

MESSENGER OF GOD: THE GREAT CONFLICT

By brother Damon Clark (e-mail: ezopps24@yahoo.com)

Say: "Obey GOD and obey the messenger." But if they turn away, then he is only responsible for his obligation, and you are responsible for your obligations. And if you obey him, you will be guided. The messenger is only required to DELIVER CLEARLY. [Quran, 24:54]

The title of this article is based on one of the most favorite quotes from the Quran that the traditionalists like to isolate and take totally out of context. Even though there are quite a few verses in the Quran which mention things such as:

"Obey Allah and obey His messenger."

"He who obeys Allah and His messenger does so for his own soul."

"Those who are enemies of Allah and His messenger.", etc.

Part of the problem, I believe, is that sometimes we as GOD Alone/Quran Alone believers can make the same mistake as the traditional muslims, namely "isolating" the Quran to a specific time and place.

The traditional muslims do this by quoting those few verses out of context and saying that we are to follow the ways, customs, traditions and mannerisms of the prophet who had lived over 1,400 years ago.

Some GOD Alone believers will put forth the argument that the messenger is no longer with us, that he did his duty when he relayed the Quran to the people and we now have GOD's eternal message which is sufficient for us as guidance.

Although this is entirely correct, I don't believe we are approaching the argument from the correct angle when we put forth this type of argument/rebuttal. Sometimes, putting forth that argument can make us almost as guilty as the traditional muslims, by isolating the Quran in some fashion to a specific time and place.

The Quran is not static. It is eternal and it is dynamic. We have to treat it as such and we have to present it to humanity in similar fashion. GW, I would like to present my argument to the traditional muslim world who insist on following hadith and who try to justify hadith by quoting the Quran where it says "Obey Allah and obey His messenger."

WHICH MESSENGER TO FOLLOW AND OBEY?

First and foremost, we have to ask "Which Messenger?" GOD says to obey the messenger, but He never specified which messenger when He could have. Muhammad is mentioned by name in the Quran, but no where in the Quran we are told to obey, follow and support "GOD and Muhammad".

There are many messengers mentioned in the Quran by name and there are others that are not mentioned by name. But Which messenger is GOD telling us to obey and follow? There's Jesus. He was a messenger of GOD. Then there's Moses and his brother Aaron. We also have Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Saleh, Hud, Lot, etc.

Ask a traditional muslim which messenger to follow and they will without fail say it is Muhammad because he was the one to whom the Quran was revealed. But to me that's a very weak argument and has no Quranic validation. Why Muhammad above all the other messengers sent by GOD, when according to GOD's Book.

"The messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord. And the believers, all who believe in GOD, and His angels, and His scriptures, and His messengers; we do not differentiate between ANY of His messengers; and they said "We hear and we obey, forgive us O Lord, and to you is our destiny." [2:285]

WHAT ABOUT THE HADITH OF ABRAHAM?

The traditional muslims would have you believe that 33:21 requires us to follow hadith.

"Indeed, in the messenger of GOD a good example has been set for you for he who seeks GOD and the Last Day and thinks constantly about GOD." [33:21]

First of all, this verse clearly points out that the example of the messenger is for one who constantly ponders on GOD and the Last Day. Most importantly, I feel compelled to point out the faultiness of this logic.

If 33:21 requires for us to follow the hadith of Muhammad, then, by this logic, we should also follow the hadith of prophet Abraham according to 60:4.

"There has been a good example set for you BY ABRAHAM and those with him, when they said to their people: "We are innocent from you and what you serve besides GOD. We have rejected you, and it appears that there shall be animosity and hatred between us and you until you believe in GOD alone." Except for the saying of Abraham to his father: "I will ask forgiveness for you, but I do not possess any power to protect you from GOD." "Our Lord, we have put our trust in You, and we turn to You, and to You is the final destiny." [60:4]

This verse clearly tells us that an excellent example has been set for us by Abraham, just as 33:21 does. According to sunni logic, we should also be following the hadith of Abraham as well. Where is the hadith attributed to Abraham?

IS THIS MESSENGER DEAD OR ALIVE?

The traditional muslims speak of Prophet Muhammad as if he's still roaming among us. They will make statements such as "Refer all issues to GOD and His messenger". They also mention his name in their "ritual" prayer as if he can hear them. And when they say

Sallalaahu alayhi wasalaam (peace and blessings be upon him), it is as if they are speaking in the present tense.

