

Al-Hadith, Analysis and an Overview

Authors(s):

A.S. Hashim [3]

Main Sources

Sources of Hadith, Muhammad Al-Jalali.

Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar.

Nahjul Balaaghah, English Translation of certain selections, Farouk Ebeid.

Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doi.

Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim.

What is Hadith?

The Hadith is the record of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (swas). The sayings and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (swas) constitute the Sunnah.

The Hadith has come to supplement the Holy Qur'an as a source of the Islamic religious law. The Hadith is the second pillar after the Qur'an upon which every Muslim rests his faith. Hadith consists of Mat'n and Isnad. Mat'n means the text of the Hadith, while Isnad means the chain of transmitters to that Hadith.

The scholars of the Hadith literature divided the Traditions into categories according to the degree of authenticity and reliability, each category had to meet certain criteria.

The categories are as follows:

1. *Sahih*: The genuine Traditions, the authentic ones.
2. *Moothaq*: Almost like the Sahih but the narration is not as strong as those of the Sahih.
3. *Hassan*: The fair Traditions although inferior in matter of authenticity.
4. *Dha'eef*: The weak Traditions which are not so reliable.

In Shari'ah (Islamic Constitution) deeds and actions are divided into five classes:

1. *Fardh or Wajib*: An obligatory duty the omission of which is Islamically punishable.
2. *Mustahab*: An action which is rewarded, but whose omission is not punishable.
3. *Mubaah*: An action which is permitted but legally is indifferent.
4. *Makrooh*: An action which is disapproved by the Shari'ah but is not under any penalty.
5. *Haram*: An action which is forbidden, and Islamically punishable.¹

The Forged (Fabricated) Hadiths

1. History of Fabrication:
 - a. During Bani Umayya's Rule.
 - b. During Bani Al-Abbas's Rule, in particular with the advent of the schools of thought in Islam.
2. By the year 200 H.: Total of 600,000 Hadiths were in existence, out of which 408,324 Hadith were fabricated Hadiths by 620 forgers.²
3. Most Notorious Forgers: Ibn Jundub, Abu Bukhtari, Ibn Basheer, Abdullah Al-Ansaari, Al-Sindi. Ibn Au'jaa professed before he was hanged that he alone had forged 4,000 Hadiths.³
4. Reason to Fabricate:
 - a. Financial incentive by the Khalifas, for example Mu'awiya awarded Ibn Jundub and others hundreds of thousands of dinars for coming forth with Hadiths that suited him.⁴
 - b. As a means of self-promotion in the government.
 - c. In a drive to enhance a particular school of thought.
 - d. Fanaticism for a school of thought at the expense of others.⁵
5. Al-Qassassoon (The story-tellers): Their operation and major role in the public.

Collection of the Hadith by The Sunni

Collection during the 1st Century H.

a. The administration discouraged putting the Hadith in writing, instead, they encouraged *committing the Hadith to memory*. The general public went along but soon it was discovered that confusion about the authenticity of the Hadith was taking place. For one thing many of the Sahaaba had died, and for another that committing to memory was not reliable at large, especially if you want the Hadith verbatim as the Prophet (swas) had said it at the circumstance it was said.

b. Al-Zuhri, Al-Hazm (both commissioned by Khalifa Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz) but the work was probably not done, due to early death of the Khalifa in 101 H.

Collection during the 2nd Century H.

- a. Ibn Jarir, Al-Thawri, Ibn Basheer, Malik Ibn Anas in his Mu'watta 1.
- b. The necessity of Ilm Al-Rijal, (Science of Cognizance of Transmitters): Their Background, Intelligence, Authenticity, Reliability, Capacity to Memorize, Manner of living, Reputation, Criticism, etc.
- c. Compiling books about forged Hadiths: To warn the Scholars as well as the public.

