

The Noble Qur'an: its Virtue and Status as a Source of Legislation

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The Noble Qur'an is Allah's Word through which He expressed His commands and teachings. It is raised above any possible description. The Noble Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and was accepted by the believers as being the essence of truth. Moreover, the believers maintain that it is the Word of Allah and not the words of any of His creatures. Thus, whosoever claims that it is the words of a human being becomes a disbeliever.

Allah described the Qur'an in the following verses: "And verily, it is an honourable well-fortified respected Book (because it is Allâh's Speech, and He has protected it from corruption). Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it: (it is) sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise (Allâh). (41:41,42). The Qur'an was also described by Allah in this verse: "(This is) a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge), and then explained in detail from One (Allâh), Who is All-Wise Well-Acquainted (with all things). (11:1)

In fact, the verses of the Noble Qur'an are very accurate, clear and obvious; they are perfected by the All-Wise and detailed by the All-Aware. This Qur'an will remain a miraculous Book with regard to the rhetorical, legislative, scientific, and historical aspects. It will remain unchallengeable in these and other aspects till the end of the world. It is preserved from the least kind of distortion; as Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'ân) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption). (15:9)

The world as a whole has not got such a conclusive and comprehensive book as the Noble Qur'an, that contains all kinds of goodness, all the methods for guiding humanity to the straight path and all the means of happiness for humankind in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Verily, this Qur'ân guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers (in the Oneness of Allâh and His Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him)) who do deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise). (17:9)

The Noble Qur'an was revealed by Allah to his Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) in order to lead the people out of the darkness of ignorance and polytheism to the light of guidance and monotheism. He [exalted and glorified be He] said: "(This is) a Book which We have revealed unto you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allâh and Islâmic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise". (14:1)

Through the Noble Qur'an, Allah [exalted and glorified be He] recovered the eyes blinded from seeing the truth, the ears deafened from listening to the truth and the hearts sealed and hindered from assimilating the reality. Through the Noble Qur'an, Allah promised happiness for Muslims in this world and in the Hereafter if they recite it in the way ordained by Allah, understand its Surahs and verses; comprehend its sentences and words, consider the limits of Allah included therein; follow its orders; refrain from its prohibitions; adjust their way of life in accordance with the legislation included therein and apply its principles and values to themselves, their families and communities. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Those (who embraced Islâm from Banî Israel) to whom We gave the Book [the Taurât (Torah)] [or those (Muhammad's (peace be upon him) companions) to whom We have given the Book (the Qur'ân)] recite it (i.e. obey its orders and follow its teachings) as it should be recited (i.e. followed), they are the ones that believe therein. And whoso disbelieve in it (the Qur'ân), those are they who are the losers). (2:121)

The well-known companion, Ibn 'Abbas, said that this verse means: "Those are the people who follow the Noble Qur'an in the way it should be followed. They regard the unlawful included therein as unlawful and the lawful as lawful. They do not change the words from their (right) places."

The companion of the Prophet, Qatadah, said: "The reference in the verse is to the companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him) who believe in the Book of Allah [i.e. the Noble Qur'an], confirm this belief in their hearts, consider its lawful as lawful and its unlawful as unlawful and act according to the teachings included therein".

That is why the Jinn were impressed with the Noble Qur'an when they heard it. Their hearts were filled with its love and they hastened to call their people to believe in that Glorious Book. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Say (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)): "It has been revealed to me that a group (from three to ten in number) of jinn listened (to this Qur'ân). They said: 'Verily, we have heard a wonderful Recitation (this Qur'ân)! 'It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allâh). 'And He, exalted be the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a son (or offspring or children). (72:1-3) In another instance, Allah described the reaction of the Jinn when they heard the recitation of the Noble Qur'an. He [exalted and glorified be He] said: (They said: "O our people! Verily, we have heard a Book (this Qur'ân) sent down after Mûsâ (Moses), confirming what came before it: it guides to the truth and to a Straight Path (i.e. Islâm). O our people! Respond (with obedience) to Allâh's Caller (i.e. Allâh's Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him)), and believe in him (i.e. believe in that which Muhammad (peace be upon him) has brought from Allâh and follow him). He (Allâh) will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment (i.e. Hell-fire)." (46:30,31)

