

A Cordial letter to the “Quranists”

Maira F. Maneka

Abstract: *There is a new wave of self proclaimed Muslims in today’s day and age who regard themselves as people who strictly follow the Quran solely. This implies that they completely reject and not believe in the literature of Prophetic sayings and lifestyle (hadith and sunnah). One of the label by which this sect goes is called “Quranists”. This letter is divided into three sections. The first section addresses the believers and followers of this thought, challenging their claim of following the Quran only i.e. if they follow the Quran they must follow the ways of Muhammad (PBUH) as well. In order to do this, five possible explanations are considered that a Quranist may have for its belief system, and then they are analysed from the lens of Quran and rationality. These include reasons that can be rooted in logic, emotions, ethics or simple malintent. Section two offers the audience possible consequences that the Quran itself promises those who disobey or reject the Prophet (PBUH) such as hellfire as their ultimate end. Lastly, the letter poses some questions for the quranist to ponder over and take action upon, rather than rationalising their actions, as that is the human essence of justifying the dissonance within ourselves.*

Keywords: *Quranists, Hadith Rejectors, Obeying the Messenger.*

Section 1

I understand why most people emotionally react and denounce the ahadith¹ altogether → because of the widespread prevalence of unreliable sayings attributed to our beloved Prophet (PBUH)² + at the same time they are also enforced upon us by our elders or society. Naturally when one discovers the inauthenticity of such hadith → or their contradiction with Quran or logic or science, one is impelled to approach the next narrated hadith with suspicion.

This situation is no different than that of a Christian or Hindu or any religious believer who matures into a scientist and later discovers that their scriptures are not in line with objective reality. The demise of this basic pillar instigates the ruthless domino effect upon all the other beliefs that this person once had with regards to his religion.

In addition to this emotional denouncement, he also looks at the past as well as the present and he sees that his brothers of the same belief have conducted questionable acts. Not only that, some have even committed the crimes under the name of the same belief that this fledgling man, in this enormous earth, seems to hold. -→ as a result, this man completely rejects his whole faith, and unites with the force that has not lied to him yet; science. He rejects God. He rejects His prophets, their mission. He rejects even the existence of a creator! Why though?

The question is why not? Because this man is deeply hurt. He is emotional. He sees how his lifelong belief contradicted a “scientific” reality just a few times, and consequently he forms a 100 % belief of the inauthenticity of his scripture. His belief has deceived him of reality. Just like a wife who is caught cheating on her husband twice and as a result the husband labels her a cheater and divorces her. No matter how much proof she brings in front of this man about her undying love and promised loyalty towards him, he will never trust her again. All this not because she lacks evidence,

¹ Ahadith is the plural of hadith, which is defined as “a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which, with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunna), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Quran”

² Peace be upon him

but because she has made him emotional. Emotions let us justify irrational beliefs. And this man's religious beliefs have always been personal to him till when he discovered they had not always been so truthful to him. Man is an emotional creature, I understand this fact.

With science he is not emotionally attached. So all the crimes and human rights violation done in the name of scientific research remain invisible to this emotionally hurt man. Just like the multi sexual relations of his secret mistress do not cause him to reject her, because he is not emotionally involved in her but the same acts by a wife will cause him to reject her. The mistress is the science and the wife is the religion. The religion must remain private, while science is for everyone and not personal.

Even when small unacceptable acts present themselves - whether remotely - to one of his religious beliefs, he readily sees and generalises them, to the whole religion. He acts utterly unscientific towards a religion because he accuses it to be unscientific in the first place.

Now returning to the Quranists. I understand you have experienced a similar fate. Your parents and society told you untrue stories about the man you are supposed to love the most. On top, they also associate things with your role model that go against his very message; The Holy Book of God.

So you identify a minuscule number of ahadith that resonate not with your logic or the Quran --- and then you also observe the unacceptable acts people have committed under the banner of this very man's name. You want to believe this role model is ideal. The best. But you are stuck in this quandary. So then as the emotional man who labels his wife a cheater because she lied to him once about something less intense, you are doing the same with our beloved ahadith. Unfortunately, you are, like the emotional man, ignoring the immense costs that come with this reaction. In order to understand your position well, this paper will put forth five possible reasons that can explain a Muslims reactance to ahadith literature. The last part of this section deals with the reason of having no reason for choosing this path,

- 1. You are a man of logic above everything else.**
- 2. You have indepth knowledge of Quran and cannot be okay with the contradictions some hadith have with it.**
- 3. Either you have a very strong moral compass.**
- 4. You consider following the ahadith too much effort – so instead of going down this abyss, you emotionally react and modify your belief. Perhaps someone once accused you of being a blasphemous person, you internalised this, and now so you adopt this position to balance the dissonance between your act and belief.**
5. You simply want to cause corruption and divide between the Muslim ummah. In that case, you are probably not a Muslim and this letter is not for you. But I would say that the attempt is quite good, however do not forget that every action has a reaction and that the Ultimate Planner hears all and sees all.

I. IF YOU ARE #1, MAN OF LOGIC: WOULD YOU REALLY DENOUNCE HADITH?

For how logical is an act of denouncing a whole field of study just because you discovered one contradiction in it? is it not the case even in science, that past theories and ideas are constantly being rejected, improved or changed? Which scientist till date have you observed that 1) believed that science is always 100% correct? For such a thinking is no less than childish, and 2) that denounced the whole disciplinary field because it passed one contradictory theory? Do we today discard all of Isaac Newton's theories just because his theory of absolutism for countered by Einstein's theory of relativity?

