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# **Development of Hadith**

*A concise introduction of early Hadith  
Literature*

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# Development of Early Hadith Literature, Principal of Collection And Genre of Authenticity

## Introduction

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has a special place in the history and culture of Islam. Not only was He the leader of the Muslim community, and the vehicle through whom the *Qur'an* was revealed, but he was also considered, by virtue of his status as a final Messenger of God<sup>1</sup> and to be a suitable model for human behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, His leadership guided the community while he was alive, but his example was believed to be normative long after his death. The *Qur'an* orders Muslims to follow the example of the Messenger and so from the very beginning the Companions (*sahaba*) concerned themselves with following the *Sunnah* (conduct or customs) of the Prophet, which was embodied in *hadith* (reports or anecdotes narrating his words and deeds.) Since these *hadiths* were an important source for the development of Islamic law, the community had to know which traditions were reliable, and which were clearly fraudulent. But the problems of *hadith* have led to much disunion over authenticity, and have led to development of the complex science of *hadith* as it serves as an additional link between Prophet Muhammad and the *Qur'an*. One can question the authenticity of the *hadith*, which contradict the *Qur'an*; however, if one were to dismiss the whole corpus of *hadith*, the very foundations of practiced Islam would be threatened.

As *Sprenger* wisely remarks that, while he is prepared to believe that no real books were produced before A.H.120, he cannot believe that traditions before this trusted wholly to their memory and had not at least written notes.<sup>3</sup> The subject of this article is not corpus of *hadith* material, but only analysing the collection of early period and its authenticity.

## Early Western Approach to the *Hadith*

Before we attempt to portray a positive picture of the methodology of religious discipline in the earliest period of Islamic history, which proved decisive for the subsequent religious development of Islam, a brief critical review of the treatment of the subject of *hadith* by the leaders of modern Western scholarship in this field is necessary.

Many Western scholars have accepted, with some reservations, these assumptions and used *hadith* as fairly reliable historical sources, but for many others the authenticity and the date of origin of the *Hadith* material are issues that have produced and continue to produce, heated debate.

Western studies of Islam since the second half of nineteenth century have pointed out that this method of *hadith* criticism is unreliable and have concentrated on the content of the text when judging the authenticity of a *hadith*. In 1848 *Gustav Weil*, after nothing that *al-Bukhari* deemed only 4,000 of his original 600,000 *hadith* to be authentic, suggests that a European critic is further required to reject without hesitation at least half of these 4,000. *Aloys Sprenger*,<sup>4</sup> who also suggests that many of the *hadith* material cannot be considered authentic?<sup>5</sup>

A Hungarian Scholar *Ignaz. Goldziher's* thesis that the traditions ascribed to the Prophet and the Companions (*Sahaba*) contained in the classical collections of *hadith*, are not authentic reports of these persons but rather reflect the doctrinal and political developments of the first two centuries after Muhammad's death<sup>6</sup> is based primarily on analysis of the content of the *hadith*, (*matn*) and not the transmitters.

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1 See Al-Quran. Surah Ahazab.40

2 Al-Qur'an Ahzab: 21

3. See. Robson j .Tradition, The Second Foundation of Islam ,.Ref: ZDMG, 1856, p.5.

4 . Berg ,H *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam..* p. 9

5 Sprenger concludes his study of the sunna by saying that in his judgement the sunna is comprised of more true material than false, and that the sira more false than tru. Sprenger, Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad, 3:civ

6 . See, Goldziher, Muslim Studies, (volume) 2 :19

Like Goldziher, Schacht<sup>7</sup> proposed general statements concerning the time, first studied their contents and classified them within the frame work of the development of the issue to which they were refer.<sup>8</sup> He considered criteria from the *isnid* only secondarily. But as historical facts, and he did not limit his conclusion to the legal *ahadith*, on which he had based his theories. Goldziher introduced scepticism about *hadith*. Schacht and Setter suggest plausible mechanisms for the creation of false *hadith*. Because this scepticism strikes at the very foundation of early Islamic literature, the rest of the edifice begins to crumble. The very piece of evidence that is meant to guarantee genuineness of the *matn*, the *isnad*, is being summarily dismissed as a fabrication. Therefore, to non-sceptics the conclusions of Goldziher and Schacht are wrong because they are based on a misunderstanding of the transmission system. In other words, their (false) assumptions about the nature of *hadith*, has led then to (false) conclusions. And so, their arguments seem contrived, circular, and contrary to reason to those who disagree with them.

### **Hadith its Meaning, Concept, and Authority**

The Arabic word *hadith* has the primary connotation of ‘new’ being used as an antonym of *qadim*, ‘old’. The term *Hadith* applied to specific reports of the Prophet’s words and deeds as well as those of many of the early Muslims. The *hadith* literature means the literature, which consists of narrations of the life of the Prophet and the things approved by him. Some other words were also used in the same sense, such as *khobar* and *athar*<sup>9</sup>. However, there is another key word, though a little different from the term *hadith* in the meaning, yet used mostly as synonymous, that is the term *sunnah*. *Tariqah* / *shir’ah* and *minhaj*<sup>10</sup> are parallel of the *Sunnah*.

