

Rights of Rasoolullah ﷺ on His Ummah

Before we look at the rights that Rasoolullah ﷺ has on us for which we will be held accountable, let us see who Muhammad ﷺ was. Let me introduce you to your Nabi, whose Shafa'at we rely on and beg Allah ﷻ for to save us on the Day of Judgment. As mentioned earlier, Allah ﷻ created an entire generation of people who loved him and recorded everything about him with the intention of emulating him and preserving and communicating the memory to generations unborn. It is for that reason that we have the most detailed account of even small details of Rasoolullah ﷺ's appearance and habits which is not the case with anyone else in the world including our own close family.

Let me mention perhaps the most beautiful description of Rasoolullah ﷺ's appearance that was recorded by Umm Ma'abad (RA), when Rasoolullah ﷺ stopped in her camp on the way to Madina when he was making Hijra.

Umm Ma'abad, 'Aatikah bint Khalid

Her camp was in Qudayd. Abu Bakr ﷺ, 'Amar ibn Fuhayrah ﷺ, a freed slave of Abu Bakr and their guide, 'Abdullah ibn Urayqat (who was then a polytheist) stopped at the camp of Umm Ma'abad (RA). She was a generous woman, known to feed and water travelers who passed by her camp. When Rasoolullah ﷺ and her companions stopped there, Abu Bakr ﷺ asked her if she had any food which they could buy from her. She said, 'If I had anything, you would not need to buy it. But there is nothing.' Rasoolullah ﷺ noticed a weak and sickly-looking goat in one corner of the camp, sheltering in some shade. He asked Umm Ma'abad (RA) if that goat had milk. She replied, 'If it had milk and was strong, she would not be here. She would have gone with the flock that my husband has taken to graze.' Rasoolullah ﷺ asked her if she would allow him to milk the goat. Umm Ma'abad (RA) agreed and told him that he was welcome to do so. Rasoolullah ﷺ asked for a container which was produced. He mentioned the name of Allah ﷻ and passed his hand over the goat's udder which suddenly filled up with milk and started to milk her.

Rasoolullah ﷺ milked the goat until the container was filled. Then he gave it to Umm Ma'abad who drank her fill. Then Abu Bakr ﷺ, then Amr bin Fuhayra ﷺ then Abdullah bin Uraiqat drank. Rasoolullah ﷺ drank last and said, 'The cup bearer drinks last.' Then he milked the goat again and everyone drank again. Then he milked the goat a third time and filled the container with milk and left it with Umm Ma'abad (RA). Then they all left her camp and continued on their way.

Umm Ma'abad's husband, Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn al-Khuza'i ﷺ was away at the time grazing their flock of sheep and goats. When he returned in the evening, he saw the bowl of milk and asked where it had come from. Umm Ma'abad (RA) narrated the story about her visitors. He asked her to describe Muhammad ﷺ and this is what she said. Her eloquence has no parallel. Her words have been the subject of many a thesis in the Arabic language. And all that she was, was an unlettered Baddu lady who had seen Rasoolullah ﷺ only once. Such were the Sahaba and Sahabiyaat of Rasoolullah ﷺ. She said:

"I saw a man who is distinctly handsome and of a beautiful countenance. He is well-built, neither blemished by a big belly nor disfigured by an unusually small head. The pupils of his eyes are very dark, his eyelashes are very long and the area around the pupils is extremely white. His eyebrows are perfectly close. He has very dark hair, a rather long neck and a thick beard. When he remains silent he is ever contemplative and when he speaks, eminence and splendor exhibit in his words. His words are like sliding stringed pearls. He is a gifted orator whose words are neither too few nor too many. He has the clearest wand and the most audible voice as he speaks. When you look at him from afar, he is the most handsome of all people, and when you move closer to him, he is the most pleasant of them. You will never be tired of looking at him. He is like a branch between two branches. He is the most handsome of the three and the most important of them. He has companions who honor him; when he speaks they listen to his words and when he commands they hasten to carry out his order. They serve and gather around him. He neither frowns or nags."

May Allah ﷻ reward Umm Ma'abad (RA) and increase her Darajaat, what a beautiful description which today, we read, 1400 years later and it is as if we are seeing Rasoolullah ﷺ through her eyes. Her husband, Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn al-Khuza'i ﷺ was from a tribe who were traditional allies of Abdul Muttalib. He said to his wife, 'By Allah ﷻ, if I meet him, I will follow him.' Later they both went to Madina and accepted Islam and are among the greatest of the Sahaba.

As I mentioned, the Sahaba described all aspects of Rasoolullah ﷺ's appearance, habits, likes, dislikes, preferences, ways, gestures and facial expressions. They described the luminous glow of his blessed countenance, the color of his eyes, his hair, his beard. They described how he wore his shoes and how he took them off. They described how he clipped his nails. They described even the soles of his blessed feet. They recorded what foods he liked and which he didn't like but didn't object if others ate them. They described his facial expressions when he was happy and how many teeth were visible when he smiled. I can go on, but I think I have made my point.