Is it not true that Allah mentions Himself in surah Nisa verse 82 that besides the word of God, in every work you will find much contradiction? Is not the literature of hadith collection a manmade effort? But despite this warning does God advice you to ignore His messenger's life and message completely? Absolutely not. Instead He advices you repeatedly, SEVERAL times to "use your reason" (that is also to be scientific), for you will find in Muhammad the best of character. It is not difficult for us to read and discover about the lives of Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the great etc. and we find no objection in doing so as well, as this knowledge provides us with valuable insights about how to direct our course of life.

Then the question arises what is your problem with using these same methods and mentalities to understand not just your own ummahs Prophet, but also the objectively decided upon "most influential man" in history?

A logical person does not act like the emotional man who divorces his wife on coming home late, because he suspects she was with another man. All this because the cheating wife of one of his friends used to come home late, so he assumes that one time coming home late of his wife equates to cheating on me at least once. That's preposterous!

Moreover, as a man of logic: if you denounce the hadith, then you also denounce the Quran because Quran is essentially transmitted as a hadith i.e. through the words of Prophet (PBUH). The fact that the words transmitted by Muhammad (PBUH) are nothing but the truth is also predicted and seconded in the Bible when it refers to Muhammad as "the spirit of truth" in book of John ch 16, verse 13:

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

A Muslim man who denounces hadith cannot possible pray five times a day in the same manner the whole ummah does because the Quran does not inform us in detail about the timings and method of offering salah, as its the sunnah of Prophet (PBUH) that informs us of that. As a logical Muslim man who denounces the hadith, either you stand firm on your logics and not offer the five daily prayers or you offer them and contradict your own beliefs.

In conclusion, as a man of logic, it becomes a bigger responsibility for you to identify and separate the authentic ahadith from the inauthentic ones. This is what Mohamed bin Ismail Al-Bukhari tried to accomplish with his work "Sahih Bukhari" – and now it is on you to further defend the truth and falsehoods. The Quran has warned you of contradictions everywhere, therefore as a man of logic, you eliminate the contradictions and identify the authentic messages of Muhammad (PBUH). Not doing so eliminates you from the category of a logical person as a logical person does not denounce a whole field of study, in this case hadith literature, based on some inexplicable findings.

II. IF YOU ARE #2, IN-DEPTH QURAN KNOWLEDGE: EVEN THEN THE CLAIM “I DON’T BELIEVE IN HADITH” OR “SUNNAH” IS INVALID

A “Quranist” doctor gave the reason that Allah says “obey Allah and obey the Rasul” but Allah does not say “obey the Nabi³”, therefore we are not bound to obey Muhammad’s (PBUH) non-revelatory advices. SubhanAllah. Such a skewed or naïve reasoning coming from a learned man. Ask a grade fifth Islamiat student and he can inform you that a Rasul is always a Nabi but a Nabi is not always a Rasul. Thus, the command “obey the Rasul” by default inculcates the command “obey the Nabi”. This is because a Nabi is the one who comes with ‘the news’ whereas the Rasul is a ‘messenger’ in literal meaning, and he also is the one who is bestowed with a divine scripture, unlike the Nabi, while at the same time he qualifies as a Nabi as well.

Let’s assume he meant that “obey Muhammad” is missing from Gods command which means Allah wants us to obey what the title of Muhammad bin Abdullah brought us; revelation and not what he said or did outside of it. E.g. just like ‘obey professor X’ implies obey him in class, but if he asks you to pick his kids from school, it’s not your domain to obey him.

Thus, Rasul is a title. The highest title man has ever received. And this title must be respected and honoured through obedience. Just like we salute the Prime Minister because of his title, and not his person, same must go for the Rasul.

Seemingly this argument seems logical, but only if you are not well acquainted with the Quran itself.

Clearly you are not #2 and well versed in the Quran, because Allah very explicitly says in Surah Muhammad verse 2

“And those who believe and do righteous deeds *and believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad* – and it is the **truth** from their Lord.”

Had Allah only wanted us to respect and follow the titles, He would have made it clear by only saying “what has been sent down upon *the Rasul*”. However, instead, the Lord Almighty uses only the name Muhammad, without any title of Rasul or even Nabi, right at the beginning of the surah. Here whatever Allah says, is revealed on Muhammad;

- Please emphasize on the word *bimaa* on **whatever** is sent down upon him: could be revelation, an intuition, an idea, or ilham – whatever Muhammad has received, is the truth. And not just any truth, but the *truth from your Lord (Rabb)*.
- Emphasis on also on ‘*alaa Muhammad*’ – ‘Upon Muhammad’. Question is, who is Muhammad? He is the husband, the father, the trader, the friend, the Saadiq (truthful), the neighbour etc. He holds all these societal roles and titles. Muhammad is not only known as the Rasul alone.

This is not a small thing to ignore. It’s also important to bear in mind that in Madinah, Muhammad (PBUH) already had the title of the head of state and of The Rasul. So why Allah mentioned him by name and not by title is not a detail to just overlook.

III. IF YOU ARE #3: HIGH MORAL COMPASS

³ Nabi in Arabic means Prophet, while Rasul means Messenger.

