

The Science of Hadith

Lesson 3



Early Hadith Collection

- From the beginning of Islam, The Holy Prophet's words and deeds were of the utmost interest to his followers.
- He was the unquestioned exemplar of faith and piety in Islam and the bridge between God and the temporal world.

Early Hadith Collection

- With this in mind, it is not surprising that many of his Companions who knew how to write tried to record the memorable statements or actions of their Prophet.
- As paper was unknown in the Middle East at the time, the small notebooks they compiled, called sahifas, would have consisted of papyrus, parchment, or cruder substances such as palm fronds.

Early Hadith Collection

- These sahfifas were not public documents; they were the private notes of individual Companions.
- Some Companions were more active in amassing, memorizing, and writing down hadiths than others.

Early Hadith Collection

- In the Sunni tradition, the Companions who are the largest sources for hadiths are:
 - 1. Abu Hurayra: 5300 hadith
 - 2. Abdullah b. Umar: 2600 hadith
 - 3. Anis b. Malik: 2300 hadith
 - 4. Aisha b. Abu Bakr: 2200 hadith
 - 5. Abdullah b. Abbas: 1700 hadith

Early Hadith Collection

- After the death of the Prophet, it was the Companions who assumed both complete religious and political leadership in the community.
- It was Companions like Ibn Abbas in Mecca, Ibn Mas'ud in Kufa, and Salman al-Farisi in Isfahan who had the responsibility of teaching new generations of Muslims and converts about the religion of a prophet they had never known

Early Hadith Collection

- The generation who learned Islam from the Companions and in turn inherited from them the mantle of the Prophet's authority became known as the Successors **التابعون**
- Like the Companions, they too recorded those recollections that their teachers recounted to them about the Prophet's words, deeds and rulings.

Early Hadith Collection

- In addition to compiling their own sahifas from the lessons of the Companions, these Successors also passed on the Companions' own sahifas.
- The sahifas of the Companions and Successors generally served as memory aids, written skeletons of hadiths that would jog the author's memory when he or she read them

Early Hadith Collection

- These sahfifas could not simply be picked up and read. One had to hear the book read by its transmitter in order to avoid grave misunderstandings of the Prophet's words.
- If hadith transmitters had reason to believe that a certain narrator had transmitted hadiths without hearing them read by a teacher, in fact, they considered this a serious flaw in the authenticity of the material

The Emergence of Musannaf Collections

- If we imagine the world of Islam in the early and mid eighth century CE, the next stage of hadith literature appears as a direct reflection of Muslim scholarly discourse of the time.
- We can picture the prominent Successor al-Hasan al-Basri, who studied with Companions like Anis b. Malik, as a recourse for questions of the city's inhabitants

The Emergence of Musannaf Collections

- A few decades later in Medina, we can picture Malik b. Anis (d. 178 AH) seated against one of the pillars of the Prophet's mosque and answering questions.
- According to the Sunni tradition, the first organized works of Islamic scholarship, called musannafs, or books organized topically were basically transcripts of this legal discourse as it had developed during the first two centuries of Islam.

The Emergence of Musannaf Collections

- The earliest surviving musannaf, Malik's Muwatta, is a mixture of Prophetic hadiths, the ruling of his Companions, the practice of the scholars of Medina, and the opinions of Malik himself.
- The Muwatta contains 1720 reports. Of these, however, only 527 are Prophetic hadiths; 613 are statements of the Companions, 285 are from the Successors, and the rest are Malik's opinions.

The Emergence of Musannaf Collections

- In the introduction of his book Malik states: "I presented this book to seventy jurists from the jurists of Madina and all of them agreed upon it, and hence I called it al-Mowatta' (agreed upon)

-

The Emergence of Musannaf Collections

- **Criticism of Malik's Muwatta**
- Al-Suyuti states: Malik did not collect the authentic Hadith only. Rather he compiled hadith that their chains of narrators are either cut or unknown.

The Musnad Era

- The shift from the variety of the musannaf to the focus on Prophetic hadiths that characterizes hadith literature occurred with the emergence of the musnad collections in the late eighth and early ninth centuries CE.
- While sahfifas has been mere ad hoc collections, and musannafs were arranged as topical references, musnad collections were organized according to isnaad.

The Musnad Era

- All the hadiths narrated from a certain Companion would fall into one chapter, then all those transmitted from another into the next, etc
- The earliest known musnad, which has also survived intact, is that of Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (d. 204 AH) مسند ابي داود الطيالسي

The Musnad Era

- The most famous musnad is that of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, which consists of about 27000 hadiths (anywhere from one-fourth to one-third of which are repetitions of hadith via different narrations) and was actually assembled into final form by the scholar's son.

