

# **Tadwin al-Hadith**

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## **Tadwin al-Hadith Part 1: Documentation and Recording of Hadith in Written Form**

*This is first part of the article on Tadwin al-Hadith by Rasul Ja'fariyan.  
It deals with some of the issues related to the writing and documentation of  
Hadith and takes up extensively the issues in scholarly manners.*

*It indeed is an enjoyable amount of reading for people interested to know  
about Hadith in the Islamic literature.*

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## Foreword

This article is about Tadwin al-hadith. The word “Tadwin al-hadith” is fairly clear to the Muslim readers but to none Muslim readers it may not be so. To present a general idea of this issue the readers should keep in mind that in the Islamic system of beliefs and conducts and laws there two major sources of literature that contain all the texts of the laws and the principles of beliefs of the, Islamic system. One is the holy Quran. The other one is the Sunnah, which consists of the sayings, the deeds and the approvals of the holy Prophet (S). The Arabic word “Hadith” which according to the dictionary means “a report” or a “saying” or a “statement” in the Islamic literature often stands for the word “Sunnah” which literally means “tradition” or “custom” or “manners.”

The Muslim scholars of Fiqh, law, and the scholars of theology all agree that the holy Quran available today is exactly what was revealed through The Archangel Gibrael to Prophet Muhammad (S). However, the meaning of many of the verses in the holy Quran is still not very clear. It perhaps is because they speak of certain facts that are not yet known to people such as the following verse:

***“Jinn and mankind, if you can penetrate the diameters of the heavens and the earth, do so, but you cannot do so without power and authority (55:33).”***

This verse, obviously, speaks of travelling into space. A thousand years ago people did not have the same idea of travelling in space as people today do.

In the case of Hadith the scholars do not complain about the unclarity of the meanings of the sayings and the statements of the holy Prophet (S). The major problem in the case of Hadith is the difficult task to verify if a certain statement said to be a saying of the holy Prophet (S) is really true or not.

The following article deals with some of the issues related to the writing and documentation of Hadith and takes up extensively the issues in scholarly manners.

It indeed is an enjoyable amount of reading for people interested to know about Hadith in the Islamic literature.

## Documentation and Recording of Hadith in written form

The significance and value of Hadith in the interpretation of the Quran, its overwhelming role in Fiqh and moral discipline is so immense that it does not need any further emphasis. All the schools of Fiqh of the Muslim community agree that the Islamic system without Hadith would be considered incomplete. (Although some of the Muslims of Egypt today do not consider Hadith very useful)

Besides, and above all, the holy Prophet (S) and the holy Quran have also drawn people’s attention to the importance of Hadith in the Islamic system.<sup>1</sup>

The issue to discuss herein is to examine how the amount of Hadith available was at the beginning documented and recorded in written form. In other words, how and when the sayings, the deeds and the approvals of the holy Prophet (S) were documented and recorded in written form. Were they recorded in written form immediately after their issuance by the holy

Prophet (S) or not immediately? This issue may prove to be of serious consequences on the matters of authenticity or otherwise of Hadith and the Sunnah as a whole.

It is clear about the holy Quran that soon after the revelation of every verse and chapter without delay they were very carefully documented in written forms.

This, however, did not take place with Hadith. It was because of the direct effects of Hadith on the social and political issues that made different groups of Muslims show certain sensitivities towards Hadith. This was one reason that despite the commandments of the holy Prophet (S) to preach and preserve Hadith in written form the documentation of Hadith was delayed. It created huge problems for the future generations of Muslims in the task of the verification of the authenticity of Hadith and complicated this task very much.

In this discourse it is important to examine how each of the two major schools of Fiqh, the Shi'ah and Sunni Muslims, have dealt with this issue and how each have found solutions for the task of verifying the authenticity of each piece and items of the Sunnah.

As historical evidence shows the Shi'ah Muslims from the very beginning were well aware of the urgent need to carefully record all the pieces and items of the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S). Besides this the infallible Imams (a.s) were living among the people up to the middle of the third century AH. With the existence of such advantages in their favor the Shi'ah Muslims did not suffer any weakness in this regard.

In the following, first the evidence in favor of such advantages in the task of preserving the Sunnah safely in the case of the Shi'ah Muslims will be examined.

The case of the Sunni Muslims with regards to the task of preserving the Sunnah will take a greater part of the discourse due to certain complications that were involved therein. As it will be noted later in the case of the Sunni Muslims Hadith was not recorded in written form for over two centuries. They would preserve Hadith in their memories.

This discourse may help to evaluate the strength of the resources of Fiqh of each school of law in terms of authenticity and otherwise and provide information about the history of Hadith in the Islamic system.

This discourse is open for comments from the scholars of law and ideology.

### **The Imams of Shi'ah Muslims and the recording in written form of Hadith and its narration**

In this brief discourse the position of the Shi'ah Muslims in the issue of the recording in written form of the Hadith will be examined. Evidence from history will show that in the midst of the misleading attitudes of others towards Hadith the Imams of the Shi'ah Muslims had always insisted on recording in written form of Hadith for its safe preservation from forgery and lies.

On the other hand even until the first parts of the third century the Sunni Muslim scholars would only for the sake of preserving the memorized

Hadith would write Hadith just for personal use to help boost their memory. This case at last changed into full recording in written form of the Hadith after a long anxiously awaited period of time. This, however, happened against all the so-called Hadith against recording in written form of Hadith.

‘Alb’a ibn Ahmar has reported that once Imam Ali (a.s) was giving a speech from the pulpit wherein he said this, “Who wants to buy knowledge for one Dirham? Harith ibn A’war purchased some paper for one Dirham and came to Imam Ali (a.s) and wrote on it a great deal of Knowledge.”<sup>2</sup>

Imam Hassan ibn Ali (a.s) would say this to his children; “You are the children of a nation and you will become of the elders of this nation in future. You must acquire knowledge. Let those of you who cannot memorize Knowledge (Hadith) record it in written form and keep it at home.”<sup>3</sup>

Hujr ibn ‘Uday was one of the companions of the holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali (a.s). He would write down the Ahadith from Imam Ali in a book and whenever he would need to know a rule of Shari’ah he would read in that book about it.<sup>4</sup>

The above are evidence of the fact that Imam Ali (a.s) and his associates would consider the recording in written form of Hadith a religious duty.

‘Umar ibn Ali has reported that a person asked Imam Ali (a.s), “How is it that you narrate more Hadith from the holy Prophet (S) than the other companions of the holy Prophet do? The Imam replied, “The reason is that whenever I would ask the holy Prophet (S) questions he would reply and whenever I would not ask he would begin to speak to me.”<sup>5</sup>

It is reported from Ali ibn Huwshab, who had heard Makhul, a scholar from Sham, Syria, saying, “Once the holy Prophet (S) recited verse 12 of chapter 69. That partially reads, “...and the listening ears will listen to it...”<sup>6</sup> and he said to Ali (a.s), “I prayed to Allah to mean thereby your ears.” Imam Ali (a.s) has said that after that whatever Hadith or so I heard from the holy Prophet I never forgot them.<sup>7</sup>

‘Amr ibn Harith has said, “Ali (a.s) once turned his face to the sky and then assumed a normal posture and said, ‘Allah and His messenger have told us the truth.’ People asked him, “About what?” The Imam (a.s) replied, “I am experienced in wars and wars are won through deceit. If I would fall from the sky and only birds would come to help me, such a condition (of helplessness) is more preferable to me than forging things against the messenger of Allah. Whatever you hear from me act up on them.”<sup>8</sup>

It is reported from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq who has said, “Write down and spread your knowledge among your brethren. When you die your children will inherit your books. A time will come when things will be chaotic and the solace and support for people will be books only.”<sup>9</sup>

It is also narrated from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s) who has said, “Preserve your books; one day you will need them.” Also he has said: “A proper support for the heart and memory is writing.”<sup>10</sup>

Abi Basir has narrated from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s) who has said, “People from Basrah asked certain Ahadith and wrote them down. Why do you not write them down.” Later the Imam (a.s) said, “Remember that you

will not be able to preserve Hadith in your memories until you write them down.”<sup>11</sup>

As it is mentioned in many Hadith the Imams (a.s) had books and booklets with them that they had received from their fathers in inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

It is reported from Imam Ali (a.s) who has said, “Document, or record down in written form the knowledge and repeated this twice.”<sup>13</sup>

It is narrated from Jabir who has said, “Abu Hanifah used to call Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq a ‘book-worm’ because of reliance on books very often and the Imam would take pride in doing so.”<sup>14</sup>

According to reports Imam Muhammad al-Baqir had written down the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) from Jabir ibn ‘Abdallah al-Ansari.<sup>15</sup>

This Imam (a.s) was only five years old when Jabir died. Although it seems very unlikely but a possibility still exists.

### **The Shi’ah Muslims and the Task of Documenting Hadith**

Since documenting and recording down in written form of Hadith was a fact of life among the Shi’ah Muslims from the very beginning the task of documenting Fiqh and Hadith had been common in this community in the very early days. Doctor Shawqi Dayf writes, “The Shi’ah Muslim’s attention towards documenting Fiqh and Hadith had been very strong. One reason for this is their belief in their Imams (a.s) as guiding and well-guided people whose Fatwas, legal opinions, were must to follow. Therefore, they paid proper attention to the judicial decisions of Imam Ali (a.s). The first compilation and documented record of legal matters was produced by Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali, contemporary to Hajjaj.”<sup>16</sup>

‘Allamah Sayyid Sharaf al-Din also writes, “Imam Ali (a.s) and his followers paid proper attention to documenting Hadith from the very early days. The first thing that Imam Ali (a.s) did was documenting in written form of the whole of the holy Quran. Soon after the death of the holy Prophet (S) he organized the verses and chapters of this holy book the way they were revealed to the holy Prophet (S). He did so with a mention of which word, phrase, sentence or verse was of a general, particular, absolute, stipulated, clear or of metaphorical sense. After completing such a documentation of the holy Quran he worked on a book for Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra’ (a.s).

This book came to be popularly known to their descendants as the “Mushaf of Fatimah”. After this Imam Ali (a.s) wrote a book on the rules of compensation for losses due to criminal acts. Which was called ‘Sahifah’. Ibn Sa’d has recorded it at the end of his well-known works ‘al-Jami’ as Musnad of Ali (a.s).

Of the other writers among the Shi’ah Muslims is abu Rafi’ who wrote the books called ‘Sunan, Ahkam and Judgements’.<sup>17</sup>

Late Sayyid Hassan Sadr writes, “The first person in the Shi’ah Muslim community who produced a book was abu Rafi’ Mawla of the holy Prophet (S)”<sup>18</sup>

Najashi also writes, “Of the first generation of the Shi’ah Muslim authors was abu Rafi’ Mawla of the Messenger of Allah. Muhammad ibn Sa’d has said in his works on history that he (abu Rafi’) was one of the best individuals of the Shi’ah Muslim community. He participated in all the

battles with Imam Ali (a.s) and was the treasurer of the Baytul Mal in Kufa, Iraq... Abu Rafi' had written a book on Sunan, Ahkam and Judgments.

The book is narrated by Muhammad ibn abi Rafi' from his father and from his grandfather. It begins with a chapter on prayer then Fasting, Zakat and judicial rules. In Kufa this book is narrated by Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn Mubarak. Ali ibn abi Rafi' also had another book and he was of the Tabi'in, the second, generation and one of the best individuals in the Shi'ah Muslim community. He had a book on the subjects of Fiqh and chapters on Wuzu, prayers and other chapters of Fiqh.<sup>19</sup>

As mentioned earlier Abu Hanifah would call Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq as a 'Kutubi' bookworm. When this was mentioned to the Imam (a.s) he smiled and said, "That he says I am a 'suhufi' is true. I have read the 'Suhuf', books of my father and grandfathers."<sup>20</sup>

This report clearly shows that the Imam (a.s) had books compiled by his father or grandfather or great grandfathers. This was at a time when the Sunni Muslim scholars had not paid any attention to compiling books on Hadith.