You believe that certain hadith expect us to do things that are not moral, thus you reject them. For this one can put forth a plethora of Quran verses that praise the character and morality of Muhammad (PBUH). However, I will mention here only one from surah Qalam: “*and you are certainly on the most exalted standard of moral excellence*” (Quran ch68:4) Since a Quranist is unlikely to adhere to the ahadith at this point to understand this verse further, therefore I will resort only to sources that fulfill your intellectual scrutiny.

By reading the verse, it becomes very self-explanatory what God is telling us and what we are expected to do with this information. Firstly, God is informing us who holds the highest character of moral excellence. Secondly, as rational and proactive beings we are supposed to follow this person in any way we can. This is because Allah has repeatedly reminded us of giving us the faculty of hearing and seeing:

Verily We created man out of a drop of intermingled sperm so that We might try him, and We therefore endowed him with hearing and sight.” (Quran 76:2)

Today, when children are taught the richest man in the world is Jeff Bezos or Bill Gates, they are also at the same time encouraged to follow their foot-steps if they want to achieve the same level of material success. We observe (see) their lives and patterns and try to understand (hearing) to what they have to say. Listening can also entail following the advice of someone. Therefore, it is obvious that we are endowed with hearing and sight, thus logic and understanding because without observation and understanding there is no logic or reasoning.

Now I ask a fellow Quranist, who claims to believe whole heartedly in the Quran, that would you not be willing to please the One who sent you this Quran? Indeed there is no confusion in the message of the Quran, that Allah expects high levels of moral behaviours from His slaves. Luckily, in this one small verse (chapter 68 verse 4), He has told us who is the best person for this as well.

Through historical evidence we already know that Muhammad (PBUH) was given the title of Al-Sadiq and Al-Amin, way before the first revelation. Thus, being of the highest character is not a wishful thinking that God is doing in this verse, but also a fact that He is stating, that existed before the revelation and became amplified after it.

When a person’s unbelievable accomplishments leave us aghast, we spend decades and decades studying their history, their lives and their works. Take Plato, Aristotle or even Alexander the Great as an example. Take even Hitler for example. These people have astounded the world with their intellect, their work, conquests and even severities. Whatever the reason, we cannot argue with the simple phenomenon that humans take interest in knowing about the person who impress or influence them. Then they try to replicate or learn from their works to achieve success.

Thus, due to this simple human tendency, man has indeed studied the Prophet of Islam with great depth and interest. It is a pride as well as dismay to see that the most well researched historical work on the most influential persons in history was done by a fellow non-Muslim, Michael Hart, who despite being a believing Christian, put Muhammad (PBUH) on top. He did this because he measured all figures according to a standard of omission and commission. If it were based on his personal inclinations, he would have chosen Jesus (PBUH) as he writes in this book:

“...my ranking Muhammad higher than Jesus, in large part [is] because of my belief that Muhammad had a much greater personal influence on the formulation of the Moslem religion than Jesus had on the formulation of the Christian religion. This does not imply, of course, that I think Muhammad was a greater man than Jesus.” (Hart, 2005, introduction p.3).

Words like this make it a matter of pride for Muslims that indeed God blessed them with a Prophet, who even non-Muslims are compelled to accept as the greatest man alive, despite their personal love for their own Prophets. Even though Hart mentions he considers Jesus to be greater (probably owing to his faith), he still placed Muhammad (PBUH) above Jesus as the most influential man in history (I would call being influential as being 'greater'). However, if this is how Mr. Hart balances his dissonance, let him be.

Works like Mr. Harts book *The 100: a ranking of the most influential persons in history*, also induce dismay in myself when I see 'Quranists' – who while being Muslims, while knowing the moral, spiritual and worldly worth of Muhammad (PBUH) –make an effort to go against the tide and deliberately dissociate themselves from knowing more about the greatest man who ever lived. What an unprofitable and inefficient way of living and what a shame.

The dismay doesn't just stem from this belief. It arises because the same people are ignoring a very important verse of the Quran where God Himself makes the criteria of following His messenger as empirical proof of ones love for Him:

"Tell people: 'If you indeed love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and will forgive you your sins. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.'" (Quran 3:31).

Can it become clearer than this? God tells us who is the best person in this world to follow. Then He further lets that man, Muhammad (PBUH), tell us, that if we love God, we must follow that man. Is this not enough convincing for our Quranist brothers that we must study and follow the Prophet (PBUH) in all ways possible? Don't you try to imitate the work ethic of Steve Jobs or philosophical outlooks of Socrates? Then what is holding you back from doing more than that for Muhammad (PBUH), when that is the basic human response expected of you? You already believe these words are from the Almighty Allah, and by knowing and following your Prophet more, not only are you proving your love to God, you are also getting your sins forgiven.

In conclusion God makes it clear who is the standard of moral excellence when He says *"and you are certainly on the most exalted standard of moral excellence"* (Quran 68:4). If you have a high moral compass, then this is what your book is telling you. If you dissociate yourself from the sunnah, and place your morality or that constructed by the United Nations above the Prophet (PBUH), then that is your own doing, caused probably by reasons #4 or #5.

