

## Obey Allah and Obey the Messenger; One or Two Sources?

[www.detailedquran.com](http://www.detailedquran.com)

First we must summarise what has been learned in the last 3 lessons: -

1. The Qur'an is complete and detailed for our guidance.
  - a. This implies that other sources of guidance are not necessary.
  - b. Anything not in the Qur'an (by virtue of its completeness) is not binding upon us.<sup>1</sup>
2. The excellent example of the prophet can be found in the Qur'an in the same way it can for Ibrahim.
3. The only revelation/inspiration given to Muhammad was the Qur'an. That is, it is the only guidance from Allah that reaches him.
  - a. Those who do not judge by what is REVEALED are unbelievers/wrong doers/rebellious.

Now one may say "What if what is revealed tells us to follow what is not revealed (Like Hadith)?" This lesson will deal with this situation, inshallah.

First of all, judging by what is revealed can only happen with the Qur'an. As the Hadith is not revealed, there is no circumstance under which we may judge from it. If Allah says to judge by Hadith (by implication or whatever) then this would contradict with the command to judge by what has been revealed. To continue...

The major argument of the followers of Hadith for the need for and validity of Hadith can be found in the "obey Allah and obey the Messenger" type ayahs.

Let's consider what these could possibly mean: -

1. Obey what Allah says and obey what the prophet independently (independent of the revelation) says.
2. Obey what the prophet says which is revealed to him from Allah.
3. Obey what the prophet says as a result of what was revealed to him from Allah (As in when he judges by the Qur'an).

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger: -

*"Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' Then if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers."*  
(3:32)

Disobedience makes you a disbeliever.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe. (29:51)*

*“You who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger. And do not turn away from him when you are able to hear.”*  
(8:20)

*“The reply of the believers when they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger so that **He** (Allah) can judge between them, is to say, ‘We hear and we obey.’ They are ones who are successful.”*  
(24:51)

Here we clearly see the phrase ‘Allah and His Messenger’ is followed by a clear indication that is the judgement of Allah (He) that is obeyed when you obey the judgement of ‘Allah and His Messenger’. Only Allah judges (12:40, 18:26), and this confirms the understanding just reached.

*“All who obey Allah and His Messenger and have awe of Allah and fear of Him, they are the ones who are victorious.”*  
(24:52)

*“You who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger. And do not turn away from **him** when you are able to hear.”*  
(8:20)

This verse tells us that Allah and his messenger are obeyed through the mouth of the Messenger. This is obvious, and Allah is exact when he states to obey ‘Allah and his messenger’, because if the messenger is delivering the words of Allah, how can you disobey his words and still obey Allah?

Etc...

So are these verses telling us to obey what Allah says and obey what the prophet independently (independent of the revelation) says?

Muhammad has no power from himself to guide correctly: -

*“When the servant of Allah stands calling on Him, they almost swarm all over him. Say: ‘I call only upon my Lord and do not associate anyone else with Him.’ Say: **I possess no power to do you harm or to guide you right.**’ Say: ‘No one can protect me from Allah and I will never find any refuge apart from Him –only in transmitting from Allah and His Messages. **As for him who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he will have the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever and ever.**’ So that when they see what they were promised, they will know who has less support and smaller numbers. Say: ‘I do not know whether what you are promised is close or whether my Lord will appoint a longer time before it.’”*  
(72:19-25)

*“Surely **you cannot guide whom you like/love, but Allah guides whom He pleases,** and He knows best the followers of the right way. And they (Muhammad’s contemporaries) say: If we follow the guidance (Qur’an) with you, we shall be carried off from our country. What ! have We not settled them in a*

*safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind shall be drawn?-- a sustenance from Us; but most of them do not know.”*  
(28:56-57)

This not only tells us that Muhammad cannot guide whom he likes, but it also clearly indicates that his contemporaries recognised that the guidance they were being called to was the guidance **with him (the Qur’an)** and not **his guidance**

Muhammad follows only the Qur’an: -

*“And when Our clear communications are recited to them, those who hope not for Our meeting say: Bring a Qur’an other than this or change it. Say: It is not for me to change it of myself; **I only follow what has been revealed to me;** surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of a mighty day.”*  
(10:15)

*“Say: ‘I am nothing new among the Messengers. I have no idea what will be done with me or you. **I only follow what has been revealed to me.** I am only a clear warner.’”* (46:9)

*“Say: O people! indeed there has come to you the truth from your Lord (The Qur’an), therefore whoever receives guidance, he does so only for the good of his own soul, and whoever goes astray, he goes astray only to the detriment of it, and I am not a disposer of affairs for you.  
And follow what is revealed to you and be patient till Allah should give judgment, and He is the best of the judges.”*  
(10:108-109)

Muhammad is made to proclaim that the truth which gives guidance is that which is sent down to him, the Qur’an. And that all of us must follow that which is revealed.