How can we refer our problems to Muhammad? And how can we obey him, support him and follow him?

"O you who believe, be aware of GOD and give up what is left of the financial interest if you are truly believers." [2:278]

"And if you will not do this, then take notice of a war from GOD and His messenger; but if you repent, then you will have back your principle money, you will not be wronged nor will you wrong." [2:279]

I can clearly understand GOD waging war on the transgressors, but I cannot see how a messenger who is no longer alive can also wage war on transgressors. To believe that Prophet Muhammad can somehow still wage war in our day and time is to make him more than human. And this relationship between the traditional muslim world and Muhammad resembles the relationship between Christians and the Messiah Jesus in that they treat their respective messengers as if they are either still alive or that they can somehow see us and see everything we do or say. Last I checked in the Quran, those were abilities possessed only by GOD.

In order for GOD and His messenger to wage war on the transgressors, I would have to believe that this messenger is alive and able to wage a war. Hence, it cannot be Muhammad.

A MESSENGER IS SENT TO EVERY NATION

So far, we've covered the fallacies of differentiating between the messengers and we've addressed the inability of the deceased to be a contemporary guide. We've also addressed the faulty logic of the sunni's to follow hadith of Muhammad according to 33:21, when we do not follow hadith of Abraham according to 60:4. We must also address the issue of a people even receiving a messenger to begin with.

"And for every nation is a messenger; So when their messenger comes, the matter is decreed between them with justice, and they are not wronged." [10:47]

"And We have sent a messenger to every nation: 'You shall serve GOD and avoid evil.' Some of them were guided by GOD, and some of them deserved to be misguided. So travel in the land, and see how the punishment was of those who denied." [16:36]

The above two verses from the Quran clearly state that GOD sends a "Messenger" to all people, to every nation. Moreover, 16:36 clearly states what "Message" these messengers will bring, namely that you shall "SERVE GOD ALONE and AVOID EVIL."

GOD also informs us that He sends a messenger to a people who is of them and speaks the same language as them.

"And We have not sent any messenger except in the language of his people, so he may clarify to them. But GOD misguides whom He wills, and He guides whom He wills. And He is The Noble, The Wise." [14:4]

So clearly this messenger that has to be obeyed and followed must come in a language that the people understand, so that he can clarify the message.

Technically speaking, even the spoken Arabic of 7th century Arabia is not the same as the spoken Arabic of present day Saudi Arabia. To me this makes it clear that the two important things are that the messenger comes in the language of the people and that the MESSAGE ITSELF is what is really important and not the words or language used to convey that message.

Many people all over the world are totally clueless when it comes to the Arabic Language. You even have some who have no idea whatsoever who Muhammad is, never heard of the Quran and have no idea what Islam is and is not. Is GOD going to punish these people for something they do not know?

"Whoever is guided is guided for himself, and whoever is misguided is for his own loss. And no person shall carry the load of another, and We were not to punish until We send a messenger." [17:15]

IS THE MESSENGER TO BE OBEYED PROPHET MUHAMMAD?

In order to accurately answer this question, the difference between Nabiyy (prophet) and Rasul (messenger) must be pointed out. We need to determine if Muhammad was indeed the LAST prophet OR the LAST messenger. I would like to first point a verse that seems to be a source of confusion and misinterpretation.

"GOD took a covenant from the prophets, saying, "I will give you the scripture and wisdom. Afterwards, a messenger will come to CONFIRM all existing scriptures. You shall believe in him and support him." He said, "Do you agree with this, and pledge to fulfill this covenant?" They said, "We agree." He said, "You have thus borne witness, and I bear witness along with you." [3:81]

The question and viewpoint many seem to have after reading this verse is that if this messenger makes confirmation of what was sent before him, then what need is there for MORE MESSENGERS?

Actually, when one pays close attention to this verse in detail, you will notice that this verse does not suggest at all the finality of PROPHETHOOD or of MESSENGERSHIP. This verse says that a MESSENGER will come to CONFIRM PREVIOUS SCRIPTURE. That has nothing to do with, nor does it have the same meaning of winding or concluding

messaging. The key word in this verse is "MuSadeeqaan" from Sadeeq which has the meaning of Authenticate, Confirm, Verify, Provide the Truth of, etc. The three letter roots of this word are Saad - Daal - Qaf.

