition against making factions in religion and the fact that they were unable to use the Qur'an to support factional interests, the competing parties had to recourse to the Hadith — a convenient and clever way out. The Shi'ite faction that wanted Ali to be the caliph after the Prophet's death fabricated Hadith to support their contention. They claimed that the Prophet said:

“The Prophet took hold of Ali's hand in the presence of the Companions, on his way back from the farewell Hajj. He let him stand till all of them knew him. Then he said: This is my attorney and brother and the Caliph after me. So listen to him and obey him.” Ibn Katheer: al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya [7:347]

The opposing group then countered this forged Hadith with other forged Hadiths. This then was how forged Hadith came into being — to support political factions.

We may peep into our history and see what devastation the various sects have caused. They hacked the Muslim Ummat into pieces, paved way to the means of persistent, consistent and permanent killing through out history. They destroyed their kingdoms, wrecked their grandeur and splendour; devastated their world and the hereafter (future) both. Sectarianism per se can not brook that every sect be understood to be true, and true in right earnest. Thus in order to cover it up, a Hadith was coined in which it was said that the Prophet had told: “There shall be seventy three sects in my Ummat and out of them only one shall be in Heaven and all the rest shall be in Hell.” Did you ponder over it? How did it make all the outfits satisfied by keeping one as an exception; that it is on the right and all others are on the wrong? The Quran, about the sects, had said: (23:53) “Every sect is in this wrong presumption that it is on the right”. In other words it means the Quran, with the words of (all outfits), had closed all the back doors that pave way to the wrong satisfaction of sectarianism. But this spurious Hadith, with the exception of "one sect", made this back door wide open. Now our history spread over almost 1000 years is a witness to the stark fact that in the garb of this exception, every sect is busy in the "Grand Jihad" of adjudging itself as the one to be on

the right and all others on the wrong. The hobby of issuing *fatwa* of *kufr* against one another is continuously pouring right from the first day.

Now, let us assume for a moment that no Hadith was in existence. This did not automatically mean that the split into the Sunnites and the Shi'ites would not have existed. As the split was politically motivated, it would have happened anyway. Now, without the Hadith, the Sunnites and the Shi'ites would have had only the Qur'an for their guidance. In that case, how would they have solved their problems?

Allah answers this question for us:

“Those who respond to their Lord and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance” - (42:38)

Without the Hadith, they would have had to read the Qur'an. Thus, they would have had to read the verse just quoted above. In addition, they would have had to come to a consensus among them, because they were all Muslims, submitters to God, ‘those who respond to their Lord and observe the Salaat prayers.’ But such things never happened because they had more than enough Hadith which they could pull out of their hats and use it to stab each other. Even if the Sunnites and the Shi'ites could not be reconciled, even if they had resorted to killing each other (which they did), they still would not have had more evil thoughts to provoke them had there not existed any Hadith. They would have been forced to refer to the Qur'an. Therefore, eventually, they are bound to have solved their differences.

However, unfortunately, history has merely repeated itself. The devils had laid their plan well. The Muslims listened to anything and everything except the Qur'an. The result was that they fell into the abyss, and they are still there to this day!

### **(b) Anti-Intellectualism**

Besides factionalism between the Sunnites and the Shi'ites, the Sunnites themselves are divided into different madh-habs or schools of thought. They broke up into many schools of thought because of the differences of opinion between their founders. At the beginning of the establishment of these schools, over 16 of them came to exist, but today only the Hanafi, the Maliki, the Shafi'i and Hanbali schools predominate. There exist major differences between the four dominant schools as well, due largely to the differences between Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik, the respective founders of the Hanafi and Maliki schools, which subsequently influenced the Hanbali and Shafi'i schools.

Instead of being testimony to the dynamism of the Qur'an which allowed such diverse opinions to exist and thus serve as a catalyst for Muslims to continuously exercise their intellect, the blind following of Madh-habs (Taqlaed) coupled with the ban on Ijtihad led to widespread promotion of sectarianism among the masses and led to the general decline in the search for truth among many scholars. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips in his work, ‘The Evolution of Fiqh’ explains the situation thus:

“The religion of Islam got restricted within the confines of the four existing Madh-habs; Hanafi, Maaliki, Shaafi'i, and Hanbali. These schools of law came to be considered divinely-ordained manifestations of Islam. All of them were supposed to be completely correct, equal and representative of true Islam, yet there were innumerable differences among them. In fact, there were schools in this period that interpreted some Hadiths in such a way as to prove that the prophet himself had predicted the appearance of the Imams and their Madh-habs. Consequently, any attempt to go beyond these canonical Madh-habs was considered heretical and anyone who refused to follow one of these Madh-habs was classified as apostate. The

hyper conservative scholars even went so far as to rule that whoever was caught transferring from one Madh-habs to another was liable to punishment at the discretion of the local Judge.”

Thus, the Muslim Ummah was virtually split into four religious sects. Ijtihad in all its forms was put aside, and the blind following (Taqlaad) of one of the four Madh-habs was made compulsory on all Muslims. Consequently, the followers of the various Madh-habs began to refuse to pray behind the Imams from other Madh-habs. Even the most Holy Masjid, al Masjid al-Haram of Makkah was affected. Separate niches were set up around the Ka’bah. It is interesting to note that separate places of prayer for each of the Madh-habs remained around the Ka’bah until the first quarter of the twentieth century when Abdul Azeez Ibn Sa’oud and his army conquered Makkah (October, 1924) and united all worshippers behind a single Imam regardless of his or their Madh-habs.

An interesting and very important question arises at this point. When nobody denies the fact that all the founders of these different Mad-habs were human beings, why do the laws made by them get such a sacred status? They did so because the Muslim masses were at that time (and still are) being made to believe that these laws were not the creation of these jurists but rather were based upon the sayings of the Prophet. Any dissent from or objection to these laws became synonymous with the rejection of the prophet’s sayings and traditions, and such an act is tantamount to blasphemy. By attributing these laws to the prophet, any discussion of them is pushed out of the domain of thought and reflection and becomes a matter of feeling and emotion, and when this happens, the sanctity attached to it puts it beyond any criticism, thereby creating an explosive situation. As a result, the moment someone questions or objects to these laws, which in reality were exacted by the jurists, it is publicised widely that such person does not believe in the Prophet. One can easily imagine to what extent such publicity can inflame the public’s emotions. This is the technique being practiced so successfully to keep the sanctity of the various Mad-habs above any criticism.

The Qur’an constantly exhorts Muslims to reason, think, reflect, and deliberate. It goes so far as to say that those people who do not use the God given mental abilities are ‘worse than animals’ (7:179). According to the Qur’an, those people who readily believe in anything without first questioning or thinking over it are not Muslims. Such an attitude brings human life down to the level of animals where the purpose of life is repetition and maintenance of the status quo. While describing the traits of the Mumineen Allah says, “These are the people who do not accept without scrutiny and deliberation”- (25:73). The Qur’an also made it clear that those people who work their way through thought and contemplation may be few in numbers, but they are always in power and strength over the majority who takes no heed to the importance of thought and contemplation.

“If from among you only hundred persons became such (who act only through, thought, wisdom and common sense) they will surely overpower a thousand Kafirs because the group of Kafirs are such who do not use their wisdom and thought.” - (8:65)

Imagine the condition of the present day Muslims in the light of the above verse. Sadly enough, the Muslims today when it comes to progress in the material world as well as in the world of values, stand exactly in the same spot as they did during the Abbasid Period and this status quo is the result of self imposed intellectual paralysis. The customs and traditions, and the tenets of the Abbasid Period have become the standard of judgment between things Islamic and non-Islamic. There is no curiosity, no motivation, no thought and reflection, no research, and no pondering. When intellectual achievements of a particular time in history is considered as the last word, human knowledge freezes at that level and intellectual stagnation sets in. The Qur’an has with forceful severity and in equally forceful terms opposed this blind conformity (Taqlaad). It has explained through numerous verses that the message of every Prophet was against this blind conformity and obedience and for this very reason all prophets were met with very strong opposition. They invited the people towards knowledge and

understanding while the people in a habitual manner described the life of their forefathers as attractive.

"When they are told, 'follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'we follow what we found our parents doing.' What if their parents lacked understanding and guidance? The example of such disbelievers is that of a parrot; they repeat what they heard without understanding. Deaf, dumb and blind, they fail to understand." - (2:170-171)

When a people, blindly following the foot-steps of its fathers, forefathers, elders and ancestors, its reactions towards events and incidents would not be based on or resultant to their thought and consideration or wisdom; rather it would wholly be motivated by subconscious. A total non-intellectualism of the sub-conscious mind takes over their faculties of senses and perceptions. Once they actually regard a thing subconsciously as commendable, and commendable it will remain in their eyes and vice versa, though they do not have any sound argument for its admissibility nor do they have any valid argument to disprove the opposite. This has been the state of affairs and condition of the religious minded Muslims for a thousand years, and continues to be so to this day.

Just consider that in the universe every element, matter etc. is in an evolutionary process, ever moving forward. Any element or matter, if for some reason stops moving forward it has to degenerate. This applies to human race as well. Only through the path of knowledge, education and learning does the evolution of humankind takes place. Every new generation has impediments and environmental obstacles before them and if they overcome them, it continues to move forward. This is the law and purpose of creation. Life is just another name of this creative urge. But if people lose their freshness of thought, if their capacities, powers and potentialities of thought are made dormant or suspended, they become unfit and unworthy creation.

Introduction of Hadith engulfed the entire Muslims and their behaviour pattern got degenerated to what the leaders wanted them to be. In fact, the Hadith enveloped entire life pattern of Muslims right from prescribing the "correct" methods of sleeping down to eating, dressing, etc. The Muslims under the Ulama, therefore, effectively underwent an intellectual death. For some of the Ulama looking for easy followers of their camp, the Hadith became a most effective tool to achieve that end. For others with no clear objectives in sight, the Hadith became an end in itself.

### © Pessimism and Political Opportunism

Among the many myths that have found their way into the Hadith is the belief in the coming of Mahdi. The Mahdi is expected to arise towards the Last Days of the world and is expected to save all the Muslims from their cruel oppressors. The Qur'an exhorts us to continuously strive to do good deeds and to make strong efforts to improve ourselves. The Muslims are encouraged to do good and to oppose evil. All this means continuous hard work in the path of God (Deen) to achieve intended objectives.

"This, because God would never change the blessings with which He has graced a people unless they change their inner selves: and [know] that God is all-hearing, all seeing. - (8:53)

Therefore, encouraging the Muslims to hang their hopes on something called the Mahdi is actually a subtle attempt to make defeatists and pessimists out of them. This pessimism, however, is further ensconced in another equally debilitating Hadith about the attestation of faith or the kalimah shahada. This fabricated Hadith says that just by reciting the kalimah shahada at the time of death, one can be forgiven by God and make it to Paradise!

Another belief, which was instilled and inculcated carefully in the hearts of the Muslims, was the belief in Fatalism. When the people saw the tyranny of the monarchical system before them the religious authority feared that this might stir in them the will to revolt. So they forestalled this possibility by creating the belief that everything happens in the world only by the will of Allah. No one does anything by his own volition or of his free will. Everything happens as a matter of fate, the *Thaqdeer*. This belief in fatalism made the monarchical hold more solid; every wickedness and devilishness of theirs has now assumed the will of God!

These Hadiths were a necessary precursor to the pessimism and the passive lethargy that was imposed upon Muslims. For how else could the people be made to resign themselves to such docility? The promise of a saviour, the promise of Heaven, the "keys" to Heaven etc. were necessary tools to maintain the people's subservience to the Hadith and to the people who propagated such Hadiths. All these sought to freeze the dynamic thinking encouraged by the Qur'an. Although these false Hadiths were advocated to serve as a bridge to link up all the warring factions in peace and harmony, it became evident soon enough that these false Hadith standing on their false foundations would collapse. How could the advocating of pessimism and passivity guarantee peace and harmony, unity and justice? Above all these false teachings were clearly against the teachings of the Qur'an. It would become all too clear how easily the corrupted and cruel rulers, the foreign invaders and the colonialists would overwhelm a docile and almost indolent Muslim populace. The Muslims had been perfectly moulded into submissive and servile forms through the indoctrination of all these false Hadith. This clearly is the cause of their downfall.

Therefore, did the Qur'an not pose a serious problem for the Hadith writers then? Any careful reading of the Qur'an and any serious discussion would definitely point out the errors of the Hadith. So, how did the Ulema handle this potential threat to their Hadith? They found the solution by simply cutting off and banishing all intellectual discussions and inquiry in Islam. They came up with the not-too-original but effective idea that only the Ulama, the priestly class, would be allowed to handle all matters pertaining to the religion. Consider this Hadith:

Narrated by Jundub: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If anyone interprets the Book of Allah in the light of his opinion even if he is right, he has erred." (Abu Dawood Hadith No. 3644)

Despite the fact that Islam never allowed any priesthood, the Ulama would go on successfully to set up not only an elite priestly class but also a whole hierarchy of priests. Much like the Brahmins of Hinduism, they would seek to impose this hierarchy upon the Muslim masses and deny the masses any access to a true understanding of the religion without first being screened by them. Once again, to sustain their position and to nip any buds of dissent that might start to bloom, the Ulama would resort to their good old panacea for all their ills — the Hadith! Here it is:

The Ulama are the heirs to the Prophet. (Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi)

Consequently, the Ulama have been most successful to this day. They occupy undisputed domination over the common people. They maneuvered around to make the people believe that they are empowered to wield the powers that are reserved to Allah. They subjugated the people to obedience. Laws and rules are trumped up day in and day out on matters assigning them to Haraam (prohibited) and Halal (permissible) or to do this or not to do that.

A perusal of the Qur'an indicates that only a few things are declared Haraam. For the remaining affairs simply boundary lines are drawn. And human thought and intellect is left independent, free to soar, within the boundaries thus prescribed, so that it is free to find the solutions for problems all by itself. But, there are the endless lists and piles of man-made

books of religion declaring Haraam. The Qur'an after declaring a handful of things as Haraam, it states:

“And be mindful, never state any lies that comes up on your tongue unhesitatingly, that this thing is Halal and that Haraam so as to ascribe false things to Allah” - (16:116)

It is not a simple matter for men to declare something Haraam. It will tantamount to squeeze the freedom of humankind for all times, and that is why such authority is not given to anyone.

‘Say: who has forbidden the beautiful gifts of Allah, which he has produced for his servants and the things, clean and pure, (which he has provided) for sustenance? - (7:32)

However, the religious monopolists have dared to challenge Allah and assumed themselves the power to declare a thing Haraam or otherwise! They produce volumes of books commanding common people to do this and don't do that. They restrict what is otherwise permissible and obstructs the path and makes life miserable. In their religious literature, music, art, photography, science, elegant and pleasant adornments, and their means and resources are all Haraam! Whereas Islam, bathed in the beauty of nature, teaches and educates as how to add and increase this beauty in the universe. As a result, the majority of them have become strictly converted into detesters of anything and everything worldly. To carry the argument further, aversion to the worldly things and enmity towards knowledge and wisdom resulted in the hatred of every element in the universe. Consequently, these people perceive evil and evil one in every corner of the universe. To them any thing of beauty becomes a thing of abhorrence and scorn. Every smiling face they meet with is a mirror of death, and every flower-strewn forehead, faggots and timber for the hell-fire.

It should not come as a surprise to us that after a thousand years of adhering to the false teachings, the Muslims' condition has progressively worsened. If the present Islamic movement for reform and regeneration aims to achieve its objectives, it absolutely must face up to the reality of the corrupting influence of the Hadith and other false teachings arising from it, and issue forth the clarion call to return to the divine Qur'an. There is no alternative to the issue. There is no shortcut to the truth but only by the destruction of falsehood.

#### (4) The Coherence Theory of the Hadith

"Why do they not study the Qur'ān carefully? If it were from other than God, they would have found many contradictions therein." -- (Ch.4: Ver.82)

In anticipation of criticism, the Hadith writers came up with other neat tricks to safeguard their position. Imam Shafi'i postulated the theory of the coherence of the Hadith. By this fantastic theory, Imam Shafi'i held that the Hadith could never contradict the Qur'an, or another Hadith. If any contradictions were found to exist, these were merely outward appearances but not real contradictions. To prove this point, Imam Shafi provides the following convoluted explanation. He takes the Prophet not only as a Divine messenger but as a Divine spokesman whose every word and action is divinely inspired. In this way, there can be no conflict between the Sunna and the Qur'an. Note the following dialogue between Shafi'i and a questioner where this confusing and contradicting theory is explained:

“He (i.e. the questioner) asked: Would it be possible for the Sunna to contradict the Book [of God]?”

[Imam Shafi] replied: Impossible! For God, glorified be His praise, imposed on men the obligation [of obedience to the law] through two avenues – the origin of both is in His Book – His Book and the Sunna: [The latter is binding by virtue of] the duty of obedience laid down

in the Book that it should be followed. So it was not permissible for the Apostle to allow the Sunna to be abrogated [by the Book], without the Apostle himself providing another Sunna to abrogate it. The abrogating Sunna is known because it is the later one, while most of the abrogating [communications] of the Book can be known only by [indications provided in] the Sunna of the Apostle.”

Imam Shafi does not provide any hard evidence or good examples to prove this coherence theory. He did not produce any support from the Qur'an for this theory. Actually, these rather simple tricks of word-play were set up to cover the obvious discrepancies and contradictions that exist in the Hadith. But whether this theory can really save the Hadith is another matter. We will see that this theory only condemns the Hadith further.

The greatest weakness of the Hadith is its contradiction with the Qur'an. We quote here just a few of the samples:

### **Selection No.1**

The following Hadiths are some of the examples of the extremely adverse comments supposedly made by the Prophet against women. They totally contradict his character, as well as the spirit of the Qur'an.

Bukhari (ref: 1.301) narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Kudri:

Once, Allah's Messenger went out of the Musalla (to offer prayer) of Id-al-Adha. Then he passed by the women and said, "O women! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women)." They asked, "Why is it so, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied, "You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you." The women asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during the menses?" The women replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her religion."

Bukhari (7.030) narrated Abdullah bin Umar: Allah's Apostle said, "Evil omen is in the woman, the house and the horse."

Muslim (576), Narrated by Abu Huraira: the Prophet said: "Woman has been created from a rib, and will in no way be straightened for you. Had it not been for the children of Israel, food would not have gone stale or bad; and had it not been for Eve, a woman would never have been unfaithful to her husband".

One can quote many verses from the Qur'an to refute the above statements. Examples are: 2:223; 4:19; 16:97; 33:35 and 48:5 & 6. Did Abu Huraira not know that there is living germs that make the food and meat turn bad even before the creation of the Jews? Quran never blamed Eve for the sin that Adam and Eve committed. Blaming all the women in the world for supposedly a sin that Eve committed is against the basic Quranic principles and against the justice of God, the Most Merciful. The Qur'an does not denigrate women in any way, but the Hadith literature contains woman-degrading Hadiths which portray the woman as naturally crooked and beyond reform, more evil than man, of lower intelligence, and a hindrance to prayers – grouped together with dogs and asses – (ref: Muslim 1032, 1034, Abu Dawood 703).

### **Selection No.2**

Here are a few typical examples of Hadiths which show aspects of character ascribed to the Prophet that are totally irrational. All the irrefutable historical evidences on the Prophet's nature contradict the spirit of such narrations.

Bukhari (ref: 7.590), narrated Anas: The climate of Medina did not suit some people, so the Prophet ordered them to proceed along with his shepherd, i.e. his camels, and drink their milk and urine (as medicine). So they went along with the shepherd i.e. the camels, and drank their milk and urine till their bodies became healthy. Then they killed the shepherd and drove away the camels. When the news reached the Prophet he sent some people in their pursuit. When they were brought, he cut their hands and feet and their eyes were branded with heated pieces of iron.

Bukhari (ref: 9.38A) narrated by Anas Ibn Malik: A man peeped into one of the dwelling places of the Prophet. The Prophet got up and aimed a sharp-edged arrowhead (or wooden stick) at him to poke him stealthily.

Bukhari (ref: 7.252/253/254) narrated Um-Salama and Um-Atiyya: A woman was bereaved of her husband and her relatives worried about her eyes (which were diseased). They came to Allah's Messenger and asked him to allow them to treat her eyes with kohl (antimony eye powder), but he said, "[...] nay, she cannot use kohl till four months and ten days have elapsed."

Bukhari (Ref: 7.658, 8.400, 4.400) Narrated by Aisha: Allah's Apostle was affected by magic, so much that he used to think that he had done something which in fact, he did not do, and he invoked his Lord (for a remedy). [...].

The most exalted character of the prophet of mercy does not accord with the kind of behaviour as narrated in the first three Hadiths. Can a Muslim believe that the Prophet of Allah cut off the hands and feet, and branded the eyes of those who slaughtered his herder? It is tantamount to insulting the prophet to say that the prophet tried to poke the eyes of the person who peeped into his room and prevented a woman to treat her eyes during Iddat. It would be assumed that the Prophet would go to this man who had peeped into his room and would teach him Islamic conduct and make him understand that what he did was forbidden, not to take an arrowhead and attempt to stab him and poke his eyes stealthily. It is impossible, also, to imagine a situation where someone as narrated in the fourth Hadith bewitched the prophet. This Hadith goes completely against the Qur'an, which counters in many places the claim of the unbelievers that the prophet was bewitched.

### **Selection No.3**

There are a number of Hadiths contained in the Sahih collections which go contrary to the teaching of the Quran. One of the hadith which stands out on its complete contradiction to the Quranic verse is:

Volume 9, Book 83, Number 17: Narrated 'Abdullah: Allah's Apostle said, "The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims."

The above referred directive regarding the apostate ascribed to the Prophet clearly contradicts many verses of the Quran.

“There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error.

