

1.7 Relation Between The Qur'an & The Sunnah

Main Topics Covered

- **The Sunnah as Part of the Revelation** (0:00 to 0:45)
- **The Difference Between The Quran and The Sunnah** (0:45 to 2:20)
- **Can We Reject The Sunnah?** (2:20 to 3:54)
- **The Sunnah as The Illustration of The Quran** (3:54 to 5:32)
- **Can There Be Any Contradictions Between The Quran and The Sunnah?** (5:32 to 5:55)
- **Can a Hadith Narrator Make a Mistake?** (5:55 to 9:55)

This episode deals with an important topic related to Quran, which is the topic of the Sunnah.

The Sunnah as Part of the Revelation

When we say the revelation, we actually mean the Quran and the Sunnah. The Sunnah is the way or tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that we know about through the sciences of Hadith (narrations).

And the narrations, whether in the collections of the narrations or the collections of Seerah (the life story of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)), is an integral part actually of the Quran, yet there is a difference.

The Difference Between The Quran and The Sunnah

The Quran from cover to cover is the word of Allah literally, as He spoke it. From the first chapter to the last chapter, 114. This is fixed and narrated according to all the companions agreed upon and compiled.

The Sunnah is a different story, because what the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said and compiled eventually by the Imams of Hadith, was said to the companions and then the companions narrated that; some of them narrated a lot and some of them narrated much less.

And then, generations after the companions, narrator after narrator started to compile the Sunnah in the compilations that we have. Therefore, these compilations are actually not exactly what the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said necessarily.

In fact, most of them would have a number of narrations for the same event. And you will see that the same hadith is narrated in a number of ways. Therefore, most of them are narrated by the meaning, not necessarily by the exact words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Yet they are an integral part of the revelation that Allah sent: when we say the Quran, we also mean the Sunnah.

Why?

Can We Reject The Sunnah?

Some people reject the Sunnah, actually. Some people don't want to take the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) seriously and they say that Islam is based on Quran only. That is a mistake according to the Quran.

These people often are called "the Quranists". Actually, I don't like this name because if you are a real Quranist, then you believe in the Sunnah. These people are not Quranists, they are the rejecters of the Sunnah. And this is a bid'ah, an innovation in the faith that we should reject.

Why?

Because the Quran itself is telling us that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has to be followed, obey his commands, and don't do what he prohibits you to do:

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern... (Quran [33:21](#))

How can I have the Prophet (peace be upon him) the best example and don't know what he did or said? I have to know the narrations.

When Allah said:

And establish prayer and give zakah and obey the Messenger – that you may receive mercy. (Quran [24:56](#))

How can I know how to pray exactly except from the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as narrated by his companions?

Yes, there could be some differences in some narrations, but at the end the overall of the narrations teach us everything in details about Islam, that the Quran sometimes would not be detailed about.

The Sunnah as the Illustration of The Quran

There is wisdom behind that because that part of the revelation, which is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, is actually the illustration of the Quran on earth.

When Aisha was asked: "How were the Prophet's manners?"

She said:

“He was a Quran walking on earth.”

In other words, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as we know from the Hadith, is the illustration of that Quran in a human form, is the behavior of the Quran.

The Quran is talking about mercy, and he (peace be upon him) is showing us what mercy is. The Quran is talking about bravery and he's showing us. The Quran is talking about saying truth the power and he's showing us what truth the power means.

The Quran is actually talking about the community and he (peace be upon him), in his example is building a community and showing us how a leader could build that community and what the behavior of the community members, men and women, should be in order for that community to be an exemplar community.

When Allah talks about this ummah around Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) being an example for the people. We know how much of an example they are through the Hadith, the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

So, to start off, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is part of the revelation, even though it's been narrated by the meaning rather than by the letter what the Prophet said in the most part, and that is important to know.

Can There Be Any Contradictions Between Quran and Sunnah?

Now, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is an illustration of the Quran, and therefore, it can't possibly contradict with the Quran. So, if there a hadith or a narrator who said something, and that thing is contradictory to the Quran, then we know that the narrator made a mistake.

Can a Hadith Narrator Make a Mistake?

Yes.

And that is part of the Quranic understanding. The proper understanding of the Quran is that people who say things that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said are not always accurate. Sometimes they're inaccurate; it doesn't mean that the narrators are false, no, it's not black and white. It's a whole knowledge; it's actually quite a professional complicated specialization that people learn from the science of Hadith that is supposed to be integrated with science of Quran.

The separation of the sciences of Hadith from the sciences of Quran is something that has been a historical mistake in the disciplinization of Islamic knowledge, because the Hadith should be integrated with the Quran.

If there is a narrator that says that Allah created heavens and earth in seven days, and the Quran says they're created in six days, which is true narration in some of the collections, then the narrator has made a mistake. This is clear and there is no way to compile six and seven, we don't have this in Islam.

When there is a narration that says that don't eat the cow meat because the cow meat is poisonous, and the Quran is telling us that the cows and cattle are actually among the blessings of Allah. Allah is not going to tell us that there is a blessing in something that is poisonous, so therefore this narration is incorrect.

When there is a narration that says, if you have a bad luck, then blame your wife or blame your horse, then that narration is authentically true, but the Quran is saying that there is no calamity that befalls on people from others. So don't go and blame your wife if something happens to you at work because she's the bad omen in the house.

No. That narration is narrated inaccurately. And in fact, the companions themselves corrected these narrations.

By the way, if you dig into the science of Hadith, you will find that there is another narration that corrected the narration of the seven days, the narration of that Eve betrayed her husband, referring to the original sin. The companions said that Islam is actually saying that the wife of Adam followed Adam, and it is Adam's sin, not Eve's sin.

If there is a narration that says that, then actually this narration is mixed with some of the children of Israel's narrations. It's a long story, but it's important to know that in Islam we don't blame women for that; and therefore, menstrual cycle is not really a punishment as we have in other religions and some narrations.

Therefore, what I am saying here in these examples that the Quran corrects the narrations of the Sunnah, and that the narrations of the Sunnah are an integral part of the revelation as they revolve around the revelation and as we understand the revelation in the highest example of it, which is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his life.

We ask Allah to teach us, to guide us, and to forgive us.