The Divine guidance, which came verbally in the necessary in the form of *Qur’anic* Revelation, provided a kind of necessary background foundation for the *Sunnah*. Although, therefore, a difference can be made between the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*, the two cannot be fundamentally divorced from each other.<sup>11</sup> For, the *Sunnah* is, more or less, a concrete implementation of the Divine will. “*Sunnah* means a path, and is a general term for the practice of a community.”<sup>12</sup> It means tradition in the sense that certain customs are traditional, whether or not there is a saying to support them.

In early Islam after death of Prophet (peace be upon him) when Islam was spreading the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah* were lost in the heat of the controversy. It goes to the high credit of *al-Shafi’i* that he perceived the utter futility of the pleading for the *Sunnah* as a separate entity, in which case it was bound to clash with the express words of the *Qur’an* here and there and thus provide the opponents with an argument against itself. *Al-Shafi’i* insisted<sup>13</sup> on taking the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah* together and at par so as to eliminate the very prospect of having the one set against the other. Most significant is his denial that the *Qur’an* constitutes the test of the veracity of the *Sunnah*.

<sup>7</sup> .J.Schacht, *Orgin of Muhammad ‘s Jurisprudance* , Oxford 1950-

<sup>8</sup> . See.J.. Schacht, *the Organis of Muhammad Jurisprudance*. P.1 and passim. See also Motzki,H. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 50 no. 1. 1991

<sup>9</sup> However, some scholars mostly of Khurasan region used to differentiate between *khobar* and *athar*. They used the *khobar* in the sense of *hadith* and the term *athar* restricted to the sayings and decisions of the Companions

<sup>10</sup> . Cf. the Qur’anic verses: لكل جعلنا منكم شرعة و منهاجا

<sup>11</sup> . The *Sunnah: Ist Place in Islam*, Institute of Islamic Culture: 1966. P, 1

<sup>12</sup> . Muslim, *Sahih* (Cairo, 1349/1930), I, p.48

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note the following ingenious retort to the anti-traditionists: وان قول من قال: تعرض السنة علي القرآن فان وافقت ظاهر هو والا استعملنا ظاهر القرآن و تركنا الحديث جهل لما وصفت فابان الله لنا ان سنن رسوله فرض علينا بان نتهي اليهما لان القرآن فان وافقت ظاهر هو والا استعملنا ظاهر القرآن و تركنا الحديث جهل لما وصفت فابان الله لنا ان سنن رسوله فرض علينا بان نتهي اليهما لان الخ cf. *Shafi al- Risalah*, Cairo, 1940, p.224 et seq.

## Carrying of knowledge of *ahadith*

After the prophet's death, when his companions scattered throughout the new provinces, many of them, and many of the Successors, undertook lengthy and difficult journeys, courting poverty and various hazards, in order to learn and collect as many hadiths as they could.<sup>14</sup>

Prophet Muhammad, (pbuh) then has probably been the most influential single figure of world history. With his spiritual charisma, his straightforward honesty, the eloquence of the book which he brought, and the revolutionary effects of his activities, the eyes of friend and enemy alike were riveted upon him, noting his every act and statement. According *John Burton*, "to his enemies, he was a revolutionary bent upon destroying the whole fabric of their society, whose activities had to be keenly watched if the progress of his mission was to be suppressed. His words must have been the focus for endless reflection".<sup>15</sup>

A vast corpus of individual narratives, consisting of supposed eye-witness account of Muhammad's every act, his orders, prohibition, recommendations, approval or disapproval, covers every conceivable aspect of personal, private, domestic, public, political, commercial, military, fiscal and administrative, as well as strictly religious, activity undertaken hour by hour, day by day, week in, week out, year after year of the twenty-three years of his public ministry. All that he had ever been seen to do, or heard to say, or to reply when questioned had, it was claimed, been reported by one or other of his inner circle and immediately taken up, talked about, analysed, checked, stored memorized and preserved and then handed on to any who had been absent by those who had been present to see, hear and record.<sup>16</sup>

So much veneration and respect did the Companions have the Prophet that one of them collected some of his perspiration, which was said to have been 'sweeter than musk, and stipulated in his will that it should be sprinkled on his body before it was put into the grave. Others preserved anything that had been touched by him, and used it as a miraculous cure for disease. Still others presented their children to him for his blessing.<sup>17</sup> It is said to have been a common practice among the friends of the Prophet that whenever any two of them met, one would enquire from the other whether there was any hadith (i.e. news of the Prophet's acts and speech), and would tell him what he knew. The Prophet himself, 'was conscious of his mortality attached a good deal of importance to the Knowledge of his own hadith. He used to ask his Companions to make them as widely as possible, and take care than nothing should be falsely attributed to him'.<sup>18</sup>

He encouraged his followers to acquire knowledge (i.e., of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*), and teach it to others. The course of study which he prescribed for people of the Porch (*ashab al-suffa*), those ascetics who lived at a porch attached to his house, included the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah*, and the art of writing.<sup>19</sup> Appointing state official i.e. "*Qadis*, judges, Imams, and other prominent dignitaries, he prefer those who have the knowledge".<sup>20</sup> In this way, the *hadith* literature originated in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely through his life, and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam through out the new Muslim dominions. The Muslim armies, which conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt, 'included a large number of the Companions of the Prophet, who carried his *hadith* with them wherever they went'.<sup>21</sup> A unique contribution from Fazul Rahman is his theory of the "silent"<sup>22</sup> transmission of Prophetic *sunna*. That is, many early Muslims simply lived out the words and acts of Muhammad. And this silent, living tradition, the tradition of what Muslims actually did, is the *Sunna*. And so *Rahman* states, " that the *sunna*