And he who rejects false deities and believes in Allah has grasped a firm handhold which will never break. Allah is Hearer, Knower.”(Qur'an 2:256)

If a person is to be killed in case he converts to another religion, it would imply that the statement of the Qur'an only means that a person cannot be forced to accept Islam, but he can be forced to remain a Muslim throughout his life.

Furthermore, the Qur'an has strictly disallowed the imposition of the death penalty except in two specific cases. One of them is where the person is guilty of murdering another person and the other is where a person is guilty of creating unrest in the country (fasa'd fil-ardh) like being involved in activities that create unrest in a society, for example activities like terrorism etc. The Qur'an says:

“Whoever kills a person without his being guilty of murder or of creating unrest in the land, is as though he kills the whole of mankind.” (Quran 5: 32)

#### **Selection No.4**

Islam, from the very beginning directed people to cultivate science. The application of this precept brought with it prodigious strides in science during the great era of Islamic civilisation, from which the West, too, benefited hugely – although this historical fact has been deliberately blacked out in their literature. Today, thanks to the scientific knowledge, great progress has been made in the interpretation of many previously misunderstood verses in the Qur'an. Verse 36 of Surah 38 is a prime example. The Qur'an gives an end to the sun's evolution and a destination place. Modern astronomy has been able to locate it exactly and has called it the Solar Apex. The verse translated by Dr Bucaille is as follows: (36:38) ‘The Sun runs its course to a settled place. This is the decree of the Almighty, the Full of Knowledge’. Note that the words 'settled place' is the translation of the Arabic *mustaqarr*. Contrast this with the supposedly reported interpretation of the verse by the Prophet as quoted by Bukhari.

Bukhari (ref: 4.421), narrated Abu Dhar:

The Prophet asked me at sunset, "Do you know where the sun goes (at the time of sunset)?" I replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better." He said, "It goes (i.e. travels) till it prostrates itself underneath the Throne, and takes the permission to rise again, and it is permitted and then (a time will come when) it will be about to prostrate itself but its prostration will not be accepted, and it will ask permission to go on its course, but it will not be permitted, but it will be ordered to return whence it has come and so it will rise in the west. And that is the interpretation of the statement of Allah." Surah 36: Verse 38 reads “And the sun runs its fixed course for a term (decreed). That is the Decree of (Allah) the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.” Clearly, such an interpretation is a laughable joke for a person endowed with even a rudimentary knowledge of the movements of the sun and earth. Such unscientific assertions are nowhere to be found in the Qur'an. However, they liberally pepper the Hadith literature.

Again, the books of Hadith contain many home-remedies, according to ideas prevalent at that time, which are scientifically absurd. The Hadith mentions there being a cure for every ailment in black cumin seed [Hadith 591, Vol. 7]. This is evidently not true. Can it cure cancer or AIDS, not to mention even the common cold? Hadith suggests that we drink "camel-urine" to recuperate after an illness [Hadith 590, Vol.7]. This is disgusting, naturally speaking. Urine is toxic stuff. The Qur'an places extreme importance on cleanliness and clean eating (*tayyab*). The Hadith mentions that "fever" is from the "heat of hell" [Hadith 621, 622, Vol. 7]. Atrocious!

The famous Hadith about the fly: "If a fly falls into the vessel of any of you, let him dip all of it (in the vessel) and then throw it away [and use the material in the vessel], for in one of its wings there is a disease and in the other there is a healing [Bukhari, Hadith 673, Vol.7]. Beware, there is going to be an outbreak of typhoid and cholera if people take the above as "Hadith-truth". Would those who profess to believe in this Hadith be willing to carry out its instructions?

Any look at the medical books will explain to you why the newborns cry when born. Some ignorant people after the death of the prophet made a research on this phenomenon and to authenticate their 'finding' they attributed this lie to the prophet. They claimed: Siad bin Al Musaiyab narrated: Abu Huraira said, "The Prophet said, 'No child is born but that, Satan, touches it when it is born where upon it starts crying loudly because of being touched by Satan, except Mary and her Son.' [Bukhari, Hadith 71, Vol.6]. Imam Bukhari had no problem to include this hadith in his collection, after all it is reported by 'reliable' and 'trustworthy' chain of narrators!

This is the story of the Hadith, which is being placed next to the Qur'an. In Surah Al Baqarah, Allah says: Therefore woe to those who distort the scripture with their own hands then say; "This is from God" Seeking a cheap gain. Woe to them for distorting the scripture, and woe to them for their illicit earnings" - (2:79).

It is easy to refute the Christian argument by referring to their sacred testament, the Bible. In a similar way the "Muslim" scholars who insist on giving eminence to Hadith can be countered by referring to their own books written by the hands of their leaders like Imam Bukhari, without God's permission.

The Muslim clergy expend a great deal of energy trying to account for these inconsistencies and contradictions. Their answers to your sensible observations may involve various choices of words, yet the thrust can broadly be summarised thus: in order to understand the Hadith you have to be very learned. There seem to be contradictions in the Hadith because you are not well-versed in Theology. They – the clergy – are learned. Therefore, they do not see contradictions. When you are learned like them, you too, would see no contradictions. So, until then you cannot contend with them on this (or any other) subject. The fact that you fail to perceive any of these idiosyncrasies only testifies to your own ignorance and lack of perception.

The misguided point is that in order to show our reverence and obedience to the Prophet we were bamboozled into following anything that has been quoted as his sayings and practices, without checking against the Qur'an. Unfortunately, our so-called political and religious leaders have taken full advantage of this weakness by fabricating suitable Hadiths to keep their iron grip and influence over us. We must keep it in mind that the Qur'an was revealed as the final testament because the previous revelations were corrupted by human interference. If we now say in one breath that we cannot accept the previous revelations because they have been corrupted by human interference, how can we then say, in the same breath, that the Hadiths are acceptable even though they are the results of human endeavour and, without doubt, many of which contradict the Qur'an?

Obviously this kind of critical review ought to baffle the reader. You should read what is written in Bukhari's collection and decide as to extent of corruption and manipulations have gone into the making of the Hadith. We know and are sure to some extent that you are going to be persuaded by others not to believe this. You may also be told to consider the magnitude of respect built up by the authors like Imam Bukhari, and the status given to his book as next to the holy Qur'an. You will be condescendingly asked and urged not to believe in any kind of undermining or vile conversation. When the book of Imam Bukhari is available, why not read it and confirm the facts we have pointed out here. You will read in it the words and sentences

of the type that man, in his right frame of mind, will never have the audacity to attribute it to the Holy Messenger. Especially to a personality whose vision and insight has no parallel and who is to lead the humanity to its final goal and be a symbol of peace to them. Our blood freezes in the veins when we go through many of the nauseating statements attributed to such a great and noble personality as the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The late Maulana Abul K. Azad gives us his opinion on Bukhari's Hadith, wherein it is said that 3 times in his lifetime, Messenger Abraham was forced to tell lies:

"From the various Hadiths that we read, no matter how close it may seem to the truth, the innocence of the Hadith cannot go further than the innocence of the mind of its narrator. Neither must the Hadith be taken to go beyond our belief. We must admit that this Hadith cannot be the words of the Holy Messenger. Definitely, somewhere the narrator of this Hadith has made a mistake. And in admitting this fact that the sky is not going to fall nor the ground will break apart." (Quoted from Tafsir Tarjuman ul Qur'an, Volume 2, published by Zamzam Co, Lahore pg 499-500)

Maulana Ubaid Ullah Sindhi goes even further and says,

'I feel embarrassed to ask a Neo-Muslim European to read Bukhari's Hadith.' (Risala al'Furqan, Shah Waliullah number, page # 286)

Apparently these seem to be cogent arguments. Newspapers or history is not a matter of belief for us. If I want I may accept a certain event; at the same time if I have convincing arguments against it I shall reject it without hesitation. On the contrary, Hadith, the way it is handed down to us, has to be in conformity with our beliefs. Even the slightest doubt on Hadith will jeopardise our faith. Let us assume that we find in history a king, at such and such an event or on such and such date he told a lie. It is totally up to us to accept or reject it. We are not at all obliged to believe it. On the contrary, when Bukhari's Hadith is put to scrutiny, in which it is written "Messenger Abraham spoke three lies in his lifetime," (Bukhari 4:578) we are bound to reject it. However if Hadith is made part of our faith, we are forced to accept it as part of the Faith. If we were compelled to believe in this Hadith, it would mean we doubt the verdict of the Messenger. And if we believe in this Hadith, we are casting aspersions on a honourable Messenger of God on a false ground of telling lies.

Suppose we read in the newspapers that one man cut off another's nose. You are under no obligation to believe it or not. But then you read Bukhari's Hadith, wherein it is narrated, "The Angel of Death was sent to Moses and when he came to Moses, He slapped him on the eye" - (Bukhari 4.619). It assumes mandatory status and you are obliged to believe in this parable. If anybody doubts the story it would be blasphemy against Islam!

The Hadith therefore, can never be classified as an infallible source of guidance, such as the Qur'an is. This is not to say that we have to burn all the Hadith books. They are useful social and historical records reflecting the people and events of the times in formative period of Islamic civilization. However, we do not contribute to the anxiety of the Pakistani scholar, the Late Professor Fazlur Rahman, who stated that if we were to neglect the Hadith, then the historical basis for the existence of the Qur'anic teachings would be destroyed. This argument has often been repeated and stressed by the supporters of infallibility of Hadith but in reality it has no basis. The proof, for the authenticity of Holy Qur'an and Messenger of Allah, through whom it was conveyed to the mankind, is Holy Qur'an itself, further supported by the existence of the Muslim community through out history and the existence of many historical records. The Qur'an, without the Hadith, will no way incomplete or affected. So is the status of Holy Prophet, Muhammad. On the contrary, the Prophet will emerge in a much better and exalted position, with no fabricated Hadith/Sunna attributed to him to eclipse his glory.

One of the greatest of scholars, Gulam Ahmed Parvez in his work *Muqaam-e-Hadith (The Actual Status of Hadith)* puts the Hadith in its correct perspective. He says:

“The correct stature of hadith happens to be as history of Deen. It can prove beneficial to history, but to present it forward to rationalize Deen, will carry little meanings. The most damaging aspect of placing hadith next to Deen caused Qur'an, which is full of life, to go into eclipse. Furthermore, from the days of Holy Messenger till today, the landmarks of ahadithist, that have remained debatable, are those that have no link with practical matters of the social fabric of Ummah. For example, who is greater of the two, Hazrat Abu Bakr or Hazrat Ali? Is Qur'an animate or inanimate? How does Allah descend to the lowest heavens in the later part of the night? While standing for prayers, must we fold our arms? Is it necessary, while praying in congregation, to recite ‘Fatiha,’ after the mullah? Should we say ‘Amin,’ in high volume or low? So on and so forth, they go on with these and similar kinds of questions. On the contrary if Qur'an had been the focus of attraction, then Muslim Ummah would have concentrated on matters, as to how we can consolidate and fortify the central governing authority and make it more practical? How can we search for ways and means to bring Muslim brotherhood closer to each other and the application of Qur'an more popular in the milieu? Man can harness the entire natural universe, the Qur'an states. How can we possibly control its potential energies, to serve in the development and emancipation of humanity? How can we turn our faith and virtuous deeds into life giving reality, so that each individual in the Ummah can become a vicegerent on earth, for which the human being is being evolved and so on and so forth?”

Therefore, as a historical record, the Hadith is useful to the extent all other historical records go. It can be accepted or rejected to the extent it survives scrutiny on constructive criticism and evaluation by scientific, historical and most of all, the Holy Qur'an.

## (5) REFUTATION OF THE Traditionalists' THEORY

“They are the ones who examine all words, then follow the best. They are the ones whom Allah has guided. They are the ones who possess intelligence” - (Qur'ān, Ch. 39:Ver. 18)

Modern Europe has succeeded in pioneering various fields of modern knowledge and becomes a leader in these fields — especially science and technology — because it holds firmly to the Kantian motto of the European Age of Enlightenment: **Dare to know**. The Islamic world, in the early stages of its second renaissance, must do likewise. Since in Islam knowledge is based on revelation, the motto of the new Islamic Renaissance must read: Dare to know under the guidance of the Qur'an.

Muslim scholars in particular and the Muslim masses in general, are very reluctant to review and revise their own understanding of the Message of Islam. The first step in an individual's intellectual and spiritual growth is to look within oneself critically and be ready to change his “accepted facts” in the face of the evidence presented. The willingness to do it has been absent from the Muslim psyche, which is why most Muslims refuse even to consider the possibility that perhaps, what their forefathers or their scholars telling them could be incorrect. Any study of the Hadith and Sunna must, of necessity, be based on the Qur'an. Everything said about the Hadith must be subjected to the critical scrutiny of the Qur'an and science. Only what passes this test is acceptable.

## **The Five Arguments of Traditionalists**

The Ahl'ul-Hadith or the Traditionalists did not distinctly emerge in Muslim society until more than a hundred years after the Prophet's death. There is a big gap between the Prophet and the first legal digest that contains some traditions, i.e. the Muwatta' of Imam Malik (d. 179 AH). It is historically known that the 'four rightful caliphs' — close companions of the Prophet as they were — not only did not leave us any collection of traditions but also made very little use of traditions circulated orally at the time.

Nevertheless, against all odds, the Traditionalists insisted from the very beginning that the Hadith and Sunna were binding on the Muslims. They claimed the authority for the Hadith from the Qur'an itself, as we shall presently show. They cannot do otherwise than make this claim, for without the authority of the Qur'an the legitimacy cannot be established, and it would be automatically rejected. It shall be shown presently that this claim is false. They put forward Five principal arguments.

1. Firstly, the Hadith is also Divine revelation.
2. Secondly, God's command to the believers to obey the messenger means that they must uphold the Hadith.
3. Thirdly, the Prophet is the interpreter of the Qur'ān and the Hadith is necessary in order to understand and carry out Qur'ānic injunctions.
4. Fourthly, the Prophet is an example for the believers to follow, and his Sunnah is binding on the believers.
5. Fifthly and lastly, Hadiths are indispensable to carry out the practice of Salaat.

We shall discuss these five principal arguments of the Traditionalists in detail and show that they are false.

### **5(a) Argument One: 'Sunna is Revelation'**

Here the claim is that both the Qur'an and Hadith are Divine Revelations. And any kind of division between these two is not admissible. That is why a hadith was later on crafted, according to which the Holy Messenger told his disciples that 'I get revelations of Qur'an and Masla Ma'a' (along with it similar and something else). This led to the concept of two kinds of revelations: "Wahee-i-Jali" – Handwritten Revelation (Qur'an) and "Wahee-i-Khafi" – Hidden Revelation (the Hadith). The Wahee-i-Jali is also called "Wahee-i-Matlaui" – Revelation-to-be-recited- and "Wahee-i-Khafi" is also called "Wahee-i-Ghair Matlaui" - Revelation-not-to-be-recited. It should be noted that there is no mention of these two types of revelations anywhere in the Qur'an. In fact, the idea of two revelations originally belonged to the Jews. The Hadith writers have borrowed it from the Jews who believed in a revelation that could be written and the other that is not written (which means it was transferred through traditions).

According to the Qur'an any revelation that claims to originate from God, must meet the criteria of perfect preservation and no contradictions in any form.

'Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder (the Qur'an) and behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption]. - (Ch.15: Ver.9)

'Will they not, then, try to understand this Qur'an? Had it issued from any but Allah, they would surely have found in it many an inner contradiction!' - (Ch. 4: Ver. 82)

Evidently the Hadith collections lack both the above Criteria. The important question arises at this point is that, if the Qur'an and the Hadith both were revelations, why the responsibility of preserving the Hadith was not taken up either by the prophet or his immediate companions? Why so much favoritism, care, and protection of one and no care at all for the other revelation? Anyhow, the Traditionalists bring forth the following Qur'anic verses in support of their theory. We will study the verses in detail and find that their claim is false.

“Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them the Ayat of Allah, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom (hikmah), while before that they were in manifest error” - (Ch.3: Ver.164)

“By the Star when it goes down, your companion is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: He was taught by one Mighty in Power” - (Ch.53: Ver.1-5)

We will look at the first verse first.

The famous classical jurist, Imam Shafi'i, basically the creator of the theory of classical jurisprudence, interpreted the Arabic word hikmah (wisdom) in first verse and in similar verses as meaning 'Sunna' or 'Hadith.' In his major work, al-Risalah, he stated:

“God mentions His scripture, that is the Qur'an, and wisdom, and I have heard from those who are knowledgeable in the Qur'an — those whom I agree with — say that wisdom is the traditions of the Prophet. This is the same as the Word [of God Himself]; but God knows better! Because the Qur'an is mentioned followed by Wisdom; then God mentions His blessing to mankind by teaching the Qur'an and wisdom. So, it is not possible that wisdom means other things than the traditions of the Prophet...”

Imam Shafi'i's interpretation of the word hikmah as meaning the Prophet's tradition cannot but give rise to grave doubts. Was he justified in doing so? He did not produce any support from the Qur'an for such an interpretation. He merely reported the view of "experts" whom he concurred with. Who these "experts" were and what their reasons for advancing such a view Imam Shafi'i did not say. According to the laws of logic, we can question any view put forward by anybody but we cannot question certainty. In the quotation above, we notice that Imam Shafi'i jumped from a statement of the status of probability to a statement of the status of certainty without giving proper proofs to enable the probable view to achieve the status of certainty. This is unacceptable in any scientific discourse.

God Himself states in the Qur'an that it is He Who explains the Qur'an. This means that the Qur'an explains itself. Taking this clue and examining the use of the word hikmah, occurring twenty times in the Qur'an, it will become obvious that hikmah is an attribute of the Qur'an. We will use the methodology of "Tasreef ul Ayah" to determine the meaning of the word "Al-Hikmah". Allah tells us: “See how We repeat the verses that they may understand.” - (Ch.6: Ver.65)

We understand that the revelations of Allah have many attributes. Allah has not just assigned "names" for His revelations - rather the "names" mentioned are actually attributes that signify different characteristics of His revelations. The word "Al-Qur'an" itself is not a name but an attribute. It means "The Recital", or "The-Recitation", specifying the attribute of recitation of Allah's revelations. There are many attributes of Allah's revelations. For example, "Al-Zikr", meaning "The-Reminder" as Allah's revelations are supposed to REMIND us; "Al-Huda", meaning "The-Guidance" as the revelations are supposed to GUIDE us; "Al-Kitaab", meaning the "The-Book" or "Written Record" as Allah's revelations are in the form of a Book, a

written record; "Al-Furqaan", meaning "The Criterion" as Allah's revelations are supposed to be the CRITERION for us to judge between right and wrong. Similarly, "Al-Hikmah" is also an attribute of Allah's revelations as it is supposed to teach us WISDOM behind the written words in 'Al-Kitaab'.

The following verses clearly explain to us that Wisdom is an attribute of the Qur'an:

“Alif Laam Ra; these are the Verses of the Book of Wisdom [Kitaab al-Hakeem]” -- (Ch.10: Ver.1)

“Alif Lam Mim; these are the Verses of the Book of Wisdom” (Ch.31: Ver.1-2)

“Ta Sin. By the Qur'an full of Wisdom” (Ch.36: Ver.1-2)

“We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic, so that you may use your Aqal. And verily it is in the Mother of The Book, in Our Presence, High, Full of Wisdom” (Ch.43: Ver.3-4)

These are of the Wisdom [al-Hikmah], which your Lord has revealed to you. Take not, with Allah, another object of Worship, lest you should be thrown into hell, blameworthy and rejected (Ch.17: Ver.39).

These above verses make it evident that Wisdom is an attribute of the Qur'an. Thus when the Qur'an is revealed to the Prophet, its Hikmah is also revealed to him by default.

“Ha Meem. And the Book of Clarity [Kitaab al-Mubeen]. We sent it down during a blessed night: for We wish to warn. In that is made distinct EVERY affair of WISDOM” (Ch.44: Ver.1-4)

Here Allah ties the descending of the Book with all wisdom. Again, we look at the Qur'an and see how "Hikmah" is defined:

“This is what We rehearse [natluhu] to you of the Ayat and the Reminder of Wisdom [al-Dhikr al-Hakeem]” - (Ch.3: Ver.58)

Here the “Reminder of Wisdom” is to be recited [Natluhu]. The only thing that the Muslims recite is the Qur'an. No one ever recites Hadith. Thus the Hikmah is the Qur'an.

We now look at another evidence that al-Hikmah is something that is to be recited. We see that Allah commanded the wives of the Messenger to recite al-Hikmah:

"And bear in mind that which is recited in your houses of the Ayat of Allah AND al-Hikmah. Lo! Allah is Subtle, Aware." (Ch.33: Ver.34)

Here we notice that the wives of the Prophet were instructed to RECITE the Verses of Allah AND the Wisdom. The only thing that is RECITED is the Qur'an. The Qur'an uses the words tilawa, yatlu, tatlu, etc. explicitly for RECITATION of the VERSES of the Qur'an. It is therefore abundantly clear that Hikmah is an attribute of the Qur'an, and is to be recited. Qur'an is not just a Kitaab or Book of Legal rulings. It also contains the Wisdom behind those rulings and laws. Thus The Book and the Wisdom means the laws and the wisdom behind those laws. This is the Miracle of Allah's Revelations - they contain His laws as well as the Wisdom behind those laws.

Therefore, just by using the 'tasreef ul Ayat' we notice two major flaws in the reasoning of the Traditionalists - one, they ignore that Hikmah is tied with the Qur'an elsewhere in the

Book; and two, they fail to produce evidence where Hikmah is tied to the Hadith of the Messenger recorded by people several years after his death.

When the above arguments are presented to the Traditionalists, some of them get very emotional and shout that "there is no 'WAU ATFA' in the rest of the 'Hikmah' usage and therefore the usage of the word 'Hikmah' is different from the one used in 3:164". They fail to see the logical implications of this stubborn and emotional argument. We will analyse some other Verses of the Qur'an in the light of this argument.

