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## The Status of the *Sunnah* according to the Qurʾān and the Arguments Against it Amongst the Qurʾān-Absolutists

Moniruzzaman\*

**ABSTRACT:** From the Islamic point of view, there are two major groups of sources of *sharīʿah* which are the primary sources and the secondary sources. In this regard, the *sunnah* of the Prophet is recognised as the second primary source of *sharīʿah* after the Qurʾān. In other words, many verses of the Qurʾān and the texts of the Prophetic *ḥadīths* have stated that the Qurʾān is the direct speech of Allah, whereas the *Sunnah* is the indirect one. Hence, it is very obvious that there is a strong link between the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah*. On the contrary, some people have argued that the Qurʾān is already perfect and complete; in which it contains every necessary law and regulation of the *sharīʿah*. Hence, this group of people believe that it is not compulsory and sensible to follow the *Sunnah* of Prophet PBUH. Moreover, according to the anti-Hadith movement, depending on the *Sunnah* apart from the Quran for legislation is equal to believing in other Gods besides Allah, or assigning partners to Allah. Therefore, this paper is aimed at clarifying and removing the confusions among true Muslims about these misleading arguments. In this regard, this paper argues that relying on the *Sunnah* together with the Qurʾān in Islamic legislation is definitely not equal to ascribing another partner to Allah or committing *shirk*. The people who follow the *Sunnah* besides the Qurʾān are following the commands of Allah to obey the Prophet PBUH. Additionally, this paper would also attempt to present the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah* as two undivided foundations of the religion of Islam.

**Keywords & Phrases:** Quranism; absolutism; the authority of *ḥadīth*; anti-*ḥadīth*; the Prophetic *Sunnah*.

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## Introduction

From the Islamic point of view, there are two major groups of sources of *sharī'ah* which are the primary sources and the secondary sources. In this regard, the Sunnah of the Prophet is recognised as the second primary source of *sharī'ah* after the Qur'an. In other words, many verses of the Qur'an and the texts of the Prophetic *ḥadīths* have stated that the Qur'an is the direct speech of Allah, whereas the Sunnah is the indirect one. Hence, it is very obvious that there is a strong link between the Qur'an and the Sunnah. On the contrary, some people have argued that the Qur'an is already perfect and complete; in which it contains every necessary law and regulation of the *sharī'ah*. Hence, this group of people believe that it is not compulsory and sensible to follow the Sunnah of Prophet PBUH. This paper will explain this subject by first elaborating the status of the Sunnah according to the Qur'an. Then, it will address the specious arguments forwarded by the anti-*ḥadīth* movement in opposing this doctrine.

### 1. The status of the Sunnah according to the Qur'an and their relations

As true practicing Muslims, they believe that Allah has created human beings and *jinn* for a specific purpose, which is to worship Him by being obedient servants. He has granted mankind the freedom to survive and showed them two paths, good and evil; to test who are the best in their acts of achieving the pleasure of Allah. In this sense, it is important for Muslims to accept that Allah does not leave them clueless without any guidance. He has sent among every community or nation Messengers with divine Scriptures, namely, *Ṣaḥīfahs*, *Tawrāt*, *Zabūr*, *Injīl*, and Qur'an. The Messengers have acted according to their Scriptures and taught their people, in a practical manner, how to follow the guidance of Allah appropriately. Allah has sent down the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Then, he spent his whole life exactly in accordance to the guidance of Allah in the Qur'an and showed Muslims a 'practical guideline' on how to follow Allah's guidance.<sup>1</sup> This 'practical guideline', as laid down and exemplified by the Prophet PBUH, is considered as the Sunnah in Islamic *sharī'ah*. This paper argues that the Qur'an itself has mentioned some statuses of the Sunnah, which will be elaborated as follows:

#### 1.1 The Sunnah confirms the Qur'anic laws

The Qur'an contains laws about *aqīdah* (doctrine), *ibādah* (worship), the sacredness of properties, adultery, disobedience of parents, etc. The Sunnah has confirmed those laws. As mentioned in the Qur'an in relation to *aqīdah* (doctrine): "The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and we

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<sup>1</sup> Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil, "Reasserting the Maqasid of Islamic Revealed Knowledge Curricula: The Experience of the Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies in IIUM," *al-Burhān: Journal of Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies* 4, no. 2 (2020): 1–25, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-burhan/index.php/al-burhan/article/view/196>.

obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to you is the [final] destination” (al-Baqarah 2: 285). The Sunnah has also mentioned the same issue and confirmed it clearly. As narrated by the companion of the Prophet PBUH, Abū Hurairah RA; “One day while the Prophet PBUH was sitting in the company of some people, The angel Gabriel came and asked, ‘What is faith?’ The Messenger of Allah PBUH replied, ‘Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.’”<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2 The Sunnah is an interpretation of the Qur'an

There are numerous verses of the Qur'an that have been sent down concisely. However, there are some verses that are ambiguous and are in need of explanation. In this regard, Prophet PBUH has provided the explanation by saying or exemplifying. For example, Allah SWT has said in the Qur'an: “They who believe and do not mix their belief with Zulm (injustice) - those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided” (al-An'ām 6: 82). For ensuring clear understanding on the term *zulm*, the messenger of Allah PBUH has explained the exact meaning of *zulm* in a ḥadīth. As narrated by 'Abd Allāh: “When the verse: ‘It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with wrong (i.e., worshipping others besides Allah)’ (6: 82) was revealed, it became very hard on the companions of the Prophet PBUH and they said, ‘Who among us has not confused his belief with wrong (oppression)?’ On that, the Messenger of Allah said, “This is not meant (by the verse). Don't you listen to Luqman's statement: “Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed” (Luqmān 31:13)?”<sup>3</sup>

### 1.3 The Sunnah specifies the general cases in the Qur'an

The Prophet's Sunnah has specified the general cases in many verses of the Qur'an. As revealed in the Qur'an: “O you, who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth. And do not aim toward the defective therefrom; spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy” (al-Baqarah 2: 267). In general, this verse indicates that it is obligatory to spend all the good things. However, as mentioned in a ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī RA that the Messenger of Allah PBUH said: “There is no *zakah* to be paid on any amount of dates or grain less than five *wasāq*.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, the verse is actually highlighting that one should spend from good things that one has earned if they amount to five *wasāq* or more. As for what is less than five *wasāq*, there is no *zakāh* or charity in it. This ḥadīth has specified the general case in the Qur'an.

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar Min Umūr Rasūl Allāh Wa Sunanihi Wa Ayyāmihi*, ed. Muḥammad Zuhair al-Nasir (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 2001), book 2, ḥadīth no. 50.

<sup>3</sup> al-Bukhārī, book 88, ḥadīth no. 1.

<sup>4</sup> al-Bukhārī, ḥadīth no. 1447.

### 1.4 The Sunnah puts a constraint on absolute cases in the Qur'an

Sometimes, the Qur'an would state an absolute case and the Sunnah would put a constrain on it. For instance, the Qur'an stated: "[As for] the thief, the male, and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent [punishment] from Allah. And Allah is exalted in Might and Wise" (al-Mā'dah 5: 38). In this verse, the word "hand" is absolute, and literally, the hand would refer the whole hand from the upper side of the fingers to the shoulder. This is where the Sunnah came into picture and constrained this absolute case by mentioning the right hand and determining the limit of amputation; which is from the wrist. In this matter, al-Nawawī has said in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: "al-Shāfi'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, and the majority of scholars said: The hand should be cut off from the wrist, where the hand meets the forearm."<sup>5</sup> In relation to this, al-Qurṭubī has also commented: "All the scholars said: The hand should be cut off from the wrist, not as some of the innovators do when they cut off the fingers and leave the thumb."<sup>6</sup> The Sunnah also has stated the limit due to which the thief's hand would be cut. In the *ḥadīth* of the prophet PBUH: "The hand (of the thief) should be cut off for (the theft of) a quarter of a Dinar or more."<sup>7</sup>

### 1.5 The Sunnah as an independent source for legislation

The Sunnah of the prophet is an independent source of Islamic legislation. There are some cases in Islamic rulings that were not mentioned in the Qur'an, but the prophetic Sunnah has added these cases as independent legislation. For example, the Qur'an has prohibited marrying two sisters at the same time but it does not state anything about marrying both the women and her paternal or maternal aunt simultaneously. As narrated by Abū Hurayrah RA, the Prophet PBUH said that: "One should not be married to a woman and her paternal aunt, or a woman and her maternal aunt, at the same time."<sup>8</sup> Also, there is no Qur'anic verses mentioning the prohibition of gold and silk for men or males, but the Prophetic Sunnah has stated it. 'Alī RA reported that once, the Prophet PBUH took some silk in his right hand and some gold in his left and declared: "These two are *ḥarām* (unlawful) for the males amongst my community."<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Qur'anic evidence on the authority of the Sunnah in Islam

<sup>5</sup> See: Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf Abū Zakariyyā al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> See: Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ḥadīth no. 6407.

