

The Science of Hadith

Lesson 4



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ENRICHING THE SOUL

Introduction

- All Muslims unanimously accept the Holy Prophet as the authoritative teacher and interpreter of God's religion.
- The question that naturally arises is “who assumes this authoritative role after the Prophet's death?”

Introduction

- The tradition that became Sunni Islam offered one answer: the community as a whole , represented by the ulema (the Muslim scholarly class), was heir to the Prophet.
- Their collective interpretation of Islam, expressed through consensus (ijma'), was as definitive as the Quran or the Prophet's edicts

Introduction

- Shia Islam proposes a different answer: the family of the Prophet had inherited his authority which was held by select members of the family known as the 12 Imams.
- In Sunni Islam, hadiths were reports transmitted from the only individual that Sunnis deemed infallible: the Prophet Muhammad

Introduction

- In Shia Islam, the infallibility of the Prophet lived on in the form of the 12 Imams.
- Not only are the 12 Imams the best sources for the sayings of the Prophet, they themselves are sources of their own hadith

Introduction

- The vast majority of hadith in the Shia tradition occur in one of three forms:
 - 1. A hadith of the Prophet is transmitted through an isnaad made up of the Imams after him.
 - 2. The saying of an Imam is transmitted from him by later Imams.
 - 3. The saying of an Imam is transmitted from him via an isnaad of his followers.

Introduction

- Whether a hadith originated with the Prophet or an Imam , or whether or not the isnaad between an Imam and the Prophet was complete was of no importance.
- This is because the Imams were infallible and spoke with the inherited authority of the Prophet.

Introduction

حديثي حديث أبي ، وحديث أبي حديث جدي ، وحديث
جدي حديث الحسين ، وحديث الحسين حديث الحسن ،
وحديث الحسن حديث أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)
وحديث أمير المؤمنين حديث رسول الله (صلى الله عليه
 وآله) وحديث رسول الله قول الله عز وجل

Introduction

“My hadiths are the hadiths of my father, and the hadiths of my father are the hadiths of my grandfather, and the hadiths of my grandfather are the hadiths of al-Husayn, and the hadiths of al-Husayn are the hadiths of al-Hasan, and the hadiths of al-Hasan are the hadiths of the Commander of the Faithful, and the hadiths of the Commander of the Faithful are the hadiths of the Messenger of God, and the hadiths of the Messenger of God are the words of God most high.” - Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq

Hadith Collections of Ahlul Bayt

- **Important books of hadith in the possession of the Ahlul Bayt**
- 1. A book known as الجامعة contains clarifications of everything in the Quran and contains all of the legal material necessary for human guidance

Hadith Collections of Ahlul Bayt

أَن عِنْدَنَا مَا لَا نَحْتَاجُ مَعَهُ إِلَى النَّاسِ ، وَإِنَّ النَّاسَ لِيَحْتَاجُونَ إِلَيْنَا ، وَأَنَّ عِنْدَنَا كِتَابًا أَمْلَاهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) وَخَطَهُ عَلِيٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) صَحِيفَةً فِيهَا كُلُّ حَالٍ وَحَرَامٍ

“Verily, what is with us, makes us needless of the people, but people are in need of us. In our possession is a book of prophetic dictations with the handwriting of Ali which contains all of what is deemed lawful and unlawful.” - Imam al-Sadiq

Hadith Collections of Ahlul Bayt

- 2. The book of al-Jifr كتاب الجفر which according to narrations is also a book the Prophet dictated to Imam Ali containing knowledge of the unseen related to information about future events and the scriptures revealed to previous prophets

Hadith Collections of Ahlul Bayt

- 3. Mushaf Fatima مصحف فاطمة is a book mentioned by the Imams of Ahlul Bayt. After the death of the Prophet, Lady Fatima was deeply grief-stricken. According to Imam al-Sadiq, an angel would console her by disclosing to her all that would transpire until the Day of Judgment. This angelic consolation was recorded by Imam Ali and remains in the possession of the 12th Imam.
- Source: al-Kafi v. 1 , p. 204

Shia Resistance Against Hadith Ban

Examples of the Shia resistance against the law of hadith prohibition

1. Abu Dhar al-Ghafari أبو ذر الغفاري
2. Rushayd al-Hajari رشيد الهجري
3. Maytham al-Tammar ميثم التمار
4. Abu Raafi' إبراهيم أبو رافع
5. Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilaali سُليم ابن قيس الهلالي