“I taught you the Book [wal]AND THE [hikmah] Wisdom [wal] AND The-Law [Torah] AND The-Gospel [Injeel]” - (Ch.5: Ver.110)

So according to the logic used by the Traditionalists, Allah taught Jesus FOUR DISTINCT revelations named as "The Book", "The Wisdom", "The Torah", and "The Injeel". This would mean that The Book is DISTINCT from Torah and Injeel. Thus according to the Traditionalist's interpretation, during that time, there were four revelations making the rounds!

We may look again at another Ayat:

"Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our Ayat and purifies you and teaches you the Book AND [wal] the wisdom AND [wal] teaches you that which you did not know." (Ch.2: Ver.151)

Now, we see another "wau Atfa". Here the Messenger teaches us "The-Book" AND "The-Hikmah", AND teaches us "that which we did not know". Thus according to the logic of the Traditionalists the presence of the "wau atfa" would mean that he is teaching us THREE DISTINCT things. Now, the Traditionalists have established that "Al-Kitaab" is the Qur'an, and "Al-Hikmah" is the "Hadith and Sunna". Now in addition to this we would like to know what is this NEW KNOWLEDGE that the Messenger is teaching...mind you because of the "wau atfa" the "new knowledge" MUST be DISTINCT from "Al-Kitaab", and "Al-Hikmah". Where this NEW KNOWLEDGE would be found? It cannot be in the Qur'an, or even in the Hadith.

We are sure that anyone with a grain of reason in his mind can see the logical error committed by the Traditionalists.

Now look closer at the second verse in question:

By the Star when it goes down, your companion is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: He was taught by one Mighty in Power, Endued with Wisdom: for he appeared (in stately form); While he was in the highest part of the horizon: Then he approached and came closer, And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant- (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. (Ch.53: Ver.1-10)

The traditionalists quote the above verse from the Qur'an without reference to the rest of the Qur'an to imply that everything that the Prophet said was Wahi from Allah. The above verses clearly describe the process of revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. They refer to especially inspired state, not to the ordinary state of the Prophet Muhammad's human existence. What should alert Muslims is the very close resemblance of this theory to the much earlier Jewish theory of written and oral revelations. This historical testimony is self-explanatory. The theory of two revelations that the Traditionalists had propagated is Jewish in origin and had its beginning in the teaching of scholar-priest Ezra, idolized by the Jews as the son of God, and his followers.

From a linguistic point of view, we note that God says 'In Huwa ila wahe yuha' 53:4, this literally translates to 'It is nothing but inspiration being inspired'. The word 'Huwa' is very indicative in this verse, it literally means 'it', but that is not all. The word 'it' in English does not give a gender, 'it' could refer to a masculine or a feminine equally. However, in Arabic the word 'Huwa' refers to the masculine (as opposed to the word Hiya which refers to the feminine). The word 'Huwa' here refers to the Qur'an which is masculine. What all this means is that in this verse, God is SPECIFICALLY speaking about the inspiration of the Qur'an to the Prophet . God is NOT speaking about every word uttered by the prophet!

The Quran explains it very clearly that the speech of the Prophet that is by Wahi is nothing else but the Quran. Allah explains what is being revealed to the Prophet:

Ha Mim: A REVELATION from the Beneficent, the Merciful Allah: A BOOK, whereof the Ayat are explained in detail; - a QUR'AN in Arabic, for people who understand - (Qur'an, Ch.41: Ver.1-3).

The Messenger himself is made to confirm that the Wahi he is receiving is the Qur'an:

'And this Qur'an has been revealed to me [uhiya ilayya ha\_zal Qur'an] that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches?' (Ch.6: Ver.19)

Allah Challenges people to produce something similar to the Revelation being sent down to the Messenger. Let us read these challenges:

'And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then bring a Surah similar to it, and call your witnesses beside Allah if ye are truthful?' (Ch.2: Ver.23)

Here we notice that as a challenge to WHAT ALLAH REVEALS to His slave, the people are told to bring a Surah. Here, Allah's challenge to 'bring a Surah similar to it' against 'that which We reveal unto Our slave', establishes that What Allah is revealing to His slave is composed of Surahs, i.e. it is the Qur'an.

Then we see that the hypocrites were afraid that a Surah might be revealed to show their hypocrisy. The Prophet's ordinary speech was always present, but the Qur'an tells us that it was a Surah that they were afraid would reveal their hypocrisy:

'The hypocrites fear lest a Surah (chapter of the Qur'an) should be sent down to them telling them plainly of what is in their hearts. Say: Go on mocking, surely Allah will bring forth what you fear?' - (Ch. 9: Ver. 64)

Not only the hypocrites but the believers also used to wait for SURAHS to see Allah's commandment. If everything that the Messenger was saying was Wahi, then they did not have to wait for a Surah:

'And those who believe say: Why has not a Surah (chapter of the Qur'an) been revealed? But when a decisive chapter is revealed and fighting is mentioned therein you see those in whose hearts is a disease look to you with the look of one fainting because of death. Woe to them then!' (Ch.47: Ver.20)

Then Allah forbids people from asking unnecessary questions when the Qur'an is revealed.

‘O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if you question about them when the Qur'an is being revealed, they shall be declared to you; Allah pardons this, and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing.’ -(Ch.5: Ver.101)

The above restriction would have been meaningless if Prophet Muhammad had received other revelations besides the Qur'an. This proves that there were no other revelations besides the Qur'an.

Moreover, we can see at some places in the Quran, Allah admonishes the prophet. If everything the prophet was doing was based on revelation such a thing would not happen.

“Allah pardons you! Why did you give them leave until those who spoke the truth had become manifest to you and you had known the liars?” - (Ch.9: Ver.43)

In the above Ayah, the messenger of God is admonished as to why he had given permission to the Hypocrites until the truthful people were made distinct from the liars. Had everything spoken by him been a revelation from God, then the above Qur'anic revelation would not have opposed the speech of the messenger in which he had given the permission to the Hypocrites for non-participation in Jihad. This makes it clear that NOT everything that the Messenger did or said was by Wahi.

Then we further see in the Qur'an that Allah says to the Prophet:

O Nabi! Why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful? - (Ch.66: Ver.1)

Here Allah admonishes the Prophet for forbidding something for himself that Allah DID NOT forbid. This verse again establishes that the Prophet often acted on his own initiative as a human being WITHOUT the revelation of Allah. If the things he did or said was by Wahi, he would NOT be admonished by Allah in the Qur'an for saying something that Allah did not want him to say.

In addition to the Qur'anic evidence, even the books of Hadith also refute this baseless claim that the Messenger was receiving other revelations besides the Qur'an:

Bukhari: Volume 4, Book 52, Number 283: Narrated Abu Juhaifa: I asked Ali, Do you have the knowledge of any Divine Inspiration besides what is in Allah's Book?" 'Ali replied, "No, by Him who splits the grain of corn and creates the soul. I don't think we have such knowledge, but we have the ability of understanding which Allah may endow a person with, so that he may understand the Qur'an, and we have what is written in this paper as well. I asked, what is written in this paper? He replied, (The regulations of) blood-money, the freeing of captives, and the judgment that no Muslim should be killed for killing an infidel.

Therefore the idea that the Sunna is also revelation has no support either from Qur'an or from Hadith books.

### **5(b) Argument Two: `Obey the Messenger' Means `Uphold the Hadith'**

Many people cite the Qur'anic Verses that command us to “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger”, and say that obeying Allah and obeying the Messenger are two different Things, – obeying Allah is to obey the Qur'an and obeying the Messenger is to obey the books of Hadith. Imam Shafi'i used this argument as his principal argument and tirelessly repeated it in his book, al-Risalah. He said,

“But whatever is decided by him in the Sunna God has decreed that we should obey, and He considers [our] obedience to him as obedience to Him, and [our] refusal to obey him as our denial of Him, which will not be forgiven...”

The thing that many proponents of Hadith forget is that Allah does not leave it to speculation as to what the people are to obey. The Ayat do not end at ‘obey Allah and obey the Messenger’, but it continues to include what the duty of the Messenger is:

“And obey Allah and obey the messenger and be cautious; but if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance of the message is (incumbent) on Our messenger [wa maa alaa rasulinal balaghul mubeen] (Ch.5: Ver.92)

And obey Allah and obey the messenger, but if you turn back, then upon Our messenger devolves only the clear delivery (of the message) [wa maa alaa rasulinal balaghul mubeen]. (Ch.64: Ver.12)

Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger; but if you turn back, then on him rests that which is imposed on him and on you rests that which is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you are on the right way; and nothing rests on the messenger but clear delivering (of the message) [wa maa alaa rasulinal balaghul mubeen]. - (Ch.24: Ver.54)

Now, if we look at these Ayat, we notice that Allah has clearly pointed out that the duty of the Messenger is only to deliver [Balagha] the message. Here we will look at the term Balagha used in the Qur'an. The term Balagha means the delivery of the Message. Note the following verse:

This is (the Qur'an) a delivery [balaghu] for Humans; let them take warning there from, and let them know that He is the One God; let the People of understanding take heed - (Ch.14: Ver.52)

The above Ayah points to IT [haza] meaning THIS IS (pointing to the Qur'an itself) is the delivery of the Messenger. This is further clarified in the following Ayah:

O Messenger! Proclaim [Baligh] what is sent down to you [ma Unzila Ilaika] from your Lord. If you do not, you would not have fulfilled and proclaimed His message: - (Ch.5: Ver.67)

In this context we may well ask one question. Who among the companions of the Prophet ever heard any of God's revelations directly from God? No one! Consequently, they cannot obey God except through the prophet's delivery of the Qur'an. This makes it necessary for God to command people to obey the messenger since he is the one who delivers to them God's message. Moreover, the Qur'an was revealed to the prophet in order that he would deliver it to a community, which was primarily composed of idol worshippers but also many of the followers of the previous scripture like the Jews and the Christians (Nasara). Let us assume that the command in the Qur'an did not contain the phrase "obey the Messenger" but was only a command to "Obey God". Immediately, the Jews and the Christians (Nasara) would say: “we already obey God, God has sent us the scripture and we obey it!”

Here, we may pose for a moment and have another look at the term “Obey Allah and the Messenger”. Allah always uses the word "MESSENGER". The Qur'an NEVER says "Obey Allah and obey Muhammad". The word "Messenger" means the ONE WHO BRINGS A MESSAGE. So, by this definition when Allah says, "Obey the Messenger" what does that mean? The Messenger is bringing Message from Allah, and therefore we must obey the Message He is Giving us. This is equivalent to obeying Allah as it is ALLAH who is sending the Message through the Messenger.

'He who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah.' - [Qur'an, Ch.4: Ver.80]

Let us find out What Allah is teaching us about Prophet Muhammad.

“Say, (Oh Muhammad), “I am no more than a human being like you...”-(Ch.18: Ver.110)

The Prophet, a human being like us was the messenger only because of the message given to him, the Qur'an. That's why there is not a single order in the Qur'an to 'obey Muhammad'. One great example of the distinction between obeying the messenger and obeying the prophet Muhammad, a human being, can be seen from what Allah told Prophet Muhammad's wives, in Surah 33.

“O wives of the prophet, if any of you commits gross sin, the retribution will be doubled for her. This is easy for Allah to do. Any one of you obeys Allah and His messenger, and leads a righteous life, We will grant her double the recompense and We have prepared for her a generous provision”. - (Ch.33: Ver.30-31)

Notice the order here for the prophet's wives to obey the messenger, not their husband or Muhammad. If Allah had said obey Muhammad that would have made unconditional obedience of their husband a decree.

Look from another angle: the Qur'an is Allah's kalaam (word) and within that kalaam Allah also orders the Messenger to convey many instructions to us. The word that means 'SAY' occurs in AL-Qur'an 332 times. We have to obey all of these instructions conveyed though the Messenger. Allah also addresses in the first person along with making his Messenger to address People. We are to obey both types of Ayat, Allah's first person as well as What Allah orders His Messenger to 'SAY' to people. Both the types of these direct statements are to be found in AL-Qur'an. Obedience to these instructions is not obedience to Messenger's own laws but it is directly to Allah's laws.

The following Verses establish that obedience to Allah and His Messenger is ONE and the SAME thing:

'And a proclamation from God and His Apostle [is herewith made] unto all mankind on this day of the Greatest Pilgrimage: “God disavows all who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him, and [so does] His Apostle. Hence, if you repent, it shall be for your own good; and if you turn away, then know that you can never elude God!” And unto those who are bent of denying the truth give thou [O Prophet] the tidings of grievous chastisement.’ - [Ch. 9: Ver.3]

Now, did the people themselves hear Allah's announcement of immunity? The answer is No! It was only from the LIPS of His Messenger, the prophet Muhammad, that they heard this announcement of immunity. Yet it has come from both Allah and His Messenger. Or does anybody assume that one announcement came from Allah and ANOTHER from the Messenger?

The intrinsic point is that, 'to obey or follow the Messenger' does not mean that a person or a group of people make their own collection of Messenger's sayings and start to follow them. Such an understanding is wrong. And even assuming for a moment that the Hadith was the only source by which we could follow the Messenger, then it was the emergent and primary need of Islam, just like the Qur'an, to preserve the Hadith with God's warranty, so that each one of us would have been able to obey the Messenger in all certainty. But the fact that it has never happened, itself shows the fallacy of such an argument. Therefore, the understanding that we are supposed 'to obey Allah and the Messenger' separately, is totally incorrect.

It is absolutely necessary that in order to follow ‘Allah and his Messenger’ we must have an objective standard. The following of God does not in any way mean that we follow our wishful thinking of God. To follow God means to follow His law revealed in the Book. Islam is a collective system for life, in which we are collectively subservient to the Law of the Qur'an. It is the duty of an Islamic Republic to legislate the clauses and sub-clauses of Qur'an's basic Shari'at laws or principles, according to the social, cultural and geo-political conditions of the time, by consensus (means in consultation with all). It is precisely because of this, the Messenger was commanded to consult his companions (Qur'an 3:159 & 42:38) and followers. But God did not go into detail because He, in His omniscience, knows that the mechanisms required for a government in the Seventh Century are very different indeed from those required today although the principles are the same. God left the detail to be filled in, and changed, by each generation as conditions may dictate provided always that the principle of 'mutual consultation' laid down by God in the Qur'an is observed.

From the above we must be able to comprehend why the Qur'an did not give us the details of clauses and sub-clauses of its basic principles or Shari'at laws. And also this should answer our question, as to why the Messenger did not give us in concrete shape, the corollaries of the laws of Allah, those he had imposed in his system of government of the time. The statements and principal laws of Qur'an were meant to remain permanent and absolute for all times. In the light of these laws, whatever clauses were approved by the assembly of those times were not preserved, as it was not necessary. The disciples of the Messenger were very much conscious of this too, that is why they also did not feel the need to preserve the Hadith.

This system, legislation of the sub-clauses and bylaws, developed by the Muslim Ummah from time to time after due consultation are to be voluntarily obeyed and respected. A dictator may elicit obedience from his subjects by force, but he can never elicit respect, which is a vital element for stability. Real social and political stability is sine qua non for progress. That, of course, is the real intent of chapter 4, verse 59, "O you who believe, obey God and obey the messenger and those in authority among you..." Obeying those in authority is much more likely to be realized if we respect them and support their government because we put them in power of our own free will.

But when the Khilaafat was transformed to aristocracy the genuine exposition of “the obedience to Allah and his messenger” also did not come by. The dualism of “religion and politics” came into play and the religious affairs were entrusted to ‘Ulemas’ – religious scholars. Consequently, to answer the question as to ‘how Allah his messenger to be obeyed’ it was formulated that Allah’s subservience to be carried out by means of the Qur'an and that of the messenger’s through his sayings. This became the necessary cause of compiling and regulating the Hadiths. Dr. Mansoor-Ul-Haque in his work “The Paradigm of Permanence and Change in Islam” explains the situation after the disintegration of the true Khilaafat system thus:

“During this whole period, Ahadith remained nitty-gritty of all condescension (or to that jurisprudence which remained under preparation in accordance with Ahadith). It was because there were a few injunctions in the Qur’an and the pragmatic necessities of life exceedingly outstripped these injunctions. Those subsidiaries and bylaws, which the Caliphate - Khilaafat - was to formulate, had to meet these necessities. In their absence, the eye used to repeatedly fall upon the Ahadith – even when general use of Ahadith bolstered to be insufficient to serve this purpose, the process of coining new Ahadith set in motion. Numerous sects took birth due to these very Ahadith and every faction in support of its own precepts either provided or coined its Ahadith when required. When centuries elapsed in the same manner, this concept took the root of a firm belief – nay, it transformed into conviction that obedience to Allah’s Messenger is done by means of Ahadith and the renouncer of Ahadith is the renouncer of Messengerhood. It is this very wrong notion that epitomizes the root cause of all entanglement in the matter of Deen.”

There is only one way to get out of this quagmire. It is to re-vitalize the Khilaafat and establish governance compatible with the dictates and principles of the Qur'an. This Islamic state must impose Qur'an's Laws and examine what Qur'an says about other departments of life and how Qur'an can fulfil those legislative needs. The basic Shari'at laws of Qur'an shall remain permanent in the constitution of the government. The by-laws, whether they had already been formulated or are newly made in the light of the principles of Qur'an, can be amended according to the changing needs. These laws shall be imposed or enacted, without discrimination of any sort on all Muslims. This is how the state should attain solidarity in the Islamic world. Gradually spread over a period of time we should be able to bring in an environment similar to the one existed during the days of Prophet Muhammad.

It therefore follows that wherever the Qur'an speaks about 'obedience to Allah and his Messenger' it means a system that has been established to implement God's laws. Let us see what one of the greatest of scholars, Maulana Maudoodi has to say about this. In Surah, Al-Ma'ida Qur'an says:

“The retribution for those who fight Allah and His messenger, and spread mischief in the land, is to be killed, or crucified, or to cut off their hands and feet on alternate sides, or to be banished from the land...” - (Ch.5: Ver.33)

Endorsing the above Ayat, Maulana Maudoodi writes in Tafheemul Qur'an:

"To fight against Allah and His Messenger means waging war against the system which the Islamic government has established." (Tafheemul Qur'an vol. I, page 465)

Thus 'to obey Allah and Messenger' does not mean to obey the 'Qur'an and the Hadith' according to our own personal standards. It is abiding by the laws of God contained in the Qur'an imposed by the central authority. It is the duty of the central authority to carry out and implement these laws of God. This is the actual meaning of 'to obey Allah and the Messenger.'

### **5© Argument Three: `Hadith Interprets the Qur`ān'**

One of the most common beliefs is that Hadith (which gives several instances of when and under what circumstances, various parts of the Qur'an were supposed to have been revealed) is essential in order to understand the Qur'an. The argument given to support this statement is so powerful that every one of them is convinced. The question is, whether the explanation given by anybody can be more authentic than the one issued by the Prophet himself.

Actually, this question does not arise at all. The realistic and important aspect of this situation are, whether the Qur'an which is supposed to shed light on and explain various things is itself in need of explanation through books of Hadiths? Whether what is being explained, presented and attributed to the Prophet does ipso facto belong to the Prophet? And whether the collection of the Hadith that we possess today does in fact explain the Qur'an?

Concerning this issue, firstly, it must be understood that the Qur'an categorically states that it is a fully detailed book and a clear explanation of everything. The following Qur'anic verses illustrate this point.

“We have put forth for humans, in this Qur'an, every kind of example so that they may remember” - (Ch.39: Ver.27).

“And, indeed, many facets have We given [to Our message] in this Qur'an, so that they [who deny the truth] might take it to heart: but all this only increases their aversion.” (Ch.17: Ver.41).

"For, indeed, many facets have We given in this Qur'an to every kind of lesson [designed] for [the benefit of] mankind!"- (Ch.17: Ver.89)

“Thus, Indeed, have We given in this Qur'an many facets to every kind of lesson [designed] for the [benefit of] mankind. However, man is, above all else, always given to contention. (Ch.18: Ver. 54)

The above Ayat contain a sad but true prediction. Allah says that He has REPEATED EVERY KIND OF EXAMPLE in the Book. Yet, He foresees that the majority of human beings will DENY that He has given EVERY KIND OF EXAMPLE in the Qur'an.

Allah further explains thus:

"And We have revealed the Book to you which has the clear explanation of everything [wa nazzalna\_ 'alaikal kitaba tibya\_nal likulli shai'iw], and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit." - (Ch.16: Ver.89)

There cannot be any words clearer than this. When He says “liKULLI Shai'iw” that means EVERYTHING. If the Qur'an itself is intended to explain everything, what does it mean to explain the Qur'an by other books? A Muslim who says that “not everything is in the Qur'an”, must sit down and contemplate on these Ayat and reflect on the disastrous consequences of his statement.

The Muslim, when confronted with these Ayat, adopts a more defensive approach by saying “Yes, the Qur'an is complete and has everything and is easy to understand, but it LACKS DETAILS. And to get the details we must resort to the books of Hadith”. The Qur'an again refutes this statement. Here is what Allah says about the detail [Tafseel] in His Book:

“Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly detailed [al-kitaaba mufaSSalan]” (Ch.6: Ver.114)

“And certainly We have brought them a Book, which We have detailed with knowledge [faSSalnaahu Ala Ilmin], a guidance and mercy for a people who believe” - (Ch.7: Ver.52)

“A Book of which the verses are distinctly detailed [fuSSilat Ayatahu], an Arabic Qur'an for people who know” (Ch.41: Ver.3)

“Indeed We have made the verses detailed for a people who take reminder [qad faSSalnaa-l-'aayyaati li-qawmin yadhakkaruuna]” (Ch.6: Ver.126)

In face of these verses, the Muslim's claim seems once again contradictory to the Qur'anic evidence. Yet, most of them insist that the Qur'an is not self-explanatory. In the light of the Qur'an, this boils down to the fact that the Muslim is not using his common sense and Aqal, the gift of Allah (reason). Allah says:

“Thus do We make the revelations detailed for a people who reflect [nufaSSilu-l-'aAyati li qawmin yatafakkaruuna]” - (Ch.10: Ver.24)

“Thus do We make the revelations detailed for a people who use their reason [kadhaalika nufassilu 'aAyati li qawmin yaqiluuna]” - (Ch.30: Ver.28)

Thus, those people who refuse to reflect and use their reason, and insist on whatever they were taught by their forefathers are accepted without question, they are the people who will not find the details of everything in the Qur'an, and will go searching for other books.