Because of all this, the Qur'an is superior to all the previous divine books. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "And verily, it (this Qur'ân) is in the Mother of the Book (i.e. Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûdh), with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom)." (43:4) In another verse He [exalted and glorified be He] said: "And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad

(peace be upon him)) the Book (this Qur'ân) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Muhaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures)." (5:48)

The commentators of the Noble Qur'an said that the superiority of the Noble Qur'an to the rest of the divine books – though all of them are from Allah – results from many things. The first advantage is that the number of its Surahs is more than the number of the Surahs in the other divine books. It is reported in a sound Hadîth that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was privileged with Sûrat Al-Fatihah and the concluding verses of Sûrat Al-Baqarah. On the other hand, a famous Muslim scholar, Ad-Darami, narrated in his book of hadith on the authority of 'Abdullâh bin Mas'ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "The long seven Surahs of the Noble Qur'an are equal to the Torah, the Mi'un Surahs are equal to the Gospel, the Mathani Surahs are equal to the Psalms and above all this, the Noble Qur'an is superior to all divine books". The Muslim scholars, Imâm Ahmed and At-Tabarani, narrated on the authority of Wathilah bin Al-Asqa' that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "I have been given the long seven Surahs instead of the Torah, I have been given the Mi'un Surahs instead of the Psalms, I have been given the Mathani Surahs instead of the Gospel and I have been privileged with the Mufassal portion". [Musnad Al-Imâm Ahmed 2/107].

The long seven Surahs are six, starting from Sûrat Al-Baqarah and ending with Sûrat Al-A'râf. The scholars differed regarding the seventh long Surah, whether it is Al-Anfâl and At-Taubah together, as there is no Basmalah to separate between them and thus making Al-Anfâl and At-Taubah as only one Surah, or it is Sûrat Yunus. The Mi'un Surahs are those containing one hundred verses, each, or more. The Mathani (oft-repeated) Surahs are of less than one hundred verses. They are called Mathani because they are repeated again and again more than the seven long Surahs and the Surahs containing one hundred verses. The Mufassal portion contains the short Surahs that come next to the Mathani Surahs. There is a disagreement among the scholars as regards the beginning of the Mufassal Surahs. Some said that they start from Sûrat As-Sâfât and others said that they start from Sûrat Al-Fath. A third group said that they start from Sûrat Al-Hujurat, and others said that they start from Sûrat Qâf. This last opinion is preferred by the two scholars i.e. Ibn Kathîr and Ibn Hajar. There are other opinions in this regard. However, they agreed that the end of the Mufassal Surahs is the last Surah of the Noble Qur'an, i.e. Sûrat An-Nâs.

The most important characteristic of the Noble Qur'an is its miraculous style. Though all the divine books are miraculous; narrating the news of the unseen and detailing the rulings and judgements; however, they do not contain the extraordinary method by which the Noble Qur'an is distinguished. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "And Verily, it (this Qur'ân) is in the Mother of the Book (i.e. Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûz), with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom). (43:4). There is another proof confirming this fact in the Noble Qur'an and that is in Allah's [exalted and glorified be He] saying: (You [true believers in Islâmîc Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) and his Sunnah] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind)" (3:110). The famous Muslim scholar, Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathîr, said that the Muslim Nation achieved this priority

by virtue of the blessings of the Noble Qur'an, which Allah [exalted and glorified be He] preferred to all the revealed books, made it superior and Muhaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) of them and to abrogate and conclude them all. It is also worth mentioning that the other revealed books were revealed at once and not gradually in stages like the Noble Qur'an, which denotes the great care and interest attached to the Qur'an and to the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom it was descended. Every time a portion of the Noble Qur'an was revealed, it was equivalent to the revelation of a complete book from among the previously revealed ones. [Fadâ'il Al-Qur'ân (The Virtues of the Noble Qur'an) by Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathîr. pp. 102,103]

This blessed Book, i.e. the Qur'an, stated many of the cosmic scientific facts proving the existence of Allah. Allah the Almighty said: "And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?" (21:30) The Qur'an also urges us to benefit from every conceivable thing in this life. He [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth,"" (10:101) In another verse Allah the Almighty said: "And He has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favour and kindness from Him. Verily, in it are signs for a people who think deeply." (45:13)

Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims to contemplate the miracles of the universe, enjoying the fruits of these mighty powers which Allah has put in the stores of His heavens and His earth.

