

## Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Based on a parallel (Mutawatir) tradition upon whose authenticity all Muslims agree, the Messenger of Allah (S) informed his followers in several occasions that he would leave them two precious/weighty things and that if Muslims adhere to both of them, they will never go astray after him. They are the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and the Members of the House of the Prophet (Ahlul-Bayt), peace be upon them all.

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim as well as many other sources that:

Someday (after his last pilgrimage) the Messenger of Allah (S) stood to give us a speech beside a pond which is known as Khum (Ghadir Khum) which is located between Mecca and Medina. Then he praised Allah and reminded Him, and then said: "O' people! Behold! It seems the time approached when I shall be called away (by Allah) and I shall answer that call. Behold! I am leaving for you two precious things. **First of them is the book of Allah** in which there is light and guidance... **The other one is my Ahlul-Bayt.** I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. (three times)."

Sunni Reference:

- Sahih Muslim, Chapter of the virtues of the companions, section of the virtues of 'Ali, 1980 Edition Pub. in Saudi Arabia, Arabic version, v 4, p1873, Tradition #36.
- And many others such as Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad (see below).

For the English version of Sahih Muslim, see Chapter CMXCVI, v4, p1286, Tradition #5920

Here is the Arabic text of the above tradition in Sahih Muslim:

قام رسول الله يوما فينا خطيبا بماء يدعى خما بين مكة والمدينة ، فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ، ووعظ وذكر ، ثم قال:

أما بعد ، ألا أيها الناس ، فإنما أنا بشر ، يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب ، وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين ، أولهما: كتاب الله ، فيه الهدى والنور ، فخذوا بكتاب الله ، واستمسكوا به ، فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ، ثم قال: وأهل بيتي ، أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي، أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي ، أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي

As we can see in the above tradition in Sahih Muslim, not only Ahlul-Bayt has been put beside the Qur'an, but also it has been mentioned three times by the Prophet (S).

Despite the fact that the author of Sahih Muslim and many other Sunni traditionists have recorded the above tradition in their authentic books, it is regrettable that the majority of Sunnis are unaware of its existence at the best, or deny it at the worst. Their counter argument is that the most reliable tradition in this regard is the one recorded by al-Hakim in his al-Mustadrak, on the authority of Abu Huraira, attributing to the Messenger of Allah saying: "I leave amongst you two things that if you follow or act upon, you will not go astray after me: The Book of God and my Sunnah (traditions)."

There is no doubt that ALL Muslims are required to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (S). However, the question remains that which Sunnah is genuine and which one is invented later and was falsely attributed to the Prophet.

On tracing the source of this report of Abu Huraira which states "Qur'an and Sunnah," we found out that it has NOT been recorded in any of the six authentic Sunni collections of the traditions (Sihah Sittah). Not only that, but also al-Bukhari, al-Nisa'i, and al-Dhahabi and many others rated this report (Qur'an and Sunnah) as weak because of its weak Isnad. It should be noted that although the book of al-Hakim is an important Sunni collection of traditions, yet it is ranked inferior to the six major Sunni books. This is while Sahih Muslim is in the second rank among the six Sunni collections of traditions.

al-Tirmidhi reported that the "Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt" version of the tradition is traced to 30+ companions. Ibn Hajar al-Haythami reported that he knows of 20+ companions witnessed that also. This is while the "Qur'an and Sunnah" version reported by al-Hakim has only one source! Thus we must conclude that the "Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt" version is much more reliable. Moreover al-Hakim has also mentioned the "Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt" version in his book (al-Mustadrak) through several chain of authorities and confirmed that the "Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt" version of the tradition is authentic based on the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Moreover, the word "Sunnah" by itself does not serve the purpose of knowledge. All Muslims irrespective to their persuasions claim that they follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (S). The differences among Muslims come from the transmitted Prophetic traditions through different avenues. Such traditions serve as explanatory means of the Holy Qur'an upon whose authenticity all Muslims agree.