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14 Khatib, *Sunna*, 124-26

15 Bourtn, J *Introduction to Hadith* p.2

16 *ibid.* p .46

17 Bukhari, *Sahih*, 1v. 62

18 Al-Tabrizi, *Mishkat al -Masabih* (1326), Ilm 32

19 Hammam ibn Munabbih, *Sahifa*, ed. Hamiduallah, M. (Paris,1380),9.

20 For detail see Bukahri pp35,6,7

21 See Azami, *Schacht's Origns*, 109-11

22 . See. Rahman, F. *Islam* 2nd edition. Cp three

and Hadith were coeval and consubstantial in the earliest phase after Muhammad and that both were directed towards and drew their normatively from him”<sup>23</sup>

### Collection & the Early Continuous Written Tradition

It is said that at the time of the advent of Islam, there were no more than 17 persons in the city of Mecca who knew how to read or write, and as regards the city of Medinah the number of those who knew the art was even smaller.<sup>24</sup> After the migration to *Medinah*, Muslims laid there the foundations of New Government and a City-State. The Prophet called for consultation all the inhabitants of the place, Meccan immigrants, *Medinan* converts, Jews and the Arabs who had not yet embraced Islam and Promulgated a State constitution. This is the first written-constitution of any state in the history of the history of the world, according *Dr Hamidullah* ‘This is a writing of the prophet Muhammad, messenger of God, which is (effective) between the Believers and the Muslims of the *Quraishite* origin and of *Yathrib* town and those who follow them( the Muslims), come and join them and partake with them in war’...The word “ this is a writing (*Kitab*)”<sup>25</sup> used here, can apply to a written document only. In the course of the 47 section of this constitutional law, the words “ the people of this document (*sahifah*)” are repeated five times.

Nabia Abbott tries to argue that there was an early and continuous practice of writing *hadiths* in Islam. By "early" she means that the Companions of the Prophet themselves kept written records of hadiths and by "continuous" that most *hadiths* were transmitted in written form (alongside the oral transmission) until the time they were compiled in the canonical collections. For her, then, it is this written transmission of *hadiths* that serves as the guarantee of their authenticity.<sup>26</sup> The problem for Abbott, given this suggestion, is the obvious lack of any early attempt to standardize all these reports about Muhammad and, more tacitly, the lack of extant manuscripts from this period. Her solution to this conundrum is to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of the second caliph, `Umar I (d. 23/644). Because of the lack of familiarity with the Qur'an in the newly conquered lands outside Arabia, the caliph feared "a development in Islam, parallel to that in Judaism and Christianity,.

" So he destroyed the manuscripts of *hadiths* he discovered and punished those who had possessed them. Many Companions avoided (at least publicly) the use of written and even oral hadiths lest they incur the caliph's wrath<sup>27</sup> even though they did not necessarily concur with him on this issue. There were many contradictory statements made regarding the writing down of Hadith. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri transmitted a Hadith on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh) that he said, “ Do not write from me anything except the *Qur'an* and whoever has written anything from me other than the *Qur'an* should erase it”<sup>28</sup> This was challenged by many scholars, who deduced that it meant that nothing should be written with the *Qur'an* on the same sheet. There is ample evidence that the Prophet (pbuh) allowed it. Abu Huraira reports that one of the Ansar told the Prophet (pbuh) of his inability to remember what the Prophet (pbuh) said. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “ Call your right hand to your aid,” i.e. write it down. It is apparent that the Prophet's sayings would not have survived if they were confined to oral transmission only. However, the real basis for the later collections of hadiths was the relatively few Companions, such as `Abd Allah ibn `Amr (d. 65/684), Abu Hurayra (d. 58/678), Ibn `Abbas (d. 67–8/686–8), and Anas ibn Malik (d. 94/712),(may God pleased with them all) who continued to collect, record, and transmit them. The fact is that the Prophet had asked the companions to refrain from recording his words suggest that the practices were widespread.

The first professional transmitters were Muhammad's illiterate follower *Abu Hurayrah* and his client Anas b. Malik al-Ansari (d.94/712). When questioned about his numerous traditions, *Abu Hurareah* explained that he was poor, had been long with Muhammad, and had devoted his life to memorizing his hadith, while

23 Islam 2nd edition. Chapter Three. Pp 43 -53

24 Hmaidullah, S. *Sahifah Hamman ibn Munabbih*.pp8)

25. ibid

26 Nabia,Abbott,*Studies* 11, pp. 6-7.Her arguments are much more tersely summarized in her “*Hadith Literauter-* pp.289-98. See Also the Summary of her position by Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, pp.131-2

27 See Abbott *Studies* 11,7 and note 24.

28 . Ibn Majah, p.20

the Meccans were preoccupied with the market and *Medinans* with their lands. <sup>29</sup> (Marwan b. al-Hakam, twice governor of Medinah, had his secretary Abu i-Za'za'ah write a great number of traditions from Abu Hurayrah's recitation. <sup>30</sup> *Abu Hurayrah* dictated Hadith to many, especially to his son-in-law Sa'id b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/721), who became concerned when one of his pupils relied only on his memory. <sup>31</sup>