Ancient Books of Hadith

- One of the most ancient books of hadith that fortunately by and large is available today is the book of Sulaym Ibn Qays al-Hilaali known as أسرار آل محمد which translates “The Secrets of the Family of Muhammad”.
- Sulaym was one of the distinguished companions of Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and Imam Sajjad (peace be upon them). It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s):

Ancient Books of Hadith

من لم يكن عنده من شيعتنا و محبيننا كتاب سليم بن قيس الهلالي فليس
عنده من امرنا شيء و لا يعلم من اسبابنا شيء و هو ابجد الشيعة و هو سر
من اسرار آل محمد

“Whoever of our followers and lovers does not have the book of Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilaali he does not have any knowledge about us and does not know anything about our affairs. It is the alphabets of the Shia and it is a secret from the secrets of the Family of Muhammad.”

The Four Hundred Usul

- Like many pious Muslims in the first three generations of Islam, those individuals who believed that the family of the Prophet enjoyed a special status or religious authority collected the sayings and rulings of the Imams in order to preserve their legacy.

The Four Hundred Usul

- In particular, the students who flocked around the 5th and 6th Imam in Medina collected notes of their teachings
- Even until the time of the 11th Imam, devotees of the Ahlul Bayt labored to record their teachings, rulings and interpretations of the Quran

The Four Hundred Usul

- A notebook of sayings from the Imams were called an “asl” (‘source,’ pl. usul).
- Hundreds of these usuls were compiled, sometimes by a student of the Imam recording his teachings directly and sometimes through an isnaad from the Imam to a slightly later collector.

The Four Hundred Usul

- The usul contained the elaborations of doctrine, answers to legal queries and polemics against those who opposed the rightful station of the Ahlul Bayt
- In order to make the information in these usul more useful and accessible, they needed to be reorganized according to topic.

The Four Hundred Usul

- Starting in the early eighth century, Shia scholars began making selections of hadiths and organizing them into 'compendia' and 'topical books'.
- For example, Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Saffar al-Qummi (d. 290 AH) wrote the famous **بصائر الدرجات** which specifically dealt with the virtues and authority of the Ahlul Bayt

The Four Hundred Usul

- Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Thaqafi (d. 283 AH) wrote كتاب الجامع الكبير في الفقه which is a comprehensive collection of hadith that focuses on Islamic law.
- These 400 hundred usul, along with the topical works of law, ritual and doctrine formed the basis for what became the four books of Shia hadith canon.

The Four Books

- The 4 most reliable Shia hadith collections are:
- 1. Al-Kafi of Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH)
- 2. Man La Yahdhuru al-Faqih of Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 AH)
- 3. Al-Tahdib of Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 460 AH)
- 4. Al-Istibsaar of Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 460 AH)

Al-Kafi

- Al-Kafi **الكافي في علم الدين** is among the most comprehensive collections of traditions from the formative period of Shia scholarship. It has been held in the highest esteem by generation after generation of Muslim scholars
- Shaykh al-Mufid extolled it as “one of the greatest and most beneficial of Shia books.”

Al-Kafi

- The introduction to al-Kafi reads as a personal letter from Shaykh al-Kulayni to a fellow believer.
- This person had complained to Shaykh al-Kulayni about the ignorance of the people and his own nagging doubts and lack of resources to address them

Al-Kafi

- He had requested Shaykh al-Kulayni to compile a book addressing all the disciplines of learning, which would be “kafi” for him (i.e., that would “suffice” him).
- It took 20 years, but at last, al-Kulayni writes, “God...has facilitated the compilation of what you requested.”

Al-Kafi

- Al-Kafi actually comprises 35 books containing over 15,000 hadith.
- Books 1-8 are commonly referred to as Usul al-Kafi. Generally speaking, Usul al-Kafi contains traditions that deal with epistemology, theology, history, ethics, supplication, and the Quran

Al-Kafi

- Books 9-34 are referred to as Furu' al-Kafi. These books contain traditions that deal predominantly with practical and legal issues.
- The final book stands alone as Rawdhat al-Kafi. It contains nearly 600 miscellaneous traditions, many of which are lengthy letters and speeches, not arranged in any particular order.

