

## Is The Qur'an Enough?

*A Response to the Qur'anists<sup>1</sup>*

By Abdullah bin Hamid Ali

### Question: 1

What would you say to someone who doesn't believe in hadith? [Please refer this matter to the exact verse (s) from the Holy Qur'an].

### Response:

For starters, the Qur'an is the word of Allah. And it instructs believers not to convey any report coming from one who is a blatant shameless sinner (*fasiq*) until we have ascertained the facts about the report. Allah, The Most High, says,

“O you who believe! When a blatant sinner (*fasiq*) comes to you with news, ascertain clarity, so that you don't afflict a people (wrongfully) out of ignorance, and thereafter become regretful for what you have done.” [49: 6]

By contrast, we can understand from this verse that we are not obliged to verify the report through additional transmitters if the one giving the report is known to be sincere, upright, and truthful, since Allah made specific mention of the blatant sinner, *fasiq*. In other words, if He had intended for us to verify the truthfulness of all people regardless of their level of integrity, he would have said, “...when a person comes to you...” But He said, “...when a blatant sinner comes to you...”

In addition, discarding the hadith altogether would lead to impracticality in the Qur'an. What I mean is that we would not be able to properly fulfill certain essential and important commandments found in the Qur'an.

For example, we'd not know how to make Salat, since the Qur'an doesn't explain in spite of ordering us to do so.

We wouldn't know how to pay Zakat. We wouldn't know what type of wealth Zakat is due on. We wouldn't know how much is to be given in Zakat, etc. But the Qur'an enjoins this upon us [9:103].

We wouldn't know how to properly perform the Hajj pilgrimage even though the Qur'an does give some basic rules that are to be followed [2: 189-197, 3: 97].

We wouldn't know what would constitute stealing [5:38], and what part of the hand or arm would have to be cut, since the word translated as 'hand' [*yad*] has a number of different connotations. It sometimes means from the tips of the fingers to the joint of the wrist. It sometimes means the entire arm extending all the way up to the shoulder joint.<sup>2</sup>

We would also not know what constitutes a proper Islamic slaughter [2:173, 5:3, 6:145, 16:115]. I mean, we wouldn't know how the animal has to be killed, where it has to be cut, when Allah's name needs to be mentioned over it, and a number of other things.

We would also not know the abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qur'an without aid of the hadith literature, even though the Qur'an confirms the concept of abrogation [2:106]. For instance, one verse orders the believers to bequeath a portion of their wealth to their parents

[2:180], while another verse grants them an automatic portion of the inheritance [4:11]. To leave this without the aid of the hadith literature would imply a lack of wisdom on the part of the Creator, since it would seem unreasonable and unnecessary for one to include their parents in their wills, when they have already been given a definite share. We would then not be able to know if the verse that entitles parents to inheritance [4:11] was revealed first or if it was the one that orders us to include them in our wills [2:18].

Another example is the verse where Allah states that women guilty of lewdness [fornication/adultery] are to be detained in their homes until death comes to them [4:15], while in another verse he states that the person guilty of the same thing whether man or woman is to be flogged 100 stripes [24:2]. To leave this without taking recourse to the hadith literature would demand that we accept that there is contradiction in the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

These are just a few matters that require explication from the hadith literature. So, if one was to discard the hadith altogether, it would be impossible to implement much of the Islamic Law.

Sometimes people who reject the hadith do so premised on the argument that the Qur'an is indisputably authentic (*mutawatir*), while most hadiths are not (*ahadiyyah*). That is, we don't have 100% confidence in the authenticity and credibility of the hadith reports, while we do have 100% certainty that the Qur'an as it is has been transmitted to us without being altered.

True indeed! But we must still make a distinction between the hadiths that are not indisputably authentic but give us near certainty that they are authentic (*sahih ahadi/hasan ahadi*), and those hadiths that give us more reason to believe that they are *not* true (*da'if*).

The truth is that Allah has not made it an obligation on us prior to carrying out an injunction that we ascertain that the source of that injunction be established through an indisputably authentic source. Rather, there are quite a number of injunctions established by the Qur'an itself that we are obliged to carry out even though the path through which we establish that reality under question does not lead us to 100% certainty.

Examples of those are: [1] the injunction about taking two male witnesses in business transactions and in the absence of one male, then two females [2:282]. A second example [2] is the injunction about taking on 4 witnesses to establish that illicit intercourse (*zina*) has been committed [4:15, 24:4]. Also in the same category is the injunction that calls for a man and his wife to swear 5 times in public to remove the accusation by the husband that his wife committed adultery, and to remove from him any obligation for any children born from her after his accusation [24:6-9].