Thus divergence in the transmitted traditions, which in turn has led to differing interpretation of Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah, has created numerous versions of Sunnah. All Muslims, as a result, splintered into different schools, groups, offshoots, which is believed to add up to seventy three groups.

All of them are obeying their own version of Sunnah which they claim to be the true one. Which of these groups follow the true Sunnah of the Prophet? Which one (out of 73 groups) will be the prosperous one, and will survive? Other than the tradition of Sahih Muslim mentioned above, the following authentic traditions provide a unique detailed answer for this question:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "I am leaving for you two precious and weighty Symbols that **if** you adhere to BOTH of them you shall not go astray after me. They are, the Book of Allah, and my progeny, that is my Ahlul-Bayt. The Merciful has informed me that These two shall not separate from each other till they come to me by the Pool (of Paradise)."

Sunni references:

1. Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, pp 662-663,328, report of 30+ companions, with reference to several chains of transmitters.
2. al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, Chapter of "Understanding (the virtues) of Companions, v3, pp 109,110,148,533 who wrote this tradition is authentic (Sahih) based on the criteria of the two Shaikhs (al-Bukhari and Muslim).
3. Sunan, by Daarimi, v2, p432
4. Musnad, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v3, pp 14,17,26,59, v4, pp 366,370-372, v5, pp 182,189,350,366,419
5. Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p585, Tradition #990
6. al-Khasa'is, by al-Nisa'i, pp 21,30
7. al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p230
8. al-Kabir, by al-Tabarani, v3, pp 62-63,137
9. Kanz al-Ummal, by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Chapter al-Iti'sam bi Habl Allah, v1, p44.
10. Tafsir Ibn Kathir (complete version), v4, p113, under commentary of verse 42:23 of Qur'an (four traditions)
11. al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, by Ibn Sa'd, v2, p194, Pub. by Dar Isadder, Lebanon.
12. al-Jami' al-Saghir, by al-Suyuti, v1, p353, and also in v2
13. Majma' al-Zawa'id, al-Haythami, v9, p163
14. al-Fateh al-Kabir, al-Binhani, v1, p451
15. Usdul Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahaba, Ibn al-Athir, v2, p12

16. Jami' al-Usul, Ibn al-Athir, v1, p187
  17. History of Ibn Asakir, v5, p436
  18. al-Taj al-Jami' Lil Usul, v3, p308
  19. al-Durr al-Manthoor, al-Hafidh al-Suyuti, v2, p60
  20. Yanabi al-Mawaddah, al-Qundoozi al-Hanafi, pp 38,183
  21. Abaqat al-Anwar, v1, p16
- ... and many more ...

إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم بهما لن تضلوا بعدي أبدا: كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وهما لن يفترقا حتى يرثي الحوض

Of course, any Muslim should follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (S), and as such, we, the Followers of Ahlul-Bayt, submit to the genuine (practice) Sunnah of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) and consider it to be the only path of salvation. But the above tradition gives evidence to the fact that any so-called Sunnah (practice) which contradicts Ahlul-Bayt is NOT a genuine Sunnah and has been innovated later on by some pay-rolled individuals in support the tyrants.

That's why the Prophet had emphasized so much on Ahlul-Bayt in loving them and following them since they carry his genuine Sunnah. And this is the basis of the Shi'a School of Thought (the School of Ahlul-Bayt). The Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet who are raised in his house know more than anybody else about the Sunnah of the Prophet and what it entails, for as the proverb goes: "The people of Mecca know its paths better than anyone else."

For the sake of argument, if we accept that the two versions of the tradition ("Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt" vs. "Qur'an and Sunnah") are both authentic, then one must submit to the interpretation that the word "my Sunnah" given by al-Hakim means the Sunnah which is derived through Ahlul-Bayt and not any other source, as it is evident from the Ahlul-Bayt version given by both Mustadrak al-Hakim and Sahih Muslim. Now let us take a look at the following tradition:

Narrated Umm Salama:

The Messenger of Allah said: "Ali is with Qur'an, and Qur'an is with 'Ali. They shall not separate from each other till they both return to me by the Pool (of Paradise)."