According to N. Abbott, the literate *Ans b. Malik* was a staunch defender of written Hadith. He transmitted mostly from Muhammad (pubh) and his family and from a few leading Companions. He exhorted his sons and pupils to "Chain down knowledge through writing" from his dictation or copying his manuscripts. 'Ubadah b. al-Samit al-Ansari (d.34/654 or 655), teacher of the *Qur'an* and of writing, transmitted from Abu Hurayrah and Ans. He established a family of three generations of Hadith scholars. His son and grandson aimed at collecting from the Ansar. They transmitted from *Ka'b.b Amr* (d.55/675), who was accompanied by a servant carrying a container full of manuscripts. <sup>32</sup>

Abbott recognizes that Western scholars, such as Goldziher and Schacht, question the veracity of the later reports of literary activities during this early period. She states that she herself shared these same doubts but now believes them to be largely unjustified, for the description of this period is relatively consistent and well-attested. The Indian Scholar, M.Azami also elaborates this view and argues (like *Abbott* and *Sezgin*) that there was already intense literary activity during the time of the Prophet, which he himself had strongly encouraged. He then proceeds to list the hundreds of Companions, Successors, and scholars from the first 150 years of Islam who, according to him, wrote down *hadiths*, along with the names of their students who received *hadiths* from them in written form. <sup>33</sup>

Abbott adds: In an attempt to counter Goldziher's suggestion of the secular nature of Umayyad rule, Abbott argues that the "Umayyad caliphs Mu'awiya (d. 60/680), Marwan (d. 65/684) and `Abd al-Malik (d. 86/705), for example, all took an active interest in transmitting and or recording hadiths. `Umar II is particularly associated with hadith literature. Abbott accepts the report (found in the recession of Shaybani (d. 189/805) of *Malik ibn Anas's Muwatta'* that this Umayyad caliph commissioned *Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn `Amr ibn Hazm* (d. 120/738) to record hadiths and sunnah." <sup>34</sup> Abbott argues <sup>35</sup> that he was only one of many the caliph contacted in order to secure authentic hadiths, and that Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri was ordered to collate these numerous hadiths from the various regions of the empire. Abbott further assumes that al-Zuhri finished this enormous task and that these drafts (manuscripts) were distributed, but that because of resistance in the provinces and the untimely death of `Umar II, they never received much attention (though the work of al-Zuhri lived on through his many noteworthy students). Thus, Abbott has attempted to remedy this "oversight" by Goldziher and to give the *Umayyads* their due by stressing their role in encouraging the written transmission of the hadith material. <sup>36</sup>

With this form of transmission of hadiths, Abbott is also able to provide the following explanation for the appearance of a rapid expansion in the number of hadiths—perhaps to counter Schacht's spread-of-*isnads* theory. Manuscripts, particularly those preserved by succeeding generations of the same family, which were lengthy documents, were divided into separate sections and given the *isnad* of the original document. From one such document could come hundreds of hadiths. "If not fully comprehended, this process would give the impression of a sudden huge increase in the number of traditions . . ." Furthermore, Abbott argues that the development of the family *isnad* and continuous written transmission lead to the . . . inescapable conclusion . . . that the bulk of the hadith[s] and sunna as they had developed by about the end of the first

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29 Abbott, *Studies*, 1, 28 and 11, 133 and 240)

30 .Ibid, p. 11-19-20

31 .Ibid

32 .Ibid, 1,48, note 6.

33 . Azmi, M . *Studies In Early Hadith Literature* . . chp . writings- pre- classical Hadith.,p 28-59

34 .Abbott, *Studies* 11, p.64.

35. It is worthy to not She adds that most Western scholars have not dared to venture much beyond Goldzhier. Abbott excludes Johann Fuck,Josef Horovitz, Rudi Paret and James robson, all of whom, incidentally, agree with her that contantes of the hadith corps were more or less fixed by the end of the first century. Abbott, *Studies* 11, p.64. Also see Berg,H. The development of Exgesis in Early Islam Pages. 38-40

36 .See, Aboott, N.

century was already written down by someone somewhere, even though comparatively small numbers of memorized traditions were being recited orally.

That is, she not only accepts the bulk of family *isnads* as genuine (unlike Schacht), but also credits them for guaranteeing the authenticity of hadiths in general. And, these parallel oral and written transmissions each served to safeguard the other and so prevented the large-scale fabrication of hadiths. Therefore, Abbott can conclude that the content of the *sunna* was more or less fixed by the time of *al-Zuhri*.

Abbott sees in the *rihlas* (the journeys in search of knowledge and usually associated with oral tradition), in the use of the *warraqah* (stationer-copyists), and in the average memory of the average tradition's evidence for the continued use and production of manuscripts of hadiths. In fact, the oral transmission has been overemphasized according to her because Western scholars have generally failed to grasp hadith semantics properly. Arabic terminology for writing materials and in *isnads* has also been misunderstood. An example of the former is the word *sahifa*. It is normally translated as "sheet (of writing material)" but can refer to anything from a single sheet to a large draft (manuscript).