My point is that when these people recorded everything about their beloved leader, what chance is there that they didn't record the most critical thing about him which are his teachings? What chance that the people who recorded the words of Revelation, the Qur'an, didn't record their explanation? What chance that when they asked questions related to the application of Islam in their lives, they wouldn't record both the question and answer? The reality is that they recorded all these things. They not only did that, but they would read out what they had written to Rasoolullah ﷺ and ask him to confirm what they had recorded. This was then preserved in their private collections. This is what they taught others, new to Islam, by the leave of and on the instruction of Rasoolullah ﷺ. This was their Islamic Syllabus. They didn't teach intricacies of Arabic grammar and the number of times a particular word appeared in the Qur'an. They taught how Islam was to be applied in our lives. They lived Islam and they preached living Islam. They had seen the power of being connected to Allah ﷻ and Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ and that is what they taught. People like Abu Hurairah ﷺ had a room full of his notes of Rasoolullah ﷺ's teachings.

The second thing to consider is the statement of Allah ﷻ when He defined the role of Rasoolullah ﷺ and stated:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن
كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

A'al Imraan 3: 164. *Indeed Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Ayaat (the Qur'an), and purifying them (external & internal), and teaching them the Book (the Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ], while before that they had been in manifest error.*

Allah ﷻ clearly defined the role of Rasoolullah ﷺ as being a combination of four separate things, each being critical to the ultimate objective which was to enable people to practice and live by Islam.

Islam is a way of life, which was the way of Muhammad ﷺ. That is what we know as the Sunnah. The Sunnah is the Qur'an, in practice. It is the practical demonstration of Tafsir of the Qur'an. However, since we have become used to dealing with words alone and getting lost in them without being concerned about their practice, we don't find anything illogical about ignoring the actions that the Words of Allah ﷻ demand.

And then He ﷻ said about preserving it:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

Al-Hijr 15: 9. *Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).*

Ask yourself that if Allah ﷻ defined the role of Rasoolullah ﷺ as being to recite the Ayaat of Allah ﷻ, prepare people to receive them by purification, explain the meaning and implications of those Ayaat and then demonstrate how they are to be lived by; how is it possible that He ﷻ, when it came to preserving them, would preserve only the recitation and nothing else. So, in effect, those who reject Ahadith are claiming that it is sufficient to preserve the Ayah "Establish Salah", but not the method of Salah and all the rules relating to it. So also, for everything else. Pay Zakat but not how much, on what, who is liable and to whom it must be paid. Fast in Ramadan but not the meaning of fasting, what invalidates it, what to do if it is invalidated, what to do if you miss it and so on. Make Haj but not when, where or how. Does this make sense? I will leave you to decide.

Then, there is the hard evidence of the written records that the Sahaba, men and women, had of the teachings of Rasoolullah ﷺ. No person of integrity can deny either their existence or that they had been written with the same dedication and Taqwa as was the Qur'an. That is why we consider all the Sahaba as totally reliable (Tsiqa). It is necessary to study Usool-ul-Hadith before you approach Hadith to understand how Ahadith were preserved and authenticated. It is a wonder of scholarly effort, guided by love of Rasoolullah ﷺ and Taqwa of Allah ﷻ which is unparalleled in the history of mankind.

An entire new body of research-based knowledge was born, called Al-Ilmul-Asma-ur-Rijaal (Knowledge of the names of the people) which recorded the names, identification and reputation of every person who quoted a Hadith. This enormous effort, which runs into hundreds of thousands of personal histories, was made to ensure that the Ahadith admitted as being correct and authentic had been transmitted by people who were totally reliable. Anyone not coming up to the exacting standard was identified and his statement was either rejected outright or was flagged to show that it had some weakness. There is no other body of knowledge in the history of scholarship that even comes close to the rigor with which Ahadith were collected and authenticated.

Finally, one simple logical question to those Orientalists and their blind taqleedis (followers) who claim that Ahadith were not recorded and only 'collected' 300 years after Rasoolullah ﷺ passed away and so can't be relied upon. Let us ignore the fact that they ignore the scholarship, integrity, Taqwa and enormous labor of love of the great scholars of Islam. Let us ask one simple question. If Ahadith were not recorded, how could they have been collected? After all, even these people don't claim that all Ahadith are fabricated.

In the words of Shaikh Mohammed Saleh al-Munajjid:

One of the ways in which we may refute those who claim that the Muslims have no need of the noble Sunnah, and that the Holy Qur'an alone is sufficient, is to note that this view is a rejection of the words of Allah ﷻ, in His holy Book, in many verses of which He instructed us to accept what the Messenger ﷺ brought, to refrain from that which he forbade, to obey him and to accept his rulings. For example, Allah ﷻ says:

"And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it) and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment". [al-Hashr 59:7]

"Say: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, he (Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) is only responsible for the duty placed on him (i.e. to convey Allah's Message) and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on the right guidance. The Messengers duty is only to convey (the message) in a clear way (i.e. to preach in a plain way)". [an-Noor 24:54]

"We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allah's Leave". [an-Nisa' 4:64]

"But no, by your Rabb, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission". [an-Nisa' 4:65].