We will now discuss a few verses from the Qur'an which are often quoted out of context in support of Hadiths in this regard. The proponents of Hadiths, in desperation, cite the following Ayat for their position:

“.....We have revealed to you the Reminder [Az-Zikr] that you may make clear to men [litubayyina] what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect.” (Ch.16: Ver.44)

There are two main claims that the proponents of Hadith make about this Ayah. The first one is that, besides the Qur'an, the Messenger was given another revelation known as al-Zikr; and the second claim is that the word Bayyina, which means clarification. Thus, the proponents of Hadith say that the Messenger was given an EXTRA revelation (al-Zikr), and he was supposed to use it to make EXTRA clarifications (litubayyina) of the Qur'anic revelations. We will analyse this Ayah, with special attention to the two words al-Zikr, and Bayyina.

The word ‘al-Zikr’ literally means ‘The Reminder’. As we have seen Allah uses different attributes for His revelations to emphasize its different aspects. Indeed, the word Qur'an itself is not a name but an attribute of Allah’s Revelations.

In a similar fashion, the word Al-Zikr is used because the Qur'an is meant for people to take reminder from it. We will see that the Qur'an itself gives plenty of evidence that al-Zikr is not any extra revelations, but just another attribute of the Qur'an itself:

A Book revealed to you-- so let there be no straitness in your breast on account of it-- that you may warn thereby, and a reminder close to the believers. [zikra-lil-mu'minin] (Ch. 7:Ver. 2)

“...although thou dost not ask of them any reward for it: it is but [God’s] reminder unto all mankind.” [zikrul-lil-'alameen] (Ch. 12:Ver. 104)

In the following verse, Allah promises that He will Guard the Zikr that He has revealed.

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder [Zikr] and We will most surely be its guardian.” - (Ch. 15: Ver. 9)

Again, in the following Verses, the Qur'an identifies itself as the blessed Zikr:

And this is a blessed Reminder [Zikrun mubarakun] which We have revealed; will you then deny it (Ch.21: Ver.50)

We have revealed to you a Book, which is a Zikr (Reminder) for you: will you not then use your Aqal (Ch.21: Ver.10)

These Ayat should be enough for anyone to see that Al-Zikr (The Reminder) is just another attribute of the Qur'an (The Recital)

We will now look at the second misunderstood word ‘Bayyina’ used in 16:44 and see that the ‘bayyana’ or clarity that the Messenger was to bring was from the Qur'an also. We first observe that another Verse is revealed by Allah that is similar to 16:43-44 above:

And We sent down the BOOK to you for the express purpose that you should make clear to them [litubayyina] those things in which they differ, and that it should be a Guide and a Mercy to those who believe (Ch.16: Ver.64)

Here we notice that Allah has explicitly mentioned that the purpose of the BOOK is to provide the Prophet with revelation so that he may [litubayyina] make clear the things that people differ in. This verse yet again establishes that the Prophetic clarification is to come from THE BOOK.

And in the following Verse Allah further explains that the Clarity and The Guidance is in the Qur'an:

Ramadan is the Month in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a Guide [Huda] to humankind and as a Clarity [Bayyinat] for The Guidance [al-Huda] and The Criterion [al-Furqaan]. - (Ch.2: Ver.185)

If the Qur'an contains clarity and is supposed to Clarify ALL THINGS, then would that be logical to assume that the Book itself needs to be clarified by obscure books of Hadith written about 200 years after the Prophet?

Since the Qur'an itself states that it has propounded all and every kind of similitude, has displayed its signs in various forms, has explained its signs in detail, and that it is based on knowledge, the only conclusion we can reasonably come to is that the Qur'an explains itself, i.e. the Qur'an is self-explanatory. We, on our part, must receive it as Allah's word, and do our best to study and understand it.

In this context it is pertinent to note that the collection of Hadiths that we possess do not explain the whole of the Qur'an. The context of only a few verses of the Qur'an has been explained. It will also be interesting to see how Bukhari handles some of the explanations of the verses of the Quran. The following Qur'anic verses and their Hadith 'explanation' illustrate this point.

(11:114) Establish worship at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night. Lo! Good deeds annul ill deeds. This is a reminder for the mindful.

Now see the explanation of Bukhari:

Bukhari (ref: 6.209), narrated Ibn Masud: A man kissed a woman and then came to Allah's Messenger and told him that. So this Divine Inspiration was revealed to the Prophet: (11:114) "Establish worship at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night. Lo! Good deeds annul ill deeds. This is a reminder for the mindful". The man said, "Is this information for me only?" The Prophet said, "It is for all those of my followers who encounter a similar situation."

Here is another verse from the Quran and its explanation provided in the Bukhari collection of Hadiths. The different ways, in which the Israelites mistreated the prophet Moses, has been explained in the Quran in detail. If nothing else, the devotion and perpetual struggle of Moses, ought to have been enough reason for Israelites to be grateful to him all their lives.

"O, you who believe! Be you not like those who annoyed Moses, But Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, And he was honourable In Allah's Sight."

Now who are these people and in what manner did they harass a messenger of God? The Qur'an itself provides the detailed description of this category of people and their means of

harassment. Qur'an, being "Ahsan al-Tafsir" and gives us the best Tafsir of this verse through repetition of its verses.

After Moses delivered the people of Israel from the Pharaoh, they said to him: "They said: "We have had (nothing but) trouble both before and after you came to us." - (7:129)

When Allah gave them heavenly food they said: "Oh Moses! We can not endure one kind of food (always)". - (Ch.2: Ver.61)

When passing through a valley, these people saw some people worshiping idols. Knowing fully well that Moses was dedicated to the worship of Allah alone they asked him: "They said: "O Moses! Fashion for us a god like unto the gods they have." He said: "surely ye are a people without knowledge" - (Ch.7: Ver.138)

Moses had shown them so many signs of Allah, but they said to him: "Oh Moses! We will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly". - (Ch.2: Ver. 55)

When Moses called them for war, they said: "...Go thou and thy Lord and fight ye two while we sit here (and watch)." - (Ch.5: Ver.24)

It was because of this behaviour of his people that Moses was annoyed: Look at this verse:

"And when Moses said to his people: O my people! Why do you annoy me? And you know indeed that I am Allah's Messenger to you". - (Ch.61: Ver.5)

Anyone with a sane mind can see the beautiful explanation we get from Qur'an. Now let us read the commentary given by Bukhari for the verse 33:69, "O you who believe! Be you not like those who annoyed Moses, But Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, and he was honourable In Allah's Sight."

Bukhari Volume 4, Hadith 616: "Allah's Apostle said, "(The Prophet) Moses was a shy person and used to cover his body completely because of his extensive shyness. One of the children of Israel hurt him by saying, 'He covers his body in this way only because of some defect in his skin, either leprosy or scrotal hernia, or he has some other defect.' Allah wished to clear Moses of what they said about him, so one day while Moses was in seclusion, he took off his clothes and put them on a stone and started taking a bath. When he had finished the bath, he moved towards his clothes so as to take them, but the stone took his clothes and fled; Moses picked up his stick and ran after the stone saying, 'O stone! Give me my garment!' Till he reached a group of Bani Israel who saw him naked then, and found him the best of what Allah had created, and Allah cleared him of what they had accused him of. The stone stopped there and Moses took and put his garment on and started hitting the stone with his stick. By Allah, the stone still has some traces of the hitting, three, four or five marks. This was what Allah refers to in His Saying: "O you who believe! Be you not like those who annoyed Moses, But Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, and he was honourable In Allah's Sight." - (33.69)

Please peruse the above commentary carefully, think for a moment, if this can possibly be the explanation given by the Messenger, of the ayaat from Quran? Traditions of this sort speak out for themselves, that these are nothing but fabricated lies. Such traditions were concocted by conspirators against Islam and were attributed to our beloved Prophet.

"Some people uphold vain Hadith in order to divert others from the path of God without knowledge, and to create a mockery out of it. These have deserved humiliating retribution". - (Ch.31: Ver.6)

Thus, the proponents of Hadith rely only on conjecture when they claim that Hadith interprets the Qur'an.

#### **5 (d) Argument Four: 'The Example of the Prophet'**

Proponents of Hadith cite the following Ayah to advocate Hadith:

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent role model [uswatun husnatun] for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much”. (Qur'an, Ch.33: Ver.21).

The Traditionalists say that we need to follow this best example by reading what people reported about the Prophet Muhammad in the books of Hadith.

Before we start our discussion, we must quote a few more Ayat for without them the discussion would be incomplete:

Indeed, there is for you an excellent example [uswatun husnatun] in Ibrahim and those with him. (Ch.60: Ver.4)

Now, Allah tells us that the best examples for us to follow are the Prophet Ibrahim and his companions and the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, Allah commanded the Prophet Muhammad and all of us through him that we all MUST follow the Prophet Ibrahim:

Say: Allah speaks the Truth: follow the way of Abraham, the sane in faith; he was not of the Pagans. (Ch.3: Ver.95)

Thus, it is incumbent upon us to follow the Prophet Ibrahim. The question is how do we follow him and his companions (remember they are all uswatun hasnah, or BEST EXAMPLES to be followed). The Qur'an does not point us to any other books that we must seek in order to follow the best example of Prophet Ibrahim. Does this mean that today we cannot follow his best example?

Before we address this question, it is important to ask a few other questions: We need to know what aspects of their best examples are we to follow. Are we to dress as they did? Do we mimic their eating habits? Is it a vital aspect of deen to know whether they shaved or sported beards, etc? Now Prophet Ibrahim probably wore the same clothing that was the norm in his time and probably sported a beard, as did his Kaffir father. Probably, he sat on the floor and ate with his hands, as did his Kaffir father. We are supposed to follow of the best example. Allah does not leave us guessing - He tells us the EXEMPLARY conduct of the Prophet Ibrahim in the Qur'an that we are supposed to follow.

The first act, of course is Submission to Allah alone: “Our Lord! And make us both submissive to Thee”. - (Ch.2: Ver.128)

And He bowed his will to the Command of Allah: “When his Lord said to him, Be a Muslim, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds”. - (Ch.2: Ver.131)

He also did not associate anyone or anything with Allah: “O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah). Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of those who associate (other things with Allah)” - (Ch.6: Ver.76-79)

“He is also the one who is not afraid to tell the truth to his elders and scholars of his age: Lo! Abraham said to his father Az’har: Takest thou idols for gods? For, I see thee and thy people in manifest error”. - (Ch.6: Ver.74)

He was a good host: “And certainly Our messengers came to Ibrahim with good news. They said: Peace. Peace, said he, and he made no delay in bringing a roasted calf?” - (Ch.11: Ver.69)

Unlike many religious people today, he was not bloodthirsty. His first instinct was to forgive and give people more chance to mend their ways. Even to the homosexuals, he was merciful. When the Angels of Allah told him that they have come for the purpose of destroying Lot’s people, he started to plead with Allah on their behalf: “So when fear had gone away from Ibrahim and good news came to him, he began to plead with Us for Lot’s people. Most surely Ibrahim was forbearing, tender-hearted, oft-returning (to Allah)?” - (Ch.11: Ver.74-75)

Thus by reading the Qur'an we see a man who was intelligent, was serving ONLY Allah and was seeking ONLY Allah’s Guidance. He was not afraid to criticize the dominant philosophies, idea, and religions of his time, but at the same time, he was soft-hearted and merciful even to the sinners. This is the example, the BEST example, we are to follow and not to adopt what he wore, how he sat, to what length he grew his beard, etc.

Just as Allah describes the BEST Example of Prophet Ibrahim within the Qur'an, He also describes the BEST Example of the Prophet Muhammad within the same Qur'an.

Now, just like Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Muhammad was also born into a culture - he wore the clothes that they wore; he had a beard as was the custom in his days. Abu Jahl also sported a beard; he ate as they did, most probably with his hands sitting on a floor. The question is: are we to follow this cultural example, or are we to follow best example outlined by Allah that we saw in the case of Prophet Ibrahim?

Allah defined in His Book the best example for us to be followed until eternity; He did not leave this task for some obscure outside sources. In a similar fashion, He cannot leave the best example of the Prophet Muhammad that we are to follow until eternity, to outside obscure sources. We will see that He has defined the best example of the Prophet Muhammad in the pristine Qur'an.

#### (a) Absolute submission to Allah alone

The Prophet Muhammad wholly submitted to Allah and declared: “Say: I am the first one to submit” (6:163). The Prophet founded his whole life on the love and fear of Allah, and carried out all his obligations solely to win the good will and mercy of Allah. "Say: 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds.'" (6:162). The Prophet's words when he and his friend were hiding in a cave after leaving Mecca are one of the finest examples of that submission. The Qur'an says:

“If ye help not (your Leader) (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him: when the unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion: they two were in the cave and he said to his companion "have no fear for Allah is with us": (9: 40)

The Prophet looked up to Allah and no one else for support.

“...Say: Allah is sufficient for me, there is no god but Him. In Him I have placed my trust for He is the Sustainer, in awesome almightiness enthroned.” - (Ch. 9: Ver. 129)

#### (b) The Prophet was always devoted and steadfast on his duty

One of the most important characteristics, frequently mentioned with regards to the Prophet in the Qur'an, is that he only practiced what Allah revealed. He conveyed the Qur'an to mankind with no alteration.

When Our Clear Signs are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, "Bring a Qur'an other than this one or change it." Say: "It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I follow nothing except what is revealed to me. I fear, were I to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Dreadful Day." (10: 15-16)

The Prophet sought only to win Allah's good pleasure, and spent his life striving to win His mercy, compassion and Paradise, with never a thought for personal interests or worldly gain.

Say: "I do not ask you for any wage for it, nor am I a man of false pretensions." (38: 86)

Say: "I have not asked you for any wage - it is all for you. My wage is the responsibility of Allah alone. He is witness of everything." (34: 47)

#### © The Prophet showed great patience at all times

Throughout the period of his mission, the Prophet Muhammad experienced all manner of difficulty. Deniers and polytheists, from among his own people, insulted him most terribly, even calling him a magician or a madman. Others wanted to kill him and even schemed to do so. The Prophet displayed the greatest patience in all these circumstances. The Muslims must take him as a model when dealing with their own difficulties.

"So be patient in the face of what they say and glorify your Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before it sets." (50: 39)

"Be patient. But your patience is only by Allah. Do not be grieved by them and do not be constricted by the plots they hatch. Allah is with those who fulfil their duty and with those who are good-doers." (16: 127-128)

The strongest illustration of this trait of the Prophet occurs again in this following verse.

"We know indeed the grief which their words do cause thee: it is not thee they reject: it is the Signs of Allah which the wicked contemn. Rejected were the Apostles before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah."(6:33 - 34).

#### (d) The prophet was most considerate and compassionate

The Prophet was a compassionate man, full of love and understanding. He took an interest in the physical and spiritual problems of his friends, relatives and all those around him, and took all appropriate measures to ensure their health, security and happiness. He always supported the community of the faithful with his strong conscience, and was a benefactor to them at all times. Because of these traits, the Prophet is described in many verses as "your companion." (34:46: 53:2, 81:22)

These features of the Prophet, that are an example for all of humanity, are revealed in the following verse:

"A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the believers."(9:128)

He took the believers under his wing, and always bore in mind their lot in the hereafter by encouraging them to remain godly. "And take the believers who follow you under your wing." (26: 215)

There were people with varying characters and ideas that surrounded the Prophet. That compassionate, tolerant, understanding and patient attitude of the Prophet was the means by which many peoples' hearts warmed to Islam and developed a genuine love for the Prophet. Allah describes this pleasing attitude adopted by the Prophet towards those around him in the Qur'an:

"It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from about thee; so pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them..."(3:159)

#### (e) The Prophet was an embodiment of tolerance and justice

The Prophet lived in a place where people of different religions, languages, races and tribes all co-existed. The Prophet never wanted to force the religion on others. The Prophet abided by the verse "There is no compulsion where the religion is concerned" (2:256), explaining the true religion to everyone, but leaving them free to make up their own minds.

So also, with the rules that the Prophet imposed on the Muslims, his just and tolerant attitude towards those of other religions, languages, races and tribes, and his way of not discriminating between rich and poor, but treating everybody equally, Allah's Messenger is a great example to all of mankind and thus became an example for all times with the words, "My Lord has commanded justice..." (7: 29)

The Prophet abided by Allah's commands and never made any concessions in his implementation of justice. The following verses bear witness to this fact:

"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah even as against yourselves or your parents or your kin and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts) lest ye swerve and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do."(4:135)

"Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man that ye judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! for Allah is He who heareth and seeth all things."(4:58)

#### (f) The Prophet was a bearer of glad tidings

In the verse "O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, and a bringer of good news and a warner" (33:45), Allah describes the Prophet as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. In another verse, Allah says: "Give good news to the believers that they will receive immense favour from Allah" (33:47). Every believer who abides by Allah's commandments and the morality of the Prophet is responsible for giving good news to Muslims, and for encouraging them. It is not proper for a Muslim to speak in a manner that is negative, to discourage the faithful, thereby leading the faithful to become pessimistic. What is in conformity with the Qur'an is, like the manner of the Prophet, to recall the good things promised to the faithful by Allah, and to keep to revitalize them.

"Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere."(2:155)

One such tidings the Prophet was told to tell people about was Allah's forgiveness of sins:

Say: "My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." (39: 53)

#### (g) The Prophet relieved Muslims of Difficulties

One of the Prophet's most important qualities was the way he lifted such burdens that people had imposed on them. Allah speaks of that quality of the Prophet in a verse:

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, permitting them good things and prohibiting them bad things, relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them. Those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful.” (7: 157)

The "heavy loads and chains" mentioned in the verse are the difficulties that the people impose upon themselves. The people in general easily prone to making their lives difficult, and to imposing rules upon themselves, by which they falsely believe they have solved their problems. This particular human characteristic is one of the reasons why the religion has been distorted through the years. Many societies have dreamed up rules that did not actually exist in the religion, and then made themselves and others believe that they would only be truly god-fearing when they adhered to them.

#### (h) The Prophet would consult with the faithful

In accordance with a command from Allah, the Prophet would consult with the faithful and seek their opinion. This was commanded in the following verse:

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from about thee; so pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)”(3:159).

Consulting with others is an approach that can bring about the most auspicious results for Muslims. In the first place, anyone who consults others demonstrates better morality by acting modestly. For instance, the Prophet was the wisest of the community of the faithful, and had the greatest foresight and understanding. Despite that, however, his consulting those around him and asking their opinion, enquiring how they would resolve a particular matter, shows what a modest person he truly was.

#### (i) The Prophet was always kind-hearted and courteous

Some of those who surrounded the Prophet were less than well-mannered and cultured. It can be seen from a number of verses that they could not understand how thoughtless they were and that their behaviour could make others uncomfortable. For instance, verses speak of people entering houses by the back instead of the front, arriving when the Prophet was dining, or else taking up his time by talking for a long time. The Prophet Muhammad, on the other hand, was very thoughtful, courteous, patient and civilized, and treated such people nevertheless with the greatest tolerance. Allah came to rescue the prophet in these circumstances.

“You who believe! Do not go into the Prophet's rooms except when you are invited to come and eat. Do not wait there while the food is being cooked. However, when you are called, go in, and when you have eaten, disperse, not remaining there to chat with one another. Doing that causes annoyance to the Prophet though he is too reticent to tell you so. But Allah is not reticent with the truth... (33: 53)

#### (j) The Importance the Prophet attributed to cleanliness

As well as their purity of heart and morality, Muslims are also known for the cleanliness of their bodies, clothes, homes and the food they eat. Once again, the Prophet is the best example of this characteristic of Muslims. In one verse, Allah told the Prophet:

You who are enveloped in your cloak! Arise and warn. Magnify your Lord. Purify your clothes. Shun all filth. (74: 1-5)

Allah tells the faithful in the Qur'an to eat that which is clean. He also instructed the Prophet to tell the faithful that clean things are lawful: “Messengers, eat of the good things and act rightly...”(23: 51)

It is unreasonable and unthinkable that God would ask the Muslims to follow the Prophet's personal mode of behaviour, because a person's mode of behaviour is determined by many different factors, such as customs and tradition, his education, personal upbringing and personal inclinations. The Prophet's mode of eating, of dress and indeed of general behaviour would not be much different from that of other Arabs, including Jews and Christians, of the time, except on matters prohibited in Islam.

So were the methods of the Prophet's wars and his administration of the Medina city-state. The weapons he used, such as swords, spears, arrows and shields were in accordance with the prevailing technology. Today, with the development of modern weapons, the Muslims obviously cannot fight with the medieval weapons used by the Prophet, although they must emulate his staunch faith in God and complete adherence to God's teachings.

In political administration, the same Islamic principles operate. Some examples: sovereignty of the people under God's sovereignty, government based on just laws, complete freedom of religious worship, obedience to God and due allegiance to leaders, leadership to be exercised by those who are competent and morally upright, and government through consultation. However, methods and the institutions may vary according to time, circumstances and shifting paradigms. The methods and instruments adopted by the Prophet to achieve them were not universally and eternally binding.

Actually, the ways of the Prophet were in strict conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an. He held firmly to the Qur'an and obeyed its injunctions. Hence, it follows that emulating the example of the Prophet boils down to upholding the Qur'an.