Muhammad’s judgements come only from the word of Allah: -

*“**Am I to desire someone other than Allah as a judge when it is He Who has sent down the Book explained in detail?**” Those We have given the Book know that it has been sent down from your Lord with truth, so on no account be among the doubters”*  
(6: 114)

*“Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous.”*  
(4:105)

Muhammad warns by the Qur’an, not by his own wisdom: -

*“Say: What thing is the weightiest in testimony? Say: Allah is witness between you and me; **and this Qur’an has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches.** Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with Allah? Say: I do not bear witness. Say: He is only one Allah, and surely I am clear of that which you set up (with Him).”*  
(6:19)

Thus it is clear that Muhammad was not to warn by his own wisdom or anything else (what people would now call Hadith and Sunnah).

Muhammad guides by the Qur'an: -

*“Allah has prepared for them severe chastisement, therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah, O men of understanding who believe! Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder,*

**A Messenger who recites to you the clear revelations of Allah so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darkness into light;** *and whoever believes in Allah and does good deeds, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers now, to abide therein forever, Allah has indeed given him a goodly sustenance.”*

(65:10-11)

So it is clear that Muhammad did not give any guidance apart/independent from the Qur'an.

The next possibility refers to obeying the revelation that Muhammad is delivering to his people.

In this case, what Muhammad is saying is in fact the word of Allah and it must be obeyed, the next verses help in seeing this: -

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, with elaboration: -

*“And obey Allah and obey the messenger and be cautious; but if you turn back, then know that only a **clear deliverance of the message** is (incumbent) on Our messenger”*  
(5:92)

Here we are told that if we disobey Allah and the messenger, then upon the MESSENGER is only the task of delivering the message (that is, of reciting the Qur'an to the people).

*“Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger; but if you turn back (**if you disobey him**), **then on him rests that which is imposed on him** (clear deliverance of the message) and on you rests that which is imposed on you; **and if you obey him, you will be guided**; and **nothing rests on the messenger but clear delivering** (of the message)”.  
(24:54)*

**‘and if you obey him, you will be guided’** but from (72:19-25), we see that Muhammad has no power to guide aright, hence we see here that in the context of obeying Allah and his messenger, the obeying of Muhammad is in actual fact the obedience of Allah, which ties in with what immediately follows it, namely that his mission was simply to clearly deliver the revelation (The Qur'an) and (4:80 below).

And if we once again look at the following verses: -

*“When the servant of Allah stands calling on Him, they almost swarm all over him. Say: ‘I call only upon my Lord and do not associate anyone else with Him.’ Say: **I possess no power to do you harm or to guide you right.**’ Say: ‘No one can protect me*

from Allah and I will never find any refuge apart from Him –only in transmitting from Allah and His Messages. **As for him who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he will have the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever and ever.** So that when they see what they were promised, they will know who has less support and smaller numbers. Say: 'I do not know whether what you are promised is close or whether my Lord will appoint a longer time before it.'

(72:19-25)

If we study the two underlined statements in this ayah we very clearly get an understanding of what it means to say 'Obey Allah and his messenger'. The first statement: -

' Say: **I (The messenger Muhammad) possess no power to do you harm or to guide you right.**'

This very clearly indicates that Muhammad CANNOT guide us correctly (To Jannah or away from Jahhannam).

Yet the next statement says: -

**As for him who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he will have the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever and ever.**'

And it implies that Obeying Allah and the messenger guides to Jannah and away from Jahannam! And as Muhammad cannot guide us, but Allah and his messenger can guide us, it therefore follows that Allah and his messenger does not refer to the separate obedience of Muhammad and Allah for our guidance, but instead t the obedience of Allah through the obedience of the Messenger when he recites the Qur'an .

*“And if you (o people) reject (the truth), nations before you did indeed reject (the truth); and **nothing is incumbent on the messenger but a plain delivering** (of the message)”.*  
(29:18)

No duty is imposed upon the messenger but to proclaim the message.

*“And obey Allah and obey the messenger, but if you turn back, then upon Our **messenger devolves only the clear delivery** (of the message)”.*  
(64:12)

No duty is imposed upon the messenger but to proclaim the message.

*“Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah. If anyone turns away, **we did not send you to them as their keeper.**”*  
(4:80)

If you obey the Messenger (NOT IF YOU OBEY MUHAMMAD), you have obeyed Allah, and if anyone disobeys (turns away), then it is not the messenger's (in this case Muhammad) job to look after them (the disbelievers) or arrange their affairs. Which

means that for those who obey Allah and his messenger (The Qur'an), the messenger will then have the responsibility of looking out for them or arranging their affairs. This is dealt within lesson 5.

(4:80) very clearly shows that obeying Muhammad was the same as obeying Allah. This is because Muhammad ordered only what Allah ordered (In the Qur'an), this also shows that if Muhammad said something that was not from the Qur'an, then it would not be binding as it is not what Allah said and therefore would not fit (4:80).

Some other indications of the fact that Obey Allah and obey the messenger, is referring to the word of Allah as spoken by the prophet are as follows: -

*“And an announcement from Allah and his Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah and his Messenger are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore, if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve”*

(9:3)

Was this referring to two different announcements, one from the prophet and the other from Allah? No! Here lies the logic of saying Allah and his messenger, because even though it is the word of Allah, it is spoken by Muhammad and hence defined as his word too. So if you say obey Allah and not Muhammad, no one would obey the Qur'an, if you say obey Allah only all the time, then there would be ambiguity with respect to obeying the (Qur'anic) words when they came from Muhammad's mouth. (4:80) fits in with this perfectly.