IV. IF YOU ARE #4: TOO MUCH EFFORT

If this is the case, you are either lazy and don't want to go the extra mile or your belief is a simple by product of the psychological phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. Your actions are not up to the mark of Sunnah in your eyes. And this makes you feel discontentment or dissonance. In order to balance the feeling, as all humans do, you can either pick up your game and start striving in the way of God by following the Prophet more vehemently than before (changing actions), OR you could simply change your beliefs (and deny the ahadith altogether). The latter option is simpler and syncs perfectly with your current way of living. However, to me this theory gives more hope than lament because the reason for dissonance to arise is primarily rooted in you viewing the life of Muhammad (PBUH) as exemplary. Thus, failing to match it makes you feel dissonance, and then you dissociate.

I do realize that there may be some aspects of your past actions that compel you to think that it is now impossible to consider yourself on the path of Sunnah. The most decorated path. The holiest path. How can a sinner like you (or me) be ever considered on this difficult path? If you

have killed people in the past, it will surely be difficult for you to believe that you are eligible for this journey because you see yourself as a horrible person. Whatever the sin may be, the point of this example is to make you realize that your past actions can indeed be changed and the dissonance can indeed be calmed down. For this Islam gives us splendid tools. But please, refrain from changing your beliefs, and cancelling the Sunnah altogether, as this is clearly not a wise step. The tool that Islam gives you is of Tawbah – repentance. Simply repent to Al-Tawwab (the acceptor of Repentance) with a clear intention, and He is All Merciful All Forgiving.

Responsibility falls on you to discover the best way for repentance, so that you can actually start seeing yourself as a better human spiritually, and thus capable of treading on the path of Sunnah that currently you so stubbornly deny.

V. THE LAST POSSIBLE REASONING IS #5:

In this case, I have nothing to say here, except that may God Himself deal with you and your machinations.

A. The reason, no reason drives you away from Sunnah.

In this section I would like to briefly explain through the lens of cognitive dissonance, why somebody who has already chosen the path of being a Quranist is less likely to resort back to Sunnah versus someone who is still in the process, and how one can change the odds in his favour by identifying this concept.

According to the psychologist Leon Festinger, cognitive dissonance (CD) is a motivating force within us. It is as natural as hunger. He states that “just as hunger impels a person to eat, so does dissonance impel a person to change his opinions or his behaviour.” (Leon Festinger, 1962, p. 1). The idea is behind this is that as humans we are driven to achieve consistency between the psychological information we have. Any conflict will motivate us to balance it. This information can be in the form of beliefs, actions or opinions. Thus any inconsistency between any of them will cause the person to act in a number of ways to make them consistent.

Having said that, there is a number of data available that confirms this human tendency. Unfortunately, this study also tells us about a human behaviour that we generally engage in, but it can be disastrous for our afterlife if not used properly. For instance, we know that a person is more likely to experience CD after they have made a decision and this then leads more to a change in beliefs. The example Festinger uses to explain this is that once you ask an adult to choose between two equally attractive gifts (no CD) and then ask him to rate the attractiveness of the two gifts (CD is present), he is more likely to consider the one he chose to be more attractive. This is because once we have made a choice between two options, and since they were equally attractive to us we will unconsciously highlight the good points of our choice and undermine the good points we have forgone. Similarly, our minds will also undercut the bad points of our choice while highlight the bad points of the forgone option. “In other words, according to the theory the process of dissonance reduction should lead, after the decision, to an increase in the desirability of the chosen alternative and a decrease in the desirability of the rejected alternative.” (Leon Festinger, 1962, p. 4). This means that the grass is not always greener on the other side, especially when we experience CD.

There are a number of factors that effect this phenomenon, however one factor that effects the presence and intensity of CD in a person is *amount of justification* we have for our action. This means that if I have a reasonable amount of information to justify my deviant behaviour, then I will experience less dissonance, which in turn will NOT lead to a change in my beliefs. However, if I have no reason to explain my deviant action (such as lying, resisting temptation or leaving the hadith), this will create more dissonance in me, and thus the change in my belief will be more. WE also experience CD when we lie and the *level of deviance* of our lie from the truth also effects how much dissonance we face.

This is very dangerous in the case of the Quranists. This is because, for a person who renounces the ahadith for reasons that are not enough to justify his actions, he is surely to feel dissonance as this new information (belief) is not consistent with what he already believed (that sunnah is an integral source of guidance). And unfortunately, since such a person has no reliable information to back his new deviant beliefs or actions, he is definitely going to change his belief. In case of Quranists, he starts believing that following Sunnah is not a valid belief. This new piece of psychological information has now calmed his dissonance down. Moreover, he has now finally made this decision. After declaring himself as a Quranist, he has invited the dissonance to motivate him towards consonance. And unfortunately, for this he will change his beliefs. Even though one can change his beliefs easily but changing an action is not. once an action of confirming some belief has been committed, then undoing it becomes next to impossible.

Due to the difficulty of undoing an act, we see people changing their beliefs more often than mending the act. Fortunately for believers in a forgiving God, we have a tool to overcome the grip CD can have on us. that tool is *Tawba* – repentance. Once we seek Gods repentance, we can expect our actions to be fully erased and because of this information, no CD will be formed, which in turn will not cause us to form new beliefs like “I am a horrible person so why do good”.

So my final message to a Quranist, who has not publicly announced his position yet, is that make sure you have enough information to make this decision. Because once the act of declaration is done, it will be challenging for you to see the good in what you left and bad in what you choose.