<sup>8</sup> al-Bukhārī, ḥadīth no. 5109; Ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar Min al-Sunan Bi Naql al-'adl 'an al-'Adl Ilā Rasul Allah*, ed. Naṣar Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī (Riyadh: Dār Taybah, 2006), ḥadīth no. 1408.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1998), ḥadīth no. 147.

Allah said in the Qur'an: "Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed" (al-Najm 53: 3-4). These two verses have maintained that Prophet PBUH says nothing from his own desire or wish. He just conveys to the people whatever Allah has commanded him. In this sense, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī stated in his commentary of the Qur'an that the verses are "asserting that nothing the Prophet utters is of his own desire or wish. He only conveys to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its entirety without additions and omissions."<sup>10</sup> This indicates that the *ḥadīth* is an indirect revelation of Allah SWT, which is one of the primary sources of Islamic *sharī'ah*.

Other than that, Allah has also said that: "And whatever the Messenger has given you – take and what he has forbidden you – refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (al-Hashr 59: 7). This verse indicates that Allah has ordered humankind to accept the sayings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. al-Qurṭubī cited a tradition to interpret this verse;

'Abd Allāh stated: "Allah had cursed those women who tattooed and who have themselves tattooed, those who pluck hair from their faces and those who make spaces between their teeth for beautification changing what God has created."<sup>11</sup> This news has then reached a woman of the tribe of Asad, who was called Umm Ya'qūb, and she used to recite the Qur'an. She came to him and said: What is this news that has reached me from you that you curse those women who tattooed and those women who have themselves tattooed, the women who pluck hair from their faces and who make spaces between their teeth for beautification changing what God has created? Thereupon 'Abd Allāh said: Should I not curse one upon whom the Messenger of Allah PBUH has invoked curse and that is in the Qur'an as well. Thereupon that woman said: 'I read the Qur'an from cover to cover, but I did not find that in it,' whereupon he said: 'If you had read (thoroughly) you would have definitely found this in that as Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has said: "What the Messenger of Allah brings for you accept that and what he has forbidden you, refrain from that."<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the Qur'an also said: "O you, who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you" (al-Nisā' 4: 59). In this verse, Allah has commanded Muslims to obey Muhammad, for which obeying the prophet is regarded as obeying Allah Himself. The interpreters have argued on the actual meaning of "obey Allah and obey the Messenger"; some of them stated that this is the command of Allah to follow his Messenger's Sunnah (tradition), as the prominent interpreter 'Aṭā' says: "obedience towards the Prophet is by following his Sunnah."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See: Muḥammad Abū Ja'far Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān Fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ḥadīth no. 2125.

<sup>12</sup> See: al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān Fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*.

Allah also says: “And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought” (al-Naḥl 16: 44). This verse affirms the role of the Prophet as an explainer of Allah’s command, and he would explain what is precise in the Qur’an, such as; rulings of ṣalāt (prayers), zakāh, and so on.<sup>14</sup> It is well-known that the explanation of the Qur’an, given by the Prophet PBUH, is called *ḥadīth*; and it should be followed to obey Allah’s commands properly.

In addition, Allah has stated: “Let those beware who dissent from the Prophet’s order, lest fitnah strikes them or a painful punishment” (al-Nūr 24: 63). In this verse, Allah has warned those people who have disobeyed His Messenger’s orders and He has vowed severe punishment in hell forever for those disobedient people. Ibn Kathīr interpreted this verse saying that the prophet’s order refers to his method, legislation, actions, and Sunnah (traditions). The words and actions of a person will be measured based on the Prophet’s words and actions. If the action agrees to the Sunnah (traditions), then it is accepted; otherwise, it is rejected.<sup>15</sup> The Prophet PBUH said: “He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf that is to be rejected.”<sup>16</sup>

Allah has also stated: “It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error” (al-Aḥzāb 33: 36). In this regard, no believers, either men or women, have the right to choose something else when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter. Instead, they must comply with the order of Allah and the Prophet. Allah has mentioned the decision of the Prophet beside His decision, which consequently, the decision of Allah and His Messenger would become one, and their judgments are one. Hence, whenever the Prophet has decided on any matters or ordered us to follow something, then it should be obeyed.<sup>17</sup>

Allah says: “Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, and then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (Āl ‘Imrān 3: 31). In this matter, Allah regards the obedience towards the Prophet as His obedience and commands Muslims to love him.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the love of the Prophet could be translated into action by following his Sunnah in all aspects of life.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, Allah also says: “But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute

<sup>14</sup> See: al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*.