Man La Yadhuruhu al-Faqih

- A generation after Shaykh al-Kulayni, Muhammad b. Ali b. Babawayh, also known as Shaykh al-Saduq, compiled another comprehensive topical hadith collection designed to assist Shias who had no other source for understanding Islam properly
- His book **من لا يحضره الفقيه** literally means “He Who Has No Legal Scholar at Hand) and contains nearly 6000 jurisprudential hadith

Man La Yadhuruahu al-Faqih

- Unlike Shaykh al-Kulayni, Shaykh al-Saduq does not provide full isnads for each hadith.
- He does not want the reader to concern himself with such specialized details, but rather assures his audience that he has only included reports that are authentic

Shaykh al-Mufid

- Shaykh al-Saduq's most famous student was Muhammad b. al-Nu'man also known as Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 AH).
- Shaykh al-Mufid was a rationalist who saw hadith as only a limited component of elaborating law and doctrine.
- He believed that hadiths should be part of a larger framework for understanding Islam, used properly and supervised by a more authoritative master: reason.

Shaykh al-Mufid

- Shaykh al-Mufid believed that rational investigation was an essential tool for determining correct belief, and he abandoned his teacher Shaykh al-Saduq's reliance on using ahad reports from the Imams as evidence in many issues.

Shaykh al-Mufid's Best Student

- It was one of Shaykh al-Mufid's students in Baghdad who would be responsible for half of the Shia hadith canon and become one of the most influential scholars in Shiism: Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi (d. 460 AH)
- While al-Kulani and al-Saduq had assured their readers that their books consisted of only authentic hadiths, Shaykh al-Tusi's two hadith works made this authentication process more transparent.

Al-Tahdhib

- Shaykh al-Tusi's first book **تهذيب الأحكام**, is in fact not a true hadith collection at all. It is a commentary on a legal work by Shaykh al-Mufid called **المقنع** containing over 12,000 hadith.
- One of the differences between 'Al-Tahdhib' and 'Man La yadhuru al-Faqih' is in that Sheikh Saduq compiled only hadith that he could give verdicts on, whereas, Shaykh al-Tusi has compiled all the jurisprudential hadith, regardless of whether he agrees with them or not.

Al-Istibsaar

- Shaykh al-Tusi also compiled a hadith collection called **الإستبصار فيما يختلف فيه الأخبار** which means “Seeking Clarity on that which Reports Differ”.
- In this book, Shaykh al-Tusi devotes himself to sorting out and reconciling hadiths that seem to contradict one another.
- This book contains over 5,000 hadith

Other Hadith Collections

- **Nahjulbalagha** is a collection of the most eloquent speeches, letters and sayings of Imam Ali.
It is compiled by one of the most notable Shia scholars of the fourth century, known as Sayid al-Radhi (d. 406 A.H)
- Nahjulbalagha, consists of three main parts: 241 sermons, 79 letters and 480 sayings.
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Other Hadith Collections

- The eloquence of Nahjulbalagha is so miraculous and its meanings are so profound that it is said

دون كلام الخالق ، وفوق كلام المخلوقين

- "it is lower than the words of the creator, and above the words of the creations."

Other Hadith Collections

- One of the technical problems concerning Nahjulbalagha, is that despite its extraordinary significance, its hadiths are technically Mursal. Unfortunately Sayid al-Radhi never mentioned the chain of transmitters of Nahjulbalagha.
- It seems the words of Imam Ali have been so well-known and its eloquence has been so miraculous that Sayid al-Radhi did not feel any need of mentioning the transmitters.
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Other Hadith Collections

- Another important hadith collection is a book called الوافي Mulla Muhammad Muhsin Kashani known as Faydh al-Kashaani (d. 1091 AH).
- This book is a collection of all 'the Four Books' organized topically and with commentary
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Other Hadith Collections

- **Bihar al-Anwar** is the most comprehensive hadith collection in the Shia tradition.
- It was compiled by Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d. 1110 AH)
- This mammoth 110 volume compilation covers various topics from theology, history, astronomy, natural sciences, philosophy, interpretation of the Quran, jurisprudence, ethics, etc.

Other Hadith Collections

- Why did al-Majlisi compile Bihar al-Anwar?
- In his introduction he mentions that he intended to safeguard the Shia books of hadith at a time when they were exposed to annihilation and destruction by tyrannical rulers.
- His primary aim was compilation of hadith, not authentication.

Other Hadith Collections

- Another important hadith corpus compiled by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Amili (d. 1104) is وسائل الشيعة الى أحاديث الشريعة which translates “The Paths of the Shias to the Hadiths of the Holy Law)
- This hadith book is a collection of jurisprudential traditions
- In addition to the Four Books, the author has referred to more than 90 other books of hadith, most of which are reliable books.

Other Hadith Collections

- Wasail consists of 35850 hadith. This book is the most important hadith book in Shia jurisprudence.