Collection during the 3rd Century H.:

The Hadith was collected and categorized in the latter part of the third century of Hijrah resulting in six canonical collections (Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah):

- a. Sahih of Al-Bukhari, d.256 A.H: 7275 (2712 Non-duplicated) out of 600,000.
- b. Sahih of Muslim, d.261 A.H: 9200 (4,000 Non-duplicated) out of 300,000.
- c. Sunan of Abu Dawood, d.276 A.H. 4,800 of 500,000.
- d. Sunan of Ibn Maajeh: d.273 A.H.
- e. Jami' of Tirmidhi, d.279 A.H.
- f. Sunan of al-Nisaa'i, d.303 A.H2.

The number of the Shi'a transmitters of Hadith quoted in the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah is over 3003.

Al-Bukhari, of Sahih Al-Bukhari, 194–256H

Collected the Hadith over a period of many years, having established certain strict criteria. Political times were very troublesome especially against Ahlul Bayt (during Al-Mutawak'kil's rulership), therefore Bukhari was circumspect, having mentioned less about Ahlul Bayt's narrations than others of the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah. Of the 2210 Hadiths claimed to have been narrated from A'isha, Bukhari and Muslim accepted only 174 as genuine according to their criteria⁴.

Muslim, of Sahih Muslim, 204–261H

It is said he was student of Al-Bukhari and 8 years younger. He differed from Bukhari in his methodology and criteria. He collected the Hadith over a number of years, having established his own criteria. Political times were less troublesome against Ahlul Bayt, (after Al-Mutawak'kil was killed by his own son), therefore Muslim narrated a large number of Hadiths about Ahlul Bayt.

Al-Nisaa'i of Sahih Al-Nisaa'i, 215–303H

Good Hadith collection, more credible. He wrote Al-Kha'sa's book, about the eminence of 'Ali and Ahlul Bayt and the Hadiths about them. Al-Nisaa'i was 88 years old in Damascus when asked about Mu'awiya said, "All I know is that the Prophet (swas) said about him, 'May he be the glutton whose devouring food ever become worse'." This infuriated Mu'awiya's sympathizers, they attacked him, trampled upon him, crushed his testicles, after which the infirm Nisaa'i was taken to Mecca where he died. He was buried between Safa and Marwa⁵.

1 Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doe, Vol. 1, Pages 34–35.

2 Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doe, Vol. 1, Pages 38–40.

3 Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Page 619.

4 Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim, Vol. 1, Page 63.

5 Al-Shatharaat, Vol. 2, Page 240. Also Al-Saadiq and Four Madh'Habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Page

560.5 Al-Shatharaat, Vol. 2, Page 240. Also Al-Saadiq and Four Madh'Habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Page 560.

Collection of the Hadith By The Shi'a

It was during the Khilaafah of Abu Bakr and early Khilaafah of Omar that Imam 'Ali (a.s.) set to the task of registering the Hadiths. Imam 'Ali was incomparably strict about Islam, and could foresee the need to register the Hadith to be the source for future generations. 'Ali was fanatic about the accuracy of his

writing, and in an agonizingly methodical manner he accomplished the following:

During Abu Bakr's Khilaafah: 'Ali rendered in writing the following:

- a. Holy Qur'an: *Chronological* order of the Qur'an's revelations.
- b. Tafseer of the Holy Qur'an, 3 volumes: called *Mus'haf Fatima*.

During Omar's Khilaafah: 'Ali rendered the following:

- a. Hadith of the Prophet (swas): Voluminous writing, called Saheefa of 'Ali.
- b. Fiqh: Al-Ah'kaam (rulings) and Mu'aamalat (transactions), the Halal and Haram.

During Uthman's Khilaafah: 'Ali rendered the following:

- a. History of the various Prophets as he learned from Prophet Muhammad (swas), called: *The White Al-Jafr*.
- b. Islamic rules and directives of Wars, called *The Red Al-Jafr*.

The books 'Ali rendered were called Al-Jaami'a (the Encyclopedia) and they were left with the Imams of Ahlul Bayt, each new Imam receiving them from the dying predecessor Imam. The Imams referred to these Hadiths and books over a period of about three centuries. Notable among them is Imam Ja'far Al-Saadiq, who was the teacher of Imam Abu Hanifah and Al-Maliki, and as many as 4000 scholars who graduated from his school. As many as 400 religious books were written by his students, referred to as ***the 400 Usool***.