#### **5 (e) Argument Five: `Hadiths Indispensable to Carryout the Practice of Salaat`.**

A standard question is raised: ‘How could we have learnt to pray if we had ignored the Hadiths?’ The natural counter-question is ‘how did the Muslims pray during 250 years before the Hadith literature appeared? Obviously, the Prophet himself had firmly established the system in detail and continuously followed right through the centuries to this day. A system for a ritual once established and practiced regularly five times a day by the Muslim communities wherever they are, and a system so simple as it is cannot fall apart. The undisputed history is the proof that the system established by the Holy Prophet in the Madinah Masjid as soon as it was erected it in the early days of Migration to the place, continues to date without a break of even a single prayer of the day! In fact, a practice that

survived for 250 years without the influence of the Hadith should continue. It is more in line to argue that the writing down of these things in the form of Hadith had contributed to division among the Imams later in History and hence different systems developed by their followers. Contrary to general idea mentioned above, the Qur'an gives clear guidelines for the physical performance of the Qur'an. The following Ayah tells us:

"Surely the FIRST House appointed for Mankind is that at MAKKAH, it is full of BLESSING and GUIDANCE for all the WORLDS [Hudan lil alameen]." [Ch.3: Ver.96]

When Allah identifies His house as 'Hudan lil alameen', i.e. guidance for all worlds, then what ever is the system and practice of that house established by the Holy Prophet is guidance for the entire world. So, the manner in which the prayer established in the House of Allah by the Prophet as was done in Madinah and it be adopted all over the world in all the mosques and homes at all times.

"And when We made THE HOUSE a place of Blessing and security for Mankind, AND TAKE ALL OF YOU FROM THE STANDING POSITION OF IBRAHEEM (MUQ'AM IBRAHEEM) THE SALAH PERFORMED (MUSAL'AA), and We covenanted with Ibraheem and Ismail, to purify My House for those who compass around and those who are in retreat and those who bow down and prostrate." [Ch.2: Ver.125]

The word "Musalla" is from the root word "Salah" just like the word "Musaffa" is from the root word "Saffa". Saffa means "purification", and Musaffa means "purification performed". In the same manner, Salah means "prayer", and Musalla means, "prayer performed". The above Verse make it clear that the prayer is to be performed as it is performed in the Sacred Mosque, which is a place for Guidance.

So according to Qur'an 2:125 we are ordered to take the Musalla from Maqam e Ibraheem in Ka'aba. The house of Allah is the Centre point of the messengers of Allah and following its system brings unity among the believers as this verse tells us:

"And from where ever you go forth, revert your self to the intersection of Al Masjid al Haraam (shatar al Masjid al Haraam), and where ever all of you are, revert your selves to its intersection. THAT THERE MAY BE NO GROUND OF DISPUTE AMONG YOU, EXCEPT THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSORS FROM THEM so fear them not but fear Me, that I may complete My favours on you and that you may be guided."-[Ch.2: Ver.150]

Therefore, the house of Allah is the Centre point of the messengers of Allah and following its system brings unity between the believers.

It is also pertinent to note that the obligatory prayers and all other religious observances of Islam were originally taught to Abraham, and were practiced by all the Prophets and their true followers. When Allah orders the prophet Muhammad to follow Ibraheem's Millah (3:95, 4:125 & 2:135), it is confirmed that his Millah exists, i.e. all the practices etc before the Prophet Muhammad. It should also be noted that the very early revelations such as the chapter "al-Muzzammil" [third chapter in the order of revelation] had already mentioned Qur'an and Zakat. It indicates that these religious observances were well-known and were being practiced. However, the true essence of those practices are mentioned in the Qur'an and with the Message of the Qur'an, the real purpose of those practices is restored. Otherwise, people perform those practices, Qur'an, Hajj etc with wrong concepts and fabrications of Shaitan. - (Ch.8: Ver.35 and Ch.4: Ver.142).

#### What Hadiths books say about the physical performance of Qur'an?

Now let us see what Hadiths books say about the physical performance of Qur'an. Bukhari does not give the methods of prayer in a coherent form. One has to go through many of his

quoted Hadiths to form some sensible idea. According to Bukhari (Vol.1 No. 346) when Allah enjoined prayer, it should have two raka'ats in each prayer whether at home or on a journey. Then the prayers offered on journey remained the same, but the raka'ats of the prayers for non-travellers were increased. For example in Hadith (Vol. 1, No. 474), the Prophet leads the prayer with two raka'ats for Zuhr and two raka'ats for Asr. In Hadith (Vol. 1, No. 518) the Prophet prayed eight raka'ats for the Zuhr and Asr and seven raka'ats for Maghrib and Isha in Medina. In Hadith (Vol. 1. No. 566) Allah's messenger never missed two raka'ats before Fajr prayer and two raka'ats after Asr prayer. In fact, the number of raka'ats of the compulsory prayers i.e. 2 raka'ats for the Fajr, 4 raka'ats for the Zuhr, 4 raka'ats for Asr, 3 raka'ats for Maghrib and 4 raka'ats for Isha, are not specified in Bukhari at all. Moreover, the same applies for the Sunnat prayers that we perform today. It is only after searching through a large number of Hadiths that we can find what perhaps we are meant to say by way of invocation while performing the set of postures of standing, bending and then in prostration. It should be emphasised here that we get these details only after a wide search and that too not without variations and contradictions. Therefore, we can quite clearly see that Hadith does not give any organised or coordinated methods of prayer that can be followed universally.

The Hadiths given in 'Muslim' do not give any clear indication to the methods of prayer either. The number of raka'ats for the compulsory prayer is not given in the format as performed now. The only similarity between Bukhari and Muslim is in the order of postures to be performed from standing to bowing and on to the prostration, and the invocations in these positions. Muslim is very clear about the recitation of Al-Fatiha in every raka'at the main confusion lies in the number of raka'ats, particularly for the compulsory prayers. For example, Hadith 1017 states that the Prophet performed two raka'ats for Dhuhur and two for 'Asr prayer. This appears to contradict Hadith 911: (911) Abu Said al-Khudri reported: the Apostle of Allah used to recite in every raka'at of the first two of the noon (Dhuhur) prayer about 30 verses and in the other two about fifteen verses; in every raka'at of the first two of the Asr prayer about fifteen verses and in the other two half of that of the first ones. The above Hadith seems to contradict Hadith 909 also which states that in the last two raka'ats the Prophet would recite Surah Al-Fatiha only, and that he would sometimes recite loud enough to make the verses audible. This is at variance with the present-day practice whereby Dhuhur and 'Asr are performed silently. Regarding the 'Witr' prayer, we see a clear contradiction between Hadiths nos. 1602, 1604, and 1607, which mention one, five, and three raka'ats respectively.

We all know that the system of prayer in Shia' is different from that in Sunni. However, both claim to be following in the footsteps of the Messenger. When we look at Sunnis, their 'Ahl e Hadith' sect's way of praying is different from the 'Hanafi' sect with clear knowledge of the difference. Again, both of these sects claim to be in the footsteps of the Messenger. Now, therefore, the question is, which system of praying ought to be considered genuine version of the Messenger, while there are different Hadiths standing to witness every sect's way of praying. It does not make sense at all that practices of all sects are correct. How are we to believe that during the time of the prophet some disciples offered prayers like the Sunnis while other disciples offered them like the Shiites do? Yet again some prayed like 'Ahl e Hadith,' while others prayed like 'Hanafis'? Or is the Messenger himself offered his prayers like the Sunnis at one time, while at another time he offered like the Shiites? Or sometimes like 'Ahl e Hadith' and sometimes like 'Hanafis'? Let us not sidestep this issue but should merit our serious consideration. The Hadith has clearly failed to resolve this matter, as this issue is a creation of Hadith itself.

From the above discussion, it is clear that, not only Hadith does not give any uniform method of prayer, but also it is a source of dispute in the end and division among Muslims. Earlier we quoted two verses from the Qur'an, Ch.3: Ver.96 and Ch.2: Ver.125, and found that we have to adopt whatever the system and practice prevailing at Makkah in all the mosques universally in all ages. It did not certainly require Bukhari to preserve this through Hadith. It

is certain that this system will bring unity among the Muslims, if it is adopted. As long as we believe in the infallibility of Hadiths, it is not possible to achieve this unity because every sect in Islam has his own Hadiths and every one of them claims to be in the footsteps of the Messenger.

### Purpose and Importance of Salat

We will now look at the purpose and importance of Salat according to Qur'an, without which the discussion would be incomplete. The most important purpose of Salat is to glorify and praise Allah, The Sustainer of the Worlds, to guard against evil temptations and to make us ever conscious of Allah. Look at the following verses:

“Verily, I am Allah: There is no god but I: So serve you Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise” - (Ch.20: Ver.14)

“Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that you do.” - (Ch.29: Ver.45)

Here Satan's plan is given in opposition to Salat and Allah's remembrance. Thus, the purpose of Salat is to also to keep remembering Allah and to guard against Satan's evil temptations.

So also, according to the Qur'an the most important aspect of the Salat is that it is directed to NONE but Allah. This aspect of Salat is emphasized in the Qur'an. We can safely assume that the people of Arabia (being the descendents of Ibrahim) were familiar with performance of Salat when the Prophet Muhammad came to them. Why was their Qur'an and Dua not accepted by Allah? Was it because they were not making the right number of Raka'ats? Was it because they were not performing its physical part in a particular sequence? The answer to this is NO. The Qur'an tells us why Allah will NOT accept anybody's Salat:

“Say: ‘Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds’” - (Ch.6: Ver.162)

The key for the acceptance of one's Salat is that it is for Allah alone. If one performs ALL the actions of Salat and the precise number of Raka'ats in the same sequences, but does not have the intention to pray to Allah alone, then the prayer is INVALID.

“For Him (alone) is prayer in Truth: any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths but it reaches them not: for the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile) wandering (in the mind).” - (Ch.13: Ver.14)

Besides the prayer for Allah ONLY, another important aspect of is Salat mentioned, i.e. one MUST perform Salat with earnestness and willingness.

“The Hypocrites - they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over-reach them: When they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance” (Ch.4: Ver.142)

Here Allah identifies a reason why these people's Salat is NOT accepted. The reasons given are NOT that they did not do the right number of Raka'ats, or did not perform the physical actions in a particular sequence. However, the reasons given are (1) that they do NOT hold Allah in Remembrance and (2) that they do not do it with earnestness and humility.

The point we must remember is that rituals are important only when we place them in the context of many important duties that Allah has asked us to perform. Otherwise they become just forms without any substance or value as this verse tells us: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing" -(Ch. 2:Ver. 177)

This Ayah establishes that body movements of turning this way or that way is NOT righteousness, but righteousness is to do good deeds and establish Salat. Thus, one of the purposes of Salat is to make us pure and help us do righteous deeds and ask for repentance if we make a mistake.

There is a discourse in the Qur'an about the Jews being asked by Allah to make a sacrifice and the Jews, in turn, asking the prophet Moses all types of questions, about the size, age and colour of the cow to be sacrificed. The Qur'an strongly condemned asking such questions.

"O you who believe, do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if you question about them when the Qur'an is being revealed, they shall be declared to you; Allah pardons this, and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing. Some people before you did ask such questions, and on that account lost their faith" - (Ch.5: Ver.101-102).

The last part of the above verse: 'some people before you did ask such questions, and on that account lost their faith', is a reminder to the Muslims. Unfortunately, the Muslims all along neglected this warning of the Qur'an and involved in researching and finding answers for unnecessary and petty issues paying little attention to important matters. This is the main reason for their downfall.

The Qur'an keeps reminding us this principle again when it discusses the wonderful story of the 'people of the cave'. The story dates back around 2nd century AD when some youths took refuge in a cave from persecution of their rulers. They were faithful believers. Allah made them sleep for centuries and finally awoke them into consciousness.

The importance of the story, according to the Qur'an, is, "Thus did We make their case known to the people that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment." (18:21). But the people who came after them started quarrelling on petty issues. Some people wanted to construct a monument over their grave similar to the character of the majority of the Muslims today. We quote:

"Behold they dispute among themselves as to their affair. (Some) said "Construct a building over them": their Lord knows best about them: those who prevailed over their affair said "Let us surely build a place of worship over them."(18:21)

Some people started disputing about the total number of the youths. We again quote: "Some say they were three the dog being the fourth among them; (others) say they were five the dog being the sixth doubtfully guessing at the unknown; (yet others) say they were seven the dog being the eighth. Say (oh Muhammad): "My Lord knoweth best their number; it is but few that know their real case."(18:22)

Some people started disputing about the number of years the youth slept: "So they stayed in their Cave three hundred years and (some) add nine (more)." Say: "Allah knows best how

long they stayed: with Him is (the knowledge of) the secrets of the heavens and the earth (18:25)

It is important to note even when discussing these interesting controversies, the Qur'an does not reveal to us the exact number of youth or the number of years they slept in the cave. The reason is that such details are unimportant for our guidance. The Qur'an finally gives a clear warning to the Prophet and the Muslims:

“Enter not therefore into controversies concerning them except on a matter that is clear nor consult any of them about (the affair of) the Sleepers”. (18:22)

The Muslims must learn lesson from this story. Those Muslims who are now engaged in disputes regarding where to place our hands while standing for prayer, up or below the naval, how to sit in Athahiyat, how many raka'at for Taraaweeh, whether to say Qunooth in the morning prayer or not, and such other petty issues must sit and contemplate on the above Qur'anic verses.

To summarize: we see that the Qur'an does NOT emphasize on the different actions of Salat, but that Salat be performed with humility to Allah alone and be accompanied by kind actions towards others. The purpose of the prayer is to worship God, to praise and to supplicate Him for man's own self-development. If what is lacking from the Qur'anic text, how to bow our heads, where to place our hands, up or below the naval, how to sit in Attahiyat, etc, really concerns us then let me just add that our role as Muslims is not merely to follow a set of prescriptions. God could have given us a list of prescriptions to follow and it would be no exaggeration to say that many Muslims perceive Islam in precisely in this way. The word of God, on the contrary, is designed to see our evolution as human being and progressively making ourselves capable of finding the answers to life's questions.

Salat is not based on physical performance or a 'check-list' of details, but it is a connection to the Almighty himself and therefore one's primary focus must always be 'Mind' and 'Message', not the 'Body' or its 'Motions'. Although the Salat prayer has its definite form, in the end this form is not important, as this verse tells us:

“Unto every community have We appointed [different] ways of worship, which they ought to observe. Hence [O believer,] do not let those [who follow ways other than thine] draw thee into disputes on this score, but summon [them all] unto thy Sustainer: for, behold, thou art indeed on the right way.” - (Ch.22: Ver.67)

In conclusion, we must remember that the Qur'an is a COMPLETE and DETAILED Book of Guidance with nothing lacking. The Qur'an has outlined where we should get our Salat from and it has identified the “nutritious” aspects of the Salat in detail. Had every single action of the Salat been important for our Guidance, Allah would have DETAILED it in His COMPLETE Book.

## (6) A SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'ĀN

"Do they not earnestly seek to understand the Qur'ān? Or is that there are locks upon their hearts? (Qur'ān, Ch. 47: Ver. 24)

Some people argue that, even if we hold on to the Qur'an, we shall still be faced with the problem of different interpretations, and this in turn will bring about disunity. It is for these purposes of answering this question that we include this chapter. What we have to avoid is not

differences of opinion, but differences in aims. We can resolve differences of opinion through discussions. However, differences in aims cannot be settled in that way, since both sides begin from different bases. Take for example the difference between a colonial power and a colonized people: this contradiction can only be resolved through pressure of the colonized people's movement against the colonial power.

There is no doubt that there are differences in Qur'anic interpretation. This is proved by the existence of many translations. However, God tells us that the Qur'an is 'clear' and 'easy.' 'Clear' here means 'straight', 'not crooked', 'not deviating'. It also means 'easy', because the Qur'an has been sent down as guidance for all, and not for any elite class of people. It is due to the Qur'an's clarity that no one can falsify it or make it crooked. Nor can anyone else, except God, invent it. It is in the sense that the teachings of the Qur'an cannot contradict science and reason, for science and reason are nothing but manifestations of the laws created by God in nature, human society and the human psyche. Therefore, God has proclaimed that there is no discrepancy between the verses of the Qur'an. It is on this basis – the integrity and unity of Qur'anic verses – that if we hold on to the Qur'an we shall succeed.

An important question arises now as to how did the messenger convey the knowledge of Allah's Book to his audience. The Qur'an provides us the adequate answer to this crucial question. We are informed that the Qur'an has been kept independent of all sorts of traditions for its exegesis, by indicating that it is its own commentary. The Qur'an is not like an ordinary book such that most other books discuss a specific topic at one place and have their subjects compiled and bifurcated within specific chapters.

The Book of Allah has its topics spread out throughout itself within various chapters. If we were to ascertain as to what Allah's Book says about the topic of divorce we find verses dealing with the subject of divorce in Al-Baqara which is the second Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an, An-Nisa' the fourth Chapter, Al Ahzab the thirty third chapter and further in At-Talaaq the sixty fifth chapter of the Qur'an. By compiling all the verses about the topic of divorce as discussed in all the locations of the Qur'an we come to know what the Book of Allah has to say about this subject. In addition, we observe that each verse clarifies and explains the other. It is by this manner that Allah has dealt with different subjects in His Book, i.e. by repeating topics in various chapters throughout the Qur'an. This manner of exegesis is identified in the Qur'an as, Tasreef ul Ayat or recurrence and repetition of subjects within the Qur'anic verses, and it is by this method that the Book of Allah provides its own explanation.

We are reminded:

“See how We repeat the communications (NUSARIF UL AYATTI) that they may understand.” – (Ch.6: Ver.65)

"And verily We have repeated for mankind (SARRAFNA\_LIN NA\_SI) in this Qur'an all kinds of similitude, Yet the greater part of men refuse (to receive) it except with ingratitude” - (Ch.17: Ver.89)

Allah has circulated topics within His Book, and what is unclear at one passage is made distinct by another verse in another passage within the Qur'an itself. One verse will throw light on the other. Furthermore, we are informed that the messenger of Allah also explained the Qur'an by the Qur'an itself:

"And thus do We repeat the communications (NUSARRIFUL A\_YA\_TI) and that they may say: You have read; and that We may make it clear to a people who know.” - (Ch.6: Ver.05)

It is evident from the above that the Prophet's lectures on the Qur'an were based on TASREEF\_UL\_AYATT, i.e. recurrence of verses, to clarify topics within the Qur'an. Moreover, the Qur'an was clarified by the Qur'an itself. This is further supported in Surah Al-Furqan, where a certain objection of the unbelievers is identified:

"Those who reject Faith say: "Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed) that We may strengthen thy heart thereby and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow well-arranged stages gradually. And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof)." – (Ch.25: Ver.32-33)

To the objection of unbelievers as to why is not the Qur'an revealed all at once, it is stated that the Qur'an is revealed in stages due to the following main reasons:

(1) So that the messengers heart may be strengthened. This is confirmed when it is stated: KAZA\_LIKA LINUSAB BITA BIHI FU A\_DAKA "Thus (is it revealed) that We may strengthen thy heart thereby." Hence, he was encouraged and enjoined to be steadfast by the revelation of Qur'anic verses.

(2) So that the arguments that the unbelievers may bring forth should be answered sufficiently by 'Haqq', i.e. the Qur'anic truth. As it is stated: WA LA\_ YATU\_NAKA BIMASALIN IL LA\_ JINA\_KA BIL HAQ "And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth."

(3) The third reason for the gradual descent of the Qur'an is to provide Ahsan-ul-Tafsir, i.e. the best explanation and exegesis of Allah's Book.

"And no example do they bring to thee but We bring to thee the truth AND THE BEST TAFSIR" – (Ch.25: Ver.33)

Thus, Allah revealed verses that provided Tafsir of other verses themselves. What remained ambiguous in one verse, its clarification and exegesis was provided by Allah Himself by the gradual descent of other verses of the Qur'an. Hence, Allah provided the Tafsir of the Qur'an by the Qur'an itself, and did not make His Book dependent on any compilations of traditions for its exegesis. It is by this manner that Allah gave the Tafsir of His Book to the messenger that he in turn conveyed to his audience. The Prophet did not give any separate book of Tafsir to the Ummah as the Tafsir of the Qur'an, which he imparted, was contained in the pages of the Qur'an itself.

While it is identified that the Qur'an explains itself by repetition of verses, we are also instructed to ponder and reflect on Allah's Book. It is mentioned that those who will use their faculties of understanding and engage in an inquiry into the meaning of the divine message, instead of following the ancestral faith, for them the Qur'anic verses will be rendered plain (See 2:170, 10:24, 38:29, 47:24).

It is Allah, who is the Mufasir, i.e. commentator of the Qur'an, and the Tafsir of one verse was provided by the revelation of other verses which would throw light on the subject under discussion. Thus, it is said:

"(God) Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an." – (Ch. 55: Ver.1-2)

Not only were the revelation, compilation and protection of the Book taken up by Allah himself, but also its explanation. We are informed:

"Nay more it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear):" – (Ch.75: Ver.18)

While acknowledging that Qur'anic passages explain themselves, renowned translator of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad also acknowledges that the Qur'an provides its own Tafsir, when he states the following in the foreword of His Translation:

"The Qur'an must not be viewed as a compilation of individual injunctions and exhortations but as one integral whole: that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine in which every verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of them clarifying and amplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped only if we correlate every one of its statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its passages, and try to explain its ideas by means of frequent cross references, always subordinating the particular to the general and the incidental to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully followed, we realize that the Qur'an is - in the words of Muhammad Abduh- "its own best commentary". - The Message of THE QUR-AN by Muhammad Asad, pp vii

### **A Scientific Methodology of Interpretation**

What do we mean by this scientific methodology of Interpretation? Whatever man wishes to do, from eating, bathing, sleeping and to the understanding of his God, there is a method. This method must be of necessity scientific, because only a scientific method can guarantee success. On the other hand, an unscientific method can only result in failure. The Qur'an itself has given us a basic rule of interpretation, contained in the following verse:

“He it is who sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are foundation of the Book: others are allegorical, But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical seeking discord and searching for the hidden meaning but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord”; and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding. (Ch.3: Ver.7)

The verse tells us that the Qur'an has two types of verse: those whose meanings are clear and decisive, forming the bases of Qur'anic teachings, called *muhkamat*, and those with allegorical meanings, called *mutashabihat*. The *mutashabihat* or allegorical verses refer to a phenomenon that mankind does not yet know, like Resurrection, Heaven, Hell, the creation of man and the universe, etc.