Another evidence for the existence of such books with Imams (a.s) is the report from Sayrafi, "I with Hakam ibn 'Uyaynah were in the presence of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s) and he asked questions from the Imam (a.s) and the Imam (a.s) paid particular attention to him. Hakam and I had a disagreement on some issues and the Imam asked his son, "Please bring me that big book. He opened the book and turned several leaves until he found the answer and said, "This is the hand writing of Ali (a.s) and the dictation of the holy Prophet (S)."<sup>21</sup>

It is narrated from Imam abi Ja'far (a.s) who has said, "We found it in the book of Ali (a.s) that the holy Prophet (S) has said, 'If Zakat is not paid the blessings of the land goes away.'"<sup>22</sup>

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s) who has said, "My father has said, 'I read in the book of Ali (a.s) that the holy Prophet (a.s) ordered to write a covenant among the Muhajir, the immigrant Muslims, the Ansar, the Muslim people of Madina and other Muslims. In it, it was said, "The rules about a neighbor is like the rules applicable to one's own self. One must not do injustice to a neighbor. The protection of the respects of a neighbor is just like the protection of the respect for a mother.'"<sup>23</sup>

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq who has said, "It is written in the book of Ali (a.s), "This world is like a snake whose appearance is attractive but inside there is deadly poison therein. A person of reason stays away from it but a child may go close to it."<sup>24</sup>

It is also narrated that in the book of discipline of Imam Ali (a.s) it said, "One must not use analogy in the matters of religion because the religion of Allah is not based on analogy. There will come a people who will use analogy. They, in fact, will do animosity to religion."<sup>25</sup>

Zurarah has narrated, "I asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir about the inheritance of a grandfather and said, 'I have not seen anybody speak about it but that is based on personal opinions except Amirul Mu'minin Ali (a.s).' I asked, "What has he said in this matter?" The Imam replied, "Come tomorrow so I can read it for you from the book." I then requested, "Please

say it to me in the form of Hadith because your Hadith is better for me than books.” “Do what I asked you to do, said the Imam (a.s). “Come tomorrow and I will read for you from the book.” Zurarah has said, “I visited the Imam next day in the afternoon. Ja’far ibn Muhammad the son of the Imam (a.s) came to me and the Imam asked him to read for me from the book.”<sup>26</sup>

Also it is narrated from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s) who has said, “It is written in the book of Ali (a.s), ‘One who drinks wine or any other kind of intoxicating substances must receive the same kind of penalty.’”<sup>27</sup>

Muhammad ibn Muslim, a companion of Imam al-Baqir (a.s) has said, “Abu Ja’far read for me from the book Fara’id that was a dictation of the holy Prophet (S) written with the hand writing of Imam Ali (a.s).”<sup>28</sup>

These were just a few Hadith out of many more on the issue of recording in written form of Ahadith. The task of properly documenting Hadith was common practice under the guidance of the Imams (a.s). This noble practice had originated from Imam Ali (a.s) under the guidance of the holy Prophet (S). These Ahadith are Mutawatir according to Shi’ah Muslims and in the Ahadith of the Sunni Muslims also they are mentioned in some degrees. This practice is a great support for the reliability of the Hadith of the Shi’ah Muslims.

After the time of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s) people had written so many books that it is difficult to enumerate them. Just a quick examination of the works of Najashi will show that the students of the Imams had compiled a great deal of books as resources of the Fiqh. The resources of Fiqh available to Shi’ah Muslims are quite rich. This is all because of the strong support of the Imams of the Shi’ah Muslims of the great and valuable task of recording in written form of Ahadith in the proper times.

Such resources are distinct from those of the Sunni Muslims in two ways.

- (a) A much larger quantity
- (a) Its aloofness from the influence of the rulers and their power seeking struggles and politics

### **History of Hadith in the Sunni Muslims Community**

The works on Hadith available today were compiled and completed in the last parts of the second century and in the third century Hijrah, Islamic Calendar. Historical evidence shows that in the second century a very few reporters of Hadith possessed very few Hadith, which were not even organized properly. Later on those small writings became the source of large works of Hadith. Most of the Ahadith in major collections of Hadith were handed down to the new generations by the help of the reporter’s memories. Before being recorded in the major works of Hadith the Ahadith did not exist in a written and recorded form anywhere else.

The issue of delay in the recording of Ahadith in a written form is a very important historical issue. It is important because it has a significant effect on the quantity, authenticity as well the forged Hadith and other related issues. One such issue is concerned with the elements that were the cause of such delays. It was due to the attitudes of such people towards Hadith that became reason for others not to record the Ahadith in the written form.

To find explanations for the plans of the people who caused delays in recording the Ahadith in written form is one of the objectives of this discourse.

In our belief from what history proves some of the Caliphs for particular interests prevented the recording in written form of the Ahadith and other Sahabah and Tabi'in, second generation Muslims, also followed such lead; these people because of the fact that "people follow their rulers" for a long time abstained from recording in written form of Hadith. They only would preserve the Ahadith in their memories.

As it will be noted later some of these people would write down from time to time some of the Ahadith only to destroy them towards the end of their lives as if such writings would only help them to memorize better. Such writings were not to transfer knowledge to coming generations.

It is interesting to note that abstention from recording in written form of Hadith came from the rulers and the reason for recording in written form of Hadith also came from the rulers.

Zuhri reports, "We disliked recording of knowledge in writing until we were compelled by the rulers to do so and then we found out that of the Muslims also no one opposed it". He further says, "The kings demanded of me to write down the knowledge for them. For a long time I continued writing the knowledge for them but then I felt ashamed before Allah for writing the knowledge for the kings but not for the others."<sup>29</sup>

All the Sahabah and Tabi'in, however, were not alike in this matter. Some of them like Imam Ali (a.s) would record the Ahadith in written form and would command others to also do so. The others began writing the Ahadith only when the prohibition of the Caliphs changed into their command to writing the Ahadith.<sup>30</sup>

'Umar Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz (who died 101AH) was the first among the Caliphs who ordered the scholars of the different cities to write down the Ahadith and send them to him (the caliph).<sup>31</sup>

It is reported that he wrote to Murrâh Ibn Kathir asking him to record in written form the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (S)<sup>32</sup>. He also wrote to Muhammad Hazm to write down all the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (S) available to him and also anything available of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab be added and sent to the Caliph ('Umar Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz). "I am afraid for the loss of the Ahadith." Wrote 'Umar Ibn Abdul 'Aziz<sup>33</sup>. He also wrote to the people of Madina asking them to write down all the available Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (S) and then send them all to the Caliph. "I am afraid of the loss of Ahadith." He had complained.<sup>34</sup>

This statement of 'Umar Ibn 'Adal 'Aziz shows clearly that until that time recording in written form of Hadith did not exist as a task but this does not prove, in any way or manner, that no record in written form of Hadith existed at all anywhere else also.

After 'Umar Ibn 'Adal 'Aziz other Caliphs did not follow up what he had started and this move faded away once again. Memorization of Ahadith was the only heritage of the Sunni Muslim Scholars that they had received until that time from their predecessors; therefore, changing of such attitude was very difficult. This becomes more believable after and examination of the

fact that some scholars of Hadith even towards the end of the second century AH would still dislike writing down of the Ahadith.

The assertions of historians of historical matters are indicative of the delay in recording down in written form of the Ahadith. It is reported from ‘Adul Razzaq, “The first person who wrote down Hadith was ibn Jurayh.” Al-Awza’i also began to write down the Ahadith after he presented his books before Yahya Ibn Kathir.”<sup>35</sup>

Al-Dhahabi writes, “In the year 143 AH the Muslim scholars began to write down the Ahadith, Fiqh and commentary of the holy Quran. Of such scholars were Ibn Jurayh in Makkah, Malik in Madinah, al-Awza’i in Sham, Damascus, Ibn Abi ‘Urubah in Basrah, Mu’ammam in Yemen and Sufyan al-Thuri in Kufa, Iraq. Before this time the scholars of Hadith would narrate the Ahadith from their memories or they would narrate knowledge from the small authentic booklets that were not so organized.”<sup>36</sup>

He has stated even more clearly, “Ibn Jurayh and Ibn Abi ‘Urubah are the first people who began to write down Hadith and Mu’ammam Ibn Rashid of Yemen also did so.”<sup>37</sup>

It is also reported from ‘Adal Al-‘Aziz ibn Muhammad al-Darwardi, who has said that the first person to write down knowledge was Ibn Shihab Zuhri. “<sup>38</sup>

It is reported from Ibn Shihab Zuhri who has said that ‘Adal ‘Aziz had ordered us to record down in written form the Sunnah and in the shape of note books and sent copies to all the lands under his rule.”<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned earlier after ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdal ‘Aziz the writing down of Hadith became a disputed matter and once again it was ignored for another half century. Ibn Hajar has said, “The recording down in written form of Ahadith began towards the end of the period of Tabi’in when Muslim scholars dispersed in various cities. Of the first people who wrote down the Ahadith were Rabi’ Ibn Subayh and Sa’id ibn Abi ‘Urubah and the third generation of Muslims compiled the Laws.”<sup>40</sup> Dhahabi also has narrated a similar statement.<sup>41</sup>

This shows that in the first half of the second century AH compilation of Hadith was incomplete. In the second half of this century it took a more complete shape.

Haji Khalifah writes, “When Islam spread, the cities of the Muslims became larger. The Sahabah and Tabi’in dispersed in these lands. After a while the older ones died as a result preservation of Hadith decreased. The scholars felt the need to record in written form the Ahadith. I swear up on my soul that the recording down in written form of the Ahadith was a fundamental issue because human memory is not immune from neglect. After them the task was up to the Imams of Hadith like ibn Jurayh and Malik ibn Anas. It is said that the first person to record Hadith in written form was Rabi’a ibn Subayh in Basrah and after him the task of writing down of Hadith spread.”<sup>42</sup>

From the above three stages of the conditions of Hadith the following comes to light.

1. In the first century no collections in written form of Hadith with due popularity existed except for few instances that some of the Sahabah may have acted against the will of the Caliphs.

1. In the first half of the second century Ahadith were compiled in an incomplete form.

1. In the last parts of the second century Ahadith were recorded in written form in a basic shape. This began in the last parts of the second century. However, there is not much of such works available today. The oldest of such written records available today are the compilation of ‘abd al-Razzaq, the compilation of ibn abi Shaybah and Muwatta’ of ibn Malik ibn Anas that were mostly compiled in second half of the second century.

According to Dhahabi Na’im ibn Hammad compiled the first Musnad<sup>43</sup> Yahya al-Hamani compiled the first Musnad in Kufa, Iraq.<sup>44</sup> Musaddad was the first to compile a Musnad in Basrah.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Causes for the Delay in Recording in Written form of Hadith**

The holy Prophet (S) from the very beginning stressed upon recording in written form of the holy Quran as a protective measure against forgery and lies. The holy Prophet (S) had granted permission to write down his Ahadith and even he had ordered to write his Ahadith down. Some of the Ahadith were written down in his lifetime but after his departure from this world not much attention was paid to preserving the Ahadith in written form. In addition, there existed an opposition to the task of the recording in written form of Ahadith and many problems surfaced because of such oppositions.

Very serious and undesirable effects came out of not recording in written form of Hadith. Some people went far enough to place the responsibility for this shortcoming on the shoulders of the holy Prophet (S) himself. Knowing that the holy Prophet cannot be blamed the way others can be blamed it was planned to falsely ascribe a Hadith as the following sentence to him about this issue.

### **The so called Hadith Prohibiting documentation of Hadith**

“Do not write down anything from me except the holy Quran and those who have written must wipe them out.”<sup>46</sup>

The statement is very clear and it does not need any interpretations. It simply prohibits writing down of Hadith. Even those who had written some Hadith down had been made responsible to wipe them out.

1. For the very clarity of this statement it cannot be accepted as true Hadith besides other reasons.

In case it is accepted its authority cannot be limited for a certain period of time. If writing down of Hadith is prohibited it is so all the time. It is known that even the narrators of this statement have ignored it and themselves have compiled their works on Hadith. The first compilers of Hadith in the first half of the second century A.H. began to compile the Ahadith and ignore the above-mentioned assertion. They knew that if something is unlawful in Shari’ah it cannot be made lawful. How can such a Hadith be accepted as true?

2. The same narrators of Hadith have narrated certain Hadith from the holy Prophet (S) that speak of writing down of Hadith as lawful.<sup>47</sup>

3. Abu Sa'id al-Khudari who is mostly considered to be the narrator of the above Hadith is also considered to be the narrator of the following Hadith or assertion that negates this Hadith to a certain degree

“We in those days would not write anything besides the holy Quran and Tashahhud, the testimony.”<sup>48</sup>

There are two things to note in this later statement.

