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Publisher's Foreword

Islam has given two reliable pathways for the guidance of mankind. One of them is the clear Verses of Qur'an while the other, quite consistent with the first, is what we call *Sunnah* or *Ḥadīth*.

To explain and interpret its basic and brief teachings, Qur'an has itself mentioned the need for *Sunnah* and the Prophet's model lifestyle. The latter explains the former. The *Sunnah* is an indispensable guide to understand the commandments and passages of Qur'an. Without *Aḥādīth*, the entire faith and the entire *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) will become no better than a riddle. It is to be noted that the wealth of expository material relating to *Shari'ah*, as found in *Aḥādīth*, was also given to the Prophet ﷺ by Allāh through the archangel Gabriel (Jibrā'il). This is why Qur'an is called Revelation Recited (*Wahy Matlu*) while the *Ḥadīth* is called Revelation Unrecited (*Wahy Ghair Matlu*).

The Arabic word *Ḥadīth* means: conversation, account, narrative, report, and also novel or modern. But as a technical term, however, it means the deeds, utterances, circumstances and matters of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ or, in other words, whatever has come down to us concerning Allāh's Messenger ﷺ and his mission (through his Companions and their followers). *Ḥadīth* is also called *Sunnah* (Tradition), *Akḥbār* (information, report, communication, and message) and *Alghar* (track, trace, sign, mark). *Ḥadīth* may be verbal, or practical or just tacit (that is, when the Prophet ﷺ did not object to some thing, thereby giving his tacit approval). However, some include even the Prophet's *Shamā'il* (his physical descriptions, natural disposition and habits) under the general heading of *Ḥadīth*.

The authority of *Ḥadīth*, its truth and its position in *Shari'ah* is indisputable. The proper art of writing began soon after the Prophet ﷺ began his mission. The Verses of the Revelation "Who has taught by the pen,"^[1] and "Nūn; by the pen and by what they write (therewith),"^[2] gave impetus to the art of writing during the era of the Prophet ﷺ. The people of Arabia who boasted of a retentive memory and their ability to reproduce with accuracy what they

[1] *Al-Alaq* 96:3.

[2] *Al-Qalam* 68:4.