We use metaphor or allegorical language in order to explain something that our listeners do not know or have no experience with it, like a father who tries to impress upon his two-year-old to not touch or play with fire. Alternatively, a teacher trying to explain the joys of married life to his students of five or six years old. Such listeners have not yet the knowledge of these things, and so we use allegorical language to make them understand. Yet, they will later come to know of these things. In the same way, God uses metaphorical language to let us know Him, the Day of Resurrection, Heaven, Hell and other invisible things. When the time comes, we too shall know the worlds that are now incomprehensible to us.

This basic rule of interpretation taught by the Qur'an in order to understand its verses properly will enable us to avoid the pitfalls of misinterpreting the Qur'anic verses. Furthermore, the Qur'an gives us a complete set of rules for its own interpretation. We shall list out the following nine principle of scientific Qur'anic interpretation.

1. Two types of verses that must be distinguished, which establish the principle of distinction between straightforward and metaphorical language. - (Qur'ān, 3:7)
2. The principle of unity of the Qur'ān's contents, meaning that its verses are not contradictory, but in perfect harmony. - (Ch. 4: Ver. 82)

3.The congruence of Qur'ānic teachings with truth and logic, establishing the principle of truth, and its congruence with science and right reason. - (Ch. 41: Ver. 41-42; 42:24; 23:70-71; 8:7-8; 17:81; 10:100)

4.The principle of self-explanation, i.e. that Qur'ānic verses explain themselves one another. - (55:1-2; 75:18-19)

5.The principle of good intention, i.e. that the Qur'ān cannot be comprehended by anyone who approaches it with bad intention. - (41:44; 56:77-79; 17:45-46)

6.The principle of topical context, i.e. that the meaning of any verse or verses must be understood in the context of the topic under discussion. - (17:58; 53:3-4; 59:7)

7.The principle of historical context i.e. that verses relating to a particular historical condition must be interpreted in the light of that condition. - (4:25, 92; 4:3)

8.The principle of easy practicability, i.e. that the teachings of the Qur'ān are meant to facilitate and not to render things difficult for mankind. - (22:78; 20:2; 5:6, 101-102; 4:28)

9. The principle of distinction between principle and methodology and putting principle above methodology. - (22:67; 2:67-71)

These are nine principles of scientific interpretation given either directly or indirectly in the Qur'an. Studying the Qur'an without a scientific methodology definitely gives rise to many problems. Orthodox translation uses the methodology of classical jurisprudence, which is based on the teachings of Imam Shafi'i. According to him, the four sources of Islamic law are: Qur'an, Hadith/Sunna, Ijma' or consensus of scholars and Qiyas or analogy. This methodology places the Hadith as interpreter of the Qur'an. It is due to this unscientific methodology of classical jurisprudence that the interpretation of many Qur'anic verses has been rendered subjective, arbitrary and contradictory. Let us examine a few cases.

### **6 (A) The punishment for Adultery (Zina)**

This is one of the clear cases where Hadith interprets Qur'an. On the subject of adultery (Zina), the Qur'an clearly lays down the punishment as follows:

'The adulteress and adulterer should be flogged a hundred lashes each, and no pity for them should deter you from the law of God, if you believe in God and the last day; and the punishment should be witnessed by a body of believers'. (24:2)

On the other hand, Hadith hold the view that the above punishment is applicable only in the case of the unmarried who commits adultery and for the married the punishment is stoning to death. It is important to note that the Qur'an does not differentiate between married or unmarried. Imam Shafi explains this contradiction as follows:

“The Sunna of the Apostle specified that the penalty of scourging with a hundred stripes for (fornication on the part of the) free unmarried couple confirmed, but that was abrogated concerning the married; and that the penalty of stoning for (adultery on the part of the) free married couple was confirmed.”

This is an interesting interpretation. Not only that does the Sunna-punishment clearly contradict the punishment in the Qur'an, but it is also given the power to confirm or overrule the Qur'an!

We will discuss the issue a bit elaborative and find out the actual teaching of the Qur'an. The first thing to be noted is that nowhere Qur'an mentions stoning to death as punishment for any offence. Even when the Qur'an prescribes death penalty, it limits it to Katal (killing) and Fasadun Fil Ardhu (spreading mischief on land).

If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land [Fasadun Fil Ardhu] it would be as if he slew the whole people, And if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. - (Ch. 5:Ver. 32)

It is evident that, the stoning to death of a married for adultery will directly infringe on the above principle. The only option is to bring the adultery on the part of the married under Fasadun Fil Ardhu. However, it is impossible to do so because the Qur'an already prescribes a punishment for adultery. In cases where already a punishment is prescribed, Fasadun Fil Ardhu cannot be attracted.

The term Fasadun Fil Ardhu broadly refers to offences against society and state. Moreover, since the term is used in a general sense, it can meet the changing needs of time. For instance, the punishment for drug traffic is not mentioned in the Qur'an. However, based on the above verse, an Islamic state can bring the offence under Fasadul Fil Ardhu since drug traffic is an offence against society.

Now look at another piece of evidence from the Qur'an:

If anyone of you have not the means to marry free believing women, they may marry believing girls from among those whom your right hand possess...and if they commit indecency (fahish Act) after their wedlock their punishment is half that of free women. (Ch. 4: Ver. 15)

Here, we may stop for a moment and ask. If the punishment for adultery for the married women is stoning to death, how can we divide the punishment into half? Let us see another place where punishments for Fahish acts are mentioned:

“O women of the prophet! Whoever, of you commits an open Fahish act, the punishment shall be increased to her doubly; and this is easy to Allah.” - (Qur'an Ch. 33: Ver. 30)

If the punishment for some indecent act had been stoning to death, then what would it mean to double the punishment?

Moreover, we must know that before the verse prescribing hundred lashes was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, the punishment for adultery was different as evident by the following verse.

‘If any of your women are guilty of indecency, take the evidence of four witnesses from among you against them and if they testify confine them to house until death do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some other way’. - (Ch. 4: Ver. 15)

Here ‘Allah ordain for them some other way’ means some definite pronouncement from Allah through divine revelation. As a matter of fact, this pronouncement is contained in verse 24:2 which prescribe hundred lashes. Nowhere in the Qur'an Allah makes any definite pronouncement except the pronouncement as contained in verse 24:2. In other words, if the punishment for adultery for the married was stoning to death, that would be clearly specified in the Qur'an in view of the above verse.

It is pertinent to note that the Prophet Muhammad is clearly forbidden through Qur'an from uttering any religious instructions other than the Qur'an. See how clearly it is commanded in the Qur'an:

"This (Qur'an) is the utterance of an honourable messenger. It is not the utterance of a poet; rarely do you believe. Nor is it the utterance of a soothsayer; rarely do you take heed. A revelation from the Lord of the universe. HAD HE EVER UTTERED ANY OTHER RELIGIOUS UTTERANCES (attributed to us), we would have punished him severely, and we would have stopped the revelation to him. None of you could have protected him against us." - (Ch. 69: Ver. 40-47)

The Prophet was ordered never to deviate from the Qur'an. Deviation meant severe punishment.

"They almost diverted you (O Muhammad) from our revelations to you; they wanted you to fabricate something else to consider you a friend. If it were not that we strengthened you, you almost leaned towards them a little bit. Had you done it, we would have doubled the punishment for you in this life, and after death; no one could have protected you against us." - (Ch. 17: Ver. 73-75)

The prophet was also ordered to deliver the Qur'an without the least alteration, and never to fabricate anything else:

"When our verses are recited for them, those who do not expect to meet us would say, 'Bring a Qur'an other than this, or change it.' Say (O Muhammad), 'I cannot change it on my own initiative. I simply follow what is revealed to me. I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the retribution of a terrible day' - (Ch. 10: Ver. 15)

The natural and logical conclusion from the above is that the Prophet of Allah could NEVER disobey Allah and inflict a punishment, which could NOT be derived from the Qur'an. Thus, the Hadith of 'stoning' are fabrications. However, some people insist on having stoning in the Law of Allah. They would go to any lengths to corrupt the pure message of Allah. Not satisfied with the stories of stoning of humans in the books of Hadith, they included monkeys in it also to show that somehow stoning is a "Natural" law:

Bukhari: Volume 5, Number 188:

Narrated 'Amr bin Maimun: "During the pre-Islamic period of ignorance I saw a she-monkey surrounded by a number of monkeys. They were all stoning it, because it had committed illegal sexual intercourse. I too, stoned it along with them."

The questions that arise from this are:

1. Do Monkeys have Nikah?
2. What does it mean for a Monkey to commit "Zina" after being "married"?
3. How did Amr bin Maimun know that the she-monkey had committed Zina?

Is this not a desperate attempt to give stoning a Divine "Yes"? But wait, there is more. After creating the stories of the Prophet stoning people, and after creating stories about monkeys getting stoned, the people realized that the Book of Allah does not mention stoning. Therefore, they turned to the famous "Theory of Abrogation", and invented false Qur'anic "ayah" about stoning and made up stories that these "ayah" were "abrogated" and taken out of the Qur'an. In one of the six most authentic Hadith books by Ibne Maja (Ibne Maja, Nikah,

36/1944 and Ibn Hanbal, 5/131,132,183; 6/269), we find a parable told by Hazrat Aysha, in which she says:

"The aa'yaa on stoning and nursing of babies were lying in book form that was kept in the patio. When the Holy Messenger passed away, we became busy in his funeral. During this time, our domesticated pet goat ate the manuscript of these two aa'yaa. And so these aa'yaa were wasted."

Very fanciful Hadith indeed! How could a verse of Quran be abrogated by a goat? As an answer to this question, Ibn Qutayba, a proponent of Hadith and Sunnah, in his classic book entitled "Solving the Contradictions Among Hadiths" puts forward the contention that "the goat is a holy animal." And he asked a counter question: "Why not believe in God's power? As He destroyed the people of Aad and Thamud, He is also able to destroy His revelations by using even a goat!" No comments are needed for such a bizarre explanation. Even assuming the above story is true, the logical question that arises is that if the "aa'yaa of stoning" is "abrogated" and taken out of the Qur'an in this way, how come the proponents and fabricators of these Hadiths claim that the RULING of stoning is still valid? There is also strong evidence that someone later tried to include stoning in Islam. If we consider the following narrations, it would become clear that there was effort made to try to justify stoning by ascribing things to Umar as well:

Sahih Al Bukhari vol.8.816, narrated by Ibn Abbas:

'Umar said, "I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, 'We do not find the Verses of the Rajm (stoning to death) in the Holy Book,' and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajm be inflicted on him who commits illegal sexual intercourse, if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession." Sufyan added, "I have memorized this narration in this way." 'Umar added, "Surely Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajm, and so did we after him."

The main implication of this is that The Qur'an we have today shown as NOT COMPLETE because the "ayah" of Rajm as SUPPOSEDLY mentioned by Umar is NOT IN IT. This will not be true because Allah is PROTECTING IT.

Thus, the Hadiths of 'stoning' are fabrications. Assuming for the sake of argument that the punishment prescribed for adultery in the case of the married is stoning to death, let us look at the implementation aspect of the law. Then the inconsistencies in the Hadith as opposed to Qur'an will become alarmingly clear. We will discuss a few of its aspects without which our discussion will not be complete.

The Qur'an on declaring the extramarital relations as a criminal act simultaneously attached extra evidentiary requirements, which will be insurmountable in practice. Four eyewitnesses are required to prove a sexual misconduct.

"Those who launch a charge against chaste women and do not bring four witnesses should be punished with eighty lashes, and their testimony should not be accepted afterwards". - (Ch. 24: Ver. 4)

Why the focus on women? Why are the strict evidentiary requirements prescribed for the punishment for Zina? Looking at the issue from a cultural perspective, this is not surprising. In nearly every culture in the world, women's sexual morality appears to be a particularly favourite subject for slander, gossip and insult.

The Qur'an however has harsh words for the exploitation of women's dignity in this way. The Qur'an first established that there was to be no speculation about a woman's sexual conduct. No one may cast any doubt upon the character of a woman except by formal charge with the support of four eyewitnesses. If such direct proof does not materialise then anyone engaging in such a charge is subject to physical punishment for slander.

The following verses were revealed in connection with a rumour spread against Aysha's honour. Notice how strongly the Qur'an prohibits public discussion of Zina.

“Why did not those, who gave currency to this charge, bring four witnesses to prove it? Since they have not brought the required witnesses, they are indeed liars in the sight of God. Were it not for the grace of God and His mercy upon you, in this world and the Hereafter, a great punishment would have befallen you on account of the slander you plunged in; For, you began to learn it from each other's tongue and then you uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought it to be a light matter, while in the sight of God it was a grievous thing. And wherefore did you not say, when you heard of it, 'It is not proper for us to talk about it. Holy art Thou, O God, this is a grievous calumny.' God admonishes you that you never repeat the like thereof, if you are believers. And God explains to you the commandments; and God is All-Knowing, Wise (24:13-18)

See how Allah says; "it not for the grace of God and His mercy upon you, in this world and the Hereafter, a great punishment would have befallen you on account of the slander you plunged in". Finally Allah admonishes the believers, 'never repeat the like thereof, if you are believers'. The issue of concern is the honor of a woman. No one should suspect the honor of a woman unless with the formal support of four eye witnesses. If four witnesses are not available, the Qur'anic response is: walk away, leave her alone. Leave her dignity intact. The honour of a woman is not a tool; it is her fundamental right.

However, we will see how the spirit of these verses will be lost when we allow Hadith to interpret Qur'an.

Based on the Hadith we quoted earlier (Bukhari vol.8.816) and many other Hadiths, our scholars are of the opinion that punishment for Zina must be carried out under three circumstances. Firstly, when there are four witnesses, secondly when there is evidence of pregnancy and finally when the parties confess. However, as we have seen, the Qur'an specifies that punishment for Zina should be carried out only in a situation where there are four eye witnesses.

If pregnancy is taken as a ground for punishment for Zina, the woman is automatically put in the position of defending her honour against accusations, which do not meet the Qur'anic four-witness requirement. It unfairly shifts the burden of proof against women to prove that she is innocent. This unfairness is not supported by the spirit of the Qur'anic verses which discourage women's sexual activity by insisting that no presumptions be made about women's sexual conduct without four witnesses. The shift in the burden of proof will be even more patently unfair when the pregnant woman is a victim of rape. In that instance, an unmarried pregnant woman must overcome the burden of a prima facie case against her simply because the attack has resulted in pregnancy.

Moreover, the Qur'anic insistence on four witnesses, as we saw earlier, establishes that the act of intercourse must be public, i.e., not less than four people must witness this act, not its consequences. It is in such a public sex in which the involved persons are liable to be punished, not public pregnancy. One cannot tell whether the pregnancy occurred from rape or Zina. In modern societies of large populations, it is generally not obvious which of these will apply to pregnant women on the street. Nor, indeed, should the public speculate about it without the solid eyewitness proof. Furthermore, pregnancy is something that only applies to

women. If pregnancy alone constitutes sufficient evidence of Zina, the result overshadows the very purpose of the Zina verses is to protect women's honour. Women, again, tend to be susceptible to accusation, and the Qur'an addresses this susceptibility directly, by enjoining any charges against women without solid proof. If pregnancy is allowed as sufficient proof of Zina, a pregnant adulteress will be convicted without any testimonial proof, while her adulterous partner escapes punishment with his reputation intact. The woman-affirming spirit of the Zina verses is lost.

Now we will discuss confession as a ground for punishment for Zina and understand how it infringes the Quranic principles. First, let us discuss a case where one party confesses and the other party denies? Following the principle of the Qur'an this man should be charged for punishment for slander if the women alleged to have involved testifies that she had no relation with this man. Because any public confession by one party without producing the required witnesses is tantamount to making a false charge against the other party which is punishable under Qur'anic law. Still, a question will be: what happens if both parties involved in Zina come forward and confess voluntarily to their sin? Or either of the parties confesses their sin without naming the other. In this regard, please read verses 68 to 71 of chapter 25, where Allah promises forgiveness to those involved in adultery, if there is true repentance as tested by a changed life in conduct. The verses describe the qualities of true servants of Allah;

“And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility.....Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred except for just cause, nor commit fornication; - and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the Chastisement on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy, Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah in repentance;- (25:68-71)

In this context, just consider when both parties involved in adultery voluntarily come forward and confess for their sins. Is it not a true repentance? Why do we want to punish them? They should be considered as role models of the society for voluntarily coming forward and confessing their sin. Allah promises them forgiveness for their true repentance, but we through our man made laws want to punish them!

Let us see another example of how our scholars have made the Qur'anic system of punishment for Zina a mockery. Classical Islamic jurisprudence interprets the Qur'anic evidentiary rule of testimony to require the actual witnessing of penetration during sexual intercourse and nothing less. This interpretation is based on the reported Hadith of Prophet Muhammad in which after a man persisted in confessing to adultery, Prophet Muhammad asked several specific questions to confirm that the act was indeed sexual penetration.

The important question is why we put such impossible evidentiary requirements on a criminal offence for which the requirements have been clearly prescribed by God. By limiting conviction to only those cases where four individuals actually saw penetration take place, the crime will realistically be punishable only if the two parties are committing the act in the public, in the nude. Even if four witnesses actually saw a couple having sex, but under a coverlet for example, this testimony would not only fail to support a Zina charge, but these witnesses would also be liable for slander! Furthermore, if any eyewitness testimony is obtained by violating a defendant's privacy, it is inadmissible! What a great tragedy! It is nothing short of making a mockery of Qur'anic law!

“Some people uphold vain Hadith in order to divert others from the path of God without knowledge, and to create a mockery out of it. These have deserved humiliating retribution”. - (Ch. 31: Ver. 6)

Our scholars also claim that the four witnesses required for punishment for Zina must be all male witnesses. Actually the Qur'anic verses on Zina, setting forth the original four-witness requirement, are not exclusively for men. The Qur'an refers these four witnesses with the Arabic masculine plural, "shuhada" (witnesses), which grammatically includes both men and women, unless otherwise indicated.

The exclusivity of male testimony as an application of cultural male bias to the Qur'anic law of Zina is unacceptable. It prevents women from fulfilling Islamic duties to be witnesses to the truth, in spite of it being repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an. However, even more significant is the fact that the permanent rejection of testimony is by itself a Qur'anic penalty. That is, in the Verse prohibiting slander, the Qur'an maintains that deprivation of the right to testify is a severe punishment: one of the two consequences of false accusation against women: 'Those who defame chaste women, and do not bring four witnesses, should be punished with eighty lashes, and their testimony should not be accepted afterwards' (24:4). Therefore a law which disallows women's testimony in Zina charge is tantamount to sentencing all women to one of the Qur'anic punishment for slander.

Qur'an wanted to protect the dignity of women. However, we on our part corrupted its teachings by incorporating man-made laws and interpreting it according to our whims and fancies; the dignity of women is lost as a result.

## **6 (B) The Punishment for Theft**

The Qur'anic injunction regarding the punishment for theft is given in verses 38 to 40 in Chapter 5.

5:38, "The male thief, and the female thief, you shall cut their hands as a punishment for their crime, and to serve as a deterrent from God. God is Almighty, Wise."

5:39, "If one repents after committing this crime, and reforms, God redeems him. God is Forgiver, Merciful."

The Muslim Scholars disagree as to how of the hands of the thief should be cut off – whether the whole hand or only the fingers should be chopped off and what should be the minimum value of the theft articles for cutting the hands? What are the things exempted from inflicting this punishment and so on? Again, there is the preposterous construction foisted on Verse 5:39, which says, 'If the thief repents after committing this crime, and repents, God redeems him. God is Forgiver, Merciful'.

Most of the commentators including Maulana Maudoodi interpret verse 5:39 to mean that if the thief repents after his hand is cut off, and then he reforms himself, then Allah turns to him in forgiveness. Repentance and reformation can only have meaning and significance if they are done before the punishment is carried out.

In this regard, we may look at a similar verse in the Quran;

"Those who launch a charge against chaste women and do not bring four witnesses should be punished with eighty lashes, and their testimony should not be accepted afterwards: except for those who repent thereafter and mend (their conduct). For Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful". - (24:4)

It is clear that if there is true repentance coupled with a change in conduct there will be no punishment. Let's assume that someone steals something and pays the heavy price of his or her hands being cutting off. What does it mean in his or her case that, "as for him who repents

after having thus done wrong, and makes amends"(5:39). How could he or she deserve a second chance without his or her hands?

Assuming not admitting that Hadith interprets Qur'an, Let us look into some Hadiths and find out the kind of interpretations and guidance we get from them regarding punishment for theft.

Look at the following Hadiths;

Sahih Al Bukhari (Vol.8.787/790): The Prophet ordered the cutting of the hand for the theft of a shield worth three Dirhams.

Sahih Al Bukhari (Vol.8.79): Narrated by Abu Huraira, Allah's Apostle said, "Allah curses the thief who steals an egg (or a helmet) for which his hand is to be cut off, or steals a rope, for which his hand is to be cut off."

Abu Dawood: Book 38, Number 4396: Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: A thief was brought to the Prophet (Peace\_be\_upon\_him). He said: Kill him. The people said: He has committed theft, Apostle of Allah! Then he said: Cut off his hand. So his (right) hand was cut off. He was brought a second time and he said: Kill him. The people said: He has committed theft, Apostle of Allah! Then he said: Cut off his foot. So his (left) foot was cut off. He was brought a third time and he said: Kill him. The people said: He has committed theft, Apostle of Allah! So he said: Cut off his hand. (So his (left) hand was cut off.) He was brought a fourth time and he said: Kill him. The people said: He has committed theft, Apostle of Allah! So he said: Cut off his foot. So his (right) foot was cut off. He was brought a fifth time and he said: Kill him. So we took him away and killed him. We then dragged him and cast him into a well and threw stones over him.