It is true that the merits of the Noble Qur'an may never end. It is the Book that cultivated the love of justice and consultation in the hearts of the Muslims and made them hate injustice and despotism. The motto of those who follow the Qur'an is: the strong faith, self-denial, altruism and mutual mercy.

A Muslim should dedicate his time to the Noble Qur'an, reciting it, understanding it, acting according to its instructions and memorizing it. This is the attitude of the believers, described by Allah [exalted and glorified be He] in the Qur'an as follows: "Verily, those who recite the Book of Allâh (this Qur'ân), and perform prayer (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) trade-gain that will never perish. That He may pay them their reward in full, and give them (even) more, out of His Grace. Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense)." (35: 29,30)

In these two verses Allah the Almighty praises those who recite His Book and combine their recitation with contemplation and feeling. Undoubtedly, feeling and sensitivity lead the one reciting the Noble Qur'an to act according to the rulings of the verses he recites.

For this reason Allah the Omnipotent combined the recitation of the Noble Qur'an with the establishment of prayer, spending secretly and publicly from the blessings of Allah and then with the hope for trade-gain that will never perish. The believers believe that the reward of Allah [exalted and glorified be He] is better than the property they spend. Moreover, they engage in the trade that will be the reason for getting their reward and

more from the Grace of Allah, as verily He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Ready to appreciate, the One who forgives the shortcomings and rewards the good deeds.

Thus, it is imperative to read the Noble Qur'an with contemplation in order to comprehend the Qur'anic statements accurately. However, if the reader is unable to understand anything from the Noble Qur'an, he has to ask the people specialized in the field. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "So ask (you, O pagans of Makkah) of those who know the Scripture [learned men of the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] if you know not." (16:43) Studying the Noble Qur'an is recommendable at all times. On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "No people who gather in one of the Houses of Allah [i.e. the Mosques] reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, but tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will envelop them, the angels will surround them, and Allah will make mention of them amongst those who are with Him. Whoever is slowed down by his actions will not be hastened forward by his lineage." [Sahîh Muslim, Hadîth no.2699]. It is not a must to recite the Qur'an in the mosque in order to attain reward. This is confirmed by the Prophet's Hadîth: "No people gather together remembering Allah the Almighty without the angels surrounding them....," So, if they gather in a place other than the mosque and recite the Noble Qur'an and remember Allah, they will obtain the same reward as gathering and reciting the Qur'an in the mosque. The phrase "the House of Allah" in the Hadîth is not restricted to a specific place, rather it denotes what the people are accustomed to. Based on this, gathering for reciting and studying the Book of Allah and learning the basics of religion as well as comprehending the rulings and wisdoms interspersed in the verses in any place, whether it is the mosque or any other place, is rewarded with the best reward. However, gathering in the mosque is better than gathering in any other place, because of the blessings and the virtues of the mosque which are not found elsewhere.

On the authority of 'Abdullâh Ibn Mas'ûd (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "He who reads a single letter from the Book of Allah will have one good deed as a reward, and every single good deed will be equated to ten good deeds. I do not consider "Alif-Lâm-Mîm" as only one letter but "Alif" is a letter, "Lam" is another letter, and "Mîm" is a third letter" [Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, Hadîth no.3075]