If you are already a self-proclaimed Quranist, I request you to go over this concept and realize that the aim of every believer is to find the ultimate Truth. The closer you go to the truth, the lesser CD you will encounter. Maybe the reasons for which you chose this path are not as logical or significant as you thought. Like Michael Hart, let the tool of standardization guide you rather than your personal inclinations. If you really do have enough justifiable pieces of information for your new found belief, do share it with me as I would not like to tread on a path that my Almighty has forbidden. So I welcome you to put forth the evidence where God prohibits us from following the Sunnah so I too can enlighten myself more. Along with this I also request you analyse the evidences that people of hadith have put forth in claiming their point of views. May Allah guide us all to the right path, and it is a matter of liberation to know that He judges us by our intentions and not our actions. May we all do good acts with good intentions.

VI. SECTION 2

In the previous section I put forth reasonings from solely the Quran and logic which make it clear to any reasonable person that indeed following the sunnah of Prophet (PBUH) is an essential and imperative commandment of the Quran. In this section we see the consequences of NOT following the sunnah. This is to offer another perspective in order to persuade the one for whom logic and Quran is not enough. Perhaps fear of consequences can motivate one to the truth.

If you are not intending on fitnah in the planet, then this section aims to redirect your attention to

CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING THE HADITH

those warnings of the Quran that currently seem invisible to a self-proclaimed Quranist.

1. LOSS OF FAITH

Discarding the Prophets (PBUH) sayings or ways, very clearly disqualifies you as a believer. The question is, is a Quranist willing to take this massive risk, after pondering on the following verse?

“By your Lord, they do not really believe unless they make you [prophet] judge their disputes, and then find no resentment to accept your decision, fully submitting.” (Quran: Nisa-65).

This one verse clearly mentions multiple warnings and admonitions for Quranist’s.

Firstly, Allah is swearing, which indicates that what is being said is DEFINITE. It exemplifies the importance and inevitability of this statement even though all statements in Quran are true. But this one has absolutely no doubt about it.

Secondly Allah declares “they do not really believe” or in other translations “they can never become believers”, which shows that Allah does not accept the faith of such people or they will never attain faith. May Allah protect us from being those. Their belief means nothing and in other words, they are not within the fold of Islam.

The third point is the condition which makes one a non-believer and that is “unless they [we] make the Prophet a judge of our disputes” or in other translations “until they accept you (Muhammad) as judge for the decision with entire submission” The simple question I ask is, how does the Prophet (PBUH) become a judge of our disputes if not through his sunnah? If it was through the Quran alone, Allah would have mentioned “unless they make MY WORD to judge their disputes”, but Allah said “you”. Is it not clear enough? Does this verse not show the confidence Allah holds in His Messengers judgement? If the Creator and Lord of all the worlds can have such faith in His Messenger, why can’t a Quranist?

It is imperative to note here another warning against directly disobeying the Prophet. Once a person does not respond to the Prophet’s call, Allah intervenes Himself between that person and his heart. There are people who feel bad that they do not obey the Prophet (PBUH) but yet they are unable to overcome this behaviour and guilt. Such a curse only falls upon a person when he directly disregards the call of Muhammad (PBUH). This is evident from surah Anfaal where Allah says

“Oh you who believe. Respond to Allah and His Prophet when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah comes between a man and his heart and that it is He to whom you all shall be gathered” (Quran 8:24).

A question here is who is this singular ‘he’ this ayah refers to? When the sentence mentions Allah and the messenger, then it should have been “when they call” not ‘when he calls’. This use of singular ‘he’ shows two things:

- That indeed it is the Messenger whom Allah is talking about because it is the Prophet who directly calls us to Allah's message. We cannot hear Allah directly as the prophets. So realistically humans can only respond to the call of a Prophet, not God Himself.
- Secondly singular *he* also gives a metaphorical message that whatever the Prophet calls us towards, his message is the same in essence as that of Allah. The message is also singular. As Allah has already told us several times in not just Quran but also Bible that 'he shall not speak of his own but whatever he hears, he shall speak.' (Bible John 16: 13-15)

Coming back to verse 65 of Surah Nisa, this is not where the admonition ends. Allah wants our submission to be completely sincere and unquestioning. So, He adds further "and then find no resentment to accept your decision" subhanAllah. Not only are we being advised to accept the judgement of Prophet (PBUH) but also to do that without any hesitation. There should be no negativity in our attitudes when accepting the judgement by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). So the question arises for a Quranist when he rejects the hadith, that are you resenting the Prophets judgement? When the literature is clear on its authenticity then why are you hell-bent on hating on those ways that only make your life easier and just?

Finally, Allah reinforces "as ones fully submitting" subhanAllah. So lack of resentment was not enough for Him. He does not want us to just accept our Messengers judgement without any resentment, but the acceptance should also include full submission. Although this seems a difficult thing, however, Allah made it a condition **otherwise He swears to you and me, that otherwise we are devoid of imaan (belief)**. And any Muslim knows, imaan is the base principle for us, without which we are nothing and have no afterlife.

In conclusion, how certain can you be in rejecting the hadith and sunnah so openly? Are you really ready for this possible consequence? Moreover, what harm can you possibly face if you DO follow the sunnah? Is there any Quranic verse that prevents you from following the hadith?