<sup>15</sup> See: Ismail ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 30, ḥadīth no. 24.

<sup>17</sup> See: Wahbah ibn Muṣṭafā al-Zuhaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr Fī al-‘Aqīdah Wa al-Sharī‘ah Wa al-Manhaj* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> See: al-Zuhaylī.

<sup>19</sup> See: Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*.



among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission” (al-Nisā’ 4: 65). In this verse, Allah has made the obedience towards His Messenger as one of the conditions of faith (*īmān*), to the extent of depicting the Prophet as a judge. The subsequent verse also emphasised a complete obedience towards the Prophet and his orders, prohibitions, judgments, and provisions.<sup>20</sup> Allah has informed men about His Messenger, emphasizing that the obedience towards the Prophet is the obedience towards Allah Himself, and the disobedience towards the prophet is the disobedience towards Allah. This is due to the fact that he does not say anything out of his own desire, but it is stemming from the inspiration sent down to him from Allah. Hence, whoever follows him would be guided and whoever goes against him would be misguided and destroyed.<sup>21</sup> This is closely related to the Prophet’s saying: “He who obeys Allah and His Messenger, he, in fact, follows the right path, and he who disobeys both of them, he goes astray.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, there is a verse of the Qur’an saying: “It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error” (al-Jumu’ah 62: 2). al-Ṭabarī interpreted the word “wisdom” in this verse as the Sunnah of the prophet PBUH; as before him, Qatādah has also defined “wisdom” by Sunnah.<sup>23</sup> In short, all the above verses have forwarded that the Prophet PBUH must be followed and Muslims should ensure the absolute validity of the *ḥadīth* of Prophet PBUH in Islamic legislation.

### 3. Anti-*ḥadīth* movement and suspicions about Sunnah

Anti-*ḥadīth* is one of the active movements in this century whose arguments are against the abovementioned arguments. An indication of a refusal of *ḥadīth* has already occurred in the early centuries, as it has initially appeared in the first century during the era of the Companions. While the world has evolved, the enemies of Islam, Jewish and Persians, have gained success in dispersing the nation, resulting in the emergence of several communities with different views that have widen their influence such as; Mu’tazilah, Khawārij, Shī’ah, etc. They have denied some aspects of the *ḥadīth* according to their interpretation.<sup>24</sup> In the modern era, the *ḥadīth* of Prophet PBUH has been contested by several movements and the most prominent comes from the Orientalism. Some non-Muslim scholars declare the *ḥadīth* as unauthentic due to forgery and bias.<sup>25</sup> Generally, the

<sup>20</sup> See: al-Zuhaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr Fī al-‘Aqāidah Wa al-Sharī‘ah Wa al-Manhaj*.

<sup>21</sup> See: Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*.

<sup>22</sup> Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ḥadīth no. 60.

<sup>23</sup> See: Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*.

<sup>24</sup> Syed Abdul Majid Ghouri, Khadijah Fatimah Syed Mumtaz al-Din, and Mohd Norzi Nasir, “Munkiru al-Sunnah Wa Ittijāhātuhum Wa Shubuhātuhum Wa Juhūd al-‘Ulamā’ Fī Muqāwamatihim: ‘Arḍ Tārikhī,” in *1st INHAD International Muzakarah & Mu’tamar On Hadith (IMaM)* (Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Alfred. Guillaume, *Traditions of Islam : An Introduction to the Study of the Hadith Literature*. ([Place of publication not identified]: Kessinger Publishing Llc, 2010).

orientalists began their study against the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet after a particular study of the Qur'an. In this context, Ignaz Goldziher was the most eminent researcher in the field of *ḥadīth* who has published a book titled *Muhammedanische Studien* in the German language.<sup>26</sup> The book was published in 1889 and 1890, respectively; and translated into English by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern under the title 'Muslim Studies'.<sup>27</sup> This book is considered as the reference for the coming researchers in this field.<sup>28</sup> Goldziher has tried to prove his claim that the *ḥadīth* was fabricated from the first three centuries of Hijri and was not from the utterances of the Prophet PBUH.<sup>29</sup> A Scottish orientalist, William Muir, has also published a book entitled *The Life Of Mahomet* in 1861 and he has indicated that there are errors in the oral narrations of the *ḥadīth*, as he stated in this book:

“We see, then, how entirely Tradition, as now possessed, rests its authority on the memory of those who handed it down; and how dependent it must have been upon their convictions and their prejudices. For, in addition to the frailty of the faculty itself rendering such evidence notoriously infirm, and to the errors and exaggerations which must distort a narrative transmitted orally through many witnesses, there exist in Mohammadan tradition abundant indications of actual fabrication; and there may everywhere be traced the indirect but not less powerful and dangerous influence of a latent bias, which insensibly gave colour and shape to the stories of their Prophet treasured up in the memories of believers.”<sup>30</sup>

The term 'Qur'anism' is also not a strange one in the contemporary Muslim world; it refers to the deniers of the *ḥadīth* of Prophet PBUH. Some have mentioned that the Indian scholar, Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan claimed that the Sunnah had been recorded only for a limited period, not for a long time; and later on, people have changed the contents of *ḥadīth* by increasing and decreasing while inserting their own fabrications.<sup>31</sup> A Pakistani Qur'anist, Abdullah Jakralawi, was reported to deny the *ḥadīth* as a second primary source of Islamic legislation next to the Qur'an. He said: “This Qur'an is the only one revelation of

<sup>26</sup> K. Noorudheen, “Authenticity of Hadith Literature: With Special Reference to Orientalists Views VIEWS | Noor Mongam - Academia.Edu” (Darul Huda Islamic University, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Mohammed Salem Alshehri, “Western Works and Views On Hadith: Beginnings, Nature, and Impact,” *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi • Cilt-Sayı* 46, no. Nisan (2014): 203–24, <https://doi.org/10.15370/muifd.41804>.

<sup>28</sup> Noorudheen, “Authenticity of Hadith Literature: With Special Reference to Orientalists Views VIEWS | Noor Mongam - Academia.Edu.”

<sup>29</sup> Mustafa Hasan al-Sibaie, *al-Istishrāq Wa al-Mustashriqūn: Mā Lahum Wa-Mā 'Aalayhim* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985).

<sup>30</sup> William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet : With Introductory Chapters on the Original Sources for the Biography of Mahomet, and on the Pre-Islamite History of Arabia*. (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verl., 1988).

<sup>31</sup> Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad Mazrū'ah, “Shubuhāt al-Qur'āniyyīn Ḥawl al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah,” in *Nadwah 'Inayat al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah Bi al-Qur'ān al-Karīm Wa 'Ulūmihi* (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex, 2000).

God to Muhammad and the rest; Sunnah of the prophet is not the revelation.”<sup>32</sup> In relation to this, Kassim Ahmad, a Malaysian intellectual who has also rejected the *ḥadīth* as an infallible source of guidance mentioned several reasons for the rejection in his book, *Hadith: A Re-Evaluation*. He has said that one of the arguments for the rejection of the Sunnah is: “The Qur’an is complete, perfect and detailed. It is the fundamental law and the basic guidance for mankind covering every aspect of life. Other books are merely expositions, either for or against the grand ideas contained in the Qur’an.”<sup>33</sup> In short, their arguments are undeniably suggesting that there is no place for *ḥadīth* in Islamic legislation apart from the Qur’an, and the Qur’an and *ḥadīth* are not integrated.

The specious arguments by the anti-*ḥadīth* movement regarding the Sunnah have been discussed extensively by scholars and can be addressed by appreciating the early sections of this paper. The author would focus here precisely on a particular argument of several Quranists, such as Najjam, Bashar Mursi, and others -concerning the following of the Sunnah. The author would also assess their argument from the Quranic perspective.

These Quranists have claimed that accepting the Sunnah of the prophet as a source of Islamic legislation leads to polytheism and disbelief.<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, they have also argued that Islam ensures that the ruler is Allah alone and the judgment is only for Him. To prove their arguments, they have cited some verses of the Qur’an: “The decision is only for Allah” (al-An‘ām 6: 57), “The decision is only for Allah” (Yūsuf 12: 40 & 67), and “His indeed is the Judgment” (al-An‘ām 6: 62). According to them, when Islam confirms that judgments and legislations belong only to Allah, accepting the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet as legislation is equated to assigning a partner with Allah, which is declared as polytheism and disbelief. Therefore, there is no way to avoid associating Allah with a partner, except to reject the Sunnah of the Prophet PBUH.<sup>35</sup> Basically, this argument is based on two particular premises. Firstly, the Sunnah is not a revelation from Allah SWT, and therefore, it is not considered as *sharī‘ah* that people should refer to. Secondly, obeying the Messenger PBUH is not equal to the obedience towards Allah. Rather, there is a conflict between obedience towards the Messenger PBUH and obedience towards Allah; obedience towards the Messenger PBUH negates obedience towards Allah. Hence, due to these reasons, they have claimed that it is *shirk* (assigning a partner) with Allah.<sup>36</sup>

However, at the beginning of this article, the discussion about the status of the Sunnah in the Qur’an, the relation between the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and the Qur’anic evidence on the authority of the Sunnah in Islam, have already indicated that the Sunnah of Prophet is a revelation from Allah to the Prophet, and the Messenger does not utter anything except with the revelation of Allah. In order to refute the argument of the

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<sup>32</sup> Mazrū‘ah.