So, what should this person do who claims that he is content with the Qur'an and therefore has no need for the Sunnah with regard to these verses? How will he respond to the commands of Allah ﷻ contained in them?

How will he apply the words of Allah ﷻ: "Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise" [al-Maa'idah 5:38]? What is the minimum value of wealth that defines theft? From where should the hand be cut off? Is it the right hand or the left hand? What are the conditions to be met with regard to the stolen item? And you may ask similar questions about the Hadd punishments for zina (fornication or adultery), slander, li'aan and so on.

Rasoolullah ﷺ stated that the Sunnah that he brought is like the Qur'an in that it is from Allah ﷻ in that it constitutes proof, and in that it is binding upon people; and he warned against being content only with what is in the Qur'an in following what it enjoins and refraining from what it forbids. He gave an example of something that is proven to be Haraam according to the Sunnah but is not mentioned in the Qur'an; in fact in the Qur'an there is a suggestion that it may be permissible. All of that appears in a single sahih hadith.

It was narrated from al-Miqdaam ibn Ma'di Karib from Rasoolullah ﷺ that he said: "Verily, I have been given the Book and something like it with it, but soon a man will be lying replete on his couch and he will say: You should adhere to this Qur'an. Whatever you find is permitted in it, take it as permissible, and whatever you find forbidden in it, take it as forbidden. Verily, the (meat of) tame donkeys is not permissible to you, nor is (the meat of) every animal that has fangs." Narrated by Abu Dawood (4604); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

This is what the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) understood from the religion of Allah ﷻ.

This is what the Taabi'een and the leading scholars of Islam understood about the religion of Allah ﷻ and they did not know anything else: which is that there is no difference between the Qur'an and Sunnah with regard to quoting evidence and constituting binding proof, and that the Sunnah explains and clarifies what is in the Qur'an. Al-Awzaa'i said, narrating from Hassaan ibn 'Atiyyah: Jibreel used to come down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Sunnah explains the Qur'an. Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyaani said: If a man is told about the Sunnah and he says, "Forget about that and tell us about the Qur'an," then you should know that he is misguided and is trying to mislead others.

Al-Awzaa'i said: Allah ﷻ: "He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)), has indeed obeyed Allah" [an-Nisa' 4:80] and "And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) gives you, take it" [al-Hashr 59:7].

Al-Awzaa'i said: al-Qaasim ibn Mukhaymirah said: Whatever was Haraam at the time when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) died is Haraam until the Day of Resurrection, and whatever was Halaal at the time when he died is Halaal until the Day of Resurrection.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What every Muslim must believe is that there is nothing in the sahih Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, not even a single Sunnah, that is contrary to the Book of Allah. Rather the Sunnah, in relation to the Book of Allah, falls into three categories:

- 1. that which is in agreement with and states the same as that which is stated in the revealed Book*
- 2. that which explains the Book and clarifies what Allah ﷻ meant thereby, restricting that which is mentioned in broad terms*
- 3. that which contains a ruling that is not mentioned in the Book, so it explains and introduces something new.*

It is not permissible to deny any of these three categories, and there is no fourth category of the Sunnah in relation to the Book of Allah. Finally: Assume that we regard this matter as an issue of dispute between us and our opponents who say that we should be content with the Qur'an alone. We say: In the Holy Qur'an we are instructed, in the event of dispute, to refer to the Qur'an and the Sunnah! Allahﷻ:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammadﷺ) and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messengerﷺ, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination" [an-Nisa' 4:59].

So, what will our opponent do with this Qur'anic proof? If he accepts it, he will refer to the Sunnah, and thus invalidate his view. But if he does not refer to the Sunnah, then he will be going against the Qur'an, which he claims is sufficient with no need for the Sunnah!

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I am saying this to prove to you that the Ahadith of Rasoolullahﷺ were preserved from the beginning just like the Qur'an was preserved. After all both came from Rasoolullahﷺ. Both are narrated by him. Both were heard by the Sahaba in his voice. Both are necessary for us to practice and live by Islam. That is why Allahﷻ created an entire generation who performed this great service for all time and who are witness before Allahﷻ to their own truthfulness and dedication. After them came others who were equally dedicated, loved Allahﷻ and Rasoolullahﷺ and were concerned with preserving Islam, in word, meaning and spirit and so dedicated their entire lives to collecting, validating and codifying the teachings of Rasoolullahﷺ. The key principle is, all this was done by people who were interested in practicing Islam.

Not those who want to change it to suit their own whims and fancies. There lies the reason for this corruption of mind and spirit which finds nothing contradictory in making the false claim that only the words were preserved and not their meaning, explanation or instructions about how the orders are to be carried out.

Humanity in general and Muslims in particular owe a debt of gratitude to all of them, which we can't possibly discharge. I ask Allahﷻ to reward them in keeping with His Majesty and Grace. I advise you and myself not to waste time in argument but to follow these generations with sincerity and dedication so that one day we can be gathered with them.