2. REVOKING OF ALLAH'S MERCY FROM ONESELF

Following the way of Muhammad (PBUH) is the way to earn Allah's mercy. Denying that path is like denying the mercy of Allah. In another verse Allah says very clearly, it cannot get more clearer than these two verses:

"(O Messenger!) Tell people: 'If you sincerely love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and will forgive you your sins. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.'" (Quran 3:31)

Subhan Allah, simply by following the Prophet we can earn the love of Allah as well as forgiveness of our sins. There could be no easier short-cut to eternal salvation for a Muslim. However this verse is more of a glad tiding, that does not appeal to someone who thinks he has enough deeds to earn forgiveness and love from Allah. The next verse addresses such thinking

"Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.' If they turn away from this then know that Allah does not love those who refuse to obey Him and His Messenger." (Quran 3: 32)

Simply put, if you refuse to obey the Messenger (as a Quranist declares to do), then you are devoiding yourself of the love of Allah. Then what is left in life to live for if not to earn our Lords love? Did Allah not make it clear also in the infamous verse where He announces that "We have sent you (Muhammad) as a mercy to humanity" (Quran 21:107)

3. LOSS OF RIGHT GUIDANCE

*“Say: “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then (know well) that the Messenger is responsible for what he has been charged with and you are responsible for what you have been charged with. **But if you obey him, you will be guided to the Right Way.** The Messenger has no other responsibility but to clearly convey (the command).” (Quran 24:54)*

Clearly the messenger should not be questioned for the stupidity and arrogance of his audience, however, if we still wish to be guided, we can simply obey the Prophet (PBUH). Which Muslim would not want to be guided to the right way? And then the question definitely arises “why would a Muslim NOT want to obey their Messenger?

Before the following verses (24:54), Allah is reprimanding the hypocrites who made big claims of leaving their homes for the sake of Allah. Allah does not want their empty and false oaths, instead Allah advises them, in ayah 54, to obey the messenger so that they be rightly guided.

Interestingly right after verse 54 Allah provides the reader incentives and details him the benefits that are expected if one does the following; worship Allah, does not commit shirk, establishes prayer, pays the purifying dues (*zakat*) and **obeys the Messenger** (PBUH). Doing the following will mean that one can expect “that you will be shown mercy” (Quran 24:56).

Another interesting thing to note in ayahs 55-56 is that Allah places obedience to Messenger (PBUH) right after the most important and obligatory commands of Islam.

- Worship of the one true God
- Giving up shirk
- Offering salah (prayer)
- Giving Zakat

Failure to follow these four commands can put a Muslims afterlife and even the basic belief into jeopardy. No Muslim on the planet can claim that these four commandments are not obligatory. Every Muslim from any sect or school of thought, unanimously agrees that these four commandments without any doubt are obligatory i.e *fard*. this means that ignoring these commands is a sin. For example, not giving the annual purifying dues (*zakat*) is a sin. Skipping one’s daily prayer is a sin. Associating partners with Allah is a sin that is not forgiven. Now let’s read ayah of surah Nur:

*“Let them (1) **worship Me** and (2) **associate none with Me**, and the one who disbelieves after this, shall be of those who are perverse transgressors. Therefore (3) **establish Salah**, (4) **pay the Zakat dues** and (5) **obey the Messenger** (PBUH); it is expected that you will be shown mercy” (Quran 24: 55-56).*

After reading this ayah, is it still a matter of speculation that whether obedience to messenger is a voluntary act? It clearly informs us that obedience to him is mandatory and not doing so would equate to sinning. One must be thinking that there are many ways to obey the messenger. As discussed in the earlier part of this paper, obeying the messenger is the easiest thing as by the mercy of Allah, we have detailed and verified accounts of his sayings and his actions. Any well-informed Muslim is aware of the fact that we cannot completely obey the messenger if we only follow the instructions of Quran. This is because even the most essential commandment of establishing salah was taught to us by our beloved and wise Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who himself learnt from the angel Jibreel upon the order of Allah Himself. How much *zakat* is to be paid? That was also taught to us by the messenger (PBUH).

So if we are cherry picking his (PBUH) teachings that protect us from disobeying *fard* commandments, then what is stopping us from obeying him in other parts of our lives too? Especially when Allah Himself informs us in Surah Hujuraat that if we followed our own ways and not the way of the

Prophet, then indeed our lives would be much harder and filled with sufferings and distress. Indeed, ignoring the way of Muhammad (PBUH) is like forcing oneself to live a harder life, while following his way can eventually “*change their (our) present state of fear into peace and security*” (Quran 24; 55)

Allah further declares in surah Jathiya the authenticity of Muhammad (PBUH) as He says “Now We have set you ‘O Prophet’ on the ‘clear’ Way of faith. So follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who do not know ‘the truth’” (Quran 45:18). Upon basic reflection we can conclude that:

- the way of Muhammad is the Way of faith that ought to be followed,
- by not following it (the sunnah) we are following the path of those who are lost, and have no truth.

The way of truth is the way of Muhammad (PBUH).