On the authority of 'Uthmân bin 'Affân (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The best in reward among you is the one who learnt and memorized the Noble Qur'an and thereafter taught it to other people" [Sahîh Al-Bukhâri, Hadîth no. 4793]. This is a concrete evidence of the virtue and blessing of learning the Noble Qur'an and teaching it. It also encourages the believer to study and memorize the Book of Allah. A famous Muslim scholar, Sufyân Ath-Thauri, was asked about the best thing for the Muslim to do; to fight in the cause of Allah or to read the Noble Qur'an. He said that it is better for the Muslim to read the Noble Qur'an because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The best among you is the one who learnt and memorized the Noble Qur'an and thereafter taught it to other people". Furthermore, Imâm Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân As-Salmi stayed in Al-Kûfa mosque for forty

years teaching the Noble Qur'an. Whenever he remembered the above mentioned Hadith he said that this Hadith was the main reason behind his stay in the mosque teaching the Noble Qur'an.

Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathir in his book titled "Fadail Al-Qur'an" (The Virtues of the Noble Qur'an) pp.126, 127 said that the main idea of the above Hadith is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) described the best of the Muslims as the one who learns the Noble Qur'an and thereafter teaches it to other people. Ibn Kathir stressed that these are the qualities of the believers who follow the Messengers (peace be upon them all). The believers are those who are perfect in their personality and who endeavour all the time to make others attain perfection and thus obtain benefit for themselves and for others. This description of the believers is contrary to the description of the disbelievers who neither benefit anyone nor let others strive to obtain their own benefit. Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "Those who disbelieved and hinder (men) from the Path of Allâh, for them We will add torment over torment because they used to spread corruption [by disobeying Allâh themselves, as well as ordering others (mankind) to do so]." (16:88) In another verse Allah said: "And they prevent others from him (from following Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) and they themselves keep away from him, and (by doing so) they destroy not but their ownelves, yet they perceive (it) not." (6:26) The most correct interpretation of this verse is that it was revealed concerning those who prevent people from following the Noble Qur'an and at the same time refrain from following it. Thus, they combine both belying the Qur'an and hindering people from following it. Allah the Omnipotent said: "Who then does more wrong than one who rejects the Ayât (evidences, verses, etc.) of Allâh and turns away therefrom?." (6:157) This is the description of the disbelievers, which is in contradiction to the description of the believers who strive to perfect themselves and try to make others attain perfection as mentioned in the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Allah described this kind of people in this verse: "And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allâh (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allâh's (Islâmic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims." (41:33) This kind of person mentioned in the verse combines the qualities of inviting people to the way of Allah, through proclaiming Adhân (the call to prayer) or by any other means, such as teaching the Noble Qur'an, the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), the Islamic law, and other branches of knowledge. These rites are performed for the sake of Allah and for the performance of good, in word and deed. Thus, none will be better than such kind of person.

As Allah's Mercy envelops those who recite His Book and follow the commandments included therein, it also overwhelms those who listen to it. Allah the Almighty said: "The believers are only those who, when Allâh is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qur'an) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone); Who perform the prayer (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and spend out of that We have provided them. It is they who are the believers in truth. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and Forgiveness and a generous provision (Paradise)." (8:2-4)

‘Abdullâh bin Mas‘ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to me: recite the Qur’an for me. He asked: Messenger of Allah, (how) should I recite to you whereas it has been sent down to you? He (the Noble Prophet) said: I desire to hear it from someone else. So I recited Sûrat Al-Nisâ’ till I reached the verse: (How then shall it be when We shall bring from every people a witness and bring you against them as a witness?) I lifted my head, or a person touched me to attract my attention, and so I lifted my head and saw his (the Prophet’s) tears falling. [Narrated by Al-Bukhâri, Hadîth no.4582 and by Muslim, Hadîth no.800, and by Abû Dâwûd, Hadîth no.3668]

Imâm An-Nawawi said that there are a lot of benefits in this Hadîth. The first one is the virtue of listening to the Noble Qur’an attentively; weeping while listening to it and pondering over the meanings of its verses. The second benefit is the virtue of asking others to recite the Noble Qur’an for the person, which is more impressive than reading by oneself.