This is what Allah does, he reveals his message to a human who proclaims it, Allah has never spoken to towns and cities directly, it was always through a messenger, through the mouth of the messenger.

Of note is the fact that we never read in the Qur'an words like "Obey Allah and obey Muhammad", there is something instructive in this, as it is not Muhammad the man that was to be obeyed, it was the messenger that was to be obeyed, this is to emphasise that what is to be obeyed is the "message" of God and not the words, ideas or views of the man Muhammad.

So when you obey the messenger, you are of course obeying the message and hence Allah.

Allah Decides and the messenger decides the same way, no separation in this: -

*“When Allah and His Messenger have decided something it is not for any man or woman of the believers to have a choice about it. Anyone who disobeys Allah and His Messenger is clearly misguided.”*

(33:36)

It is obvious that Muhammad will decide whatever Allah decides, and hence there cannot be any separation in this regard (that is, that you would obey the decisions of Allah in the Qur'an, and separately obey the decisions of Muhammad even if they

have no Qur'anic basis). The next verses clarify that it is only Allah who judges anything and not Muhammad. That is why Muhammad can make no judgement unless it is Allah's.

Only Allah Judges: -

*“Surely the Hukm (Law and Judgment) is for none but Allah”*

(12:40)

*“He does not make anyone His associate in His Hukm (Law and Judgment)”*

(18:26)

*“Shall I seek a Law-giver other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book distinctly elucidated.”*

(6:114)

And so we see that there is no separation of Authority in the phrase ‘Obey Allah and obey the messenger’, it really just means, obey the word of Allah by obeying what is revealed through the prophet.

Hence the 3<sup>rd</sup> possibility of absolutely obeying for all time what the prophet says as a result of what was revealed to him from Allah (As in when he judges by the Qur'an) is not to be accepted, as the prophet's individual judgement is not the judgement or word of Allah and hence cannot be described as Allah and the messenger's word/judgement (it is merely the judgement of a societal leader for his time and place, and not revelation and guidance for all humanity). This can only happen if it is first Allah's judgement (That is, if it is contained in the Qur'an). Because for example, Muhammad used his judgement in (9:43) and was wrong, because it was not the judgement of Allah.

Let us not forget that the Qur'an is full of Allah's judgements and answers to the kuffar and Muslims, recall: -

*“The rejecters say: ‘Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? Thus (it is revealed gradually) that We may strengthen your heart thereby and We have arranged it in right order. And no example do they bring to you but We bring to you the truth and the best explanation”*

(25:32-33)

*“O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if you question about them when the Qur'an is being revealed, they shall be declared to you; Allah pardons this, and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing.”*

(5:101)

And so Muhammad would have answered his opponents directly with the Word of Allah. Recall all the places Allah says ‘Say (Qul)’ to the believers and unbelievers, and ‘They say (Qalu/Qaal)’ or they ask...

Consider the next verse: -

*“Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow guardians besides Him, how little do you mind.”*  
(7:3)

This is general in scope, so we should not even take Muhammad/Messenger as a guardian other than Allah when it comes to guidance. This is the clear command of Allah to follow what has been revealed. Not what the prophet says, not what he does, but **what is revealed**.

But to obey what the prophet says as a result of what was revealed to him from Allah (As in when he judges by the Qur’an) is in fact valid because of his societal role (as indicated in the Qur’an) apart from being the messenger (this is dealt with in the next lesson (5)).

In conclusion, consider the following: -

*“Say: I only call upon my Lord, and I do not associate any one with Him.*

***Say: I do not control for you evil or good.***

*Say: Surely no one can protect me against Allah, nor can I find besides Him any refuge:*

***(Mine is) but a delivery from Allah and His messages; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger surely he shall have the fire of hell to abide therein for a long time.***

*Until when they see what they are threatened with, then shall they know who is weaker in helpers and fewer in number.*

*Say (O Muhammad, unto the disbelievers): I know not whether that which ye are promised is nigh, or if my Lord hath set a distant term for it.*

*The Knower of the unseen! and He does not reveal His secrets to any, Except to him whom He chooses as a messenger; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him,*

***So that He may make evident that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them and He records the number of all things.”***

(72:20-28)

**“Am I to desire someone other than Allah as a judge when it is He Who has sent down the Book explained in detail?”** *Those We have given the Book know that it has been sent down from your Lord with truth, so on no account be among the doubters.”*

(6: 114)

Consider this, Allah has told us that the Qur’an is detailed, clear and complete for our guidance, what sense does it then make to say that Allah is telling us to follow more/separate guidance from Muhammad?

Consider: -

*“Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe.”*

(29:51)

Even from this point of view, in order for the Qur'an to be without contradiction, 'obey Allah and the messenger' cannot mean to obey two separate sources for guidance.