

Question:

Explain the indispensable role of Sunnah and Hadith in the interpretation and practical application of the Holy Quran. Discuss how the rejection of Sunnah leads to deviation from the true spirit of Islam.

Introduction:

The role of Sunnah and Hadith is indispensable and crucial in explicating the Quran and providing the practical application of the Holy Quran. The Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) is not a secondary source of moral inspiration, it is a foundational pillar of interpretation—that is proved through following Quranic reference:

من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله

"He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah."

~ Surah Nisa: 80th verse

The Sunnah and Hadith make a foundation of Islamic law because they provide the practical framework through which the teachings of Quran are classified, implemented and preserved.

Note: Sunnah and Hadith have a slight difference.

Sunnah means the practical tradition of Prophet (PBUH) such as his sayings, approvals, character, lifestyle, and manners while Hadith is the documentation or recorded reports of that practice.

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Role of Sunnah and Hadith in interpretation and practical Application of the Holy Quran

1. Explanatory Function:

Quran is a clear and open message for Muslims. The Sunnah explains verses that are general, brief, or need practical application. For example: Quran commands establishing prayer as:

واقیموا الصلوة واتوا الزکوة

"And establish prayer and give zakah."

~ Quran (2:43)

but it does not specify the number of rak'at, timings, or method. The Prophet (PBUH) demonstrated these details, saying:

"Pray as you have seen me
pray."

(Bukhari)

Scholars like Imam al-Shafi in al-Risālah confirm that Quranic commands cannot be practiced without Prophet's explanation.

2. Elucidatory Function:

Some Quranic verses provide principles but lack procedural detail. The Sunnah clarifies them. For instance, the Quran commands zakat as:

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً

"Take zakat from their wealth."

~Quran (9: 103)

but the Prophet's Sunnah defines nisab, eligible assets, and rates that make zakat workable in daily life. According to Ibn-Taymiyyah, the Sunnah "details what Quran summarizes", ensuring accurate application.

3. Definitive Function: (Takhsīs and Taqyīd)

The Sunnah can restrict general Quranic statements or specify broad instructions. As Quran permits eating of all "good things", yet the Sunnah tells us that the consumption of domestic donkey is restricted.

"On the day of khyber, Prophet (PBUH) forbade the meat of domesticated donkeys."

~ Sahih al-Bukhari

Furthermore, Sunnah also restricted the Amount of Sadqah:

"There is no charity on less than five dates (wasq)."

~ Sahih al-Bukhari

4. Legislative Function: (Tashri)

The Sunnah also establishes independent rulings not explicitly mentioned in the Quran, but still divinely approved. For instance, the Prophet (PBUH) forbade the marriage to a woman and her paternal aunt or maternal aunt at the same time.

Quran confirms his authority as:

وما ينطق عن الهوى، ان هو الا وحىٌ يُوحى،

Nor does he speak of his own whims.

It is only a revelation sent down to him.

~ Surah Najm: 3-4

5. Confirming Function: (تأكيد)

Sunnah reaffirms and strengthens Quranic injunctions, such as Quran says:

فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمْ أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمْ

"Do not say 'Ugh!' to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them."

~Surah Al-Isra: 23

Sunnah reinforces this command for parents by saying that: Paradise lies under the feet of mothers (Bukhari)

6. Practical Demonstrations:

Quran commands some act of doing things while Sunnah demonstrates how to fulfill Quranic acts.

For example, Prophet (PBUH) practically performed Salah, Hajj, Wudu, and ghusl. In this way, Sunnah is forming the living interpretation.

7. Making Exceptions: (الاستثناء)

Sunnah creates exceptions to general Quranic commands. For example, Allah prohibited hunting in the state of Ihram in Surah Al-Maidah (verse 95). The Prophet (PBUH) created exceptions by allowing Muslims in Ihram to kill certain animals.

"There are five animals which are harmful and there is no sin in killing them in the state of Ihram: the crow, the kite, the scorpion, the mouse, and the rabid dog."

~ Sahih al Bukhari

Moreover, Sea food is also allowed-when Sahaba ate a giant fish (Anbar) during their journey in Ihram, and the Prophet (PBUH) approved it.

8. Detailing Universal values:

Quran commands muslims about justice, equality, mercy, humility, balance, and social order. While Sunnah provides further detailing to these universal values. For example, Prophet (PBUH) provided specific, actionable methods for controlling anger:

"Anger comes from Satan, and Satan is created from fire; so extinguish it with water (by making wudu)."