(a) He did not say that it was because of the commands of the holy Prophet (S) unless one would interpret it as such, because of his not considering it the main point in his statement, which is possible but very unlikely.<sup>49</sup>

(b) The writing of testimony is mentioned here while the former so called Hadith prohibits everything from the Holy Prophet (S) other than the holy Quran. In another narration from ibn Mas'ud Istikharah is also added.<sup>50</sup> Why the holy Prophet (S) would grant permission for writing down of the Testimony and prohibit the writing down of the other Ahadith?

As it will be discussed latter, evidence show that even Abu Bakr and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab at the beginning had the intention of writing down the Ahadith but latter because of the reason that 'Umar stated, he did not write down the Ahadith. None of them mentioned any prohibition from the holy Prophet (S).

In addition, when 'Umar consulted the Sahabah about the writing down of the Ahadith they also supported the idea of recording in written form of the Ahadith.

4. There is another narration in which abi Basir speaks to abi Sa'id al-Khudari saying, “What we read we write them down. Abu Sa'id responds, ‘Do you want to make them a book? The holy Prophet (S) spoke to us and we speak to you and you should just memorize them like us.’”<sup>51</sup>

There are two points to note in this case also.

(a) Abu Sa'id did not ascribe the prohibition to the holy Prophet (S)

(a) His reason for not writing down the Ahadith is the same as that given by the Caliph who also did not ascribe the prohibition to the holy Prophet (S).

5. After the so called Hadith of prohibition there is this expression, “Speak (as much as you like) of Banu Israel; there is no offense in it.”

So the whole of the so called Hadith placed together would mean, “Do not write the Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad but speak of the Israelites as much as one would wish”.

If something would destroy whatever Prophet Muhammad (S) has taught and propagate whatever Banu Israel says it becomes clear what the author of the so called Hadith had wanted. He simply wanted to replace the Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad (S) with those of Banu Israel. Can reason believe Prophet Muhammad (S) would say such a thing?

6. The following part of the statement of abu Sa'id expresses a possibility that the so called prohibition may have been for him only: “I requested permission from the holy Prophet (S) to write down his Hadith but he denied me such permission.”<sup>52</sup>

It will be observed later that the holy Prophet (S) did grant permission to people for writing down of his Ahadith.

### **The Narration of Abu Hurayrah**

It is narrated from abu Hurayrah who has said, “The holy Prophet (S) came to us when we were writing down Hadith. He asked us, ‘ what is this you are writing?’ We replied, “These are the matters that we have heard from you.” He then said, ‘Do you want a book other than the book of Allah? The nations before you were destroyed only for what they had written along with the book of Allah.’<sup>53</sup>

Comments to this are as follows.

1. Even assuming this to be abu Hurayrah’s own narration his truthfulness is very much questionable because of the research others have conducted about him.

2. The reason given in this narration is just like the reason given by the Caliph in this matter. Abu Hurayrah ascribes to the Prophet (S) but the Caliph did not ascribe it to the Prophet (S).

3. This narration may have some of its theme come from the Hadith of the holy Prophet about the books of the people of the books but it is not about the Hadith that is the finishing substance for the divine message.

4. How would possibly the holy Prophet (S) prohibit the writing down of his Sunnah that explains the Islamic system of Shari’ah?

Another narration of abu Hurayrah shows that either he was unaware of the first narration or those who ascribe it to him. It says, “The holy Prophet (S) had heard that people write down Ahadith. He went on the pulpit. After praising Allah said, ‘What are these books that I hear you write? I am only a mortal. Whoever has some of it with him let him bring it to Me.’<sup>54</sup>

This narration has clearly considered the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S) as of no authority. His considering himself a mortal has negated the authority of his own Hadith. This is not acceptable to Muslims.

It is important to note that a similar thing was said by certain group to ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Al-‘Ass who would write the Ahadith of the Prophet (S) to which the Prophet had said, “I do not say but the truth.”<sup>55</sup>

This expression of the holy Prophet (S) clearly negates the narration of abu Hurayrah.

1. Abu Hurayrah himself has said that no one has more Hadith than he except ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar does because he would write the Ahadith but abu Hurayrah would not write.<sup>56</sup>

This shows that there was no prohibition on writing down of Ahadith. Abu Hurayrah’s not writing may have been for personal reasons.

2. One of the pupils of abu Hurayrah, abu Nahyak, has said, “I would take the books from abu Hurayrah and would write from them for myself and then would take them to abu Hurayrah and read to him and ask him, “Did you hear them from the holy Prophet (S)? He would acknowledge.”<sup>57</sup>

Do these narrations not negate his (abu Hurayrah) narration that say writing of Hadith is prohibited?

3. Also it is narrated that Hamam ibn Manbal, a pupil of abu Hurayrah had compiled a book in the lifetime of abu Hurayrah that contained the Ahadith from him.<sup>58</sup>

This does not agree with abu Hurayrah's narration of the prohibition of writing Hadith when his own pupil writes Hadith with his knowledge. Another report is narrated from Zayd Ibn Thabit who when in the presence of Mu'awiyah was asked about a Hadith and was asked to write down that Hadith to which Zayd had said, "The holy Prophet (S) had told us not to write any of his Ahadith."<sup>59</sup>

The answer to this among the others is the huge collections of the works on Hadith that are all available today. As it will be observed after examining the true reason for such prohibitions, such narration is not truly from the holy Prophet (S).

Ibn Mas'ud's case, who was told to destroy the book full of Hadith<sup>60</sup> could be explain as follow.

(a) It is not known if the holy Prophet (S) had asked him to destroy the book. It is possible it was done because of the order of the Caliphs.

(b) This, as will be explained, was done about the narration of Banu Israel not the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (S). The same is the case with abu Musa al-Ash'ari whose son had a collection of Hadith and it was destroyed.

***... "In the life of the Messenger of Allah there is good examples for you to follow... Holy Quran, 33:12.***

***...Follow whatever the messenger teaches and abide by his prohibitions... Holy Quran, 59:7.***

***...It does not befit a believer to act as they choose when Allah and His messenger have already decided for them." Holy Quran, 33:36.***

### Notes

1. See verses 12:33, 7:59 and 36:33 Holy Quran.
2. Tabaqat al-Kubra Vol. 6, P 168, Taqyid al-'ilm P 89-90, Kanzul 'ummal vol. 10, P 156, Rabi' al-Abrar vol. 3, P 294.
3. Behar al-Anwar vol 2 P 152, al-Taratib al-'idariyah vol. 2 P 246, Sunan al-Darimi vol. 1 P 130, 'ilal al-Hadith vol. 2 P 438, Taqyid al-'ilm P 91, Jami' al-Bayan al-'ilm vol. 1 P 99, Kanzul 'ummal vol. 1 P 193, Rabi' al- Abrar vol. 3, P 326, Tarjamah al-Imam Hassan from history of Damascus P 167.
4. Tabaqat al-kubra vol. 6 P 220
5. Ansab al-Ashraf vol. 3 P 98 Hadith No 980 from Tarjamah of Imam Ali (a.s) in history of Damascus, Behar al-Anwar vol. 2 P 230, al-Fadael of ibn Hanbal HadithNo 222
6. Holy Quran 69:12.
7. Ansab al-Ashraf vol. 1 P 121, History of Damascus vol 38 P 202, Hulyatul Awliya vol. P 67, Shawahid al-Tanzil Hadith No. 1009.
8. Ansab al-Ashraf vol. 2 P 145.
9. Behar al-Anwar vol. 2 P 50 from Kashf al-Mahajjah.
10. Behar al-Anwar vol. 2 P 152.
11. Behar al-Anwar vol. 2 P 153.
12. See Makatib al-Rasul vol. 1 P 71-89, Ali Ahmadi Miyanchi.
13. Taqyid al-'ilm P 89.
14. Rawadat al-Jannat vol. 8 P 169.
15. Taqyid al-'ilm P 104.
16. Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi (al-'asr al-Islami) P 453, Tamhid of Tarikh al-Falsafah al-Islamiyah P 202-203, Mustafa 'Abd al-Razzaq.
17. Al-Muraja'at P 305-306, A'lami, Beirut.
18. Ta'sis al-Shi'ah, li 'ulum al-Islami P. 280, A'lami, Beirut.
19. Rijal of Najashi P 3-4, Qum.

20. Qamus al-Rijal under Tarjamah of Muhammad ibn ‘abdallah ibn Hassan, Rawadat al-Jannat vol. 8 P 77.
21. Rijal of Najashi P 255.
22. Furu’ al-Kafi vol. 2 P 666, also Furu’ al-Kafi vol. 7 P 77.
23. Wasael al-Shi’ah, Kitab al-Zakat, also Makatib al-Rasul vol. P 73.
24. Wasael al-Shi’ah, Kitab al-Jihad, Makatib al-Rasul P 76.
25. Wasael al-Shi’ah, Kitab al-Qada’.
26. Furu’ al-Kafi vol. 7 P 94.
27. Wasael al-Shi’ah, Kitab al-Hudud.
28. Furu’ al-Kafi vol. 7 P 98.
29. Tabaqat al-kubra’ vol. 2 P 389, Musannaf ‘Abd al-Razzaq vol. 11 P 258, Taqyid al-‘ilm P107.
30. Jami’ Bayan al-‘ilm vol. 1 P 92.
31. Musannaf ‘Abd al-Razzaq vol. 9 P 337.
32. Tabaqat al-Kubra’ vol. 7 P 447.
33. Sunan al-Darimi vol. P126, Taqyid al-‘ilm P 105-106.
34. Sunan al-Darimi vol.1 P 126, Akhbar Asbahan vol. 1 P 312, Tadrib al-Rawi P 90 by Sayuti.
35. Al-Jarh Wa al-Ta’dil vol. P 184.
36. Tarikh al-Khulafa’ P 261 by Sayuti.
37. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz vol. 1 P 170, 169, 203.
38. Jami’ Bayan al-‘ilm vol. 1 P 88-91.
39. Jami’ Bayan al-‘ilm vol. 1 P 92.
40. Muqaddimah fath al-Bari P 4-5.
41. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz vol. P 160.
42. Kashf al-Zunun vol. 1 P 237.
43. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz vol. 1 P 419.
44. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz vol. 1 P 419.
45. Ibid, Tadrib al-Rawi P 88-89.
46. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 29-31, Musnad Ahmad vol. 3 P 12, 21, 39, Sunan al-Darimi vol. P 110.
47. Jami’ Bayan al-‘ilm vol. P 76, Kashf al-Astar, vol. 1 P 109.
48. Taqyid al-‘ilm p 93, Musannaf ibn abi Shaybah vol. 1 P 293.
49. Musannaf ibn abi Shaybah vol. 1 P 294.
50. Musannaf ibn abi Shaybah vol. 1 P 294.
51. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 36-37.
52. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 36.
53. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 34.
54. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 34.
55. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 34.
56. Al-Kifayah fi ‘ilm al-Riwayah, P 82.
57. Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar vol. 4 P 320.
58. ‘Ulum al-Hadith P 21-22.
59. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 35, ‘Umdat al-Qari vol. 1 P 572, Musnad Ahmad P 182 vol. 5.
60. Taqyid al-‘ilm P 39, Sunan al-Darimi vol.1 P 124-125.

## **Tadwin al-Hadith Part 2: A Historical Study of the Writing and Compilation of Hadith**

*This is second part of the article on Tadwin al-Hadith. It deals with some of the issues related to the writing and documentation of Hadith and takes up extensively the issues in scholarly manners.*

*It indeed is an enjoyable amount of reading for people interested to know about Hadith in the Islamic literature.*

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### [Foreward]

One of the evidence indicating the lack of authenticity in the Hadith ascribed to the Prophet (S) about prohibition on the writing of Hadith is the statement of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab on his intention to have Hadith compiled. ‘Umar is reported to have said, “I had intended to write down the texts of the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S). But then it occurred to me that people in the past wrote certain books and due to their relying heavily on such books, they abandoned the Divine Scriptures. By God, I will not allow anything to cover (obscure) the Book of God”.<sup>1</sup>

The above Riwayah, report, shows that the Second Caliph had at first intended to write the Hadith. In some versions of this Riwayah it is stated that he consulted other Sahabah, Companions of the holy Prophet (S) about this matter. They also approved it, but he later changed his mind for a reason that he himself stated, not on account of the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S).

Another evidence of the lack of authenticity in the Hadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith is the statement of the Prophet (S) on the last Thursday of his terrestrial life. On that day when his Sahabah, Companions had assembled around his death bed, the Prophet (S) asked them: “Bring me ink and paper that I may write for you something after which you will not fall into error.” Thereat some people with ‘Umar at their lead opposed him (a.s), saying,” The Book of God is sufficient for us.”