Tirmidhi Hadith (3598) and Muwatha (41:28): Safwan fell asleep in the mosque with a sheet of cloth under his head. A thief stole the sheet but Safwan woke up, caught him and took him to the Prophet. As the Prophet ordered his hand to be cut off, Safwan relented and tried to say that he had given the thief the cloth. The Prophet said "Why did you not do so before bringing him to me?"

It is not the purview of this book to discuss the stupidity and meaninglessness of the above man-made Hadiths attributed to our beloved Prophet. There is no need to explain to our attentive reader as to what will happen if we apply the above concocted Hadiths to any legal system. Instead, we will look into the Qur'an and study the application of the theft punishment. First, we will discuss in short three important features of criminal law in Qur'an relevant to our discussion.

#### A. The Law of Equivalence.

According to the Qur'anic criminal justice, a punishment must fit the crime. The law of equivalence must be followed in all cases. It is stated in the Quran;

“In the law of equality there is life to you, oh men of understanding”

So also, the Qur'an directs Prophet Muhammad to follow the law of equivalence in matters of punishments.

“If you punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong that has been done to you.”  
- (Ch. 16: Ver. 126)

This important principle is also stated in verse – Ch. 42:Ver. 40;

The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereof (in degree); but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah - (Ch. 42: Ver. 40)

Therefore, it is evident from the above verses that the Qur'an prescribes law of equivalence in all punishments. An Islamic state is bound to follow this principle while formulating and enforcing laws.

#### B. Option to claim compensation from the offender.

In Islam, the victims or the family of the victims are given option to claim compensation for the crimes committed against them. This is an important feature of criminal law in Islam.

Let's consider the case of murder in Qur'an, which is a worse crime than stealing. There are two earthly punishments. Verse 4:92 deals with a believer's accidental killing. Neither capital punishment nor jail are involved. However, he has to pay a blood money to the family of the deceased unless it is remitted freely by them. Verse 2:178 deals with the second case when someone meant the killing. This verse also gives the option of sparing the murderer's life, with reasonable compensation to the family of the person killed if they agree to this. Therefore, in Islam the victims and/or the family of the victims have to fix the quantum of punishment for all the crimes committed against them.

#### C. Encouraging exercise of forgiveness to the criminals if they repent and reform.

This is also a very important feature of Islamic Jurisprudence, which is not often highlighted. The element of forgiveness and mercy is very strong in Islam. Yet, today in the formulation and enforcement of Muslim Laws the tendency is to be as harsh as possible. It is pertinent to note that wherever the Qur'an mentions punishments, that verse ends with a clause for forgiveness. We will look at a few verses:

“Those who launch a charge against chaste women and do not bring four witnesses should be punished with eighty lashes, and their testimony should not be accepted afterwards: except for those who repent thereafter and mend (their conduct). For Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful”. - (Ch. 24:Ver. 4)

“... Eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal. But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself” - (Ch. 5: Ver. 45)

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress limits; for Allah does not love the transgressors. And slay them where ever they catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for persecution is worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the sacred mosque, unless they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who reject faith. But if they cease, Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful.” - (Ch. 2: Ver. 190-91)

"The retribution for those who fight God and His messenger, and spread mischief in the land, is to be killed, or crucified, or to cut off [qatta'a] their hands and feet on alternate sides, or to be banished from the land; except for those who repent before they fall into your power; in that case know that Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful. (Ch. 5: Ver. 33-34)

See, even in worst crimes like waging war against Allah and his messenger and spreading mischief on land, if there is true repentance on the part of the criminals, they have to be given forgiveness according to the above verse.

Therefore, keeping in mind the above three principles, it will become abundantly clear that, 'If the thief repents after committing the crime and reforms', the punishment of cutting of the

hands as stated in 5:38 will not apply; i.e., if one stole your money and thereafter he repents and returns the money to you and compensate you for all the loss, then cutting of his hands must not be carried out and it is not an equitable punishment. This does not mean that every time when a thief returns the stolen articles he should be forgiven. The verse 5:39 requires reformation on the part of the thief. We have to frame laws in this regard taking into account the general principles contained in the Qur'an, the circumstances of the case, nature of the theft, etc. What is theft and which theft at what circumstances should be met with the maximum punishment of cutting of the hands is the concern of the State. It therefore follows that the State has the authority to lay down rules of conduct for the people based on the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an.

Besides, Verse 5:38 refers to 'THE thief'. If someone steals for the first time, comes forward and acknowledges his or her wrongdoing, he or she is not called 'THE thief'. Verse 5:38 does not apply to those ones. The Qur'an also leaves the door open for thieves to repent and reform as stated in 5:39.

Lastly and finally look at the following verse;

“And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility.....Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred except for just cause, nor commit fornication; - and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the Chastisement on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy, Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah in repentance;- (25:68-71)

### **6© Misinterpretation of the Verses 59:7 and 4:65**

The principle of topical context (Principle No. 6) and the principle of self-explanation (principle No.4) are such an elementary principle in the understanding of the book of Allah that one wonders how any educated person can make an error on this point. Because of the scholars' attempts to uphold the teachings of the Hadith, many Qur'anic verses have been badly misinterpreted. We will discuss two such cases.

“So take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.” (Ch.59: Ver.7)

Here the claim is that the above verse is of a general nature and the prophet is empowered hereby to make lawful or to prohibit something of religious nature on his own accord.

Actually, this verse was revealed in connection with the distribution of the spoils of war, more specifically booty acquired from enemy without combat such as, for example, abandoned enemy property. In this type of spoils, the fighters do not share. Even a simple perusal of the preceding and succeeding verses clearly shows that it refers to the spoils of war. Thus, the believers were enjoined to accept only those spoils the Messenger gives them and to refrain from taking what he prohibits. Allah has dictated who the recipients are to be.

Even if we give the proponents of Hadith the benefit of doubt and assume that the verse is of general rather than a specific nature, we would ask ourselves “what is it that the Messenger gave us and what is it that the Messenger prohibited?” The only thing that he did give us, according to the Qur'an, is the Qur'an itself. He prohibited only what he was commanded to prohibit, namely the things specifically cited in the Qur'an. Chapter 66, verse one states, “O

Prophet, why do you prohibit what had made lawful for you?" This is a reprimand, one of several, directed to the Prophet for having prohibited something which God made lawful. Look at the following verse also:

"O ye who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you" - (Ch.5: Ver.87)

Here God commands all those who believe – and that includes the Prophet – not to prohibit the things made lawful by Allah. Since the Qur'an is fully detailed and complete, it must contain all the prohibitions imposed by Allah. Anything that is not specifically prohibited is thus ipso facto permitted and the prophet is not allowed to prohibit it as evidenced by the above cited verses.

"When our verses are recited for them, those who do not expect to meet us would say, 'Bring a Qur'an other than this, or change it.' Say (O Muhammad), 'I cannot change it on my own initiative. I simply follow what is revealed to me. I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the retribution of a terrible day'" (Ch.10: Ver.15)

From this we learn that the prophet had no mandate to command us to do anything not sanctioned by Allah, otherwise the request to 'bring a Qur'an other than this or change it' would not make sense. Allah is the sole source of religious guidance and accepting any matter of religion not specifically sanctioned by Allah is idol worship. The Qur'an, Chapter 42, verse 21, reads in part, "Or do they have partners who decree for them matters of religion not sanctioned by God?"

Another verse that is often quoted to legitimise and mandate the acceptance books of Hadith is:

"But nay, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you the judge of what is in dispute between them, then they shall find in themselves no dislike of that which you have decreed, and submit in full submission." (Ch.4: Ver.65)

The Hadith proponents point to this Ayah in isolation and start jumping up and down with joy that this ayah gives them freedom to use any and all judgments from the books of Hadith and Fiqh. However, the Qur'an does not reveal this verse in Isolation. It explains it through repetition as promised by Allah, i.e. the same topic is discussed in other parts of the Qur'an, which explains why Allah made such a commandment. So let us see what the Prophet was commanded to judge with and how the Qur'an explains what the judgment of the Messenger is that we must obey.

"Surely We REVEALED THE BOOK to you (Muhammad) with the truth that you (Muhammad) may JUDGE BETWEEN HUMANS as GUIDED BY ALLAH, and be not an advocate to those who betray their trust;" - (Ch.4: Ver.105)

Then Allah uses the examples of the Jews and the Christians to warn the Prophet and all of us Muslims with the following warnings:

"Indeed We Revealed the Torah wherein is Guidance and Noor (Light); with it THE-PROPHETS WHO HAVE BECOME MUSLIMS JUDGE the Jews, the rabbis, and the doctors of law; of what they have guarded of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereof. Therefore, desire not the people, and desire Me; and do not exchange My Ayah for a small price. And WHOEVER DOES NOT JUDGE BY WHAT ALLAH REVEALED, those are the rejectors/kafiroon." (Ch.5: Ver.44)

“We ordained therein for them (Jews): "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal." But if any one remits by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for him. And WHOEVER DOES NOT JUDGE BY WHAT ALLAH REVEALED, those are the dhalimoon/oppressors”. - (Ch.5: Ver.45)

“Let the people of the Injeel (Christians) JUDGE BY WHAT ALLAH HAS REVEALED therein. And WHOEVER DOES NOT JUDGE BY WHAT ALLAH REVEALED, those are the fasiqoon/rebellious”. - (Ch. 5: Ver.47)

“And thus (Muhammad) JUDGE BETWEEN THEM BY WHAT ALLAH REVEALED, and do not follow their vanity; and be guard of them, lest they test you from part of what Allah has Revealed to you; but if they turn back, then know that Allah desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults; and surely many humans iniquitous indeed.” - (Ch.5: Ver.49)

Therefore, it is clear that Allah has directly commanded the Muslims and the Prophet to JUDGE by the Qur'an. The Prophet was a slave of Allah and could never imagine doing something, which was not in Allah's Book. This is how the Qur'an explains itself by repeating the topics:

"And certainly We have repeated for mankind in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude, but the majority of mankind do not consent to aught but denying." - (Ch.17: Ver.89)

#### **6(d) The Myth Of Intercession**

The Hadith literature has succeeded in duping many Muslims to believe that the prophet has been given the right of intercession on the Day of Judgment. Bukhari and Muslim state categorically that the Prophet has been given the right of intercession. (Refer Bukhari: Vol.1.331, 5.224, 6.242, 8.563, 8.571; Muslim: 0389, 0747, 2071, 2516).

Narrated by Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: I shall be pre-eminent amongst the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection and I will be the first intercessor and the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah). (Muslim, Hadith No.5655)

To believe that a prophet or a saint can intercede on our behalf or have our sins forgiven or our wishes fulfilled, implies belief that Allah has partners. This is polytheism. Intercession is a major source of injustice, because it persuades Allah, the greatest judge, to bend the rules of fairness at the request of a saint or prophet. It is sheer wickedness and gross mockery of the concept of justice. How a righteous person known as a prophet can even think of persuading God to do what is unjust. Such a concept is a sheer hoax, and must be condemned, because it mocks divine authority and will. The Qur'an states right in the beginning.

"(Allah is the) Master of the Day of Judgment." (Ch.1: Ver.3)

Thus, the Day of Resurrection turns out to be the Day of Judgment, whose only purpose is dispensation of justice by God independently. If He listens to intercession, He ceases to be the Master of the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an confirms this point of view:

"Ask forgiveness for them (O Muhammad), or ask not forgiveness for them; though thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times Allah will not forgive them." (Ch.9: Ver.80)

The Qur'an repeatedly asserts that the Prophet Muhammad possesses no power to benefit anyone or harm anyone. In other words, the prophet cannot put anyone in Paradise, nor can he take anyone out of the hell. The following verses are very clear on this subject.

"Do you know what is the Day of Judgment? That is the day when no soul hath power at all for any (other) soul. The (absolute) command on that day is Allah's. (Ch.82: Ver.19)

"Say (oh Muhammad): 'To God belongs ALL INTERCESSION. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, then to Him you will be returned.'"(Ch.39: Ver.44)

"O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the provisions we have given to you, before a day comes where there is no trade, no nepotism, and NO INTERCESSION. The disbelievers are the unjust." (Ch. 2:Ver.254)

Having stated the principle of no-intercession on the Day of Judgment at many places, asserting divine authority and sovereignty, the Qur'an goes on to say:

"He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will. Allah is able to do all things."(Ch.2: 284)

It is therefore obvious that both punishing and rewarding are the prerogatives of Allah, and intercession has nothing to do with it. However, Allah cannot exercise this prerogative unjustly because He is committed not to wrong anyone. "Then every soul will be paid in full that which it earned, and they will not be wronged." (Ch.2: Ver.281)

Moreover, if Allah rewards the wrongdoers with the greatest blessing known as paradise just on the Prophetic intercession, then what more can he offer to the good? Intercession is certainly an insult to piety and God-fearing. In fact, Allah bluntly rejects the idea of intercession:

"It is no concern at all of thee (Muhammad) whether He pardon them or punish them; for they are evil-doers. To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth and punisheth whom He pleaseth: but Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful."(Ch.3: Ver.128)

To conclude, there will be no intercession on the Day of Judgment. When Allah says, 'to Him belongs all intercession' it follows that no one can intercede with Allah. If at all there is any intercession on the Day of Judgment it will be with Allah's permission and that too restricted to only those who are already saved by Allah as this verse tells us:

"He knows what is before them and what is behind them and they (the prophets) offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable and they stand in awe and reverence of His (glory)." (Ch. 21:Ver. 28)

Therefore, what else is there, to make one think that a Prophet or a saint will be able to intercede on our behalf? They will, rather, disown us on the day of judgment than intercede on our behalf as this verse tells us:

"[And God shall say]: And now, indeed, you have come unto Us in a lonely state, even as We created you in the first instance; and you have left behind you all that We bestowed on you [in your lifetime]. And We do not see with you those intercessors of yours whom you supposed to have a share in God's divinity with regard to yourselves! Indeed, all the bonds between you [and your earthly life] are now severed, and all your former fancies have forsaken you!" (Ch. 6: Ver. 94).

### **6(e) The Punishment for Apostacy**

Traditionalist Muslim scholars have long embraced classical positions on apostasy that consider the rejection of Islam as a capital crime, punishable by death. This position is taken

from many reported Hadiths of the prophet. For instance, Bukhari reports a hadith stating that "Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him". (Bukhari, Vol. 9, No. 57). There are other hadiths that sanction the killing of apostates.

Narrated by Abdulla, Allah's Apostle said, "The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims." (Bukhari, Vol. 9, No. 17).

On the contrary, there is ample evidence in the Qur'an that individuals should be able to accept or reject a particular faith on the basis of personal conviction, and that no amount of external pressure or compulsion should be permitted: "No compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error."(2:256). "If it had been the Lord's will, they would have believed – All who are on earth! Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" (Ch.10: Ver.99)

It is pertinent to note that there is no earthly punishment prescribed for the apostates in the Quran. Here is a verse from the Quran where Allah Almighty specifically talks about those who leave Islam, and promises them punishment on the Day of Judgment.

"They ask thee (Mohammed) Concerning fighting In the Prohibited Month. Say: Fighting therein Is a grave (offence); but graver is it In the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the sacred Masjid, and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith (Islam) and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the hereafter; they will be companions of the fire and will abide therein." (Ch.2: Ver.217)

According to the Quran, if we believe in GOD we are guided. If we do not believe in GOD, GOD will deal with us in the Hereafter. In other words, there is no worldly punishment for those who turn back from Islam, except that their hereafter will be dark and their abode will be hell fire.

"Those who believe, then reject faith, then believe (again) and (again) reject faith, and go on increasing in unbelief,- Allah will not forgive them nor guide them nor guide them on the way."(4:137)

Notice that the Quran says those who reject faith and then BELIEVE and again DISBELIEVE. If a Muslim rejects faith and is then killed for doing so how will he live to again BELIEVE and then DISBELIEVE. The atmosphere of this verse is that of free will and freedom of choice to everyone. If Allah wanted he would have said something about the punishment, if there was any, of those who reject Islam after accepting it. But Allah takes this to be clearly a private matter between them and Allah.

The following verse further confirms this situation.

"O you who believe, if any of you reverts from his religion, then God will bring people whom He loves as they love Him, and humble themselves towards the believers, while being stern towards the disbelievers; and strive in the cause of God; and never worry about any blamer who might blame them. Such is God's grace that He bestows upon whomever He wills. God is bounteous, omniscient." (Ch 5: Ver.54)

Furthermore, the Qur'an has strictly disallowed the imposition of the death penalty except in two specific cases. One of them is where the person is guilty of murdering another person and the other is where a person is guilty of creating unrest in the country (fasa'd fil-ardh) like

being involved in activities that create unrest in a society, for example activities like terrorism etc. The Qur'an says:

“Whoever kills a person without his being guilty of murder or of creating unrest in the land, is as though he kills the whole of mankind.” (Ch.5: Ver.32)

There is also one thing. If we insist on someone not leaving Islam as per their own individual choice it will in effect welcoming hypocrites into our religion which sometimes more dangerous than an apparent disbeliever. Hypocrites love their life, because they don't believe in the hereafter or Allah, so obviously if we told them to repent and come back otherwise face death penalty, they will be coming back like the hypocrites they are.

The Quran gives complete freedom to human beings to choose a path of their own.

"Say, 'The truth is from your Lord': Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it): (Ch.18:Ver.29)

### **6(f) The Belief in the Miracles of the Prophet Muhammed**

According to the Hadith literature, the prophet performed hundreds of miracles and made many predictions about the future events. The Hadith literature succeeded to elevate our prophet as a prophet with supernatural powers. We quote here just one Hadith, out of the many, which contain miracles performed by the prophet.

Narrated by Anas Ibn Maalik: I saw Allah's Apostle when the 'Asr prayer was due and the people searched for water to perform ablution but they could not find it. Later on (a pot full of) water for ablution was brought to Allah's Apostle. He put his hand in that pot and ordered the people to perform ablution from it. I saw the water springing out from underneath his fingers till all of them performed the ablution (it was one of the miracles of the Prophet). (Bukhari 1.170)

We don't need to do any research on the 'reliability' or 'trustworthiness' of the chain of narrators to prove its authenticity of the above narration. We have the book of Allah with us as an unchallengeable evidence to prove the case. The Qur'an being our infallible guide, we will discuss this issue in the light of its teachings based on the rules of interpretations that we discussed in the beginning, i.e. the principle of unity (principle No.2) and the principle of self-explanation (principle No.4).

The Qur'an explicitly makes clear that the prophet did not possess any miraculous powers. In fact, nowhere in the Qur'an does the Prophet perform even one miracle. On the contrary, the Qur'an repeatedly asks the Prophet to tell his people that he is only a man like them; meaning people should not expect miracles from him:

“Say thou: "I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me by inspiration that your Allah is One Allah: so stand true to Him and ask for His forgiveness." And woe to those who join gods with Allah.” (Ch. 41:Ver. 6)

However, the unbelievers all along doubted the Prophet Muhammad's mission, because they saw nothing extraordinary or miraculous in him. It was beyond the reach of their common sense to believe that a prophet could not perform any miracles. Their objection is not surprising because in every age man expects supernatural verification from one claiming to speak on God's behalf. The Qur'an discusses this subject at many places:

“They said, "If only miracles could come down to him from his Lord!" Say, "All miracles come only from GOD; I am no more than a manifest warner." (Ch. 29:Ver. 50)

"And the Unbelievers say: "Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?" But thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide." (Ch. 13:Ver. 07)

"Yet they say: 'What sort of apostle is this [man] who eats food [like all other mortals] and goes about in the market-places? Why has not an angel [visibly] been sent down unto him, to act as a warner together with him?' Or (Why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why he (not) has a garden for enjoyment?" The wicked say: "Ye follow none other than a man bewitched."-(Ch. 25:Ver.7-8)

"They say: "We shall not believe in thee, until thou cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, Or (until) thou have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water; Or thou cause the sky to fall in pieces, as thou threatened\* against us; or thou bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face: Or thou have a house adorned with gold, or thou mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we shall not even believe in thy mounting until thou send down to us a book that we could read." Say: "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man- a messenger?" (Ch. 17:Ver. 90-93)

[\*Note: this is likely a reference to an earlier revelation in Surah 34: ver. 9]

Have a look at another piece of evidence from the Qur'an. The following verse states that the age of miracles ended before the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Allah did not provide the Prophet with any miracles to support his claim of prophet hood; all the arguments presented in the Qur'an were of an intellectual nature.

