

7. The Prophet's Judgement Was Binding

Allah Says “But no, by your Lord, they will not truly believe until they make you judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and submit completely.” Sūrat an-Nisā’ 4:65

And “It is not for a believing man or believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, to have any choice concerning their affair.” Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33:36

What judgement of the Messenger are Muslims commanded to accept if his only function was to repeat the Qurʾān? The Qurʾān presents Muḥammad as someone to be believed, obeyed, followed and referred to for judgement. His teachings therefore possessed an authority distinct from merely reciting the Qurʾānic wording, while remaining subordinate to and derived from Allah’s revelation.

8. Without the Sunnah, Who Explains the Qurʾān?

Once the Prophetic explanation is removed, someone must replace it. Who? The modern reader. One person decides *ṣalāh* (prayer) means one thing; another interprets it differently. One decides an instruction is metaphorical; another takes it literally. Each individual reconstructs Islam according to his own reading. The authority of the Messenger is gradually replaced by the authority of the individual interpreter.

Yet Allah Says “Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day.” Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33:21

How can Muslims living centuries later follow his example while categorically rejecting authentic reports describing what he said, did and approved?

The Fundamental Contradiction of Ḥadīth Rejection

The problem can be reduced to a few questions.

How do you identify Muḥammad historically?	Via ḥadīth.
How do you know his biography?	Via ḥadīth.
How do you identify his Companions?	Via ḥadīth.
How do you know the history of the <i>muṣḥaf</i> ?	Via ḥadīth.
How do you identify Makkah and the Kaʿbah?	Via ḥadīth.
How do you know how the earliest Muslims prayed?	Via ḥadīth.

Even the Arabic language through which the Qurʾān is interpreted has itself been transmitted by human beings. The consistent ḥadīth rejector therefore relies upon extra-Qurʾānic transmission simply to construct the historical, linguistic and practical framework through which he reads the Qurʾān. The real debate is not: “Do we accept transmission?” Everyone does. The real question is: “Which transmissions are authentic, and how do we determine their authenticity?” That is precisely what the science of ḥadīth was developed to answer.

A Call Back to the Messenger

The slogan “Qurʾān alone” sounds as though it elevates the Book of Allah. Yet the Qurʾān itself does not teach “Qurʾān alone”.

It Commands “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.” Sūrat an-Nisā’ 4:65

And It Says “If you love Allah, then follow me.” Sūrat Āl ʿImrān 3:31

The message cannot be separated from the Messenger who conveyed it, explained it, taught it and demonstrated how it was to be lived. Nor is it consistent to reject transmitted reports while relying upon transmission to know the Prophet himself, his Companions, Makkah, the Kaʿbah, the history of the *muṣḥaf* and the inherited acts of worship practised by Muslims from generation to generation.

Islam does not require the blind acceptance of every report attributed to the Prophet. Rather, it requires us to accept what is authentically established from him. For this very reason, Muslim scholars developed a rigorous tradition of examining narrators, chains of transmission, the wording of reports and their historical circumstances with extraordinary care.

Indeed, the Prophet warned against the very attitude of accepting the Qurʾān while dismissing his teachings.

Abū Rāfiʿ Reported that the Messenger of Allah said **“Let me not find one of you reclining on his couch when a command or prohibition of mine reaches him, and he says: ‘I do not know. We only follow what we find in the Book of Allah.’”**

Sunan at-Tirmidhī, no. 2663

The Qurʾān was not sent to us without a Messenger. Allah sent Muḥammad to convey it, explain it and demonstrate it. To accept the message while rejecting the authentic teachings of the Messenger who delivered it is therefore not a return to the Qurʾān, but a departure from the very way the Qurʾān commands us to understand and follow it.

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ANSWERING HADITH REJECTORS



CAN YOU FOLLOW THE QUR'ĀN WHILE REJECTING THE ḤADĪTH?

If the Qur'ān alone were intended to be the sole source of Islamic teaching, why does the Qur'ān repeatedly command Muslims to obey the Messenger? Why does it tell believers to follow him, accept his judgement and refer disputes to him? Why does Allah say that Muḥammad was sent to explain what had been revealed? And if all historical reports outside the Qur'ān are rejected, how do we even know who Muḥammad was, who his Companions were, how the Qur'ān was collected, or how Muslims have worshipped for fourteen centuries?

These are not random questions. They strike at the heart of ḥadīth rejection. The issue is not whether every narration attributed to the Prophet is authentic. Muslim scholars themselves distinguished authentic reports from weak and fabricated ones. The real question is whether the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger is authoritative. The Qur'ān itself answers that question.