Sunni references:

- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p124 on the authority of Umm Salama

- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 9, section 2, pp 191, 194
- al-Awsat, by al-Tabarani; also in al-Saghir
- Tarikh al-Khulafaa, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p173

The above tradition gives evidence to the fact that Imam 'Ali and Qur'an are non-separable. If we accept the "Qur'an and Sunnah" version to be authentic, then one can conclude that the one who carries the Sunnah of Prophet is Imam 'Ali since he is the one who has been put beside Qur'an.

Interesting to see, al-Hakim has many other traditions about necessity of following Ahlul-Bayt, among which is the following tradition. This tradition is also narrated by many other Sunni scholars and is known as the "Tradition of the Ship" in which the Prophet (S) stated:

"Behold! My Ahlul-Bayt are like the Ark of Noah. Whoever embarked in it was SAVED, and whoever turned away from it was PERISHED."

إِنَّمَا مِثْلُ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي كَمِثْلِ سَفِينَةِ نُوحٍ

مَنْ رَكِبَهَا نَجَى وَ مَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا هَلَكَ

Sunni references:

1. al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v2, p343, v3, pp 150-151 on the authority of Abu Dharr. al-Hakim said this tradition is authentic (Sahih).
2. Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p786
3. Tafsir al-Kabir, by Fakhr al-Razi, under the commentary of verse 42:23, Part 27, p167
4. al-Bazzar, on the authority of Ibn Abbas and Ibn Zubair with the wording "drowned" instead of "perished".
5. al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p234 under Verse 8:33. Also in section 2, p282. He said this Hadith has been transmitted via numerous authorities.
6. Tarikh al-Khulafaa and Jami' al-Saghir, by al-Suyuti
7. al-Kabir, by al-Tabarani, v3, pp 37,38
8. al-Saghir, by al-Tabarani, v2, p22

9. Hilyatul Awliyaa, by Abu Nu'aym, v4, p306
10. al-Kuna wal Asmaa, by al-Dulabi, v1, p76
11. Yanabi al-Mawaddah, by al-Qundoozi al-Hanafi, pp 30,370
12. Is'af al-Raghibeen, by al-Saban

The above tradition gives evidence to the fact that those who adopt the school of Ahlul-Bayt and follow them, shall be saved from the punishment of Hell, while those who run away from them shall meet with the fate of the one who tried to save his life by climbing up the mountain, with the only difference that whereas he (Noah's renegade son) was drowned in water, but these people will be drowned the fire of Hell. The following tradition also confirms it:

The Prophet (S) said about Ahlul-Bayt:

"Do not be ahead of them for you will perish, do not turn away from them for you will perish, and do not try to teach them since they know more than you do!"

لا تتقدموهم فتهلكوا ولا تتخلفوا عنهم فتهلكوا ولا تعلموهم فإنهم أعلم منكم

Sunni references:

1. al-Durr al-Manthoor, by al-Suyuti, v2, p60
2. al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p230, quoted from al-Tabarani, also in section 2, p342
3. Usdul Ghabah, by Ibn al-Athir, v3, p137
4. Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, by al-Qundoozi al-Hanafi, p41, and P335
5. Kanz al-Ummal, by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, v1, p168
6. Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p163
7. Aqabat al-Anwar, v1, p184
8. A'alam al-Wara, pp 132-133
9. Tadhkirat al-Khawas al-Ummah, Sibit Ibn al-Jawzi al-Hanafi, pp 28-33
10. al-Sirah al-Halabiyah, by Noor al-Din al-Halabi, v3, p273

Here is another one:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "My Ahlul-Bayt are like the Gate of Repentance of the Children of Israel; whoever entered therein was forgiven."

