

REVISION NOTES: 1.5 (a) The Sunnah of the Prophet

1. Key Definitions

To score well, you must distinguish between these two terms:

- **Sunnah:** Literally means "the trodden path." It refers to the **actions, lifestyle, and silent approvals** of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- **Hadith:** The **written record** or narration of the Sunnah. A Hadith is the report of what the Prophet said or did.

2. The Components of Sunnah

The Sunnah is generally divided into three categories:

1. **Qaul (Sayings):** What the Prophet (PBUH) said. (e.g., "Actions are judged by intentions.")
2. **Fi'l (Actions):** What the Prophet (PBUH) did. (e.g., How he performed Wudu or stood in prayer.)
3. **Taqrir (Silent Approval):** When a companion did something in front of the Prophet (PBUH) and he did not forbid it, signifying it is permissible.

3. Importance of Sunnah for Muslims

The Sunnah is the second source of Islamic law (Shari'ah). Its importance lies in:

- **Interpretation of the Qur'an:** The Qur'an gives general commands (e.g., "Perform Salah"), but the Sunnah provides the details (how many units, what to say, and the timings).
- **A Perfect Example (Uswatun Hasanah):** Allah describes the Prophet as the best pattern of conduct (Surah 33:21). The Sunnah shows how to apply Islam to family life, business, and government.
- **Legal Authority:** In the Qur'an, Allah commands: *"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger"* (Surah 4:59). Therefore, following the Sunnah is a religious obligation.
- **Clarification:** The Prophet (PBUH) clarified complex issues, such as the specific rules of inheritance or the details of the Hajj pilgrimage.

4. The Role of Sunnah in Islamic Belief and Practice

The Sunnah acts as the "manual" for the "textbook" (the Qur'an).

In Practice (Ibadah):

- **Salah:** The Qur'an mentions prayer, but the Prophet said, "*Pray as you have seen me praying.*"
- **Zakat:** The Sunnah defines the *Nisab* (minimum amount of wealth) on which Zakat is due.
- **Hajj:** The Prophet performed Hajj publicly to show the Ummah the correct rituals.

In Belief (Aqidah):

- The Sunnah reinforces the Oneness of Allah (Tawhid) and explains the details of the Day of Judgment, Heaven, and Hell that are mentioned briefly in the Qur'an.

5. The Recording of the Sunnah

The preservation of the Sunnah happened in stages:

1. **Memorization:** The Sahaba (Companions) had remarkable memories and memorized the Prophet's words and actions immediately.
2. **Practice:** The most effective recording was the daily practice of the community.
3. **Written Notes:** Some companions, like **Abdullah ibn Amr**, kept personal notebooks (*Sahifas*) of the Prophet's sayings.
4. **Formal Collection:** Later, scholars like **Imam Bukhari** and **Imam Muslim** traveled thousands of miles to verify and compile "Sahih" (authentic) collections.

PRACTICE EXAM QUESTIONS

1. Describe Question (6 Marks)

"Describe the three different types of Sunnah."

- *Tip:* List and define Qaul (sayings), Fi'l (actions), and Taqrir (silent approval) with a brief example for each.

2. Explain Question (6 Marks)

"Explain the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

- *Tip:* Focus on how the Sunnah explains, expands upon, and demonstrates the practical application of the Qur'anic verses. Use the example of Salah (Prayer).

3. Assessment Question (12 Marks)

"The Sunnah is as important as the Qur'an for the daily life of a Muslim. Assess this statement."

- **Agree:** Without the Sunnah, a Muslim cannot perform basic duties like Salah or Zakat correctly. The Qur'an commands obedience to the Prophet.
- **Disagree:** The Qur'an is the literal word of Allah and the primary source. The Sunnah is secondary and must never contradict the Qur'an.
- **Conclusion:** The two are inseparable; the Qur'an provides the principles, and the Sunnah provides the application.