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CHAPTER 1

***SUNNAH:* THE SECOND SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW**

The *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has been accepted as an important source of Islamic law, next in importance only to the Holy Quran. This status of the *sunnah* has remained unchallenged and undisputed throughout the centuries. There have been many differences among Muslims in their juristic opinions, but the authority of the Holy Quran and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet was never denied by any jurist. Leaving aside some scattered individuals who separated themselves from the main stream of the Muslim population, nobody has ever refused to accept the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet as a sacred source of the Islamic law.

The position is still the same, but some non-Muslim orientalist and some of their followers have tried, during the last century to cast some doubts in the authority or the veracity of *Hadith* and to develop a suspicious attitude towards the *Sunnah*. That is why some Muslims who are unable to study Islam through its original sources, when they read such books, often become a bit skeptical in the subject.

The present article intends, therefore, to provide an objective and simple account of the *SUNNAH* based on the original sources of Islamic learning. The purpose is not to indulge in a hot atmosphere of argumentation which has no bounds or limits, but to narrate the truth as it stands.

DEFINITION OF *SUNNAH*

The *Sunnah* has been defined by the scholars of the science of 'Hadith' as follows:

"A word spoken or an act done or a confirmation given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ."

'Confirmation' in this definition is termed in Arabic as *Taqrir*. What is meant by this term is like somebody said something, or acted in a particular manner, and his saying or act came to the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and he either confirmed it in express words or remained silent without giving any indication of disapproval. Such silence, being an implied approval of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is also included in the term 'Sunnah'.

As the *Sunnah*, with all its three kinds (saying, act and confirmation), relates to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, its true status in the Islamic law cannot be ascertained without ascertaining the status of The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself.

The status of the Holy Prophet

So, the first pertinent question in the subject is: What status does a prophet occupy when he is sent to the people? Has he no higher a status than that of a message-carrier or a postman who,

after delivering the letter, has no concern with it whatsoever? The answer is certainly in the negative. The prophets are not sent merely to deliver the word of Allah. They are also required to explain the divine Book, to interpret it, to expound it, to demonstrate the ways of its application and to present a practical example of its contents. Their duty is not restricted to reciting the words of the Book, rather they are supposed to teach it and to train people to run their lives in accordance with its requirements. The Holy Quran leaves no doubt concerning this point by saying:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا
مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ
مُسْتَبِينٍ.

Allah has surely blessed the believers with His favour when He raised in their midst a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His verses and makes them pure and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, while they were, earlier, in an open error (3:164).

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

He (Allah) is the One who raised up, among the unlettered, a Messenger from among themselves who recites the verses of Allah, and makes them pure and teaches them the Book and the wisdom. (62:2)

The same functions were attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the prayer of Sayyidna Ibrahim عليه السلام when, according to the Holy Quran, he prayed:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

Our Lord, raise in their midst a messenger from among themselves who recites to them Your verses and teaches them the Book and the wisdom and purifies them. (2: 129)

These are the terms of reference given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which include four distinct functions and the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been entrusted with all of them:

- (1) Recitation of the Verses of Allah.
- (2) Teaching the Book of Allah.
- (3) Teaching the Wisdom.
- (4) Making the people pure.

Thus the Holy Quran leaves no ambiguities in the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not supposed to merely recite the verses and then leave it to the people to interpret and apply them in whatever manner they like. Instead, he is sent to 'teach' the Book. Then, since teaching the Book is not enough, he is also required to teach "Wisdom" which is something additional to the "Book". Still, this is not enough, therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ has also to 'make the people pure', meaning thereby that the theoretical teaching of the Book and the 'Wisdom' must be followed by a practical training to enable the people to apply the Book and the wisdom in the way Allah requires them to apply.

This verse of the Holy Quran describes the following functions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ :

- (a) He is the authority in the way the Holy Book has to be recited.
- (b) He has the final word in the interpretation of the Book.

(c) He is the only source at which the wisdom based on divine guidance can be learned.

(d) He is entrusted with the practical training of the people to bring his teachings into practice.

These functions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ can never be carried out unless his teachings, both oral and practical, are held to be authoritative for his followers, and the Muslims who are given under his training are made bound to obey and follow him. The functions 'b' and 'c', namely, the teaching of the Book and Wisdom require that his 'sayings' should be binding on the followers, while the function 'd', the practical training, requires that his 'acts' should be an example for the ummah, and the ummah should be bound to follow it.

It is not merely a logical inference from the verse of the Holy Quran quoted above, but it is also mentioned in express terms by the Holy Quran in a large number of verses which give the Muslims a mandatory command to obey and follow him. While doing so, the Holy Quran has used two different terms namely, the 'ita'ah' (to obey) and the 'ittiba' (to follow). The first term refers to the orders and sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, while the second relates to his acts and practice. By ordering the Muslims both to 'obey' and to 'follow' the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Holy Quran has given an authority to both his sayings and acts.

The obedience of the Messenger

It is in this background that the Holy Quran insists repeatedly on 'the obedience of the Prophet' so much so that it is mentioned side by side with, the obedience of Allah,

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَارْءُؤْلَ قَائِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger but if they turn their backs Allah loves not the disbelievers'.

وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (3:32)

And obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may be blessed. (3:132)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

O those who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. (4:59)

وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا

And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and beware. (5:92)

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

وَرَسُولَهُ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

So, fear Allah and set things right between you and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are believers. (8:1)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا

تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ

O those who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him, while you are listening (8:20)

وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا

And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel with each other, and so lose heart (8:46)

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا
عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ
تَهْتَدُوا

Say, 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; then, if you turn away, upon him rests what is laid on him, and upon you rests what is laid on you. If you obey him, you will be guided'. (24:54)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تَبْطُلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

O those who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and do not make your deeds vain. (47:33)

فَأَقِمْوَا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ

So, establish *salah* and pay *zakah* and obey Allah and His Messenger (58:13)

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا
عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

And obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn your backs, Our Messenger has only to deliver the manifest message. (64:12)

In these verses 'the obedience of the Messenger' has been ordered as an obligatory command. There are other verses in which the results of the 'obedience of the Messenger' have been described. Here again the 'obedience of the Messenger' has been combined with 'the obedience of Allah':

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And the believers, men and women, are friends
of each other; they bid the fair and forbid the unfair;
they establish *salah* and pay *zakah* and they obey
Allah and His Messenger. These are those upon
whom Allah shall have mercy; Allah is All - Mighty,
All Wise. (9:71)

وَأِنْ تَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ
شَيْئًا

If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will
not diminish you anything of your deeds. (49:14)

The Holy Quran has also made it clear that 'the obedience
of the prophet' is not a new principle, nor is it limited to the Holy
Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The same principle applied to all the
former prophets who came before him:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

And we sent no messenger, but that he should be
obeyed by the leave of Allah. (4:64)

It is also clarified by the Holy Quran that the prophets are
the spokesmen of Allah's pleasure. Hence, the obedience of the
prophet is actually the obedience of Allah Himself.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

And whoever obeys the Messenger, thereby obeys Allah. (41:80)

As the obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been stressed by the Holy Quran and has been combined with the 'obedience of Allah' in the same way his 'disobedience' has been warned against and is combined with the 'disobedience of Allah':

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ
نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا

And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He shall admit him to Fire where he shall remain for ever. (4:14)

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا

And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has gone astray into manifest error. (33:36)

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him there is the fire of *Jahannam*. There they shall remain for ever. (72:23)

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

And whoever makes a breach with Allah and His Messenger, then Allah is severe in punishment. (8:13)

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ
نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ

Did they not come to know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, for him there is the fire of *Jahannam*.? (9:63)

Thus, both positive and negative aspects of the 'obedience' have been dealt with in the Holy Quran and the 'obedience of the Holy Prophet ' in each one of these verses has been mentioned separately, alongwith the obedience of Allah:

It is noteworthy that whenever the 'obedience of Allah' is mentioned in the Holy Quran, it is always followed by the obedience of the Prophet' which has never been missed even in a single verse. There is no verse in the entire Book where the 'obedience of Allah' has been mentioned alone with no reference to the 'Obedience of the Messenger'.

On the contrary, there are some verses where only the 'obedience of the Messenger' has been mentioned, and there is no reference to the 'obedience of Allah':

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ.

And establish *salah* and pay *Zakah* and obey the Prophet, so that you may be blessed. (24:56)

وَأِنْ تَطِيعُوا تُهْتَدُوا

And if you obey him (the Prophet), you shall find the right path. (24 : 54)

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصَوُا الرَّسُولَ
لَوْ تُسَوَّى بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ

On that day those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth might be levelled with them. (4 : 42)

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ
الْهُدَى وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّى
وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا .

And whoever makes a breach with the Messenger after the right path has become clear to him, and follows a way other than that of the believers, We shall let him own what he chose and shall admit him in the *Jahannam*, and it is evil as a returning place. (4:115)

The reason for so much stress upon the 'obedience of the Prophet' is that the 'obedience of Allah' cannot be carried out except through the 'obedience of the Prophet'. Allah does not address each and every individual to tell him what He requires from him, as the Holy Quran puts it:

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ
وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ

And it is not possible for a human being that Allah should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a curtain, or that He should send a messenger and he reveal by His leave what He wills. (42:51)

Therefore Allah conveys His injunctions only through His prophets, and his obedience cannot be carried out except by the obedience of the messengers. So, when a prophet bids something or forbids something, he does not do it in his private capacity, rather, he does so in the capacity of a messenger of Allah. When Allah Himself has given an express command 'to obey the Messenger', the obedience of the Prophet is actually the 'obedience of Allah', though in an indirect manner. This point

has been clearly established by the Holy Quran in the following words:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

And whoever obeys the Messenger, thereby obeys Allah. (4:80)

So, whenever only the 'obedience of the Messenger' has been mentioned in the Holy Quran it includes, without saying, the 'obedience of Allah' because the Messenger does not say anything in the capacity of a Messenger unless he is guided by a revelation from Allah:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

And he (the Prophet) does not speak out of his own desire. It is not but a revelation revealed (to him) (53:3)

Looked at from this angle, the obedience of the Prophet ﷺ represents the obedience of Allah and the reference to the former always includes the latter. That is why the Holy Quran in some verses deemed it sufficient to refer to the obedience of the Messenger only, for the practical way to obey Allah is only to obey the prophet.