1. The Qur'ān Commands Obedience to the Messenger

Allah Says “O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger... And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger.” Sūrat an-Nisā’ 4:59

And “Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah.” Sūrat an-Nisā’ 4:80

And “Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you from, abstain from it.” Sūrat al-Ḥaṣhr 59:7

The Qur'ān could simply have commanded Muslims to “obey the Qur'ān”. Instead, it repeatedly commands obedience to the Messenger. Muḥammad was not merely a delivery mechanism who handed mankind a book and then became religiously irrelevant. He taught, explained, judged, commanded and demonstrated the religion.

Allah Says “Say, ‘If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins.’” Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān 3:31

Following the Sunnah is therefore not an alternative to following the Qur'ān. It is part of following the Qur'ān itself.

2. The Prophet Was Sent to Explain the Revelation

Allah Says “And We revealed to you the Reminder so that you may explain to the people what has been revealed to them.” Sūrat an-Naḥl 16:44

This raises a simple question: if the Qur'ān were intended to function entirely independently of Prophetic explanation, why was the Messenger commanded to explain it? The Qur'ān commands prayer, Zakāh, fasting and Ḥajj, but many of their practical details are known through the Sunnah. How many units are prayed at Fajr, Zuhr, ‘Aṣr, Maghrib and ‘Ishā’? How is the prayer actually performed? What are the detailed rites of Ḥajj?

The Prophet Said “Pray as you have seen me praying.” Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

And Concerning Ḥajj “Learn your rites from me.” Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

Without the Sunnah, how would you know how to pray, the detailed rulings of fasting, or how to perform Ḥajj and ‘Umrah? If the ḥadīth rejector appeals to inherited Muslim practice, he has already conceded the principle: religious knowledge can be transmitted outside the written Qur'ānic text.

3. Which Muḥammad Do You Believe In?

The Qur'ān Says “Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.” Sūrat al-Faṭḥ 48:29

But which Muḥammad? The Qur'ān does not provide a complete biography identifying Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh. How do you know his father was ‘Abdullāh, his mother was Āminah, his tribe was Quraysh, or that he lived in Makkah and migrated to Madinah? How do you know Khadijah was his wife or Abū Bakr his Companion? His lineage, parents, birthplace, tribe, family, Companions, travels and the events of his life are known overwhelmingly through transmitted reports and *sīrah*. The person who says, “I believe Muḥammad is the Messenger because the Qur'ān says so,” still depends upon information outside the Qur'ānic text to identify which historical Muḥammad the verse refers to. You cannot rely upon transmitted history to establish the identity of the Messenger and then dismiss more authentically scrutinised narrations as inherently unreliable when they preserve his teachings.

4. Which Companions Do You Follow?

Allah praises those who follow the Companions in the good that they did:

Allah Says “The first and foremost among the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who follow them with good conduct: Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.” Sūrat at-Tawbah 9:100

But who were these Companions, and how do you know their way without transmitted reports? The Qur'ān does not give a complete list of their names, biographies, teachings or practices. How do you know who Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ibn Mas‘ūd or Ibn ‘Abbās were, what they believed, or how they understood and practised Islam?

That knowledge reached us through transmission, including the reports and ḥadīth preserved by Muslim scholars. So how can someone claim to follow the earliest believers while rejecting the very reports through which their way is known?

5. Who Preserved the Qur'ān?

There is an even deeper problem. The same narrators of the Qur'ān whom the ḥadīth rejectors accept are the same ones they reject for the prophetic tradition. But according to those who reject the ḥadīth, how do we know about the people who transmitted and collected the Qur'ān? It does not narrate the complete history of its collection under Abū Bakr or the standardisation of the *muṣḥaf* under ‘Uthmān. We know these things through transmitted historical reports.

Allah Promised “Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it.” Sūrat al-Hijr 15:9

Muslims believe this absolutely. But how Allah historically brought about that preservation is known through transmission. The Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet, recited to his Companions, memorised, written, taught and passed down generation after generation. Its transmission was public and widespread, and did not depend upon the report of any single individual or small group.

This does not mean that the Qur'ān and every individual ḥadīth reached us in exactly the same way or with the same degree of evidence. Individual ḥadīths were transmitted through particular chains of narrators and therefore vary in strength. Muslim scholarship therefore examines how reports were transmitted and distinguishes between different levels of evidence rather than rejecting transmission altogether.

6. Rejecting Fabrications Is Not Rejecting Ḥadīth

Accepting the Sunnah does not mean accepting everything attributed to the Prophet.

The Prophet Warned “Whoever deliberately lies about me, let him take his seat in the Fire.” Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

It was precisely because Muslims took his words seriously that the sciences of ḥadīth developed. Scholars asked: Who narrated this? From whom? Did they meet? Was the narrator trustworthy? Was his memory accurate? Did stronger narrators contradict him? Was there a hidden defect? They studied both the *isnād* and the *matn*. They developed sciences of narrator criticism, narrator biography and hidden defects. Reports were classified according to their reliability. Therefore, saying that fabricated ḥadīths exist is not an argument against ḥadīth. It is an argument for authentication. The existence of counterfeit money does not prove that genuine currency does not exist.