إنما مثل أهل بيتي فيكم مثل باب حطة في بني إسرائيل من دخله غفر

Sunni References:

- Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p168
- al-Awsat, by al-Tabarani, Tradition #18
- Arba'in, by al-Nabahani, p216
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, pp 230,234

Another fairly similar tradition was recorded by al-Darqunti as well as Ibn Hajar in his al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, Ch. 9, section 2, p193 where the Prophet (S) said: "Ali is the Gate of Repentance, whoever entered therein was a believer and whoever went out was an unbeliever."

The above tradition was in connection with verses 2:58 and 7:161 of Qur'an which describe the Gate of Repentance of Bani Israel. Those of companions of Moses who did not enter the Gate of the Repentance were lost in the desert for forty years, while those who did not enter the ark of Noah were drowned. Ibn Hajar concludes that:

"The analogy of the Ark of Noah signifies that those who love and honor the Ahlul-Bayt and derive from their guidance will be rescued from the darkness of opposition, and those who will turn against them will be drowned in the sea of ingratitude and will perish in the desert of insubordination and rebellion."

Sunni reference: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, p. 91

Have we ever asked ourselves why the Prophet put so much emphasis on Ahlul-Bayt? Was it just because they were members of his family, or was it because they carried his true teachings (Sunnah) and they were the most knowledgeable individuals among his community after him?

Different versions of the Tradition of Two Weighty Things (al-Thaqalain) which prove conclusively that it is compulsory to follow the Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bayt, are not ordinary traditions. They are repeated many times and are related on the authority of more than thirty of the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) through various sources.

The Holy Prophet (S) repeated these words over and over again (and not merely in one isolated instance but on several occasions) publicly to show that it is compulsory to follow and obey the Ahlul-

Bayt. He made the announcement during the Farewell Pilgrimage, on the day of Arafat, on the day of Ghadir Khum, on the return from Ta'if, also in Medina from the pulpit, and in his deathbed when the room was packed with his disciples, he said:

"O folk! I am soon going to depart from here, and although I have already told you, I repeat once more that I am leaving with you two things, namely, the Book of Allah and my descendants, that is, my Ahlul-Bayt." Then he lifted 'Ali by the hand and said: "Behold! this 'Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with him. These two shall never separate from each other until they come to me at the Pool of Kawthar."

Sunni reference: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar, Ch. 9, section 2

Ibn Hajar al-Haythami wrote:

"The Traditions of Adherence has been handed down through a large number of sources and more than twenty of the disciples have related it."

He further wrote:

"Here a doubt arises, and it is that while the Tradition has come down through various sources, some say that the words were spoken during the last pilgrimage, others that they were spoken at Medina when he lay on his deathbed and the room was packed with his disciples, yet another saying that he spoke these words at Ghadir Khum, or in another Hadith, on the return from Ta'if.

But there is NO inconsistency in these, since having regards to the importance and greatness of the Qur'an and the pure Ahlul-Bayt, and with a view of emphasizing the point before the people, the Holy Prophet might have repeated these words on all these occasions so that any one who had not heard them before might hear them now."

Sunni reference: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p230

Concluding the above traditions, the Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt are the only two precious things that the Prophet left for Muslims, and stated that if Muslims follow BOTH of them, they will not go astray after him, and they will be led to Paradise, and that those who forsake Ahlul-Bayt will not survive. The above traditions have been designed by Prophet (S) to answer which "Sunnah" is genuine and which group carries the true "Sunnah" of the Prophet. It is aimed at not leaving Muslims at loss as to which way to go after the departure of the Prophet (S).

On the other hand, if we use the word "Sunnah" alone, it does not give us any specific answer for this question since all the groups among the Muslim nation follow their own version of Sunnah as well as their own interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Thus the prophetic instructions were clear in urging Muslims to follow the interpretation of Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet transmitted through the channel of Ahlul-Bayt whose sinlessness, purity, and righteousness is confirmed by the Holy Qur'an (the last sentence of verse 33:33).

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