### Cataloguing of Early Texts

Hadith written down officially during the Time of the Holy Prophet: Muhammad (pubh) used to declare: "I have been sent in the capacity of a teacher."<sup>37</sup> He used, as often, to direct the children to acquire learning from their neighbours.<sup>38</sup> And take their lessons at the mosque in their streets.<sup>39</sup>

Fuat Sezgin also argues that there was an early, continuous written tradition in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band I: Qur'an Wissenschaften, Hadith, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik bis ca. 430 H.*<sup>40</sup> In many ways his evidence resembles that of Abbott and so it need not be fully restated. However, his argument differs from hers in that it is a much more focussed and concerted attempt to undermine the implications of Goldziher's sceptical approach to the hadith literature. *Sezgin* realizes that Goldziher did not have all the currently available sources, and in this respect cannot be unduly faulted. However, in a harsher critique, *Sezgin* devotes considerable energy to trying to demonstrate that Goldziher misunderstood some key terms related to the transmission of hadiths.

*Sezgin* lists eight ways in which transmission took place: *sama`*, *qira'a*, *ijaza*, *munawala*, *kitaba*, *i`lam al-rawi*, *wasiya*, and *wijada*. *Sezgin* states that only the first two (listening and recitation, respectively) involved memorization. The others, and often in practice even *sama`* and *qira'a*, involved written materials.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, written transmission was as customary as oral transmission.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly *Sezgin* (like Abbott) has no doubts as to the authenticity of the *isnads*. Moreover, he is willing to suggest that from these authorities can be gleaned authors of actual texts. *Sezgin* traces a very different history for hadith literature than that provided by Goldziher. He urges that the first stage involved simple books (*sahifas* or *juz's*) produced by the Companions and the earliest Successors (and in this regard, Goldziher and he agree).

*M. M. Azami* in his two major works, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* and *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, has attempted to rectify the perceived inadequacies of Western scholarship on hadith literature and in particular to refute the theories of Schacht. *Azami's* far more original and valuable contribution to the study of hadiths comes with his defence of the *isnad*. Schacht contends that, while the *isnad* system may be authentic for hadiths whose *isnads* end in second-century scholars, they are

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37 (Ibn Majah, No 229) Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Mkhtasar Bayan al-Ilm* p 15; *Mishkat*, in loco citing Darimi.)

38 Ibn Hajar, *Isabah*, Vol 1 No. 17

39 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr *Mukhtasa Bayan al-Ilm*, p. 14

40 Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, p.21

41 *ibid.* p.22

42 .*Sezgin*, *Geshichte*, pp.58-62 See also Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature*, p.86



certainly not for those which end with the Prophet or the Companions. *Azami* breaks down Schacht's contention into six main points and addresses each in turn.<sup>43</sup>

As mentioned above that writing of *hadith* was quite common among companions in the Prophet's own time and the books on separate subjects of practical interest had already begun to appear before the Umayyad period, such as Zaid b. Thabit's (d.45) booklet on the subject of *Fara'id* (share of inheritance) Recognition of outstanding religious scholars began early and continued to increase. "Masruq b. al-Ajda (d.63/682), traditionist judge and poet, travelled far in search of knowledge. He credited Abu Bake, Umar b. al-Khattab, Ali b. Abi Talib, Mu'adh b. Jabal, Abu 'l- Darda', Zayd b. Thabit and Abdullah b. Abbas (d.68/6880 with having acquired among them all the religious knowledge possessed by the Companions".<sup>44</sup> The Companions had begun to make notes for their own guidance in sheet and other materials. Know as follows:

**Sahifa.** This is a collection of the sayings of the Prophet, which were written down, by one of his Companions during his lifetime "such collection which was assembled by Abu Hurayra and taught and handed down by him to his students"<sup>45</sup> or by their successors of the next generation. Goldziher, according to whom some are also described as *Rasa'il* and *Kutub*, mentions several of these *Sahifas*.<sup>46</sup>

The most important of them however, is the *Sahifa* which was collected by 'Abd Allah ibn Amr ibn al-As (d.65/684), who gave it the title of *al-Sahifa al-Sadiqa*.<sup>47</sup>

b) **Juz.** This is a collection of hadith handed down on the authority of one single individual, be he or she a Companion, or a member of any succeeding generation. The term *juz'* is also applied to collections of hadiths that were compiled on a specific subject, such as Intention, the Vision of God, and so forth.<sup>48</sup>

c) **Risala.** This is a collection of hadith which deals with one particular topic selected from the eight topics into which the contents of the *Jami* books of hadith may generally be classified.

d) **Musannaf.** This is a more comprehensive collection of hadiths in which the traditions relating to most or all of the above eight topics are assembled and arranged in various 'books' or chapters' each dealing with a particular topic. To this class belong the *Muwatta'* of Imam Malik, the *Sahih* of Muslim, and similar works.

e) **Musnad.** This term, which literally means 'supported, was originally used for such traditions as were supported by a complete uninterrupted chain of authorities going back to the Prophet via a Companion.

f) **Mu'jam.** This is generally applied to works on various subjects arranged in alphabetical order. The best known are the *Mu'jams* of Abul'l-Qasim Sulayman ibn Ahmed ibn Ayyub al-Tabarani, who is generally known by his *nisab*.

g) **Jami.** This is a hadith collection, which contains traditions relating to all the eight topics listed above under the rubric of *Risala*. Thus, the *Sahih of al-Bukhari*, as well as the principal book of *al-Tirmidhi*, is known as a *Jami*. The *Sahih* of Muslim, by contrast, is not so styled, because although it is comprehensive in most areas, it does not contain traditions relating to all the chapters of the *qur'an*.

h) **Sunan.** Hadith Written officially during the time of the Holy Prophet.