~ Musnad Ahmad

These details operationalize the Quranic command to be merciful, patient, and humble.

Rejection of Sunnah Leads to Deviation from True Spirit of Islam

Rejection of Sunnah causes theological and practical collapse:

1. Loss of Prophet's Model:

The Quran commands following the Prophet's life, which becomes impossible without Hadith.

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example."

~ Surah Ahzab: 21

2. Distortion of Beliefs:

Muslims concepts like angels, signs of the Last Day of Judgement, Prophetic Seerah will be lost. If only Quran sustains but Sunnah and Hadith is rejected, the true spirit of Islam will be vanished. As Quran contains summarized commands and Sunnah extends those commands that clear the divine message further. By distorting or rejecting Sunnah - true spirit of Islam will be

deviated as well.

3. Impossible to Follow Quran without Sunnah:

The Quran gives general commands and Sunnah gives details. By rejecting Sunnah, it would be impossible to follow Quran.

As Imam Al Shafi stated in Al-Risalah:

"There is no command in the Quran except that the Sunnah explains it"

4. Denying Sunnah is Denying Quran:

The Quran itself makes Sunnah obligatory, so rejecting Sunnah is equal to denying or disobeying Quran itself.

Ibn Hazm (Al-Akham fi Usul al-Ahkam):

"Denying Sunnah is denying the Quran that commands us to follow the Prophet."

5. Creating a New Religion:

Without Sunnah, Islam becomes a theory, not a way of life. Rejection of Sunnah turns Islam into an abstract book, not a lived

Religion. People will mold the meaning of Quranic text according to their will.

Imam Malik said:

"The Sunnah is the ark of Noah.

Whoever boards it is saved, whoever refused is drowned."

6. Causes Fragmentation and Sects Like Quranists

When Sunnah is Rejected, every person interprets Quran according to personal ideas. Most of the times, human mind is not mature enough to interpret divine messages as they are supposed to interpret. Modern Quranist groups follows only Quran not Sunnah - they deny hijab, Salah methods, and deny Hadith on punishments.

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (Majmu' al-Fatwa):

"Whoever rejects Sunnah inevitably falls into innovation and misguidance!"

7. Failure to understand Quranic Ambiguities:

The Quran contains general verses, allegorical verses, conditional statements, context-dependent

Qaws (Asbab-al-Nuzul) that only Sunnah can explain. For example, Quran says:

فَاقْطِعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ

"Cut their hands (thieves)."

Without Sunnah, extremism arises even cutting hands of a child for stealing food can be a case.

Imam Ghozali said:

"Whoever uses the Quran without Sunnah corrupts both reason and religion."

8. Destruction of Shariah:

Entire Shariah collapses without Sunnah. When Quran says thieves should have cut their hands and Quran order lashes for zina in Surah Nur (ayah 2). Then, Sunnah clarifies which theft amount, what conditions, and relationship status for Zina punishment (married/not married).

Al-Shatibi (Al-Muwafaqat):

"Shariah cannot be applied without the Sunnah."

Reasoned Evaluation:

An evaluative look shows that Sunnah fills the

gap between Quranic commands and practical model for implementation, by defining rituals, moral conduct, and legal procedures. Quranic framework is incomplete without Sunnah.

Assessing Relationship between Quran and Sunnah:

The Quran mandates obedience to the Prophet (PBUH). Some critique that Sunnah is late and unreliable as Sunnah is written by Sahabas later on. But historical evidence like Sahifah of A'ishah and the Hadith of Abu Huraira demonstrates that documentation began during the life of Prophet (PBUH).

Examining Consequences of Rejecting Sunnah:

Rejecting Sunnah produces several deviations. Ritual collapse because Quran mentions them without procedure. Some argue that emphasizing Sunnah may alienate modern audience of Quran who consider Hadith difficult to verify. The counterpoint remains that Islam differentiates between authentic Sunnah and fabrications.

Evaluating the Role of Sunnah:

Sunnah continues to shape legal systems in Muslim-majority nations. For instance, Pakistan's Constitution-227 Article and Malaysia's Islamic courts confirm this relevance. Moreover, for a small domestic matters other than legal matters- Sunnah is a touchstones for Muslims.

Concluding Note:

A critical and balanced evaluation shows that Sunnah is indispensable for understanding, practicing, and preserving Islam. Rejection of Sunnah is equal to rejection of core perspectives of Quranic commands that causes deviation from the true spirit of Islam. Therefore, adherence to authentic Prophetic guidance remains essential for the maintenance of Integrity of Islam and prevention of deviance from Quranic ideologies.