The Musnad Era

- Ibn Hanbal claimed he had sifted the contents of his Musnad from over 750,000 hadiths and intended it to be a reference for students of Islamic law.
- Although, he acknowledged that the book contained unreliable hadith, he supposedly claimed that all its hadith were admissible in discussions about the Prophet's Sunnah-if it was not in his Musnad, he claimed, it could not be a proof in law.

The Musnad Era

- Although Ahmad ibn Hanbal is one of the four Imams of Sunni law, Sunni scholars did not include his book among the 'Six Authentic Books of Hadith'. Al-Bukhari and Muslim are more accepted by the Sunni scholars although they were the students of Ibn Hanbal

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Musannafs and musnads both had their advantages:
- Musannafs were conveniently arranged by subject
- Musnads focused on Prophetic hadiths with full isnaads.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- From the early ninth to the early tenth century, a large number of hadith scholars combined the two genres in the form of sunan/sahih books
- A sunun/sahih was organized topically which made it easy to use as a legal reference but also focused on Prophetic reports with full isnaads.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- The authors of these collections sought only to include hadiths that had been relied upon by Muslim scholars and were known to be authentic either because they had strong isnaads or because the community of scholars had agreed that they truly reflected the Prophet's teachings

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Two of the earliest known sununs are those of Saieed b. Mansur al-Khurasani (d. 227 AH) and Abdullah al-Darimi (d. 255 AH)
- Two participants in the sunan movement were Muhammad b. Ismail al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH) and his student Muslim b. al—Hajjaj al-Naysaburi, broke with the hadith scholars' willingness to use weak hadiths in law.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Unlike their teacher, Ibn Hanbal, Bukhari and Muslim felt that there were enough authentic hadiths in circulation that hadith scholars could dispense with less worthy narrations.
- According to the Sunni tradition, Bukhari and Muslim were thus the first to produce hadith collections devoted only to hadiths whose isnaads they felt met the requirements of authenticity.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Their books were the first wave of what some have termed “the sahih movement”
- Known as the “Sahihayn”, the collections of Bukhari and Muslim would become the most famous books of hadith in Sunni Islam.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- **Sahih al-Bukhari**
- Muhammad b. Ismail al-Bukhari devoted 16 years to sifting the hadiths he included in his sahih from a pool of 600,000 narrations.
- The book consists of 97 chapters, each divided into subchapters.
- 7,397 hadiths
- If you include repetitions the number is 2602

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Sahih al-Bukhari covers the full range of legal, ritual, theological and ethical topics.
- Many commentaries have been written on Sahih al-Bukhari but the most famous is Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's فتح الباري في شرح صحيح البخاري

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- **Shia Criticism of Sahih al-Bukhari**
- Some sunni scholars have challenged the authenticity of some of its narrations
- Ibn Hajar in the introduction of his commentary on Sahih Bukhari asserted: "The experts in hadith criticized and rejected 110 hadith narrated in Bukhari, 32 of which are also narrated by Muslim.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Bukhari narrates many traditions from individuals who were known for their loyalty to the Ummayyds and their animosity towards Imam Ali
- Such figures include: Amr Ibn Aas, Marwan Ibn Hakam, Muawiyah, Mughayrah Ibn Shu'ba, Nu'man Ibn Bashir

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Bukhari only narrated 19 hadith from Imam Ali who was with the Prophet from the first day of the advent of Islam to the last day of the life of the Prophet
- He narrated only 1 hadith from Fatima al-Zahra the daughter of the Prophet
- He did not narrate any hadith from Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein; the only grandsons of the Prophet and the Masters of the youth of the Paradise.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- Bukhari did not narrate any hadith from Imam Sadiq, not even as a narrator of the hadith of his grandfather!
- He was a contemporary to Imam al-Jawad, Imam al-Hadi and Imam al-Askari and yet did not narrate any single hadith through any of them.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- **Sahih Muslim**
- Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d 261 AH) was a student of Bukhari
- His Sahih is much more raw hadith collection than Bukhari's
- It contains fewer chapters (only 54) and lacks Bukhari's legal commentary

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- It has many more narrations, numbering about 12,000, with Muslim scholars placing the number of Prophetic traditions at around 4000.
- Unlike Bukhari, Muslim keeps all the narrations of a certain hadith in the same section. Muslim also diverges significantly from Bukhari in his exclusion of commentary reports from Companions and later figures.