It is well known that beginning of the tradition was purely oral, and that only gradually did it come to be written down. In the beginning, before men thought of tradition as a foundation of the system, stories about the Prophet would almost inevitably be oral partly because many narrators would be illiterate, and partly because such stories would merely be retailed for interest.

Hajji Khalifa says that the Companions and flower did not collect Traditions in written form because of their sincere faith, their nearness to the time of the Prophet, the small amount of disagreement in their time, the battles in which they engaged, and their having opportunities of referring to authorities.<sup>49</sup> The

43 . Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature*, p1-237

44 See . N.Abbott. for further details *Hadith Literature*.11

45 Hammam ibn Munabbih, edited by Dr hamidullah , see Bibliography

46 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 11,22-4

47 Ibn Sa'd, iv/I 262; Sezgin, I 84; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 11,23

48. Dihlawi, *Risala dar-Fann-i-Usul-i-Hadith* Delhi, 11255),22

49 *Lexicon bibiographicum et encyclopedicum I*, pp.79f.



early students who carried works on the *hadith* were followed by many *hadith* specialists (known as *muhaddithun*), various provinces of the Muslim world. Some of those major collectors of *hadith* are ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd al-aziz ibn Jurayj (d.150/760) worked at Mecca, Sa’d ibn Aruba (d.157/774) in Mesopotamia, al-Awza’i (d.159/775) in Syria, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman (d. 159/775) at Medina, Za’id ibn Qudama (d.160/776) and Sufyan al-Thawri (d.161/777) at Kufa, and Hammad ibn Salma (d.165/781) at Basra.’<sup>50</sup>

As almost all these works are lost, no opinion can be expressed on their plan, method or spirit, But *Ibn al-Nadim*, who includes them in his catalogue, gives us a short comment on each. He calls the works of *Ibn Jurayj*, *Ibn Aruba*, *al-Awza’i*, *Ibn Abd al-Rahman* and *Za’ida ibn Qudama*’ works on the *Sunna*, and says that they are arranged like the books of fiqh-into chapters devoted to the same type as the *Muwatta*, the early law manual of Imam Malik,<sup>51</sup>

## Ethnicity and Judging Criteria

During the time of the prophet, the Companions were zealous to learn and recall his words and the incidents of his life. A very strict system of judging traditions in virtue of the *isnad* arose, but it is difficult to state when this began. *Malik*, in his *Muwatta*’, does always trouble to give a complete *isnad*, which would suggest that by his time the method had not hardened into a strict system. But all the later books give us complete lists of the authorities through whom the traditions were transmitted from the Prophet.

The theory is that traditions were transmitted in a regular manner, so that those who heard them from their authorities were entitled to transmit them in turn. One is not justified in assuming that from the beginning traditions were very particular in their methods; but as time went on, and Tradition became a matter of vital importance, rules were elaborated. To illustrate just how strict the rules became, I give here a summarized account of eight methods of transmission as described by Ibn al-Salah (577-643/ 118/1245)<sup>52</sup>

1. **Sama** (Hearing) a *shaikh*’s words, which he dictates, or recites with out dictating. He may make this recitation from memory, or read it from his book. This is generally held to be the highest form, and the one who hears it may say *haddathana*, *akhbarana*, *anba’ana*, *sami’tu*, or *qal lana fulana* (so and so said to us)
2. **Ard**: (Reading to Teacher) Reading over to a sheikh what one has heard. It is all the same whether one reads it oneself, or is present, when someone else is reading. The one who recites may do so from memory, or from a written copy. The sheikh may know the material by heart and merely listen; but if he does not know it by heart, he must have his copy in his hand.
3. **Ijaza** (licence). The first type is to give a specified person licence to transmit a specified amount. The second is to give a specified person licence to transmit something, which is not specified. One may say, “ I give you licence to transmit all that I have heard.” There is a difference of opinion about the value of this, but the majority are said to consider it perfectly satisfactory. The third is to give licence, merely using a qualification without specifying a person. One may say, “ I give licence to the Muslims,”
4. **Munawala** (handing over). This is of two types, the better of which is combined with a licence to transmit, which is generally agreed to be also the highest type of *ijaza*. For example Zuhri(51-124) gave his manuscript to several scholars, like Thauri, Auza’i and ‘Ubaidullah b. ‘Umar. It was called *munawala*.
5. **Kitabah**. (Lit. Correspondence). This means that the sheikh writes to the student when he is absent some of his traditions in his own handwriting; or he may write it for him when he is present or may employ someone else to write it for the student as from him. *I’lam*: to inform about a hadith
6. The narrator may tell pupil that a certain tradition, or a certain book is what he heard from so and so. Without saying any thing about his transmitting it.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Nadim, *al-Fihrist*,(Leipzig 1871-72 ce) 225-27.