<sup>33</sup> Kassim Ahmad, *Hadith : A Re-Evaluation* (Tucson, Arizona; Freemont, CA: Monotheist Productions International; Universal Unity, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Mazrū‘ah, “Shubuhāt al-Qur’āniyyīn Ḥawl al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah.”

<sup>35</sup> Mazrū‘ah.

<sup>36</sup> Mazrū‘ah.

Quranists who have regarded the act of accepting the Sunnah of the prophet PBUH as a source of Islamic legislation as an act of polytheism and disbelief, it suffices here to mention what Allah has said about His Messenger: “Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed” (al-Najm 53: 3-4). Likewise, the Sunnah is the legislation of Allah, just as the Qur’an that is also the legislation of Allah. In addition to that, the Sunnah shares similar roles with the Qur’an, especially in terms of being the *hujjah* (proposition to establish law) of *sharī‘ah* and its source. The noble verses of the Qur’an have explicitly explained about this matter: “But no! By your Lord, they will never be ‘true’ believers until they accept you ‘O Prophet’ as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly” (al-Nisā’ 4: 65). “The only response of the ‘true’ believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so he may judge between them, is to say, ‘We hear and obey.’ It is they who will truly succeed” (al-Nūr 24: 51).

Consequently, these absolute verses have clearly showed that the Prophet’s Sunnah is a revelation from Allah, and indeed, whatever the Messenger says or does pertaining to the matters of religion - is certainly from Allah. These verses have also indicated the necessity of referring to the Messenger of Allah and being content with what he has ruled, and surrendering and submitting to that. Hence, there is no place in Islam for those who are not referring to the Messenger of Allah and do not accept his ruling. This is due to the fact that obedience towards the Messenger of Allah is obligatory upon Muslims and it is part of obedience towards Allah. In this matter, it suffices to mention the words of Allah: “Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah” (al-Nisā’ 4: 80). Therefore, it is evident that all of these absolute verses have quoted the fact that adherence and obedience towards Messenger PBUH are regarded as the adherence and obedience towards Allah. Hence, it is perplexing to find that the Quranists have accepted all these verses but claim that whoever obeys the Messenger has assigned a partner with Allah.

## Conclusion

The discussion above has revealed that there is strong integrity and relation between the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Indeed, the Sunnah is the legislation of Allah, just as the Qur’an that is also the legislation of Allah. Likewise, the Sunnah is the indirect speech of Allah because the Messenger’s sayings and deeds related to the matter of religion are certainly from Allah SWT. In this occasion, the Qur’an itself has declared that Sunnah confirms the Qur’anic laws, Sunnah interprets the Qur’an, Sunnah specifies the general case in the Qur’an, Sunnah puts a constraint on an absolute case in the Qur’an and Sunnah is independent legislation, hence, it is impossible and unreasonable to say that there is no integrity and link between the Qur’an and Sunnah. Not even that, it is also unlikely to say that the Sunnah has no authority in Islamic *sharī‘ah*, as the Qur’an itself has declared the full authority of Sunnah in Islam. This is indeed, nothing, but falsification of the truth. To relate, the suspicion of Quranists who have regarded the act of relying on the Sunnah next to the Qur’an as a source of Islamic legislation as *shirk* (ascribing another partner with Allah), is totally baseless and irrational. This is due to the fact that Allah himself has stated

the necessity of referring to the Messenger, and commanded Muslims to be satisfied with what he rules, and surrender as well as submit to that. Besides, Allah himself has made the obedience towards the Messenger as obligatory upon Muslims and declared that the obedience towards the Messenger is equal to the obedience towards Him. Therefore, people who follow the Sunnah along with the Qur'an as a source of Islamic legislation are not among *mushriks*, but they are following the commands of Allah in obedience to the Prophet PBUH. Hence, this suspicion of Quranists is nothing but a great delusion.

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