This Riwayah reveals that the writing of anything aside from the holy Quran was not prohibited. The Prophet (S) considered it necessary to protect the Ummah against falling into error and misguidance. When the Prophet (S) was asking to write down his instructions - and a group of Companions - led by the Second Caliph according to al-Shahristani in al-Milal wa al-Nihal - opposed him - it was because he (S) was aware of the disasters that would follow in the wake of this incident. Details, as recounted by Sunni scholars, of the harms caused for not writing down the Ahadith will be explained later. Is it right to consider the Prophet (S) responsible for something which caused so much harm to the Islamic system and Sunnah?

### **Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) on Recording in Writing of Hadith**

In a number of his Ahadith the Prophet (S) has permitted the writing of Hadith in general or that he has given such permission to particular individuals. These Ahadith, alone are sufficient to invalidate the ones that prohibit the writing of Hadith. To say the least, the conflict of Riwayat, reports would cause both of them to lose authority (Hujyyah). The number of these Ahadith is larger than those prohibiting the writing of Hadith. The possibility of the authenticity of such large number of Ahadith is very real. These Ahadith contain the permission and the obligation to write down the Ahadith.

These Ahadith have been reported through several chains of narrators.

A man complained to the holy Prophet (S) about his inability to remember. The Prophet (S) told him, “Take the assistance of thy right hand i.e. writing against the defects of thy memory.”<sup>2</sup>

It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (S) stood up and delivered a speech on the occasion of the liberation of Makkah. Abu Shat requested the Prophet (S) for a transcript and a copy of the sermon, whence he (a.s) ordered the sermon to be written down for Abu Shat.<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet (S) is reported to have stated, “Define, preserve and record knowledge by means of writing it down.”<sup>4</sup>

It is reported from Rafi’ Ibn Khadija who has said: “We asked the Prophet (S), ‘Should we write some of the things that we hear from you?’ ‘Write it down; there is no harm in it.’ The Prophet replied<sup>5</sup>.”

It is reported on the authority of ‘Amr Ibn Shu’ayb that his grandfather asked the Prophet (S), “We hear things from you but we cannot commit them to memory. Do we have permission to write them down?” “Yes, write them down.” The Prophet (S) replied<sup>6</sup>.

It is reported through several chains of narrators from ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘As who has said: “I asked the Prophet (S), ‘Can we write down what we hear from you?’ ‘Yes.’ The Prophet (S) replied. “Irrespective of whether you are angry or calm?” I added. ‘Yes.’ I do not speak anything but the truth whether be I angry or pleased.’ The Prophet (S) replied.<sup>7</sup>

In another Hadith the narrator is reported as asking the Prophet (S), “Can we write down knowledge (facts to know, meaning Hadith thereby)?” “Yes” .The Prophet (S) replied.<sup>8</sup>

The same ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Amr reports, “I used to write down whatever I would heard the Prophet (S) say with the purpose of recording it. Then Quraysh stopped me from doing it and I, also abstained from writing them down. Later I mentioned the matter to the Prophet (S). He said, “By God, in whose hands is my life, I do not speak anything but the truth.”<sup>9</sup>

It is reported from Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s) that the Prophet (S) said, “Write this knowledge (‘ilm) from which you will benefit in this world and also in the hereafter. Know that knowledge protects one against ruination.”<sup>10</sup>

Another famous Hadith of the Imams from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s), which has been narrated both by Sunni and Shi’ah Muslim sources, refers to an inscription on the Prophet’s sword. Al-‘Imam al-Sadiq (a.s) is reported to have said, “There was a Sahifah, inscription, in the hilt of the Prophet’s sword, that said, “Condemned is he who steals land at the boundaries. Condemned is he who befriends people other than his own friends” or he said,” Condemned is he who repudiates the bounty of his Benefactor.”<sup>11</sup>

Abu Hurayrah is reported to have said: “No one is better informed than me about the Prophet’s Ahadith except ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar, because he would write with his hand and memorize with his mind, whereas I would only memorize and would not write. He had requested permission from the Prophet (S) to write the Ahadith and the Prophet (S) had granted him such permission.<sup>12</sup>” ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar is reported to have said: “I went to the Prophet (S) and said to him, ‘I want to narrate your Ahadith and if you permit I will use my hands to write them down to assist my heart, memory.’<sup>13</sup>

The Prophet (S) said, “If it is my Hadith then take the assistance of thy hand.” He also reportedly possessed a Sahifah, which was well-known as al-Sahifat al-Siddiqah,<sup>14</sup> although some have denied that it contained the

Prophet's Ahadith.<sup>15</sup> Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah is reported to have confirmed that 'Abdallah possessed such a Sahifah called al-Sahifah al-Siddiqah<sup>16</sup>.

In another Hadith the Prophet (S) is reported to have stated, "When a mu'min, a believer dies, the page on which he had recorded 'ilm will serve as a barrier between him and the Fire on the Day of Resurrection."<sup>17</sup>

Al-Tirmidhi has reported that Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah possessed a Sahifah in which he had recorded a number of the Ahadith of the Prophet (S).<sup>18</sup> His son also used to narrate Ahadith from the Sahifah. According to al-Bukhari's report, it was a copy of the Sahifah of 'Abdallah Ibn 'Awf, who used to write Ahadith in it with his own hand writing.<sup>19</sup>

Samrah Ibn jundab had also collected many Ahadith in a big book and his son, Sulayman, who inherited it, used to narrate Ahadith from it. It was probably the same treatise about which Ibn Sirin says: "In the Risalah given by Samrah to his son there is a great amount of 'ilm."<sup>20</sup>

It is reported from Anas that pointing to a Mushaf, a book, he would say, "These are the Ahadith, which I heard from the Prophet (S). I wrote them down and presented them to the Prophet (S) for his approval."<sup>21</sup>

Al-Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s) narrates from his ancestors (a.s) that the Prophet (S) said, "When you write a Hadith, write it with its sanad (chain of narrators). If it is true, you will share its reward; if false, the sin will lie on its narrator."<sup>22</sup>

The Prophet (S) is also reported to have said, "Confine knowledge." When asked as to what he meant, he explained that he meant writing it down.

Umm al-Mu'minin Umm Salamah (r) may God be pleased be with her, is reported to have said, "The Prophet (S) asked for Adim (tanned sheep skin). Ali (a.s) was also with him. Then he dictated so much to Ali (a.s) that both sides of Adim and even edges were filled."

All these Ahadith are evidence that the Prophet (S) permitted the writing of Hadith.

Many scholars believe that the Prophet (S) prohibited its writing earlier and permitted it later.<sup>23</sup>

If this is the case, what was the basis for some of the Caliphs to prohibit the writing of Hadith? After that the Prophet (S) had permitted it and after a great number of Ahadith had already been written how can the Caliphs' prohibition be linked with the holy Prophet (S)?

Rashid Rida has analyzed the Ahadith prohibiting and permitting the writing of Hadith. He has tried to prove that the prohibition superseded earlier permission and hence the Ahadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith ought to be accepted as genuine. He writes:

"If we assume that there is a conflict between Ahadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith and those permitting it, one may say that one of them abrogates the other. The Ahadith prohibiting supersede the permitting ones for two reasons: Firstly, the Sahabah, Companions of the holy Prophet (S) narrated the Ahadith prohibiting writing even after the Prophet (S). Secondly, the Companions did not write The Ahadith; for had they done so, their compilations would have reached us".<sup>24</sup>

This explanation, however, may not stand the test for the following reasons.<sup>25</sup>

First, the Companions narrated the Ahadith permitting the writing of Hadith along with those prohibiting it, and, as seen above, some Companions did continue to write the Ahadith.

Secondly, the reason for the Companions' abstinence from compilation was the prohibition imposed by the First and the Second Caliphs, not on account of any prohibition from the Prophet (S).<sup>26</sup>

Thirdly, in a conflict the general rule is to disregard both pieces of evidence. Only a powerful evidence supersedes a not so powerful one. In this case neither side is proved to be as such.

Regarding Aba Hurayrah's admission that 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar used to write down the Ahadith, Rashid Reda says, "There is no reason that we should regard it as evidence of the permissibility of writing, because it is not mentioned in the Hadith that 'Abdallah wrote with the Prophet's permission."<sup>27</sup>

It has already been cited above that the Riwayah shows Abdallah Ibn 'Umar indeed possessed such a permission. There are many Riwayat which bear this out, and in the one cited above Aba Hurayrah expressly states that 'Abdallah had obtained such a permission from the Prophet (S).<sup>28</sup>

On the contrary, others, like Aba Zuhrah, are of the opinion that the Prophet (S) permitted writing of Hadith towards the end of his ministry when the danger of the intermingling of Hadith with the Quranic text was removed.<sup>29</sup>

If the practice of some Companions, especially that of the Caliphs would be considered this opinion may not be able to stand valid. On the other hand, if it would be accepted it would subject the practice of some of the Caliphs to blameworthiness. It would then be up to Abu Zuhrah as to which of the two alternatives he would approve.<sup>30</sup>

### **Views of Some Companions Regarding the Writing of Ahadith**

Despite the belief of some Companions that Hadith should not be recorded in written form, a group of them continued to do so. This is an indication that the related prohibition was imposed by the order of the Caliphs and not by the command of the Prophet (S). Among the Companions who believed in its permissibility were Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s) and his son al-Hasan (a.s) who wrote down the Ahadith and also stressed others to write them down.<sup>31</sup>

From 'Abdallah Ibn Abbas it is reported as having said, "Record 'ilm, knowledge by writing it down."<sup>32</sup> Harun Ibn 'Antarah narrates from his father that 'Abdallah Ibn al-Abbas after narrating a Hadith to him asked him to write it down.<sup>33</sup>

Salami reports that he saw some tablets with Ibn 'Abbas on which he had written the deeds of the Prophet (S) as narrated to him by Abu Rafi'.<sup>34</sup>

It is reported that Anas Ibn Malik used to tell his son, "Record knowledge."<sup>35</sup>

Al-Kattani reports that ‘ayad used to narrate the permissibility of writing the Ahadith from most of the Sahabah and Tabi’in.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, most of the companions, it seems, had either no conviction in what they stated about the permissibility of writing or had no courage to express it in deed; the evidence of this is their abstention from compilation of Hadith.

Zazan reports, “I took some lines of rosary (Tasbih) from Umm Ya’fur and went to Ali (a.s). He taught them (i.e. their meaning) to me and then told me to return them to Umm Ya’fur.”<sup>37</sup>

It is narrated that Ibn ‘Abbas used to write the sunan of the Prophet (S) on tablets which he carried with himself during sessions of learned assemblies. It has been unanimously reported (Mutawatir) that on his death he left behind a camel-load of books.<sup>38</sup>

The report according to which abu Bakr wrote some Ahadith after the Prophet (S) and then burned them after some time,<sup>39</sup> also indicates that the writing of Hadith was an accepted practice among the Companions.

The Hadith reported from Ali (a.s) in which he said that whoever wrote a Hadith should write it with its sanad<sup>40</sup> also supports this view. The sources are explicit that a number of the Companions considered the writing of Hadith as permissible.<sup>41</sup>

The report about the Sahifah of Jabir Ibn ‘Abdallah which contained the Ahadith of the Prophet (S) also supports the fact that the practice of writing down of Hadith existed among the Companions<sup>42</sup>. This proves that a group of Companions and the Caliphs approved the writing of Hadith. The holy Prophet (S) had not prohibited the documentation and the recording of Hadith in written form<sup>43</sup>.

### **The Holy Quran and Writing**

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, to support the permissibility of writing down Hadith, cites the following evidence from the holy Quran. On the basis that the holy Quran enjoins us to write down about things for which there is fear of loss, he argues that Hadith, being subject to such a danger, should be documented and recorded in written form. He cites verses 2:282, 6:91 and 37:157 of the holy Quran. al-Tahawi also, cites the following verse.