Because of the source and chain of narration of the Hadith, the Shi'a (Ja'fari) rely only on the Hadiths as *narrated by Ahlul Bayt* or those Hadiths in the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah (Bukhari, Muslim and others) that are *similar* to what Ahlul Bayt had quoted.

The Corpus of Islamic Knowledge

- The *Holy Qur'an* in chronological order.
- The *Tafseer* of the Holy Qur'an consisting of three large volumes, called **Mus'haf Fatima**.
- The books of *Hadith* as Imam 'Ali had recorded them, called **Saheefa of 'Ali**.
- The books about *Al-Ah'kaam*, detailing the rule and regulations of the Shari'ah.

● The books of Jafr:

● The White Jafr about knowledge of the Prophets, life happenings, and other special (mystic) matters.

● The Red Jafr comprised of rules and matters about and involving wars.

‘Ali about Ahlul Bayt

Describing the high standing of Ahlul Bayt ‘Ali said in one of his sermons:

ومنها يعني آل النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام

هُم مَوْضِعُ سِرِّهِ، وَلَجَأُ أَمْرِهِ، وَعَيْبَةُ عِلْمِهِ، وَمَوْئِلُ حُكْمِهِ، وَكُهُوفُ كُتُبِهِ، وَجِبَالُ دِينِهِ، بِهِمْ أَقَامَ انْحِنَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ، وَأَذْهَبَ ارْتِعَادَ فَرَائِصِهِ.

Allah Almighty has placed His trust in Muhammad's Household (Ahlul Bayt). They are the citadel where His Commandments receive protection, and from which the Directives are defined and interpreted. Muhammad's Household are:

- The *fountainheads* of knowledge created by Allah,
- The *shelters* for Allah's teachings,
- The *haven* for the Heavenly Books, and
- The *mighty bastion* to defend Allah's religion.

Islam in its beginning was weak and helpless, but Muhammad's (swas) Household came to its service, support, and defense. Islam was shaken by the infidels, but Muhammad (swas) Household made it strong and powerful.

About 30 years later, ‘Ali's (a.s.) grandson, Al-Sajjad (a.s.) invoked a Du'aa on behalf of Ahlul Bayt in his renowned book As-Sahifa As-Sajjadiyah:

“Oh Lord! Bless Thy Ahlul Bayt, whom Thou chose to execute Thine works, and have made them the reservoir for Thy knowledge, the guardians for Thy religion, deputies of Thine on earth, and the path toward Thy Paradise.”

Ja'fari (Shi'a) Source of Hadith

The original books of Hadith as written by Imam 'Ali (a.s.) are not available, but the sources of Hadith of Ahlul Bayt were best registered by:

Al-Kulaini (d.329 A.H.=940 A.D.) in the book of Al-Kaafi which registers 16,199 Hadiths.

a. Life: Great scholar, taught in Baghdad, wrote many books.

b. Hadith Works: Al-Kaafi took 20 years to write, 34 sections with 326 chapters. Registered 16,199 Hadith or sayings through Ahlul Bayt, 2577 Sahih, 1118 Moothaq, 302 Qawiy, 144 Hassan, and 9380 Weak.

Al-Siddooq in the book of Man La Yah'dharhu al-Faqeeh.

a. Life: Scholar of exceptional caliber, from Qum. Wrote numerous books and resided in Baghdad, teaching for a while.

b. Hadith Works: Man La Yah'dharhu Al-Faqeeh, 5,973 Hadiths in 446 sections.

Toosi in the book of Al-Tah'dheeb, and the book of Istibsaar.

a. Life: Leader and scholar of great repute; taught in Baghdad both Shi'a and Sunni. During disturbance between Shi'a and Sunni which the government enticed, Al-Toosi's library was burned, his house attacked, and he left Baghdad to Najaf establishing the Howza Ilmiyyah.

b. Hadith Works:

i. Tah'dheeb Al-Ah'kaam, 12,590 Hadiths, in 390 sections.

ii. Al-Istibsaar 5,521 Hadiths.