GOD uses this same word, (muSadeeq), the same way He does in 3:81 in other verses. Here are a few of them:

2:41, 89, 91, 97

3:3

5:48

35:31

46:12, 30

Please keep in mind as well that GOD said "A" messenger will come to verify/confirm previous scripture. He NEVER said the FINAL messenger will come to verify previous scripture.

Therefore, the big question now is, can we expect more messengers and warners, or is it over and done with?

My answer to that question would be YES, we can expect more messengers to continue to warn the people of the Final Hour. Here's why:

"Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is a messenger of GOD and the Seal of the Prophets. And GOD is fully aware of all things." [33:40]

In this verse, GOD refers to Muhammad as Rasul "AND" as "Seal of the Prophets". He uses the word "WA" in this verse which means "And" in the Arabic Language. For GOD to refer to Muhammad as both of these things in one line and to use the word "And" strongly suggests that there is a difference between the two according to GOD.

GOD DOES NOT use the definite article in this verse when He referred to Muhammad as rasul (messenger). But HE DOES use the definite article when He refers to Muhammad as "Khatim Il-nabiyyeen" (THE seal of the prophets). In the Arabic Language, whenever the definite article is not used in conjunction with a word, it simply means one of something, or "A" something, (kitab means A book, where as Il-kitab means "THE" book).

GOD called Muhammad TWO entirely different things in 33:40. He called him rasul, (which means "A" messenger without the use of the definite article IL), and He also called him "THE" seal of the prophets. The definite article "IL" IS used in this case.

This concretely means that PROPHETHOOD, not messengership, has been concluded. No more prophets are to come. However, this says absolutely nothing about the finality of messengers/messengership.

WILL THERE BE OTHER PROPHETS OR MESSENGERS TO COME?

I believe that finality/sealing of prophethood means finality of SCRIPTURE to come from GOD. 33:40 and 5:3 are the keys to understanding this. GOD said Muhammad was the conclusion/sealing of prophets in 33:40. In 5:3 GOD said something to the believers of this final prophet which provides the key to what He meant in 33:40.

"Today I have PERFECTED your system for you, and COMPLETED My blessings upon you, and I have accepted Surrender as the system for you." [5:3]

So, if He perfected our system and completed His favors and blessings on us and has ALSO CONCLUDED prophethood, then what need of messengers then? Why didn't He conclude messengers/messengership as well?

Because there will ALWAYS be a need of warners and reminders for the people of serving GOD alone and preparing themselves for the Day of Reckoning. A messenger DOES NOT need to come with a new scripture. He warns and reminds the people with scripture that GOD has already revealed.

The most important reason that GOD did not conclude/seal off messengers and messengership is because He didn't say "The Message" of the Quran should no longer be given to the people. We have to give "The Message" to the rest of Humanity until we are raised up to meet our Lord. If we sincerely, compassionately and honestly promote the message of serving GOD alone, which is the message of the Quran, and invite others to the Quran, and invite them to true monotheism, then indeed that would make us "Messengers of GOD".

SO, WHO IS THE MESSENGER SPOKEN OF?

If Muhammad is not the one who is to fulfill the duties we just spoke of in our present day and time, then who is it?

Well, obviously it is one who comes with the Quran to the people. This is the message that is being delivered to the people. Muhammad was the final Prophet, but he was not the final messenger. Also, there will be no more scripture, but a messenger doesn't have to come with divine revelation. A messenger reminds the people with what they already have.

"And those who rejected will be driven to Hell in groups. When they reach it, and its gates are opened, its guards will say to them: 'Did you not receive messengers FROM AMONG YOU, who recited to you the revelations of your Lord, and warned you about meeting this day?' They will answer: 'Indeed, but the promise of retribution was destined to be upon the rejectors.' " [39:71]

So you see, a messenger does not have to receive scripture to recite what is already with the people and to warn them of the Day of Terrible Regret.

The Duties/functions of messengers are explained in GOD's book in the following verses:

2:101,129,143,151

5:67,92,99

6:48 13:40 14:4 16:35 18:56 21:25 24:54 29:18 36:17 42:48 64:12 98:2

So when GOD says "Obey GOD and obey His messenger", my two questions are, who is that messenger and what is the message that he/she brings.

I believe these verses from the Quran tell us who that messenger is.