***“And be not averse to write it down, whether it be small or large, with its term;.... (2:282)”***

About the writing of debts he says, “When God commands the writing down of debts to avoid doubts and suspicion, a realm of knowledge that is more difficult to safeguard and more important than recording of debts stands in greater need for protection. Such protection is to commit it to writing to eliminate the possibility of doubt mentioned herein.” Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani are of the same opinion.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Actual Reason behind the Prohibition on the Writing of Ahadith**

The above shows that the responsibility for the delay in the writing of Hadith cannot be placed upon the Prophet (S). The Ahadith that suggest such a prohibition to be from the Prophet (S) are not acceptable for various reasons. On the basis of mostly authentic historical sources of the Ahl al-

Sunnah as well as Shi'ah sources the readers will evaluate the soundness and validity of this study.<sup>45</sup>

'Aishah is reported to have said, "My father had collected 500 Hadith of the Prophet (S). One morning he came to me and said, 'Bring the Ahadith that are with you.' I brought them to him. He burnt them all and said, "I am afraid, should I die leaving these with you." It is reported on the authority of al-Zuhri that 'Umar wanted to write the Prophet's Sunan. He thought about it for a month, seeking guidance from God in this regard. One morning he made a decision and declared, "I recalled the peoples who lived before you. They wrote certain things and were attracted to such writings so much so that they abandoned the Book of God."<sup>46</sup>

Abd al-'Ala' says, "Qasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr used to dictate Hadith to me. He said, 'The amount of Ahadith had increased during the days of 'Umar. So he ordered that Hadith be collected. When this was done he set them on fire and declared, "No Mishnas like the Mishnas of the followers of the Bible."<sup>47</sup> Mishna is one of the books of the Jews besides their Scripture, the Torah. 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab compared it to the Hadith of the Prophet (S) which he did not want to exist alongside of the Book of God.

Yahya Ibn Ju'dah also reports that 'Umar had intended to write the Ahadith and sunan. But having changed his mind he sent notices to all the cities declaring, "Whoever has with him any Hadith should destroy it." It has been reported from 'Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr that, "'Umar Ibn al-Khattab wanted to write the sunan of the Prophet (S). He consulted the Companions of the Prophet (S). All of them were of the opinion that they should be documented in written form. But 'Umar reflected upon the matter until one morning he made a decision and said, "I wanted to write down the sunan but then I recalled a people who lived before you who wrote books and abandoned the book of God. By God, I will not cover the Book of God with anything<sup>48</sup>.

This Riwayah shows that the Companions or at least those of them who were consulted, approved the writing down of Ahadith. But the Caliph, after a month's reflection, prohibited the writing of Ahadith on the basis that he himself states<sup>49</sup>. The argument is not based on the Sunnah of the Prophet (S).

### **The Opposition of Some Sahabah and Tabi'un to the Writing of Hadith**

After the Caliphs' prohibition on the writing of Hadith, since some people regarded their moves as legal precedents (Sunnah), a group of the Sahabah and Tabi'un also abstained from committing Hadith to writing and relied solely upon their memory. They transmitted the Ahadith in oral narration instead of writing them down. To them it was improper to write and compile the Hadith of the holy Prophet (S),<sup>50</sup> whereas the Quran and the Prophet (S) had strongly stressed on writing in general.

Abu Burdah is reported as having said that his father told Abu Musa al-'Ash'ari to bring to him whatever he had written of his father's narration.

When they were brought he destroyed them and said, “You also, like us, should only memorize.”<sup>51</sup>

‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Salamah al-Jahmi reports, “I heard a Hadith of the Prophet (S) from ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Amr and wrote it down. After memorizing it, I destroyed what I had written.”<sup>52</sup>

‘Asim said, “I wanted to leave a book with Ibn Sirin but he abstained from keeping it, saying that he would not allow any book to remain near him.”<sup>53</sup>

Abu Nadrah says, “I asked abu Sa’id to write for us. He replied, “I will not write and I will not make out of something a Quran for you. You take (Ahadith) from us in the same way as we received from the Prophet (S). Abu Sa’id used to say, “Narrate Hadith to one another, for one of them may remind the other.”<sup>54</sup>

It has been reported on the authority of Ibn Abi Tamim that Ibn Sirin and his companions would not write Hadith.<sup>55</sup>

Al-Harawi writes that the Sababah and Tabi’un would not write Ahadith and would record them only in their memory, with the exception of the book of Sadagat.<sup>56</sup>

Al-Nuwawi writes, “All the attention of the Sahabah was focussed on Jihad, on struggle against the carnal self, and on worship. Therefore they could not find any time for writing. For similar reasons, the Tabi’un also did not produce any written work (Tasnif).”<sup>57</sup>

Abu Kathir al-Ghubri reports Abu-Hurayrah as having said, “Ahadith should neither be concealed nor should they be written down.”<sup>58</sup>

‘Abdallah ibn Muslim reports that Sa’id ibn Jubayr had a detested writing.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Ibrahim al-Nakha’i declared that he had never written down anything.<sup>60</sup> When asked why he did not write, he replied, “When man writes something, he comes to rely on that writing.”<sup>61</sup>

Habib ibn abi Thabit is reported to have said, “I do not have any book in the whole world, except for a Hadith, which is for my coffin.”<sup>62</sup>

Al-Hasan ibn abi al-Hasan at the time of his death ordered his servant to ignite the oven and to throw all his books with the exception of one into it.<sup>63</sup> Ibn Sirin used to say, “If I had to write a book, I would make a book of the letters of the holy Prophet (S).”<sup>64</sup> Yahya ibn Sa’id says, “I found the scholars opposed to writing.”<sup>65</sup> Sulayman ibn Harb reports, “Yahya ibn Sa’id came to us and he would narrate Hadith. At first, our companions would not write his Ahadith, but after sometimes they began to write them.”<sup>66</sup>

Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn abi-Bakr would ask ‘Abdallah ibn al-‘Ala’ not to write Hadith.<sup>67</sup>

Sufyan reports that when ‘Amr ibn Dinar was told that he wrote ‘Amr’s Ahadith, ‘Amr stood up and said, “Whoever writes should leave my place.” Sufyan says that thereafter he did not write anything that he heard from ‘Amr but would only memorize.<sup>68</sup>

It is reported from Ibn Tawus that his father said, “Someone asked ‘Abdallah ibn al-‘Abbas a question which pleased Ibn ‘Abbas. The man told Ibn ‘Abbas to write the answer for him. But Ibn ‘Abbas said that they would

not write anything of the ‘ilm.”<sup>69</sup> This Riwayah conflicts with the earlier ones about Ibn ‘Abbas cited above.

Malik ibn Anas reports that when Ibn Musayyab died he did not leave behind any book. The same was true of Qasim ibn Muhammad, ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri.<sup>70</sup> Mansur ibn Mu’tamar is reported to have said, “I have not written anything until now.”<sup>71</sup>

A similar statement is reported from Yunus ibn ‘Ubayd.<sup>72</sup> It is reported of Ibn abi-Dhu’ayb that he would only memorize Ahadith and abstain from writing them. He belonged to the fifth Tabaqah, generation, and lived during the middle of the 2nd/8th century.<sup>73</sup> It has been said of Sa’id ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz that he would not write anything.<sup>74</sup>

Isma’il ibn ‘Ayyash, who belonged to the sixth Tabaqah, remembered ten thousand Hadith by heart but would not write anything.<sup>75</sup> Abu Hatim reports that he never saw any writing in the hands of abul-Walid al-Tayalisi.<sup>76</sup> Both of them belonged to the seventh Tabaqah, generation, and detested writing Hadith. It is also said of al-Nufayli that no books were ever seen with him.<sup>77</sup> Also Sahib al-Basri is said to have detested writing.<sup>78</sup>

### **Book Besides the Book of God**

The above Riwayat, reports show that those who considered the writing of Hadith impermissible, they did so because the writing of Hadith would lead to the emergence of ‘a book by the side of the Book of God’. That the People would abandon the holy Scripture for other books.

In examining the validity of this fear it will come to light that it was just a pretext. The Book, the holy Quran only with the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S) completes the Shari’ah.

The supporters of prohibition to writing of Hadith-the Caliphs or others who followed them in this matter and sought to justify their acts, had in their mind a statement of the Prophet (S), “a book by the side of the Book of God.” Unfortunately, by mistake or otherwise, they applied it improperly.

It is a fact that during the lifetime of the holy Prophet (S) certain Companions had acquired some copies of the Torah and other books of the Jews. When the Prophet (S) heard about it, he told them to abstain from making other books a parallel authority with the Book of God, the Quran. In this regard it is worth to note the following Riwayah narrated on the authority of Jabir. Jabir reports that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab brought a copy of the Torah to the Prophet (S) and said, “This is a copy of the Torah which I read.”

The Prophet (S) was silent but the color of his face changed. Abu Bakr noticed this and said to ‘Umar, “May thy mother mourn for thee, do you not see the face of the holy Prophet (S)?” ‘Umar glanced at the face of the holy Prophet (S) and said, “I seek refuge with God from the anger of the holy Prophet (S). I accept God as the Lord, Islam as the Din, religion, and Muhammad (S) as the prophet.” Thereupon the Prophet (S) said, “By God, if Moses were to come here and were you to follow him and abandon me, you would have deviated from the straight path. If Moses were alive and had he seen me he would have followed Me.”<sup>79</sup>

This Hadith shows that the Prophet (S) was angry because ‘Umar had taken some other scripture as a parallel authority to the holy Quran. In

another Hadith of a similar kind a man from the Ansar' takes the place of abu-Bakr. It is also probable that the two refer to different incidents of this kind and that this happened on several occasions.

It is reported from abu-Qallabah that once 'Umar ibn al-Khattab passed by a man who was reciting from a book. After listening for a while 'Umar liked what he read. He asked the man to write from this book for him. The man consented to do so. 'Umar then bought a leaf to him on, which the man wrote filling both sides.

Later, he came to the Prophet (S) and read it out to him (S). Thereupon the color of the face of the holy Prophet (S) changed. There at a man belonging to the Ansar said to 'Umar, "May your mother mourn for you. Do you not see the face of the holy Prophet (S)?" On this the Prophet (S) said, "I am raised as a prophet, as the opener (fatih) and the sealer (khatim), and I have brought everything that I should have had."<sup>80</sup>

It is reported on al-Zuhri's authority that Hafsa, 'Umar's daughter, brought a book to the Prophet (S) in which there were stories of Joseph (a.s). She began to read them to the Prophet (S), whose face reddened as he listened. Thereupon the Prophet (S) said "By God, if Joseph himself were to come here and were you to follow him and leave me you would have gone astray."<sup>81</sup>

These Ahadith indicate that what the Prophet (S) disliked was the reading of corrupted texts, whose inevitable effect was propagation of Jewish misinterpretation, which have been known as Isra'iliyat - amongst the Muslims. The Prophet (S) did not want the Jewish books to take a place by the side of the Holy Quran, the exact words of God Almighty. The books that did not acknowledge the infallibility of the previous Prophets could make the people deviate from the straight path and the true doctrine of religion that the holy Quran contains.

The Ahadith just cited also show 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who later became the Caliph and his daughter showed interested in books of this kind and the Prophet (S) had often to check them. Unfortunately, later on when Ka'b al-Ahbar, a Jew who had outwardly converted to Islam, came to 'Umar and asked his permission to read the Torah, 'Umar told him, "If you know that it is the same Torah that was revealed to Moses (a.s) on Mount Sinai, then read it day and night."<sup>82</sup> This was 'Umar's view even after the Prophet (S) had expressly forbidden him personally not to read such things.

There are other Riwayat which confirm this point that the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S) regarding 'setting another book by the side of the Book of God' relates to Isra'ili texts. It has been reported that when 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ud heard that some people had a book whose contents amazed them, he took it away and destroyed it. He said, "The People of the Book were ruined because they relied upon the writings of their scholars ('ulama') and neglected the Divine Scripture."<sup>83</sup>

The term 'ulama' to the Arabs of those days meant the scholars of the Jews and the Christians. The books referred to in this Riwayah were Jewish writings.

The following Hadith further clarifies this matter. Murrah al-Hamadani says, "Abu-Murrah al-Kindi brought a book from Syria (al-Sham) and gave

it to Ibn Mas'ud. Ibn Mas'ud glanced through it, brought water and washed away its written contents. Then he said, "The peoples who lived before you perished for following such books as this. They abandoned the Scripture of God." Al-Husayn says, "Indeed he would not have destroyed that writing had it been the holy Quran or the Sunnah. Rather, it was a book belonging to the Ahl al-Kitab."<sup>84</sup>

Imam Ali (a.s) is reported to have said, "Any of you who has a book should destroy it. The peoples who lived before you were destroyed for following the statements of their scholars and abandoning the Book of God."<sup>85</sup>

Al-'Imam al-Sadiq (a.s) is reported to have said, "Some scholars search after the Hadith of Jews and Christians, whereby they seek to increase their knowledge. The place of such people, scholars, is in the bottommost level of Hell."<sup>86</sup> It is reported on the authority of 'Amr ibn Yahya ibn Ju'dah that when a book was brought to the Prophet (S) he said, "It is a great witlessness and misguidance for an ummah, nation, to neglect what her own prophet has brought to see what some other prophet has brought."<sup>87</sup> This Hadith also reveals the kind of book that was brought to the Prophet (S) and explains the meaning of 'misleading books.'