In each of these instances, not 2 witnesses, 4 witnesses, and not 5 oaths is good enough to remove all doubt or produce 100% certainty that a particular thing happened during a particular transaction, or that someone committed fornication, or that a wife was guilty of adultery. Likewise, the oaths do not negate the possibility that she may have actually committed adultery, since it's possible that she could lie about not committing the act.

Once this is understood, we can only conclude that Allah did not make it an obligation on us to verify with 100% certainty that a hadith is genuine. Rather, near certainty is good enough. Near certainty is established through stipulating that every transmitter in the chain be of outstanding religious integrity whereas they are not known to commit major sins, and that even if one of them happens to commit a minor sin, it is not something he/she repeated. The other condition is that their memories be so strong whereas what they remember is far more than what they forget by comparison. When this happens, we have confidence that the report has been related with

relative accuracy. And we have confidence that the transmitter didn't make up a lie. If he/she did, the onus is on them, not us.

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Another objection raised by Qur'anists is that there are narrators who are actually unknown in the chains of many hadiths that exclude the hadiths from consideration. For example, the actual name of the famous Companion, Abu Hurayra, is uncertain.<sup>4</sup> The strongest view held by scholars is that his name was 'Abd Al-Rahman ibn Sakhr. However, the compendia on hadith transmitters list a number of possible names for him other than this one.

For Qur'anists, this is one of the greatest proofs for not relying on the authority of the hadith, since if it's possible that one of the narrator's true name is not known, then what kind of trust can we have in the names and persons of other narrators?

In response to this difficulty presented by the Qur'anists, let us imagine a person from your past who you once knew but whose name you don't remember. Because you don't know his name, could you then say that he never existed? How absurd of a suggestion! In the same way, just because we might not know the true name of Abu Hurayra with 100% certainty, it doesn't mean that he never lived and narrated hadiths from the Prophet (pbuh). It's no different than those same old buddies you knew back in the day who were known by a nickname whose proper names you never knew.

So our hope is that these arguments are enough to remove any semblances of doubt that have been cast into the heart of a sincere Muslim by the falsehood of the Qur'anists.

Was Salam  
Abdullah

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<sup>1</sup>'Qur'anist' is the name given to one who says that "The Qur'an is Enough" meaning that Muslims don't need the hadith literature to be good Muslims and carry out the commands of the Creator.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Misbah Al-Munir, Mukhtar Al-Sihah, Lisan al-'Arab

<sup>3</sup> Those who argue for the abandonment of the hadith, seem to overlook the fact that by abandoning the hadith literature, conflict and contradiction would appear in the words of the Creator. Their main focus is on the reliability and sound preservation of the Qur'an as opposed to the fact that most of the hadith have been transmitted in a manner that still leaves some degree of doubt concerning their authenticity. The emphasis on that and their apparent desire to develop a type of Islam that conforms with Eurocentric tendencies to abandon tradition, believe that what is old is bad and what is new is good, and to be accepted by the European Western majority, have

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led them to overlook the harm that they bring to the original message and moral teachings of the religion for nothing more than political expediency. They and we all have been ordered to do nothing more than worship Allah while being sincere to Him in religion. But, questioning the authors of our history and tradition in this way does nothing more than show that their motivations are more emotive than they are scientific and scholastic; especially when the Qur'an was only preserved and transmitted to us through the same people who transmitted and preserved for us the hadiths.

<sup>4</sup> Another example of a Companion whose name isn't known is Abu Al-Dahdah or Ibn Al-Dahdah who is mentioned in the hadith literature as being a man who died during the time of the Prophet (pbuh) of whom the Prophet (pbuh) said, "And [who can count] how many date-palm branches that are hanging in Paradise for Abu Al-Dahdah." And in one narration it says that he said, "...for Ibn Al-Dahdah." (Reported by Muslim) The Prophet (pbuh) said this of him due to an incident wherein Abu Lubaba disputed with an orphan over the ownership of a date-palm tree. When the orphan cried, the Prophet (pbuh) said to Abu Lubaba, "Give it to him. And you'll have a date-palm branch for yourself in Paradise." Abu Lubaba said, "No!" Abu Al-Dahdah heard the Prophet's statement, so he purchased the date-palm tree from Abu Lubaba, and then asked the Prophet (pbuh), "Will I have a date-palm branch in Paradise if I give it to the orphan?" He said, "Yes!" So the Prophet said, "And [who can count] how many date-palm branches that are hanging in Paradise for Abu Al-Dahdah.". The actual name of this Companion is unknown. However, his existence is an established fact. And how could one deny it, when the Prophet (pbuh) prayed over him and praised him? So the fact that we don't know the actual name of Abu Hurayra doesn't discredit him or his reports in the least.