Abraham implored his Lord:

"Our Lord, and let us surrender to you and from our progeny a nation surrendering to you, and show us our rights and forgive us; You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful." [2:128]

"Our Lord, and send amongst them a messenger FROM AMONG THEMSELVES, that he may recite to them Your revelations and teach them the scripture and the wisdom, and purify them. You are the Noble, the Wise." [2:129]

How would I recognize that person? By the message he/she brings. And What is that message? The message that is contained in the Quran. And that message is the message of true Monotheism.

"So We sent a messenger to them from amongst them: 'SERVE GOD, YOU HAVE NO OTHER GOD BESIDES HIM. Will you not take heed?' " [23:32]

That is the message of the Quran. That's the message that I follow, support and obey. Therefore I will follow and support those that represent that message. In essence, those that truly represent The Quran.

GOD Alone/Quran Alone.

CONCLUSION: THE ULTIMATE ARGUMENT AGAINST HADITH AND SUNNAH

In 3:7, GOD tells us that there are two types of verses in the Quran; The Mutashabihatun, (Allegorical verses which can have more than one meaning/interpretation). Then there are the Mukhammatun, (CLEAR and LAW-GIVING verses), which have NO ambiguity about them and need NO explanation whatsoever. These are the verses that lay it out CLEARLY

and **CONCRETELY** what is lawful and what is forbidden, (honor and respect your parents, do not eat flesh of swine, do not fornicate, do not come near adultery, do not cheat the orphans from their dividends, etc.) Quite systematically, GOD calls these verses the "essence/foundation" of the scripture, because they contain the laws and prohibitions and are thus very important for our salvation.

GOD deliberately and systematically chose to give His Laws and Prohibitions in the clear (mukhamat) verses so that we cannot say we do not understand these laws and prohibitions and therefore we will not obey them. GOD did not put the laws, commandments and prohibitions in His revelation in the form of riddles and guess-work, and will then proceed to punish us for not understanding or picking up on these riddles and thus, not obeying/establishing them.

Now, let's talk about the **CLEAR** and **LAW-GIVING** verses of the Quran...

All throughout the Quran, when GOD decrees a law or prohibition, He precedes the commandment by calling to the believers, or to the people of the book, or sometimes to mankind in general. He starts the injunction with either "Ya aayahul 'alaytheena amanu" (Oh you who believe), or "Ya ahl il-kitab" (Oh people of the scripture), or "Ya Nnaas" (Oh mankind).

Nowhere, **NOWHERE**, in the Quran does GOD **EVER** issue a decree to the believers, or to the followers of the scripture, or to man in general to follow hadith and sunnah of Muhammad. If it is so important, if it is absolutely necessary for our salvation, if we are in need of it for our guidance, if GOD had decreed that the believers follow hadith and sunnah, **HE WOULD HAVE "CLEARLY" SAID SO** in the **CLEAR** and **LAW-GIVING** verses which address the believers and followers of the scripture.

None of GOD's decrees, commandments, laws and prohibitions are ambiguous, in the form of riddles and left to us to guess and figure it out. Moreover, **NOWHERE** in the Quran is the word hadith attached to the word prophet, or to the word messenger, or to the name Muhammad. And **ALL** of these words are mentioned in the Quran numerous times, but **NEVER** together or in connection to each other. And nowhere in the Quran does GOD ever say "Oh you who believe, you must establish the sunna and follow the hadith", or "Oh followers of the scripture, you must establish the sunna and follow hadith" and neither does He say follow the hadith and sunnah of Muhammad, or of the prophet, or of the messenger.

Unless the commandment can be pointed out in the Quran for believers to follow hadith and sunnah, the traditionalists **HAVE NO ARGUMENT!!** Anything that they try come up with concerning the super-human memories of the narrators, their honesty, isnaad, science of hadith, etc. are 100% moot.

This completely makes **NULL** and **VOID** the entire hadith and sunnah doctrine. Unless, of course, someone can point out the "**LAW**" or "**COMMANDMENT**" of establishing hadith and sunnah in the mukhamat (Law-Giving) verses of the Quran.

"GOD cites the example of a man who has partners that dispute with each other, and a man who has given to deling with only one man. ARE THEY THE SAME? Praise be to GOD; most of them do not know." [39:29]

There is no god but GOD. He is One and has no partners or associates.