"And nothing has prevented Us from sending (this message, like the earlier ones,) with miraculous signs (in its wake), save (our knowledge) that the people of the older times (only too often) gave the lie to them; thus, we provided for (the tribe of) Thamud the she-camel as a light-giving portent, and they sinned against it. And never did we send those signs for any other purpose than to convey a warning."-(Ch.17: Ver.59) (Muhammad Asad's translation)

We have purposefully taken the translation of Muhammad Asad for the above verse, because he has given a beautiful commentary for above verse:

"... This highly elliptic sentence has a fundamental bearing on the purport of the Qur'an as a whole. **In many places the Qur'an stresses the fact that the Prophet Muhammad, despite his being the last and greatest of God's apostles, was not empowered to perform miracles similar to those with which the earlier prophets are said to have reinforced their verbal messages.** His only miracle was and is the Qur'an itself- a message perfect in its lucidity and ethical comprehensiveness, destined for all times and all stages of human development, addressed not merely to the feelings but also to the minds of men, open to everyone, whatever his race or social environment, and bound to remain unchanged forever. Since the earlier prophets invariably appealed to their own community and their own time alone, their teachings were, of necessity, circumscribed by the social and intellectual conditions of that particular community and time; and since the people to whom they addressed themselves had not yet reached the stage of independent thinking, those prophets stood in need of symbolic portents or miracles in order to make the people concerned realize the inner truth of their mission. **The message of the Qur'an, on the other hand, was revealed at a time when mankind (and, in particular, that part of it which inhabited the regions marked by the earlier, Judeo-Christian religious development) had reached a degree of maturity which henceforth enabled it to grasp an ideology as such without the aid of those persuasive portents and miraculous demonstrations which in the past, as the above verse points out, only too often gave rise to new, grave misconceptions.**" (Asad, The Meaning of the Qur'an, Dar Al-Andalus Limited 3 Library Ramp, Gibraltar rpt. 1993], pp. 427-428, n. 71; bold emphasis ours)

The Prophet was consumed with the passion to reform the people and to induce them to accept the truth which he had placed before them. Their insistent demand that he should work miracles to convince them, made him despondent. On such occasions, the Qur'an counsels him to remain firm and not to give way to despair. Sometimes, he might have thought that if only he possessed the power to work miracles, he could quickly have persuaded the people to accept his teaching and follow the right path. The Qur'an did not leave even such a remote thought unanswered. The following verse nips in the bud any thoughts from the Prophet's mind to do some miracles because of his eagerness to get all to accept his Message.

“If their aversion (to the truth) is grievous to thee, then, if thou can, seek a way down into the earth or a ladder\* into the sky that thou may bring to them a portent (to convince them all). If Allah willed, He could have brought them all together to the guidance; so be not thou of the ignorant.” (Ch. 6 : Ver. 35).

[\*Note: The people did indeed ask the Prophet to do this miracle to believe in his Message and the Prophet's answer was, “Say: "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man- a messenger?" (Ref.Ch.17: Ver.90-93)

The people were insistent. The ignorant people kept on asking the prophet to make predictions and to tell them of future events. However, they got this answer from the prophet.

“Say (O Muhammad), "I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of GOD. Nor do I know the future. Nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I simply follow what is revealed to me." Say, "Is the blind the same as the seer? Do you not reflect?"(Ch. 6:Ver. 50)

“Say (O Muhammad), "I have no power to benefit myself, or harm myself. Only what God wills happen to me. IF I KNEW THE FUTURE, I would have increased my wealth, and no harm would have afflicted me. I am no more than a warner, and a bearer of good news for those who believe."(Ch. 7:Ver. 188)

To emphasize that fact God tells us again: “Say (O Muhammad), "I am not different from other messengers. I have no idea what will happen to me or to you. I only follow what is revealed to me. I am no more than a profound warner." (Ch. 46:Ver. 9)

Then God informs us that all the messengers do not know what happened to the people who came after their death: “The day will come when GOD will summon the messengers and ask them, "How was the response to you?" They will say, "We have no knowledge. You are the Knower of all secrets." (Ch. 5:Ver. 109)

Therefore, in view of all the verses quoted above, it is quite evident that, according to the Quran, the prophet Muhammed did not perform any miracles or made any predictions. All the Hadiths, which state otherwise, must be discarded since they contradict the teachings of the Quran.

## (7) CONCLUSION – RETURN TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S ORIGINAL TEACHING — THE QUR'ĀN

Allah puts forth a Parable a man belonging to many partners at variance with each other and a man belonging entirely to one master: are those two equal in comparison? Praise be to Allah! But most of them have no knowledge. - (Qur'ān, Ch. 39: Ver. 29)

When Prophet Muhammad died, he left with us only the Qur'an and nothing but the Qur'an, guidance for Muslims and indeed for all mankind. Notwithstanding the conflicting versions of Hadith saying the contrary, historical facts prove beyond any shadow of doubt that there were no Hadith collections existing at the time of the Prophet's death. Moreover, the Qur'an pronounced this fact as well when God stated several times that the function of the messenger was only to deliver the message.

“Shall we treat the Muslims like the guilty? What is wrong with you? How do you Judge? Do you have another book that you apply? One that gives you anything you want?” (68:36-38)

“Say: Show me a book from God that provides more guidance than them (Qur'an and Torah)?” (28:49)

“Shall I seek other than God as a source of Law and judgment when He is the one who has sent down the Book to you in detail?” (6:114)

Nevertheless, we have seen how the Muslim society, during period between 200 to 250 years after the death of the Prophet, at the instance of their religious scholars (particularly Imam Shafi), built a new doctrine to the effect that the Prophet has left them the Qur'an and the Hadith and that they must hold on to both. History speaks that the early caliphs discouraged the dissemination or recording of Hadith. Al-Muwatta' of Malik ibn Anas may be said to be the first Hadith collection, although, properly speaking, it was a law-book rather than a Hadith collection. We know that the official collections were made only after Imam Shafi pronounced the Hadith as well to be divine and a source of law on par with the Qur'an.

It is widely propagated that we were fortunate that Imam Bukhari and various other religious scholars could make the collection and otherwise we would have been robbed of our Islamic treasure. Some scholars go even to the extent to exclaim that only one tenth of the knowledge is in the Qur'an and the rest of nine tenth of the treasure is in the Hadiths. No wonder nine tenth of time these scholars are at war against the Qur'an.

Whether to go back and refer only to the Qur'an to solve our many pressing problems of today or to persist in our thousand-year old error of clinging to the unauthorized Hadith and heresies resulting out of it — this is the greatest dilemma facing the Muslims today. Are we brave enough to admit our mistake, retrace our steps and make amends? Or, shall we continue arrogantly to cling to and defend the traditions that we have inherited from our forefathers? To let ourselves drift aimlessly in confusion, backwardness, degradation and disunity that have plagued us all these thousand years? To be divided not only among ourselves, but, more importantly, divided within our own individual selves about what is right and what is wrong, what is "religious" and what is "secular," who is an "Alim" and who is not and the thousand other conflicting teachings fed to us by the Hadith? What a remarkable achievement indeed for the Hadith!

So, what are we to do now? Is there any way out? Is there no "Second Comings" for us, for mankind? However, there is. Everything that we need, the primordial element, lies in the Qur'an, latent and merely waiting for us to reach out again. The clearest spring with its purest

fount of knowledge still runs straight and true in the Qur'an, just as it has been from the day it was first revealed by God Almighty in His All-Encompassing Mercy for all mankind.

As we contemplate the fate of the Muslims, agonize over traditions that many of us have come to love, and fear to reject, let us be reminded by these verses:

"When they are told, 'follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'we follow what we found our parents doing.' Supposedly, their parents lacked understanding and guidance? The example of such disbelievers is that of a parrot; they repeat what they heard without understanding. Deaf, dumb and blind, they fail to understand." - (Ch. 2: Ver. 170-171)

No, we shall not be deaf, dumb or blind anymore. We shall not be like parrots and repeat what others tell us without first questioning and understanding things. The answer to our dilemma, therefore, lies in our going to the Qur'an for guidance.

"Why do they not study the Qur'an carefully? If it were from other than God, they would have found many contradictions therein." (Ch. 4: Ver. 82)

Such is the challenge written in the Qur'an. We are challenged to find even one contradiction within it. Does any other book, revealed or not, have any such statement? Does the Hadith allow us to question it, or does one become a heretic to do so? Is the Hadith beyond reproach? Does it occupy a plane higher than the above verse?

Allah tells us that the Qur'an is light (4:174, 42:52). Can the Hadith shed light on the Qur'an, which is light? The answer to the question is "No". For a believer the Qur'an is like a sun, which always shed light. Any light if found in any Hadith is no more than a reflection of the light of the Qur'an. If we turn towards the Hadith for light, we turn away from the Qur'an. Moreover, if we allow the Hadith to come in between the Qur'an and us, we will find ourselves in the darkness of a spiritual eclipse, cut off from the light of the Qur'an.

### **The Qur'an: The Final Solution to All Deviations**

Prior to the political and ideological conflicts, caused by nothing more than greed and pride, the Muslims had always settled their issues by referring to the Qur'anic teachings. Therefore, they had remained united and strong. Guided by the Qur'an, they did not discriminate between the weak and the powerful, the few and the many, and between factions and tribes. The Qur'an points out the truth and the right course of action for them to follow.

However, the Hadith allowed leeway for some groups to still insist on an independent course of action and attribute it to the Prophet and to God. Therefore, it was in their vested interests to tout the Hadith as a source of theology and law. Besides helping the various factions to maintain a specific domain, the Hadith introduced splits and diverse opinions that precipitated situations to give up a unified belief and world-view. Factional fighting, the moral decay and the demise of the Muslim pre-eminence were the casualties. That is why the Omniscient God, knowing that this would happen, in His incredible mercy to the Muslims and to mankind, put this warning in His Qur'an:

"Then (on that day) the Apostle will say: "O my Lord! Truly my people took this Qur'an for just foolish nonsense." Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy among the sinners: but enough is thy Lord to guide and to help". - (Ch. 25: Ver. 30-31)

We should note that God never said, and neither did the Prophet, that some day the people would desert the Hadith. This is because the Hadith is not the Word of God and neither is it the word of the Prophet. The Hadith are merely guesswork and opinions of Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, al-Nasa'i and others who took it upon themselves to

record stories about the Prophet and then accord these stories the labels of 'authentic,' 'weak,' etc.

It is logical, therefore, that if our intention today is to honour and follow Prophet Muhammad, we must return to his original and true teachings, i.e. the Qur'an, and cleanse his name of all the heresies that have been falsely attached to him. We cannot avoid this responsibility, although some of us do not like it. The Prophet himself told us that his mission was to deliver the Qur'an, and he himself followed the Qur'an and nothing but the Qur'an.

The retroactive development that has befallen on Muslim society, as we stated above, is due to the general human weakness of wanting to idolize human beings. In the history of man, we find he had idolized Prophets, saints, religious scholars and priests, leaders, material wealth, their own egos and, of course, lifeless idols. This mistake is being committed by all religious communities, not excepting the Muslims. The best way to avoid and overcome this weakness is to apply scientific criticism to all beliefs, theories, philosophies and man-made systems and human icons in the light of the Ideology of Islam. Only in this way, can we separate truth from falsehood, seeds from chaff, make the truth uppermost, and banish the falsehood.

Due to the regime of taqlid or blind imitation, imposed in the name of religion from about the 12th century until the end of the 19th century, the Muslims swallowed the teachings of the so-called 'Four Great Imams', even the wholesale medieval theology and jurisprudence. If the Muslims, particularly their leaders and intelligentsia, had held fast to God's command not to accept anything without verification, to listen to all views and follow the best, and to apply Islamic scientific criticism towards all important theological works, this taqlid regime would not have lasted for all these seven centuries! In our opinion, the re-evaluation of the entire Islamic heritage is one of the biggest tasks that has to be undertaken by the Muslim intelligentsia.

### **Destruction in Accordance With the Laws of the Qur'an**

“From this Qur'an many people will receive guidance, mercy and counsel and many others will come the sharing of going astray.” - (Ch. 2: Ver. 26)

Consider this great and illustrious verse stated above. Allah says that from this very Qur'an many people's share would be to go astray. That very water which is fundamental in saving life can also become the very cause of man's death!

Have you noticed how Qur'an has hinted towards a basic law? When people made this Qur'an to serve their personnel motives and used it accordingly then the Qur'an instead of being a spring of advice and counsel, became a cause of going astray. We have subordinated the teachings of the Qur'an in such a way that it is now used for mere recitation (that too without understanding its meaning) and for the purpose of salvation for the dead. When a belief is inculcated that it is not necessary to understand the Qur'an because mere repetition of the words of the Qur'an is enough for Savaab, then the question of acting upon it does not arise at all. Can anything be served by merely repeating the words without understanding its meaning? Allah has at every step (in the Qur'an) stressed and emphasised the need to think and contemplate. It is therefore quite evident that if the Qur'an is to be read without understanding its meaning, then what else will there be to think and contemplate?

It is the law of the universe that every element must be in its original position. If it is removed from its original position the same element becomes harmful. Place a craft on water and the water becomes its means to float. Bring the same water atop the craft and the water will become a flood to sink the craft.

Hence when the teachings of the Qur'an were neglected and subordinated to the whims and fancies, the paths of achievement and success were shut and closed.

“Is it only a part of the book that you believe in and you reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? And on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous chastisement. For Allah is not unmindful of what you do.” - (Ch. 2: Ver.85)

“But those who break the Covenant of Allah after having plighted their word thereto and cut asunder those things which Allah has commanded to be joined and work mischief in the land on them is the Curse; for them is the terrible Home!” - (Ch. 13: Ver. 25)

A greater clarification is given in this verse: “Tell them that God’s power has overall power to bring upon you calamities from above or from under your feet, or to cover you with confusion with party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance each from the other. See how we bring the truths and facts before you repeatedly, so that you may think and contemplate”. - (Ch. 6: Ver. 65)

Once again, it should be understood that the verse with which we began this discourse does not mean that the people will get both guidance as well as deviation to go astray from the Qur'an! Qur'an is totally a source of eternal guidance and counsel; it is light; from it, only guidance is attained in totality. Then one does not go astray. What has been pointed out is that, if Qur'an is regarded as the code of life and lived accordingly, the guidance is fructified. On the contrary, if it is regarded merely as a religious book for recitation alone and thereby removing it from its assigned role thereby subordinating it to one’s own fancies and beliefs then their share will be nothing but humiliation and going astray. In reality, this is what had happened to the present Muslim masses. They are enduring today the consequences of their negligence of the Qur'an.

We now bring the attention of our readers to a reading from the Surah Furqaan. (Furqaan is another attribute of the Qur'an – it means something that distinguishes the truth from falsehood, i.e. The CRITERION).

The scene is from the day of judgement. We start with the Verse where the Zalimun or unjust people regretting that they did not take the way of the Messenger:

“And the day when the unjust one shall bite his hands saying: O! Would that I had taken a way with the Messenger” - (Ch. 25: Ver. 27)

These people then curse the Shaitaan who took them away from the Dhikr (another attribute of the Qur'an, meaning The Reminder). The verse continues: “O woe is me! Would that I had not taken such a one for a friend! Certainly he led me astray from the reminder [dhikr] after it had come to me; and the Shaitaan fails to aid man.” - (Ch. 25: Ver. 28-29)

The Messenger himself will complain to Allah about HIS FOLLOWERS NOT taking HIS WAY. Here is how: The verse continues: “And the Messenger will say: O my Lord! Surely my people have neglected this Qur'an.” - (Ch. 25: Ver. 30)

Then Allah tells us that for every prophet, there is an enemy, and this enemy is the one that takes people away from the Qur'an, which is way of the Messenger: The verse continues: “And thus have We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners and sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and a Helper” - (Ch. 25: Ver. 31)

In this last verse, Allah tells us that for every Prophet there is his enemies. One might ask, who are these enemies and how do they lead people AWAY from the Qur'an – the way of the

Messenger? As we know, Allah does NOT leave anything to guesswork, but explains what He means by Tasreef al-Ayat, i.e., “repeating the Verses”: “See how We repeat the verses that they may understand.” - (Ch. 6:Ver. 65)

Thus, we look elsewhere in the Qur'an to see who these enemies are. We find their exact description in the following Ayah: “Likewise did We make for every Prophet an enemy- evil ones among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If your Lord had so planned, they would not have done it: so leave them and their inventions alone.” - (Ch. 6: Ver. 112)

Here is the exact description of those evil enemies. They will come up with “flowery discourses”, i.e. stories that sound so nice to the listener, and stories that look plausible. It is through this method that the evil ones will drive people away from the way of the Messenger – the Qur'an. It is not hard to see the Muslims of today have hundreds of books of Fiqh and Hadith; they insist that we must read them and cannot understand the Qur'an without these “flowery discourses”. Shaitaan has been very successful with the Muslims. He has used their love and respect for the Prophet Muhammad to actually to drive them away from his true Sunna – while all the time the Muslim is thinking that he is following the Sunna, he is actually following other “flowery discourses” that Allah NEVER authorized.

Therefore, "Return to the Qur'an" — is the most fitting slogan for the people of Muhammad, because it is the Qur'an which is the message that he brought to mankind, and because it is the most appropriate response to his famous complaint in the Qur'an. However, once again, a return to the Qur'an does not mean that we destroy all the books of Hadith and all the books of the religious scholars, nor do we mean that we no longer need the religious scholars.

It only means that we must refer to the Qur'an alone as infallible guidance for our conduct. As regards other books, be they books of Hadith, books of religious scholars, books of the Marxist school or of the liberal school, we shall apply our discriminating faculty either to accept or reject, partially or totally, their interpretations, explanations and recommendations in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the needs of modern life.

Our religious scholars, who, all this while, have been trained according to the medieval method of rote learning only in religious knowledge, must master the important secular sciences, according to the modern critical and historical method, to enable them to have an integrated knowledge of the world. The same thing applies to the Muslim intelligentsia: they should muster the Qur'anic sciences. Only such people can be called Ulama, or learned.

The Muslims have three major tasks that they must undertake.

Firstly, the Muslims must evaluate critically everything that has been inherited from their Islamic tradition, in strict accordance with the bidding of the Qur'an. All the material, which is in accordance with the Qur'an, should be accepted, and that which is against the teaching of the Qur'an should be discarded, no matter to, or with whom it is associated. Then within the framework of the Qur'anic laws, principles, and guidelines, the united Muslim Ummah should by mutual consultation, reconstruct the Shariah according to the needs and demands of the modern time.

Secondly, Muslims have to learn to accept things that are from outside their fold but which by themselves are inherently good and therefore originate from God. Modern Western civilization and the other Eastern civilizations have discovered many good things through much effort and pain. We too can learn from these civilizations, if there is any good to be learnt. The Muslim thinkers must also seek to reach out to those intellectuals and thinkers in other faiths and cultures as well, for they also seek to do well in the world.

If Muslims can learn to do these two things, then they can go on to the third and the final task to build the second Islamic civilization which will once again shower its blessing without discrimination, on mankind, badly torn and tortured at its own hands.

We must embark upon this task. If we succeed in this task, then, not only will we extricate ourselves out of this present hell but also show the remaining world the way to paradise. There is no need at all to feel intimidated or over-awed. We must take courage, inspiration and encouragement from the Words of God Himself:

“Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength Exalted in Might.” - (Ch. 22: Ver. 40)

“Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe: verily Allah loveth not any that is a traitor to faith or shows ingratitude. - (Ch. 22: Ver. 38)

“O you who believe! If you help [the cause of] God, He will help you, and will make firm your steps.” - (Ch. 47: Ver. 7)

“He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse. (Ch. 9: Ver. 33)

“...and fulfil your part of the covenant, that I fulfil My part of the covenant, and fear none but Me.” - (Ch. 2: Ver. 40)

The Prophet and his followers were people who firmly believed in these divine promises, held on tight to the Qur'an, His revelations, and scaled the heights of success, as no human community had done before. Following him and the early Muslim generations, we shall also achieve success, far greater than any human society had ever achieved.

It is our belief that on the day the Muslims realize that the Sunna of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is to follow the Qur'an in every religious matter; And on the day when the Muslim world breaks the shackles of tradition and formulas and starts to view the Book of Allah as Guidance giving light for all the times and ages, on that day will begin the Muslim Renaissance. It is only through the Qur'an that the Muslims will be able to come out of the bottomless pit of darkness and ignorance, which many of them currently inhabit.

Finally, we would like to assert that our purpose behind editing this work is not to insult any true scholars and seekers of the truth. Rather, the purpose is to take the Muslims back to the basics. For indeed, the books of Hadith may have a historical value, and may contain certain truthful reports, they should be valued and studied as such just like the Christian Bible should be valued and studied or like the alleged sayings of the other wise people of the past. However, when it comes to religious laws, judgments, and guidance, ONLY the Qur'an should be sought, as was the practice of the Messenger himself.

Unless and until we place the Qur'an alone as guidance in all matters and unless we do not allow it to be interpreted by man made books, the teaching of the Qur'an cannot be understood by us. And, we will not be able to create that revolution which Qur'an had created once and has in it the potential to create it again any time. Because the Qur'an is the word of God and contains the truth, to hide this Book – this miracle – under the dust of tradition and Hadith is to deny ourselves of its promised miraculous blessings, the blessings that have the power to transform human souls and change the course of nations. This is a book of guidance for mankind designed to take them out from the realm of darkness into the realm of light, from falsehood into truth, from injustice into justice and from slavery into freedom.

## (8) REFERENCES

The following references contain only works which have been quoted in this work and does not aim at being complete.

Ahmad, Kassim. (1986). Hadith – A Re-evaluation. Translated from the Malay original. Malaysia.

Ahmad Kassim. (1986). Hadith – A Re-evaluation. Translated from the Malay original. Malaysia.

Parwez, G. A. Muqaam-e-Hadith (The Actual Status of Hadith). (Aboo B. Rana, trans.) Tolu-e-Islam Trust, 25-B, Gulberg-2, Lahore-11.

Dr. Syed Abdul Wadud. Conspiracies against the Qur'an. Tolu-e-Islam Trust, 25-B, Gulberg-2, Lahore-11.

Muhammad Zybayr Siddiqui (the Professor of Islamic Culture, Calcutta University). Hadith Literature- Its Origin Development & Special Features. Calcutta.

Juynboll, C. H. A. Juynboll. (1983). Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, provenance and authorship of early Hadith. London: Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Mansoor Ul-Haque, The Paradigm of Permanence and Change in Islam. Tolu-e-Islam Trust, 25-B, Gulberg-2, Lahore-11.

Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilal. (1988). The Evolution of FIQH (Islamic Law & Mad-habs). International Islamic Publishing House.

Yahya, Harun. The Superb Morality of the Prophet (saas) as Related in the Qur'an. Turkey: GLOBAL PUBLISHING, Gursel Mah. Darulaceze Caddesi No: 9 Funya Sk. Eksioglu Is Merkezi B Blok D. 5 Okmeydani-Istanbul.

-----oooooooo0000oooooooo-----