<sup>51</sup> . Ibid

<sup>52</sup> *Ulum al-hadith*, pp. 14 off,

7. **Wasiyah** (To entrust someone the book, which may be transmitted on the authority of the one who entrusted the book. For example Abu Quilabah (d. 104) who entrusted his book to Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani.
8. **Wajada**. (A late form of verbal noun from *wajada* to find). That is to find someone's book without any sort of permission to transmit on anyone's authority. This was not a recognized way of learning a *hadith*.

## Certificate of reading

A regular record of the attendance was kept and after the reading of a book was completed, a note was written either by the teacher or one of the famous scholars in attendance. This gave details of the attendance, e.g. who listened to the complete book and who joined partially.<sup>53</sup> 'The purpose of the science was to determine the authenticity of hadith attributed to the Prophet and to his companions and to preserve the corpus from alteration or falsification. Scholars verified each report with a chain of authorities (*isnad*), going back, as far as possible, to the Prophet himself. Razi, in 327 AH, wrote *Kitab al-jarh wat ta'dil*, which was a book of details about the lives of traditions, or authorities, who had transmitted hadith'.<sup>54</sup>

## Development of the 'Science of the Hadith'

The *hadiths* were classified principally on the basis of the quality of the *Isnad*. The transmitter should be '*adil*'<sup>55</sup>.<sup>56</sup> By the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> /9<sup>th</sup> century the Hadith had taken definite form, had established almost all its detailed contents, and completely won the field. As I referred above the Judging, check and balance system develop with together. In order to collect, sift and systematize this massive and amazing product, a number of eminent scholars began to travel through out the length and breadth of the then Muslim world. This powerful movement is known as 'Seeking of the *Hadithith*'.<sup>57</sup> By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/ beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century several collections had been produced, six of which have since then been regarded as being especially authoritative and are know as ' The Six Genuine Ones'.<sup>58</sup>

## Matn Analysis and Criticism

Extensive precautions had been taken against the possibility of human error's entering the tradition, the inevitably found their way into the body of the *Hadith* literature. The mere formal soundness of an *isnad* is not considered definitive proof of the actual genuineness of the text of the traditions to which they are attached. Even though *isnad* is completely without fault, the text should still be analysed before the genuineness of its attribution can be established. Some of those principles are given bellow for the criticism of the texts of the traditions have been laid down:

1. A tradition must not be contrary to the other traditions, which have already been accepted by the authorities on the subject as authentic and reliable. Nor should it contradict the text of the *Qur'an*, a *Mutawatir hadith*, the absolute consensus of the community (*ijma qat'i*), or the accepted basic principles of Islam.

53 . (See for explanation Tadlis, Azami .p65 )

54 . Azami *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* . , pp 47-57

55 . "That is, he should be known for the scrupulous observance of the ordinances of the religion: paryer, fasting, pilgrimage and support of the poor. He must also avoid all intoxicants. He should be sober in manner and manly in his social conduct. He must, therefore, have the reputation of being truthful and honest in all his dealings. He should be know to have applied accurate in reproducing precisely what he had personally acquired from those from whom he transmits. He ought, by preference, also to be competence in Arabic, proficient enough to appreciate which types of words or particles affect the meaning and nucnce of what he passes on- that is, if he is one of those who transmit hadiths according to the sense, as opposed to the strict letter. In the interests of accuracy, verbatim from a book, his information will be accepted only if he had memorized his hadiths precisely as heard and he did not have to rely upon his text" *Risala*, pp.370-1

57 Rahman.F *Islam*. P 63

58. See. *Hadith Literature, its Orgins*, cp.7 . Azami, Schachts;s Orgins, 114

2. A tradition should not be against the dictates of reason, the laws of nature, or common experience.
3. Traditions establishing a disproportionately high reward for insignificant good deeds, or disproportionately severe punishments for ordinary sins, must be rejected.
4. Traditions describing the excellent properties of certain sections of the *Qur'an* may not be authentic.
5. Traditions mentioning the superior virtue of persons, tribes, and particular places should be generally rejected.
6. Traditions containing such remarks of the Prophet as may not be a part of his Prophetic vocations, or such expressions as are clearly unsuitable for him, should be rejected.
7. A *matn* should not violate the basic rules of Arabic grammar and style.<sup>59</sup>

On the grounds of these principles the compilers of the standard collections of Traditions have rejected a large number of traditions, which are included in some 'sound' *hadith* collections. Like those of Ibn al-Jawzi,<sup>60</sup> Mulla Ali al-Qari, al-shawkani, and others,<sup>61</sup> The genuineness of the *Hadith* was also determined through its *Isnad*. Those concerned with the protection of Hadith began to pay particular attention to gain insight into the character of the narrators, as the authenticity of the tradition depended on their reliability. Criticism of authorities began, which became an important part of the science of *hadith*, called Ma'rif al-Rijal. In addition to the fabrication that was taking place, some scribes were accused of carelessness in their transmission; some were inaccurate in old age, or suffering from a faulty memory. The years of births and deaths were also identified to distinguish whether it was possible that the narrator could have met the person they had quoted.