Therefore, it is the duty of every Muslim to recognize the status of the Noble Qur’an and act upon its rulings. It is also one’s duty to abide by the rites of religion during listening to the Noble Qur’an and to follow the way of the Salaf (Righteous Muslim Predecessors who are the ideal to follow) in reading the Noble Qur’an. They are the guiding stars that should be followed and imitated in every aspect of life. They (i.e. the Salaf) were the best examples to be followed in their perfect submission to Allah and in their understanding of the meanings of the Noble Qur’an. They had strong belief in Allah’s saying: "And truly, this (the Qur’ân) is a revelation from the Lord of the ‘Âlamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists), Which the trustworthy Rûh [Jibrîl (Gabriel)] has brought down Upon your heart (O Muhammad (peace be upon him) that you may be (one) of the warners, In the plain Arabic language)." [26:192-95]

It is true that the Noble Qur’an, its words and meanings, is from Allah. It is the divine legislation for all people and creatures; the first and the foremost reference for religious matters for Muslims; the judge solving all the problems in all affairs. It is worth mentioning that the rulings in the Noble Qur’an did not descend all at once, but came gradually, during the time of the Message. Some of these rulings aimed at strengthening the heart and the faith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and some aimed at supplying the Muslim Nation with knowledge and action. Still others were revealed on the occasions of some events that happened to Muslims in their daily lives in different times and places. Whenever something happened, certain portions of the Qur’an were to be revealed to give ample clarification about Allah’s judgement with regard to that event. These included juridical cases and historical events that used to take place in the nascent Muslim community during the era when legislation was in its formative stage. An instance of that was the case regarding alcohol drinking

Imâm Ahmad narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to Madînah at a time when people were drinking wine and earning money by means of gambling. When they asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about that, the following verse was revealed:

"They ask you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: "In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit"" (2:219) When this verse was revealed, people understood that the verse did not include a clear prohibition, rather it described the harm and the sins incurred by them, both. They continued drinking alcohol till a day when a man from the immigrants led the Maghrib (sunset) prayer and, having drunk alcohol, committed a lot of mistakes in recitation. Then, another verse, which is somehow more strict than the above was revealed. Allah the Almighty said: "O you who believe! Approach not the prayer when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter." (4:43) People, however, continued to drink alcohol, except before prayers, in order to come to the prayer in their full senses. Then the following verse was revealed: "O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and Al-Ansâb, and Al-Azlâm (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitân's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. Shaitân (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allâh and from the prayer. So, will you not then abstain?". (5:90)

When this last verse was revealed all the Muslims said: "We abstain O our Lord". Some people asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about the ruling regarding those who were used to drinking alcohol and practicing gambling and died before that prohibition. Then, the following verse was revealed: "Those who believe and do righteous deeds, there is no sin on them for what they ate (in the past), if they fear Allâh (by keeping away from His forbidden things), and believe and do righteous deeds, and again fear Allâh and believe, and once again fear Allâh and do good deeds with Ihsân (perfection). And Allâh loves the good-doers)." (5:93) Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to his Companions: "If it was made unlawful for them, they would have abstained from drinking alcohol and practicing gambling, as you did." [Musnad Al-Imâm Ahmad (Imam Ahmad's Compilation of Hadith), 2/351,352]. Anas bin Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he was the cupbearer in the house of Abu Talhah. When alcohol was prohibited, an announcer was ordered (by the Prophet) to declare its prohibition among people. Abu Talhah asked Anas to go out to investigate the matter. When Anas told him about the prohibition of alcohol, Abu Talhah ordered Anas to spill all the alcohol they had. Anas said that the streets of Madînah were streaming with alcohol because all the people spilt out their alcohol, which was known as Fadîkh. Some people talked about the fate of those who used to drink it and died before it was made unlawful. Then, this verse was revealed: "Those who believe and do righteous deeds, there is no sin on them for what they ate (in the past), if they fear Allâh (by keeping away from His forbidden things), and believe and do righteous deeds, and again fear Allâh and believe, and once again fear Allâh and do good deeds with Ihsân (perfection)." (5:93)