Also, Ibn 'Abbas says, "Why do you ask Ahl al-Kitab about your questions and problems when the Book of God is amongst you?"<sup>88</sup> All these Ahadith show that the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S) regarding 'setting another book by the side of the Book of God' were related to the danger of diffusion of Isratiliyyat, Israelite tales. They did not, by any means, relate to his own Sunnah, which is complementary to the holy Quran and laws wherein are Divinely binding (wajib al-'ita'ah). All Muslims accepted it. The existence the acclaimed collection of Hadith known as Sihah al-Sittah further supports this point.

The Muslim scholars of Hadith did at last write down and compile the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S). These scholars are honored for doing what the earlier generations disliked. It was due to a serious misunderstanding on the part of those who like 'Urwah burnt the Ahadith that they had written with the rationale, "We do not want to set a book by the side of the Book of God."<sup>89</sup>

## Notes

1. Jami' Bayan al-'ilm, I, 57, cites this Riwayah through several chains (turuq); see also Taqyid al-'ilm, 49-51.

2. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, VI, 47, 106, 116; I, 90, 22, 29, 32, 336; III, 346; Tahdhib ta'rikh Dimashq, VI, 451; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, V, 438, 439.

3. Bihar al-Anwar, II, 152; Taqyid al-'ilm, 65-68; Mizan al-'itidal, I, 653; Lisan al-Mizan, II, 298, IV, 21.

4. Musnad Ahmad, I, 238; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 84; Fath al-Bari, I, 184; Taqyid al-'ilm 86.

5. Al-'iqd al-farid, II, 419; al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, II, 38; Taqyid al-'ilm, 68-70; see also Sunan al-Darimi I, 127; Husn al-Tanbih, 194; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 72; Kanz al-'ummal, V, 224; Abu Nu'aym's Akhbar Isfahan, II, 228.

6. Majma' al-Zawayid, I, 151; Kanz al-'ummal, V, 225; Taqyid al-'ilm, 72-74; al-Manar, I, 763; al-Taratib al-'idariyyah, II, 245.

7. Taqyid al-'ilm, 74, 79; Musnad Ahmad, 215; Bihar al-Anwar, II, 147; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 85.

- Taqyid al-‘ilm, I, 85.
8. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 74,79; Musnad Ahmad, 215; Bihar al-Anwar, II, 147; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85.
9. Taqyid al-‘ilm, I, 85.
10. Ibid., 74,75; Fath al-Bari, I, 184; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
11. Musnad Ahmad II, 162,192; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85.
12. Kanz al-‘umm al, X, 157.
13. Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85; see also Fath al-Bari, I, 182, 199, 203, 246, 247; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 88, 89; al-Bukhar’i’s al-‘Adab al-Mufrad, 129; Musnad Ahmad, I, 100.
14. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 24, quoting from al-Tabaqat al-kubra, Musnad Ahmad and Sunan al-Tirmidhi; see al-Musannaf, XI, 254; Sahih al-Bukhari, I, 148; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 84; Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 318-320; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 42; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
15. Sunan al-Darimi, I,126; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
16. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 245; al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII 494, IV, 262 Taqyid al-‘ilm, 84; Ta’wil al-Mukhtalif al-Hadith, 93; Ibn Qutaybah’s al-Ma’arif, 200.
17. Hashim Ma’ruf al-Hasani, Dirasat fi al-Hadith wa al-mahaddithin.
18. Bihar al-Anwar’ II, 144.
19. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Ahkam, bab al-Yamin ma’a al-Shahid.
20. Al-Sayr al-Hathith fi Ta’rikh Tadwin al-Hadith, p. 9; ‘Ulum al-Hadith, 13.
21. Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, IV, 236; ‘Ulum al-Hadith, 14.
22. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 96.
23. Al-‘imla Wa al-‘istimla 5.
24. Bihar al-Anwar, II, 152; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, II, 34.
25. Al-‘imla’ wa al-‘istimla 12.
26. Ulum al-Hadith wa Mustalahuh,8,9; Ta’rikh al-Madhahib al-Fiqhiyyah, 24; al-‘imla’ wa al-‘istimla 146.
27. Adwa’ ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 48.
28. Ibid., 50, quoting al-Manar.
29. Abu Zuhrah, Ta’rikh al-Madhahib al-Fiqhiyyah, 24; al-‘Imla wa al-‘istimla, 146.
30. The sources for this statement are cited below.
31. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 92.
32. Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 319; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 128.
33. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 246; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 92.
34. Al-Tabaqat al-kubra, VII, 21; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 127; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 96, 97.
35. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 247.
36. Ibn abi-Shaybah’s al-Musannaf, II, 390.
37. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, II 123; Sayr al-Hadith, 9; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 136; ‘Ulum al-Hadith, 20.
38. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 123; al-Ma’rifah wa al-tatrikh, II, 142, 143, 661; al-Tabaqat al-kubra, V, 467; Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 319; ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s al-Musannaf, XI, 183.
39. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 5.
40. Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 67.
41. Sunan al-Darimi, I, 127, 128, al-Ma’rifah wa al-Ta’rikh, II, 279; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 84, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, II, 371; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 113 - 199.
42. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 123; al-Ma’rifah wa al-tatrikh, II, 142, 143, 661; al-Tabaqat al-kubra, V, 467; Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 319; ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s al-Musannaf, XI, 183.
43. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 71.
44. Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 319.
45. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 5; Kanz al-‘umm al, I, 174.
46. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, III, 287; ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s al-Musannaf, XI 257; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 49; Tatrikh al-Khulafa 138.
47. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 188.
48. Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I,77; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 53.
49. Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 68.
50. Ibid., II, 65.
51. Kashf al-‘Astar, I, 109.
52. Al-Ma’rifah wa al-Ta’rikh, II, 523.

53. Al-Kifayah, 353; al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 59.
54. Hayat al-Sahabah, I, 243, 244.
55. Al-Taratib al-'idarlyyah, I, 62; al-Turuq al-Hukmiyyah, 256.
56. Al-Taratib al-'idariyyah, II, 249.
57. Ibid.
58. Al-Tabagat al-Kubra, II, 364.
59. Ibid., VI 258; on page 257 that he wrote Ibn 'Abbas's Ahadith.
60. Al-Tabagat al-Kubra, VI, 258.
61. Ibid., VI, 271, whereas his pupil regretted not having written Hadith, see p. 270.
62. Al-Tabagat al-Kubra, VI, 320.
63. Al-Tabagat al-Kubra, VII, 157.
64. Al-Tabagat al-Kubra, VII, 157; Sunan al-Darimi, I 120.
65. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII, 141, Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 81.
66. Taqyid al-'ilm, 111, al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 829.
67. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 188.
68. Ibid, V, 480; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 113.
69. 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI 258; Taqyid al-'ilm, 42.
70. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 111.
71. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 142.
72. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 145.
73. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 192.
74. Ibid, I, 219.
75. Ibid., I, 254.
76. Ibid., I, 382.
77. Ibid. I, 441.
78. Ibid. I, 461; see Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 78-79; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 119, 120
79. Sunan al-Darimi, I, 116; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, X, 313.
80. Ibid., VI, 113, XI, 111; Majma' al-zawa'id, I, 182.
81. 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI, 110; Mizan al- 'i'tidal, I, 666; Lisan al-Mizan, II, 408; Bihar al-Anwar, XI 99; Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 49, III, 28, 29; al-Zamakhshari's al-Fa'iq, IV, 114.
82. Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 262; al-Fa'iq, I, 651.
83. Sunan al-Darimi, I, 122; Taqyid al-'ilm, 53, 56.
84. Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 48; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 52, 53; in Taqyid al-'ilm, 34, there is a similar Riwayah that a book was brought to him from Yemen in which there were Ahadith related to the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s) and that he destroyed it.
85. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 76.
86. Bihar al-Anwar, II, 108.
87. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 50
88. 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, X, 314; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 51.
89. Abu Zuhrah, al-'Imam Zayd, 167.

### **Tadwin al-Hadith Part 3**

*This is third and last part of the article on Tadwin al-Hadith. It deals with some of the issues related to the writing and documentation of Hadith and takes up extensively the issues in scholarly manners.*

*It is an enjoyable amount of reading for people interested to know about Hadith in the Islamic literature.*

**Authors(s): Rasul Ja'fariyan**

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### [Foreward]

In the light of the above information it is not possible to hold the Prophet (S) responsible for the failure to write Hadith; such a stand would raise questions that would have no answer. It was mentioned that some of the Caliphs interfered directly in this matter and prohibited the writing of Hadith.

In the following an effort will be made to find an explanation for such a prohibition. After evaluating a number of reasons that have been offered in this regard, what seems to have been the main reason behind the prohibition will also be mentioned with sufficient evidence to support such viewpoint.

### The Reasons Given for the Prohibition

1. One reason offered is the fear for the people's failure to distinguish between the holy Quran and Hadith of the holy Prophet (S) which would result in the corruption (Tahrif) of the Quranic text, an unforgivable offence.<sup>1</sup>

Ustadh Abu Riyyah has rejected this weak argument in the following words:

Such a reason may appear convincing to ordinary people, but a researcher cannot accepted it, because it would suggest that the eloquence of the Quran stands on the same level as that of Hadith.<sup>2</sup>

In his proposition if the miracle of Quranic eloquence is understandable for the people, how they would have mixed Hadith of the holy Prophet (S), which stand on a lower level of eloquence than the holy Quran, with the verses of the Holy Book. Such a viewpoint, in fact, amounts to a denial of the miraculous character of the holy Quran.

In fact, to believe in the possibility of a mix between the holy Quran and Hadith is to believe in the possibility of textual corruption finding way into the holy Quran. Such a belief is unfounded; God Almighty has personally guaranteed the incorruptibility of the holy Quran:

***Verily, We have sent down al-Dhikr, the holy Quran, and verily We are its protector. (15:9)***

A group of Companions knew the entire holy Quran by heart, and with the high degree of their protective care and devotion towards the holy Quran it was not reasonable to entertain any fear of a mix of the holy Quran and Hadith. At most such fear was only a possibility, and in no way was an eminent danger. On the other hand it was certain that harm would follow for not writing down Hadith. It had obvious effects from the first day.

The Companions disagreed amongst themselves from the early days about some laws of the Shari'ah, and it was obvious that if the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) were not recorded such differences would become more serious with time, as it did. Between a remote threat and an eminent danger of widening differences, they should have given more weight to the latter. Basically, the former did not have any real weight at all.

2. According to abu-Riyyah, let it be accepted that the prohibition came from the holy Prophet (S) to keep the laws of the Shari'ah within restricted limits and was opposed to the proliferation of Ahadith. This was one reason, according to him, behind the instances where the Prophet (S) disliked

answering questions put to him. The same reason also holds true in the case of Hadith that were valid at a particular time and not so afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

This argument is very weak. It is not possible to accept that the Prophet (S) opposed the increase in Hadith as the basis of the legal system of the Shari'ah. How can it be accepted when the holy Quran and the Sunnah are to answer the variegated needs for law to the Day of Judgement and to offer constant guidance to man? Moreover, there is no evidence that the holy Prophet (S) ever issued such a prohibition on the writing down of Hadith.

3. Al-'Awza'i, offering another explanation, writes, "The science of Hadith is a noble one when it is transmitted orally. Such method always keeps the people engaged in reminding one another of Hadith. But, when written, their light would fade and they may fall into unworthy hands."<sup>4</sup>

However, al-'Awza'i's explanation is not an answer to the need for recording in written form of Hadith, although oral transmission is beneficial in some respects such as constantly reminding people about the contents of Hadith. Such method would be constant cause of subjecting Hadith to addition and omission of human memory. In fact, al-'Awza'i himself has invented this explanation and it is doubtful whether those who prohibited the writing of Hadith had considered it or not.

4. Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, offering an explanation similar to the above one, writes, "The writing of Ahadith was prohibited so that individuals should not rely solely on what they have written and would abstain from memorizing them. In that case, the task of memorizing Hadith would diminish altogether."<sup>5</sup>

This rationale is also unacceptable, because the losses resulting from the failure to write Hadith were incomparably serious and far greater than such benefits. Human civilization and values have been guarded through the written word and not by means of memory, although the memorization of Hadith is in itself a very valuable practice.