On the contrary, the Holy Quran did not deem it sufficient to refer to the 'obedience of Allah' without referring to the 'obedience of the Messenger', to remove even the remotest excuse for ignoring the 'obedience of the Prophet' and to leave no doubt whatsoever in the fact that the 'obedience of Allah' is not complete unless the 'obedience of the Prophet' is fully observed with all its implications.

Ittiba' (following) of the Prophet.

The second term used by the Holy Quran in respect of the prophets is the 'ittiba', i.e. to follow:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

Say, if you love Allah, follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins (3:31)

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي
يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Evangile... (7:157)

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ.

Believe, then, in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be on the right path. (7:157)

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ

Allah has surely relented towards the Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in an hour of difficulty (9:117)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O Prophet, sufficient to you is Allah and those who followed you of the believers (8:64)

رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ .

(The believers say:) Our Lord, we have come to believe in what You revealed, and followed the Messenger. So, write us among those who bear witness. (3:53)

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

Say, " This is my way. I call to Allah with sure knowledge, I and whoever follows me." (12:108)

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ

The closest of the people to Ibrahim are those who follow him. (3:68)

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً

And We set in the hearts of those who followed him (Jesus) tenderness and mercy (57:27)

وَأَنذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نَجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ وَتَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ . (إِبْرَاهِيمَ : ٤٤)

And warn the people of the day when the punishment comes on them and those who did evil shall say , "Our Lord, defer us to a near-term, and we shall respond to Your call and shall follow the messengers". (14:44)

وما جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ
يَتَّبِعَ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ

And We did not appoint the Qiblah on which you were earlier, but that We might know the people who follow the Messenger, as distinct from those who turn back on their heels (2:143)

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ (يس : ٢٠)

He said, 'My people, follow the messengers'. (36:20)

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي

(طه : ٩٠)

(Moses said:) And your Lord is the 'Rahman' (the All-Merciful). So, follow me and obey my command. (20:90)

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّا إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ

(القمر : ٢٤)

وَسُعُرٍ

So, they (the disbelievers) said, 'Shall we follow a single human being from among us? Then, indeed we should be in error and insanity'. (54:24)

All these verses, with different styles and connotations, lay a strong emphasis on the necessity of 'following the prophets', and indicate that whoever believes in a prophet is bound to 'follow' him. The reason is obvious. The prophets are sent to the people to set a practical example of what they teach and preach. Their message is not confined to their oral teachings. Their acts are equally important in any effort to discover, learn and follow the right way of living. The Holy Quran is quite explicit on this

point when it was said in Surah al - Ahzab:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن
كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
(الأحزاب ٢١٠)

There is surely a good example for you in the Messenger of Allah, for the one who hopes (to meet) Allah and the Hereafter, and remembers Allah abundantly." (33:21)

It is an established fact that mere theoretical education cannot be sufficient for reforming a people. The natural way of reformation is to set a practical example which people may follow. Mere reading of books cannot make a person perfect in a science or art, unless he is simultaneously trained by a senior scholar or a skillful artist of that field. If somebody studies the books of medical science, but does not work under the supervision of an experienced doctor, he despite his thorough study, cannot claim to serve as a doctor nor can such a person be allowed to play with the lives of the patients.

If somebody studies books of law, he cannot claim to be a lawyer unless he acquires a practical training from a senior lawyer and remains for a considerable time under his juniorship.

Even a plain enthusiast who wants to cook a good meal cannot do so perfectly by merely studying the books written on the subject, although all the ingredients required for cooking the food are mentioned in the book and even the minute details of the process are fully described. But a person who has never cooked that meal before cannot prepare it just right and perfect with the sole help of a cook - book unless he is practically trained by some expert. That expert sets a practical example for him and he, by following the example, gradually learns how to cook that good meal.

It clearly shows that human beings are always in need of a practical example in order to learn an important subject. The same is true in the matter of religious teaching and training.

That is why Allah did not choose to send the divine books only. He always sent a messenger with the book. There are many prophets who came without a new divine book. But there is no divine book sent down without a prophet. The disbelievers of Makkah, too, demanded many times that the Book should be revealed to them without the mediation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But the demand was rejected and the Book was sent through the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The reason is obvious. Humanity did not need a divine book only. It also needed a teacher who could teach them the contents of the Book. It also needed an instructor who could train them and could set a practical example for them without which they could not benefit from the Book in their practical life. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent with a clear direction to all human beings that they are bound to obey and follow him and to learn the details of Allah's pleasure through the practical example set before them by him. It was also clarified in the foregoing verse of the Holy Book that the 'obedience of the Messenger' is actually the 'obedience of Allah' and that the latter cannot be carried out except through the former, because whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ says or does in the capacity of a prophet is based on the revelation received by him from Allah. Thus, his sayings and his acts both, even though they are not contained in the Holy Quran, are inspired or confirmed by the divine revelation.