4. REGRET ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

Allah is Al-Aleem. He knows everything in this universe. He knows the future and the past. He knew at the time of Prophet (PBUH) that Quranists will appear. Therefore, it seems this specific verse was revealed targeting this time and space as well as it seems to be tailor made for the Quranists of today. So here is the graphic outcome that Allah clearly warns Quranists about if they dare to disobey His Messenger:

*“Allah has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a Blazing Fire; therein they shall abide for ever. They shall find none to protect or help them. On that Day when their faces shall be turned around in the Fire, they will say: “**Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger.**” They will say: “Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they turned us away from the Right Way.”* (Quran 33:64-67)

Firstly, keeping in mind what we have already learnt from Surah Nisa verse 65 that we lose imaan if we do not make Muhamamd the judge of our disputes, therefore we should be fearful of the word “unbelievers” in this verse as it could be pointing to a Quranist, who considers himself to be a believer. These few verses clearly paint the horrific picture and the words of regret that people will say. “Had we obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger” – we think that such regrets will only be faced by those people of the book who don’t believe in Muhammad’s (PBUH) prophethood, but what about the Quranist? They are more worthy of this lament considering they were so close and aware of their prophet through the Quran, yet they let “their great ones” (scholars, celebrities, societies, ideologies of Modern times etc) turn them away from the “right way” i.e. way of the Prophet (PBUH).

How much clearer warning could Allah give for us to realise that discarding the way of Sunnah, is NOT THE WAY! He is showing you the future outcome **now**, so you can mend your ways now! What is this, if not the extreme mercy and concern of Allah for people who so easily abandon the person on whom Allah Almighty has declared His full trust.

“(O Muhammad), warn mankind of the Day when a severe chastisement shall overtake them, and the wrong-doers will say: “Our Lord, grant us respite for a short while; we shall respond to Your call and will follow Your Messengers.” (But they will be clearly told): “Are you not the same who swore earlier that they shall never suffer decline?” (Quran14:44)

Again in this ayah Allah reiterates the regret of the unbelievers. They also denied the following of their messengers and thus are being punished for it. If we do the same mistake, what is the difference between them and us? There is no guarantee that these people will not constitute the Quranists, who, in my opinion will be the most unfortunate ones. This is because Allah has warned them and us over and over again of the

possible fate that none of us desire, however, for some reasons the Quranist seem indifferent to this warning.

5. FALLING INTO HYPOCRISY

This is a more complicated point to dwell into, however for the sake of my conscience it seems important to attempt to explain it. Through the following ayahs we will see that one consequence of rejecting the prophet (PBUH) is hardening of hearts. And the reason this point is more complicated is because along with the warning and unlikely truth reveals, it also portrays a bright side of hope for those who may feel upset if they resonate with the hypocrites.

This verse is complicated also because it has been subject to incorrect translations. However, due to the wisdom and miraculous nature of this Book, regardless of what meaning we take of the word *tamanna* ('desire' or 'to recite') in these ayahs, we still get a cohesive picture.

Before the ayahs are mentioned, their implications for a Muslim will be discussed. In these ayahs from Surah Hajj, Allah is informing us of a theory about how certain human behaviour and thinking works. We learn from these verses that typically whenever a Prophet or a Messenger is sent he is hindered by the satan. Every prophet wishes his people to believe in their true Lord and especially the people they love the most. The satan intervenes in their wishes to make them upset and give up. We see this throughout the Quran how all prophets faced enemies who did everything possible to dismantle their mission and their wishes. For example, we learn about prophet Nuh AS and how much he wished his son to believe in Allah. However, the satan intervened and gave wasawasa (evil thoughts) to his son who refrained from believing till his last breath. Although such a setback could depress a prophet, however as per the verses, Allah says He eradicates the evil satan wishes to bring upon them. So, Allah keeps the prophets imaan intact and helps them recover the loss of their dearest wishes.

The theory that follows this is what we should be paying attention to. Allah says that when people see a prophet face such set backs, then those people who have a disease in their heart, they use this very incident as an excuse to not believe. And not only do they disbelieve, they do so very strongly.

Allah gives us a clear reason why He lets such things happen. Even though it seems like a trial for the prophet, but it is actually a trial for the observers around him. Witnessing a prophets desires get unfulfilled makes some people averse to his message. And these people are the ones who suffer with a disease in their heart. On the other hand, there are also people who realise the truth of the message, which then humbles them and softens their heart.

A.Importance of such trials:

One may wonder about the importance of trials for people. These ayahs show us that rejecting a Prophets message is a trial for people's hypocrisy to come out. Witnessing a prophets wish get hampered with, is a big trial for people as it will reveal their hearts weaknesses. Allah called such hearts as those which are diseased.

Trials and ayahs like this are for us. They allow us to identify and amend our weaknesses. Why else would Allah put humans to trials anyway. So HE can know whose hearts are diseased? Absolutely not. He is *Al-Aleem* – All Knowing. It is so *we* can identify our shortcomings and rectify them. It is so pleasant to see that right after Allah mentions the trial to be for those whose hearts are diseased, He says 'so that those who possess knowledge may realize that this is the Truth' – subhaanAllah. Allah is revealing to us here the importance of using our intellect and gaining knowledge as it can take us out of our diseased states. Moreover, here Allah also seems to covertly empathize with such hypocrites as He lets them know that it's

okay if the trial revealed something ugly from within you. Now you can work on it and ask Him for guidance. Below are the verses:

And (O Muhammad), (is has always been the case with) every messenger and prophet We sent before you that whenever he had a desire, satan tried to interfere with his desire. But Allah eradicates the mischiefs worked by Satan and confirms His Revelations, for Allah is all-Knowing, All- Wise. (He allows this) so that HE may make satans obstacles a trial for those whose hearts suffer from the disease and whose hearts are false --- the fact is that these unjust people have gone far away in their enmity --- and so that those who have knowledge may realise that this (message) is the Truth from Allah and may believe in it, and their hearts may submit humbly to it. Most surely Allah always guides the Believers to the straight way.” (Quran 22: 52-54)

These Qur’anic verses inform us of the state of our hearts which can either be humble and soft or it could be hard and diseased. Allah Almighty already put the theory in front of us. Now it is up to us to self analyse and rectify. As mentioned earlier, these bold verses also offer a ray of hope in the end when Allah says ‘He guides believers to the straightway’. Thus, He is making it absolute upon Himself to guide anyone who wishes to be guided. Thus, this prevents one from feeling hopeless and also renders the blame on others useless. We know through these verses that other agents and situations (guided by satan) will, and can, play a role in misguiding us, however, Allah is always there provided we wish to obtain guidance, therefore, eventually we cannot blame anyone but ourselves.

In conclusion the main points from the above-mentioned verses are:

- Every prophet and messenger that ever came, had their desires tampered with by the satan.
- The obstacles that he created for them worked as a trial for the hypocrites, whose hearts were false.
- Allah helps his prophets to recover from the losses but He also causes the hidden hypocrisy of people to be revealed,
- At the same time, a believer’s belief is also manifested because of their knowledge and understanding.
- This is a common occurrence and indeed those people who think and have understanding can truly be mellowed down and appreciative of the fact that indeed it is the creator who can inform us of such human behaviour, and not ourselves.
- Allah also assures us of guidance from Him, so not all hope is lost for someone who sees himself as the one whose heart is suffering from a spiritual disease.

6. HELL AS ULTIMATE REFUGE

“If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell – what an evil refuge!” (Quran 4: 115)

What an evil refuge of hell. Certainly what an evil refuge for someone who believes in God and knows about heaven and hell. This verse is quite self-explanatory. Who better suits this punishment than the Muslim who is aware and informed of the ways of the Prophet (PBUH) and yet he wishes to discard it. This ayah coincides with the previously discussed ayah from Surah Anfal (verse 24) where Allah informs us of His own intervention between a person and his heart when they openly reject their Messengers call. Do you really want that to happen and then suffer this outcome. Would a believer in Allah and his messengers want to be left alone on a path that God almighty calls “evil refuge!”?

Lucky for you and me, Allah also says here “in the path he has CHOSEN”, this means there is still time for a Quranist to make a choice that does not leave him stranded. We always need Allah for guidance

as we are faulty beings. We cannot afford to be left on our flimsy decisions. May Allah protect us from making this heavy decision of discarding the Sunnah as then all hope is lost of being brought back to the right path. May we not make the mistake of rejecting Allah's constant guidance.

B. Conclusion

All in all, just by looking at a few verses of the quran we can see that the stakes for rejecting the way of the Prophet are very very high. Basing this extreme step on some idiosyncratic interpretations is not just a foolish move, but also a very dangerous one. It can firstly pour your imaan out of you, make life difficult for you, it can turn you into a hypocrite, it can cause you eternal remorse in the hereafter for taking this one sheepish step and finally, you could end up in hell eternally.

The short conclusion that arises from this section is simple; that if you want to willingly and perfectly obey Allah's two most constant commands in the Quran that say:

- Obey Allah and obey the Messenger
- Believe and do good deeds

Then in order to achieve these following. The sunnah is a must. Not just a good idea. There is no better way to obey the messenger than by following his sunnah and there is no better way to perform good deeds than by doing them the way our Prophet (PBUH) taught us through example or advice.

C. Questions for Quranists:

This section requires that certain questions be put forth the Quranist's in order to understand their position

1. Where do you find the commandment that the sunnah of Prophet is NOT to be followed? Whose path/theory are you following?
2. After reading SOME of the consequences of disregarding Muhammad's (PBUH) call, what makes a self-proclaimed⁴ Muslim still stick to rejecting hadith?
3. What are the consequences of following Muhammad's way, that have also been approved academically to be authentic? Why discard the sunnah ways that are proven to be reliable in all aspects?
4. Let's say the sunnah exists through literary sources, but they are disputed about its authenticity however the content is in line with the Quran. What is the sever consequence of still incorporating that sunnah in your life?⁵ Does the Quran severely condemn such behaviour?
5. Since almost every Quranist believes in Isaac newton and his theories, and is happily making use of his inventions that influence us all today. My question is why? What evidence do Quranist have that such behaviour is permitted? Since we see the influence of Muhammad (PBUH) as highest in the world, but we see that Quranist stubbornly reject his ways. Why is this hypocrisy allowed for non-Muslim inventors but not for Muhammad (PBUH)? Why don't the Quranist give up using electricity because they have not enough proof of whether his writings are authentic or not? If authenticity doesn't matter than why do they hesitate in following a sunnah if its not as authentic as the Quran?

⁴ Self-proclaimed because it has been explained in section 2 from clear verses that those who do not take Muhammad (PBUH) as the judge of their matters, they do not really believe. So Muslim hood comes into question.

⁵ Bear in mind this question is for those ahadith which are questionable in their authenticity. The ones that are strongly sahih, this question does not even arise for them.

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