5. Another explanation that is given in this regard is that had Hadith been written down the people would have abandoned the holy Quran to give all their attention to Hadith.<sup>6</sup>

This argument is also not defensible, because the same thing could be said of oral Hadith and the holy Quran. It is true that exclusive attention to Hadith is a deviation. People vulnerable to such matters can be warned and asked to take an equal interest in the holy Quran. The prohibition on writing of Hadith, which inflicted irreparable damage on Islamic system, was not a correct way of obtaining that result.

6. The author of Abjad al-'ulum writes, "The Sahabah and the Tabi'un did not need to write Hadith and the laws for the following reasons: Their faith was pure and they had the blessing of proximity to the times of the holy Prophet (S). Disagreement among them was absent and they had the opportunity of referring to reliable persons. But when Islam spread they began to write and compile Hadith, Fiqh and Tafsir of the holy Quran."<sup>7</sup>

What the author states is not the reason for the opposition of some Companions to the writing of Hadith. It is only an explanation that may or may not apply to the history of Hadith. In fact, why Hadith was not written

the real cause was opposition to the writing of Hadith, not absence of the need to write down Hadith.

The spread of Islam occurred in the first twenty, or at the most fifty, years after the demise of the holy Prophet (S), whereas the writing and compilation of Hadith was delayed until the latter part of the first half of the 2nd/8th century. Aside from these two points it is well known that fabrication of Hadith in the name of the Prophet (S) began in his (S) own lifetime, and it naturally increased in the absence of recorded in written form of Hadith. It was the duty of the Companions, who differed amongst themselves over legal questions, to stop the increasing forgeries and further differences by committing Hadith to writing.

7. The actual reason behind the prohibition on the writing of Hadith, was what has been advanced by a contemporary scholar, Sayyid Ja'far Murtada, and is confirmed by the evidence available. He says, "There existed two sects among the Jews, of which one believed in a written literature. The other believed that nothing except the Torah should be committed to writing. The second group was called Qurra' (Readers).

Dada has pointed this out in his book on Jewish religious thought.

Ka'b al-'Ahbar, a Jewish convert to Islam, belonged to this second sect. Once asked a question by 'Umar about poetry, of the things he says about Arabs is that a group of the descendants of Isma'il carried the Gospel only in their hearts and spoke with wisdom.... It is probable that the Caliph had taken the idea (of not writing anything except the holy Quran) from Ka'b al-'Ahbar. 'Umar had very intimate terms with Ka'b al-'Ahbar and respected his opinions.

The prohibition on writing Hadith also went well with his state policies. He thereby could curb criticism and further consolidate his own power. Such a step would have resulted in the effacement of the part of Hadith relating to the opponents' claims and merits and served to lend strength to their position.<sup>8</sup>

The author, as his statement shows, considers it probable that a number of reasons lay behind the prohibition on writing Hadith. The most important was the influence of the views of Ahl al-Kitab over the Second Caliph, who, it seems, liked to read their books since the time of his conversion.

The Riwayah of 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr confirms this influence. According to this Riwayah the Caliph had first intended to have the 'Sunan' compiled and he even consulted the Companions about his plan. They approved it, but he changed his mind with the argument that the Ahl al-Kitab had abandoned their scripture for other books that they had written and that he would not allow something similar to happen with the holy Quran.<sup>9</sup>

It is very probable that this argument of the Caliph was inspired by Ka'b al-'Ahbar, who belonged to the sect of the Qurra who refrained from writing anything besides the Torah. Ka'b had evil designs against Islam; although the Caliph may not have had similar intentions, he, unfortunately, failed to see through Ka'b's malice.

'Umar's argument against the writing of Hadith came to be echoed by others. Abu Burdah reports from his father that he said: "Banu Isma'il wrote

books and abandoned the Divine Scripture”.<sup>10</sup> Hakam ibn ‘Atiyyah narrated from Muhammad (probably, Muhammad ibn Sirin) that he used to say, “It has been narrated that Banu Israel were led into error on account of the books that they inherited from their ancestors besides the Torah.”<sup>11</sup>

Another scholar writes, “One of the major influences that the Jews incorporated among the Muslims was the latter’s practice of refraining from writing Hadith. It is written in the Talmud, “You have no right to write things, which you narrate orally.” It is not improbable that the Muslims were motivated by Ka’b al-‘Ahbar in this matter, although they set it forth in the fond of a Prophetic Hadith. An evidence of such influence is the declaration of the Caliph after burning the Ahadith that had collected saying, “Not a Mishnat like the Mishnat of the People of the Book.”<sup>12</sup> These words show a form of influence from the practice of the Jews.

Abu ‘Ubayd, in his Gharib al-Hadith, writes, “I asked a scholar learned in the Torah and Gospel about the word ‘Mishnat’ He said, “The rabbis and doctors of Banu Israel wrote certain books after Moses, aside from the Scripture and called it ‘Mishna’.”

Obviously the Caliph had liked the practice of the group of Jews of the opposite camp to the writers of ‘Mishna’. Abu ‘Ubayd further says, “After the above clarification I understood the meaning of this Riwayah. This was the reason why ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As was averse to taking anything from the Ahl al-kitab, although he possessed some books which he had come to acquire during the campaign of Yarmuk (from Jewish synagogues).

Abu ‘Ubayd adds, “It is certain that the prohibition (on writing and narration) did not pertain to the Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet (S). Had it been so, how would most of the Companions themselves narrate Ahadith?”<sup>13</sup>

This shows that the Second Caliph proscribed the Hadith and Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S) because he considered that writing them was similar to the writings of Jewish doctors. Thereby, instead of halting the spread of Jewish ideas he was induced to practice them over the Hadith that could lead to the destruction of the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S). It must also be added that ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Amr was himself one of the propagators of Israeliyat, Jewish ideas, and not at all disinclined to them. For his knowledge of the Torah people would ask him to describe the characteristics of the holy Prophet (S) for them.<sup>14</sup>

To recap that which happened to Hadith was that generally it was not recorded in written form until the end of the 1st/7th century, although some of the Companions favored its writing and a few possessed certain tablets with Hadith written on them. Scattered records in written form of Hadith began to appear at the outset of the 2nd/8th century, but thorough compilation started towards the end of the 2nd/8th and mostly in the 3rd/9th century. All of the six Sihah date from the 3rd/9th century. Although it is possible that some of the compilers had random compilations of Hadith at their disposal, evidently most of their Hadith came from an oral narration.

The existence of some very short works, not comparable with any of the great collections of Hadith available today, supports the fact that there is little sign of the occurrence of recording in written form of Hadith during

the 2nd /8th century. So, Hadith was not recorded in written form for a long period of time and it was mostly transmitted orally to next generations of Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

## **The Consequences of Not Recording in Written form of Hadith**

The absence of recorded in written form of Hadith for narration resulted in a number of harmful consequences. In the following some such consequences will be examined.

### **1. The Loss of a Great Many Ahadith**

The loss of a great may Hadith was a natural result of not documenting Hadith properly. Although memorization did result in preserving a large number of Hadith, it also resulted in the loss of many, for memory is only an imperfect means of preservation. Muhaddithun, narrators of Hadith, admit such losses is best proof of the negative aspect of not recording Hadith in written form.

Ibn Qulabah says, “Books and writing are better for us than weak memory and forgetfulness.”<sup>16</sup> Yahya ibn Sa’id writes, “I found scholars who disliked writing Hadith. Had we recorded Hadith in written form, we would have now possessed a great deal of the knowledge (‘ilm) of Sa’id ibn Musayyab and his opinions.”<sup>17</sup> Yahya here regrets the loss of the Ahadith narrated by Sa’id and the loss of his views.

‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr writes, “I wrote a great number of Ahadith and later had them effaced. I wish I had not destroyed them even if it would make me to give away all my property and children for such cause”.<sup>18</sup>

Hisham ibn ‘Urwah narrates, “My father burnt the books that he possessed during in the episode of Harrah, during the attack on Madinah and ravaging of the city the in the year 63/283 by the Syrian army). Later he said to me, “Had I kept them, it would have been better for me than the property I now possess and my children.”<sup>19</sup> Yahya ibn Sa’id has said something similar.<sup>20</sup> These statements indicate how much some people regretted not for documenting Hadith properly.

Mu’ammar says, “I narrated some Hadith to Yahya ibn Kathir. He asked me to write for him the Hadith of so and so. ‘We detest the writing of ‘ilm.’ I told him. He said to me, “Do write, for if you do not you would definitely lose it.”<sup>21</sup>

Al-Mansur says, “I wish that I had written down the Ahadith...; I have forgotten as much as I now remember. Alas! Only if I had written them down! Now I remember only a half of what I have heard.”<sup>22</sup>

Ibn Rushd writes, “Had the scholars not preserved knowledge through writing and had they not defined the trustworthy from the untrustworthy, all knowledge would have been lost and there would have remained no trace of the Din, religion. May God give them the best of rewards”.<sup>23</sup> The commencement of the writing Hadith, despite the unfortunate delay, was a welcome development, even though it followed the narration of oral Hadith that tried to preserve the trustworthy and the otherwise.

Rashid Rida writes, “We are certain that we have forgotten and lost a great number of the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S). The scholars did not

write down what they had heard. But that which was lost did not belong to the exegesis of the Quran nor was it related to religious matters.”<sup>24</sup>

After admitting the fact of the loss of Ahadith, he tries to play down its significance in a mere conjecture that the amount of Hadith lost was not on the Quranic exegesis on religion’s matters. Such a view is inadmissible. How is it possible that what is a Hadith, a form of the Sunnah of the Prophet (S) would not be part of religion? His statement affirms the fact that some of the Muslim sects do not possess all the teachings of the Prophet (S), as his Ahl al-Bayt (a.s) had presented.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr writes, “Today no one is against the writing of Hadith. If no one would write down Hadith, a great amount of knowledge would be lost.”<sup>25</sup>

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said, “When I left Madinah I was the most knowledgeable of men, but on reaching Syria I forgot what I knew.”<sup>26</sup>

Yazid ibn Harun has said, “I memorized three thousand Hadith from Yahya ibn Sa’id, but I forgot a half of them due to an illness.”<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Rahawayh writes, “I remembered seventy thousand Hadith by heart and could recall one hundred thousand of them. Whatever would I hear I could commit it to memory. But after sometimes I forgot them.”<sup>28</sup>

Al-Sha’bi has said, “Until now I have not written a single page, and until now no one has narrated a Hadith to me that I have not memorized it, and I disliked his reciting it to me twice. But I have forgotten a great amount of knowledge (‘ilm), to the extent that it could make someone one a scholar in his own right.”<sup>29</sup>

Ishaq ibn al-Mansur writes, “I asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal as to who disliked the writing down of ‘ilm.” He said that some detested it and some recommended it. I remarked that had ‘ilm not been written down it would have been lost. He agreed, saying, ‘Were it not for the writing down of ‘ilm, we would have had no ‘ilm today.’<sup>30</sup>

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has said, “Some people narrated Hadith to us from memory and some from their books. The Hadith of those who narrated from books was more precise.”<sup>31</sup> Ahmad himself never narrated Hadith except from a book.<sup>32</sup>

Ibn Salah writes, “Had Hadith not come to have been written down, all ‘ilm would have disappeared in the latter era.”<sup>33</sup>

These statements are sufficient testimony to the loss of a great deal of Hadith.

## 2. The Spread of Lies

Another evil consequence of not writing down and documenting Hadith properly was the increase of fabricated Hadith. It was not possible to keep the orally transmitted Hadith in a precise, stable form. In the beginning, as is well known, even any attention was not paid to Sanad, chain of narrators, due to the general atmosphere of trust that prevailed. Now the scholars of Hadith, to escape the negative implications of this fact, state that fabricated Ahadith did not exist during the era of the Companions. But recent researches have proved that some individuals, like Abu-Hurayrah, did forge a large number of Hadith.<sup>34</sup>

Later on, there is no doubt, much effort was made to separate reliable from unreliable Hadith, but this was during a period when a considerable number of groups had emerged in the society along political and ideological lines. It was when even the criterion of what was trustworthy (Thiqah) could be variously interpreted. In such circumstances, it is obvious to what extent a correct evaluation of Hadith is possible and what kind of devastation it could cause in the system.