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- There is considerable overlap between the Sahihayn.
- Muslim scholars generally put the number of traditions found in both books at 2326
- Bukhari and Muslim drew essentially from the same pool of transmitters, sharing approximately 2400 narrators. Bukhari narrated from only 430 that Muslim did not, while Muslim used about 620 transmitters that Bukhari excluded.
- The most famous commentary written on Sahih Muslim is by al-Nawawi

The Sahih and Sunan Movement

- **Shia Criticism of Sahih Muslim**
- Like his teacher, Bukhari, he also relies heavily on individuals who were loyal to the Ummayyads and harbored hatred towards the family of the Prophet
- The presence of narrations that are evidently fabricated:

The 6 Authentic Books

- Among all the Sunni Hadith collections, there are six books that are more the most prominent and authentic.
 - 1. Sahih al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH)
 - 2. Sahih Muslim (d. 261 AH)
 - 3. Sunan Abu Dawud (d. 275 AH)
 - 4. Sunan al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH)
 - 5. Sunan al-Nasai (d. 303 AH)
 - 6. Sunan Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH)

The 6 Authentic Books

- Some exclude Sunan Ibn Majah and replace it with the Muwatta of Malik b. Anis
- Others replace Sunan Ibn Majah with Sunan al-Darimi

Other Sunni Books of Hadith

- Another famous hadith collection compiled by Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, known as Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405 AH)
- He wrote *المستدرک علی الصحیحین*
- His book is a supplement to Sahihayn. He has compiled hadith that Bukhari and Muslim missed in their books although according to the principles of Bukhari and Muslim they are authentic.

Other Sunni Books of Hadith

- Some of the biased scholars have accused al-Hakim of being a Shia despite the fact that he was a Shaf'i scholar.
- The reason for such accusations is because al-Hakim has narrated many hadith on the virtues of Ahlul Bayt in general and about Imam Ali in particular.
- Al-Hakim asserts that these hadith are authentic according to the principles accepted by Bukhari and Muslim but they did not narrate it.
-

Other Sunni Books of Hadith

- For instance, al-Hakim narrated the famous Hadith of al-Ghadir with the same isnaad that Muslim narrated from Zayd b. Arqam. However, unlike Muslim, he quoted the important part of the hadith in which the Prophet said, "Whoever I am his master, then Ali is his master too."

Other Sunni Books of Hadith

- Ibn-ul-Athir (d. 606 AH) compiled a hadith collection called جامع الاصول في احاديث الرسول which translates “Comprehensive Principles in Narrations of the Messenger.”
- Ibn-ul Athir has compiled the six books that to his conviction were authentic. They are al-Mowatta' in addition to the first five authentic books of Sunnis. Ibn-ul-Athir replaced Ibn Majah with the Muwatta of Malik.

Other Sunni Books of Hadith

- In order not to bore the layman readers, he omitted the chain of transmitters of the hadith and only mentioned the name of the one who is narrating from the Prophet .
- He has also deleted most of the narrations from other than the Prophet. His work is a good source for a quick access to the hadith mentioned in the Six Authentic Books of Sunnis.

Most Comprehensive Sunni Book of Hadith

- Historically the most comprehensive Sunni book of Hadith would be **جوامع الجامع** “Collecting of the Collections” also called **الجامع الكبير** “The Great Collector” by al-Suyuti (d. 911 AH)
- al-Suyuti intended to collect all the Prophetic narrations in one book.

Most Comprehensive Sunni Book of Hadith

- To compile his book he referred 71 books of hadith. He then divided his work into two main sections: the words of the Prophet, and the actions of the Prophet.
- Unfortunately, al-Suyuti died before he finished his work. Thus, his book was never published.

Most Comprehensive Sunni Book of Hadith

- Less than half a century after the death of al-Soyouti, one of the famous narrators of the tenth century; Ali b. Abdul Malik Husam al-Din known as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi (d. 975 AH) completed the unfinished work of al-Suyuti
- His book is called *كنز العمال في سنن الأقوال والأفعال*
- “The Treasury of the Workers in Verbal and Actions' Narrations.”

Most Comprehensive Sunni Book of Hadith

- He compiled his book from 93 Sunni books of hadith. The main sources of al-Hindi in compilation of his book were three books of Hadith compiled by al-Suyuti:
 - al-Jame'ul-Saghir,
 - Ziadatul-Jame'ul-Saghir
 - al-Jame'ul-Kabir

Most Comprehensive Sunni Book of Hadith

- Kanzul-Ummal is the most comprehensive Sunni book of Hadith. Al-Hindi has collected 46624 Sunni Hadith in his book. He has compiled his work in an alphabetical jurisprudential order, and thus a researcher can easily find any hadith under its subject.