We can conclude that alcohol was prohibited gradually and in three stages. The first stage was when this verse was revealed: "They ask you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: "In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit"" (2:219). Though this was not a

decisive prohibition, those of strong faith managed to give up drinking alcohol. Then, ‘Umar bin Al-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "O Allah give us a decisive ruling regarding alcohol". Then, this verse was revealed: "O you who believe! Approach not the prayer when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter." (4:43) Afterwards, Muslims continued drinking alcohol and only avoided it at the times they apprehended that the effect of intoxication would last till the time of prayer. Then, ‘Umar bin Al-Khattâb said: "O Allah give us a decisive ruling regarding alcohol". Then these two verses were revealed: "O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and Al-Ansâb, and Al-Azlâm (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitân's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. Shaitân (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allâh and from As-Salât (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?" (5:90) Upon listening to these two verses, ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "We have abstained."

The aim of gradual legislation was to purify the Muslim Nation from all bad traditions and abominable habits that opposed the law of Allah and to perfect the Muslims with the virtues of forgiveness, patience, selflessness, love, trust, kind treatment of the neighbours, justice and many other good qualities.

Allah [exalted and glorified be He] is the sole Legislator for His servants. He said: "The decision is only for Allâh, He declares the truth, and He is the Best of judges." (6:57) He only legislates that which benefits people and brings about goodness and happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, regardless of whether the wisdom behind the legislation is perceived or not.

The Noble Qur'an is the first source for legislation, while the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is the second source. Muslim scholars unanimously agreed on the authority of the Sunnah as a source of legislation beside the Noble Qur'an. Allah the Almighty said: "O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad (peace be upon him) and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (peace be upon him), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination)." (4:59). In another verse Allah [exalted and glorified be He] said: "With clear signs and Books (We sent the Messengers). And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) the Dhikr (reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'ân)) that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought." (16:44). In a third place He [exalted and glorified be He] said: "And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (peace be upon him)) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allâh; verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment." (59:7)

In his book called I'lâm Al-Muwaqî'în 'An Rabel-‘Âlamîn [i.e. Informing those who give Fatwas on behalf of the Lord of the worlds of the danger of their position] volume II, p.263, Imâm Ibn Qiyim Al-Jawziyah defines the position of the Sunnah with regard to the

Noble Qur'an saying: "The position of the Sunnah with respect to the Noble Qur'an is of three aspects. The first one is to be in accordance with the Noble Qur'an in all aspects and as a result the existence of the Sunnah with the Noble Qur'an in one issue will be of a reinforcing nature regarding the rulings. The second aspect is to be an explanation and manifestation of the rulings included in the Noble Qur'an. The third aspect of the position of the Sunnah to the Noble Qur'an is to clarify the obligations about which the Noble Qur'an kept silent and manifest the prohibitions, which are not explained in the Noble Qur'an. Bearing all this in mind, we can say that there is no contradiction between the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), rather they complement each other.

Therefore, the role of the Sunnah is to emphasize the rulings of the Noble Qur'an, explain the texts thereof, expound the abridged, or initiate a ruling that is not mentioned in the Book of Allah. In spite of the important position of the Sunnah, we do not turn to the Sunnah for legislation, except when the ruling is not found in the Noble Qur'an. It is the Sunnah which explains to us that the number of prayers is five times a day; explains the number of Rak'as in every prayer; defines the essence of the alms giving; defines who is obliged to perform it, and the shares thereof. It is the Sunnah that shows us the way of performing Hajj and 'Umrah, and that the obligatory Hajj is once in one's lifetime. It is the Sunnah which shows the Miqâts for Hajj and determines the number of times that Tawâf around the Ka'bah should be performed.

Thus, it is the duty of everyone believing in the authority of the Noble Qur'an but renouncing the Sunnah to hasten to renew his faith and to return to Allah the Almighty. Allah said: "And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death)." (20:82)

Both of the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) are revelations from Allah to His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are the two sources of legislation, which have guided man to his innate nature and made of him a human being who knows his real role in life, repeating this verse all the time: "All praise and thanks be to Allâh, Who has guided us to this, and never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allâh had guided us!" (7:43)

May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family and upon his honourable companions (may Allah be pleased with them all)