Highlights of Collection of Hadith, Shi'a

Hadith in the 1st Century

Collected by	Book	Comment
Imam 'Ali	Saheefa of 'Ali	Referenced by Shi'i and Sunni scholars
Zainul Abideen	Risalat Al-Huqooq	Written by the Imam or Dictated to his Companions
Abi Rafi'	Sunan and Ah'kaam	Servant of the Prophet, close to 'Ali, d 30H
Jabir Al-Ansaari	Mansak	Companion of the Prophet, d 78H

Hadith in the 2nd Century

Collected by	Book	Comment
Imam Al-Baaqir	Tafseer Al-Qur'an	Having references to Hadith
Zaid Ibn 'Ali	Mus'had	Hadith and Fiqh
Imam Al-Saadiq	Al-Tawhid	Most of the writing by his Companions
	The 400 Usool (400 books).	All referencing to Imam Ja'far Al-Saadiq.
Al-Saadiq's Companions	Elaboration and expansion on Hadith	Completed by the time of Al-Hassan Al-Askari.

Hadith in the 3rd Century

Depending on the 400 Usool (the 400 Books) three massive works of collecting the Hadith through Ahlul Bayt, categorized and indexed, were done. It became a reference for about two centuries.

They are:

1. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Al-Warraaq **Al-Hadhrami**
2. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Muhammad ibn Ahmad **Al-Asha'ri**
3. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Muhammad ibn Al-Hassan ibin **Al-Waleed**

Hadith in the 4th Century Till Now

Collected by	Book	Comment
Al-Kulaini	Al-Kaafi	16,199 Hadiths, most of which are Sahih, Hassan, Moothaq, or Qawiy.
Al-Qummi Al-Siddooq	Man La Yah'dharhu Al-Faqeeh	5,973 Hadiths, with 3913 References.
Muhammad Al-Toosi	Tah'dheeb Al-Ah'kaam	12,590 Hadiths, in 93 chapters.
Muhammad Al-Toosi	Al-Istibsaar	5,521 Hadiths.

The Golden Chain Of Narration

Because of being the trusted Prophet's family and the most learned, the narrations of Ahlul Bayt were often referred to as the Golden Chain of Narration. Ahlul Bayt's care in transmitting, and their meticulousness, and righteousness made people flock to them for quotes of Hadith, taking them as examples, and writing numerous books about Hadith, Fiqh, Ah'kaam, Halal and Haram among other subjects. The Shi'a believe that the Imams were *Divinely Commissioned*, therefore they were Ma'soom, meaning safeguarded by Allah from:

- Religious error,
- Sin, and

- Forgetfulness.

Therefore, to the Shi'a the narration of the Imams was binding, their teaching binding, and the Hadith they narrated was the only one acceptable to them. If the Hadith in the Sihaah Al-Sittah (Sunni) is confirmed by the Hadith from one of the Imams, then that Hadith is acceptable, otherwise it would be questionable.

Each Imam used to say: "My Hadith is the Hadith of my father, and his is the Hadith of his father, up to 'Ali, who directly narrated the Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (swas)."

Manners of Collection Of Hadith

Name of collection	Al-sihaah al-sittah	Narration of ahlul bayt
School	(Sunni)	(Shi'a)
Writers	Registered by highly qualified scholars in Islam.	Registered by highly qualified scholars in Islam.
Resource of Hadith	Quoting various people whose narration went back to the Prophet's Companions then to Muhammad (swas) himself.	Quoted from the twelve Imams (Ahlul Bayt). Narration was straight through to Prophet Muhammad (swas) by way of 'Ali's registration of Hadith.

-
1. Introduction to the Hadith, A. Rahman Doe, Page 34.
 2. Al-Ghadeer, Al-Amini, Vol. 5, Page 245.
 3. Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim, Vol. 1, Pages 17-20.
 4. Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Page 218.
 5. Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Pages 264-268.

Topic Tags:

Hadith [4]

Category:

Hadith Sciences [5]

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/articles/al-hadith-analysis-and-overview-hashim>

Links

[1] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/login?destination=node/21331%23comment-form>

[2] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/register?destination=node/21331%23comment-form>

[3] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/hashim>

[4] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/hadith>

[5] <https://www.al-islam.org/library/hadith-sciences>