The two most important compiler/evaluators were Muhammad *ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari* (194-256/ 810-70) acclaimed later by Muslims as being next only to the *Qur'an* in authority. The *Sahih* of Muslim *ibn al-hajjaj* (d.261/875) comes next, close to that of al-Bukhari, although there are 4 other collections by Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani (d.275/888), al-Tirmidhi, (d.279/892), al-Nasa'i (d.303/916), and Ibn Majah (d.273/886) that are accepted by all Sunni Muslims. By this time the criticism is exclusively directed towards the *isnad* or the transmission chain of the Hadith. A systematic and complex inquiry was undertaken into the biographies of the transmitters of the tradition and their bona fides and this is known as 'the Science of Justification and *Impugment*'.<sup>62</sup>

Criticism of the *hadith*, even the rejection of the *hadith* theory advocated by *Imam Shafi'i*, is not something new. Criticism of it existed from the earliest times. At the time of *Imam Shafi'i*, the *Mu'tazilite* rationalist school, one of the earliest Muslim theological schools, advanced two very sound arguments to refute the *hadith* theory. They stated that the *hadith* was merely guesswork and conjecture, and that the *Qur'an* was complete and perfect, and did not require the *hadith* or any other book to supplement or complement it. The transmitters were thus divided into different categories such as 'completely trustworthy', 'truthful', 'weak', 'mendacious' and 'unknown', etc., although there remained differences of opinion among scholars about the several transmitters. Another classification was adopted concerning the continuity or otherwise of a chain of transmission and as to the stage of transmission at which the link is 'broken'. The third line concerned the number of simultaneous transmitters at each stage. As we have seen earlier. On these basis *Hadiths* were classified into various categories such as 'genuine', 'good', 'weak', 'not well-known', i.e. where the connection with the Prophet is indirect), et.

## Verification oh the Hadith & Conclusion

In conclusion I will not repeat what has been written, I will say that the transmitting the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is as old as Islam itself. Prophet thought to have taken some pains to ensure the use and dissemination of his *sunnah*. These reports were collected soon after the Prophet's death, and then were compiled by several different scholars. Once the *hadith* were compiled, a

59. Siddiqi,Z. *Hadith Literatur*, Cp.7. pp.115 .also, See al- *Mawdu'at* (Medina, 1386-89)

60 . al-la'ahi al-Masnua fi-l –Ahadith al –Mawdu'a (Beirut, 1408)

61 . Bukhari, *Sahih*, Kitab al-Sullh, bab I; cf, Ibn Hajar, *Fath*, ad.loc.

62 . Islam Rahman.F. P 64

science of *hadīth* criticism had developed in order to distinguish between authentic and false *hadīth*. In order to determine the authenticity of the *hadīth*, scholars examined the *isnad*, or chain of authorities who transmitted the *hadīth*

The Prophet is reported as having said, ‘There will come in later days men who will transmit what neither you nor your fathers have ever heard. Beware them, lest they mislead you and seduce you.’<sup>63</sup> Muhammad b Sīrīn (d.110/728) said, ‘the information one is collecting is religion. So consider from whom you accept your religion.’<sup>64</sup> As, *Abdullah b. al-Mubarak* is reported as saying, ‘The *isnad* is a part of religion. But for it, anyone could say whatever he pleased.’<sup>65</sup>

The reference is clearly to transmitters of the later times, since it is characteristic that the following is reported, not only from the caliph ‘Umar and the Companion ‘Abdallah b. Masūd, but even from the Prophet himself in identical words: It is sufficient to make any man a liar that he transmits all that he hears.<sup>66</sup> A variant, forms as late an expert as Malik b. Anas, is worded: ‘No man who transmits all that he hears is safe’.<sup>67</sup> Hadith, thus defined, has been the subject of the closest interest among the Muslims since the lifetime of the Prophet.

As I have pointed out above concerning hadith of the prophet rest upon the central question of the status of the sunnah of the Prophet which is the second main source of Islamic law, valid forever, and the life of the prophet is a model which ought to be followed by Muslims irrespective of time and place. For this purpose companions, even in the life of Prophet, Scholars, especially early scholars, played their roles with due caution in transmitting or copying a *hadith*.

Mean while, in the very early stage of the diffusion of hadith in the Islamic world, the community faced some very grave events, and there was a great upheaval a quarter century after the death of the Prophet. I refer to the *fitna* of the assassination of ‘Uthman and the war between ‘Ali and Mu’awiya which produced a breach among Muslims. Here, it seems as if the first fabrication of hadith began in the political sphere.

A third century scholar, Imam Muslim, named his book *al-Tamyiz*, who’s subject is methodology of Hadith criticism. Some Hadith scholars used the word *naqad*, but it did not gain currency in their circle. They named the science, which deals with criticism of hadith, *al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dil* (the knowledge of invalidating and declaring reliable in Hadith).

However, as it has been seen, these principal Hadith collections do provide the framework for religious and ethical thought in Islam. It is this embodiment of literature that functions as the most authoritative interpretation of the text of the *Qur’an*.

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63 .Ibid, bab: fi ‘L-du’afa’ wa-‘I-kadhhabin wa-man yurghab ‘an hadithihi.

64. Muslim, Introduction, bab: al-Isnad min al-din.

65 . ibid

66 . ibid., bab: al-nahyu’an al al-hadith bi-kulli ma sami’a

67. Ibid

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