Writing on this topic, Abu Riyyah says, “When the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) were left without being properly documented in a written form the Companions did not take any step to do so. It opened the door of narration for both the devote as well as the devious. The devious would narrate whatever they wished without any fear of anyone.”<sup>35</sup>

Another author writes, “One of the causes of the emergence of the fabrication of Hadith was that Hadith had not been committed to writing and the Companions were satisfied with memorizing and narrating it orally.”<sup>36</sup>

Abu al-‘Abbas al-Hanbali (d.716/1316) in this regard writes, “One of the causes of the divergence of opinion among the ‘ulama’ is contradictory Hadith and texts. Some think that Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab was responsible for it. The Companions asked his permission to write Hadith but he stopped them. It was in spite of knowing that the Prophet (S) had ordered the sermon delivered on the occasion of the last pilgrimage to be written down for Abu Shat and that he (S) had said, “preserve knowledge by means of writing.”

Had every Companion written down what he had heard from the Prophet (S), the Sunnah would have been recorded with as short chain of narrators as only one link (in the chain of transmission)<sup>37</sup> between the Prophet (S) and (the next generation of) the Ummah.

It is interesting to note that Abu al-‘Abbas had been accused of Rafd, rejection and Tashayyu’, being a Shi’ah Muslim for this statement.

Abu Riyyah in another statement, where he appears to reject the belief that it was the Prophet (S) who imposed the prohibition on the writing of Hadith, says, “Would it be proper to think that the Prophet (S) might have neglected a half of what had been revealed to him?

How would he leave it unguarded in the memories of persons, of whom one would remember, another forget and yet another one would add to that which had remained undocumented properly...? Where was the kind of care that the Companions exercised in a similar case, the holy Quran? Why did they not write down Hadith as they wrote the holy Quran? Their negligence half of revelation remaining undocumented properly and they all are responsible for it.”<sup>38</sup>

Ibrahim ibn Sa’d is explicit about the documentation of Hadith. He states, “Documentation of Hadith started when false and fabricated Hadith had spread noticeably. Had it not been for the Hadith which came to us from the east, we would not have written down a single Hadith, nor permitted it to be documented.”<sup>39</sup>

A similar statement is ascribed to Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri. However, Hadith was documented in written form when it was already very late. How late it was can be inferred from the fact that Sahih al-Bukhari was selected out of

seven hundred thousand Hadith and Abu Hanifah could accept only 150 out of a number of nearly one million Hadith.

### 3. The Narration of Meanings

One of the consequences of not documenting Hadith was that the actual words of Ahadith were generally forgotten and narration based upon meaning became a common practice. It is natural that one who had heard a Hadith twenty years ago could remember only its meaning to narrate it to others. Additions and deletions are also frequent in such case. Had Hadith been committed to writing from the beginning, the probability of such a hazard would have been of a much lower degree.

‘Imran ibn al-Husayn has said, “By God, had I wished I could narrate the Hadith of the holy Prophet (S) for two consecutive days, but what stopped me was that I saw those who heard as I had heard narrated Hadith in a form which it did not possess originally. I was afraid of also narrating Hadith in the same erroneous manner as they do although not intentionally.”<sup>40</sup>

Sufyan has said, “I heard through a certain chain of narration from Bara’ ibn ‘Azib from the holy Prophet (S), ‘I saw the holy Prophet (S) raised his two hands when starting the prayer. When I went to Kufa I observed that the narrator of Hadith, Ibn Abi Layla, added to the above Hadith the phrase, “Then he would not repeat it”. It seems that his memory was better when he was in Makkah. I was told that his memory had undergone changes.”<sup>41</sup>

Ibn al-Jawzi, in the biographical account of the narrators whose Ahadith contain fabrications, writes, “The first kind are those who under the influence of asceticism gradually neglected memorization as well as the classification of Hadith. There were also those who, in a faulty manner, narrated Hadith from their memory after their books were lost, burnt or buried. These people sometimes would narrate a Mursal Hadith as Marfu’, a Mawquf Hadith as Musnad, and sometimes insert one Hadith into another.”<sup>42</sup>

### 4. The Divergence amongst Muslims

Another consequence of not documenting in written form of Hadith was the differences and divergence of legal opinion amongst the Muslims, to the extent that divergent Fatwas and beliefs, based on differing Ahadith, became a prevalent feature of the Muslim community. Following the early conquests Islam spread to new regions.

The Sahabah and the Tabi’un who dispersed in different directions, each of them carried with him only that portion of the Hadith of the holy Prophet (S) that he had heard from him (S) or his Companions. From Madinah, some of them went to Makkah and Yemen, some to Syria and Palestine, and some settled in the cities of Iraq, such as Kufa and Basrah.

As a result of this dispersion each of them adopted a legal approach that agreed with the Ahadith that he knew. Not knowing the Ahadith that others knew, each of them followed different and divergent Fatwas. When such divergence became public in the period of the Tabi’un, they began to journey to various cities, and this is how ‘travelling in search for Hadith’ (al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadith) came to be instituted. Most of these journeys occurred during the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, and even later.

The real cause for this was the dispersion of Hadith through the different cities and the itinerant scholars endeavored to bring about uniformity and unison between the Ahadith of various lands. Sometimes it was found out that a single Hadith had been narrated differently in different locations.

‘Abdallah ibn Mubarak, we are told, traveled to Yemen, Egypt, Syria and Kufa to collect Hadith.<sup>43</sup> Abu Hatim al-Razi writes, “The first of my journeys in search for Hadith took seven years. I calculated that the distance that I had traveled on foot added up to about a thousand parsangs, a distance of about four miles. I kept on adding up in this way and would leave off when the distance reached a thousand parsangs....Many a time I journeyed from Makkah to Madinah and from Syria to Egypt, from Egypt to Ramlah, from Ramlah to Bayt al-Maqdis, from there to ‘Asqalan, Tabariyyah, Damascus and Hums....<sup>44</sup>

Ibn Musayyab has said, “I have traveled for days and nights in search of a single Hadith.<sup>45</sup>”

These journey traditions were so widespread that al-Khatib compiled a whole work on this topic with the title “al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadith”, journeys in search of Hadith, and al-Ramhurmuzy assigned a chapter of his book al-Muhaddith al-fadil to this topic.<sup>46</sup>

This traveling in search of Hadith became so important that Yahya ibn Mu’in had to say, “There are four kinds of persons who cannot be expected to attain any maturity. . . A man who remains in his hometown, writes Hadith therein without travelling to other cities in the search of Hadith.”<sup>47</sup>

Such problems as these, which were a natural consequence of the failure to properly document Hadith, did not occur in the case of the holy Quran. Had the Hadith of the Prophet (S) been committed to writing from the beginning, with the cooperation of all the Companions, all the various legal, even theological and political schools that emerged later would not have come into existence. Each of these schools based its beliefs on Ahadith. But how far were those Ahadith authentic? To what extent were they acceptable to others? To what extent others could accept their importance in cases where narration had been based on the narration of meaning? These were questions to which no answer existed.

Abu Zuhrah writes, “When ‘Umar died and the Companions left for different towns, each of them founded a school of law for himself and each of them followed his own way. When the era of the Tabi’un arrived, every town had its own school of law whose views were as remote from another as the cities were remote from each others.”<sup>48</sup>

Al-Mansur once told Malik ibn Anas of his intention to give a standard status to his works on Hadith called ‘Muwatta’. He suggested to copy the book for every town and to order the people to teach only its contents and to refrain from referring to anything else (as legal authority). Malik had replied, “O Amir al-Mu’minin, do not do such a thing. These people have already their own beliefs on the basis of what they have heard and narrated of Hadith. Leave the people of every town alone with that which they have chosen for themselves.”<sup>49</sup>

## 5. The Spread of Ra’y

Another negative consequence of the failure to document Hadith properly was the emergence and subsequent prevalence of the practice of Ra'y (analogy) among the Muslim scholars of Fiqh, because each of them had access only to some of the Ahadith, of which many were either lost or were inaccessible. The people pressed them to give Fatwas but they did not have adequate amount of Hadith available. They had to take recourse in Ra'y to answer the people. A number of them practiced Ra'y for lack of confidence in Ahadith, which was a natural result of the absence of a reliable and properly documented Hadith.

At times, in one city a Hukm, a ruling, was based on an available Hadith, while elsewhere the Hukm was based on analogical opinion. Unfortunately, after some time, the judgements based on analogy assumed legal authority for others, which also did not have access to reliable Hadith. They preferred to act according to the Ra'y of their predecessors instead of formulating their own analogical opinions or Fatwas. The prevalence of the practice of Ra'y to this extent amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah was due to the unavailability and inadequacy of Hadith, which in turn was due to the loss of a great number of the Ahadith of the Prophet (S).

### **The Prohibition on the Narration of Hadith**

It was discussed above how documenting Hadith in writing was prohibited and what consequences resulted therefrom. In the following the discussion relates to the fact, as history reveals, that certain people among the Companions had tried to even stop oral narration of Hadith. They prohibited documentation of Hadith under the pretext of safeguarding the holy Quran. They prohibited its oral narration also but under the pretext that the attention of the people should be focused mainly upon the holy Quran, as if their sole aim was to make Hadith appear as insignificant altogether. It is probable that political reasons may have been behind as the motive.

Qurrah ibn Ka'b has said, "We set out from Madinah to Iraq. 'Umar accompanied us to the outskirts of the city. He said, "Do you know why I have come?" "Perhaps you came to bid us farewell as Companions of the Prophet (S)" We replied. He said, "I have come to tell you that you should give greater exposure to the holy Quran and that you should narrate fewer Hadith of the holy Prophet (S). Now go, for I am your partner in this matter."

Qurzah has added in another Riwayah, "I was sitting amongst some people who reminded each other of Hadith. It appeared to me that I remembered more Ahadith than they did. But I kept my silence when I remembered 'Umar's advice."

In al-Dhahabi's narration, he is reported to have said, "When they asked me to narrate Hadith, I told them that 'Umar had prohibited me to do so."<sup>50</sup>

It has also been reported that when the Caliph sent Abu Musa al-'Ash'ari to Iraq, he told him, "Do not engage them in Ahadith. I am your partner in this affair."<sup>51</sup>

These Riwayah indicate that an attempt was made to stop the propagation of the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) not merely its writing but also its narration in any form and manner.

Ibn 'Asakir has recorded the following statement of Ibrahim ibn 'Abd al-Rahman.

By God, 'Umar did not die before he summoned the Companions of the holy Prophet (S), such as Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu al-Darda', Abu Dharr, 'Aqabah ibn 'Amir and . . . He told them, "What are these Ahadith that you have spread all over the horizon?" They said, "Do you stop us from narrating Hadith?"<sup>52</sup>

According to a Riwayah recorded by al-Tabarani, Ibrahim ibn 'Abd al-Rahman used to say, "'Umar summoned 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, Ibn Mas'ud al-'Ansari and Abu al-Darda'. He told them, "What are these Ahadith that you narrate so extensively from the Prophet (S)?" Then he detained them in Madinah until his own death."<sup>53</sup>

Obviously, these individuals were among the most well-known Companions of the holy Prophet (S). The Ahl al-Sunnah have no doubts about the veracity of such men as Hudhayfah, Abu al-Darda' and Ibn Mas'ud. 'Umar himself had so much regard for Ibn Mas'ud that while sending him to Iraq he wrote to the Iraqis, "I have preferred your benefit to my own by sending Ibn Mas'ud to you."<sup>54</sup>

Ibn Hazm has taken note of the seriousness of the charge against the Caliph, but, daring not criticize the Caliph's act, he raises doubts about the veracity of the Riwayah. He has said, "This Hadith is Mursal, and doubtful on account of Shu'bah in the chain of narrators. It is not possibly to cite it as evidence." But we know that the Hadith has been narrated through several chains. In addition to this, Ibn Haytham, in Majma' al-Zaw'id vol.1, p.147, after classifying this Hadith as Sahih, writes, "This statement of 'Umar is Sahih (authentic) and it has been narrated through many chains of narrators."

However, Ibn Hazm, while examining this Hadith, has said, "This Riwayah is evidently false; should we accept it we must consider its speaker outside the pale of Islam, because his efforts were directed to the cover-up and negation of the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (S)."<sup>55</sup>

The author of al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadwin writes, "The rationale that the detention (Habs) of the Sahabah (in Madinah) was on account of their prolific narration of Hadith, is not correct. Because Abu-Hurayrah was one of such individuals, yet he was not detained (by 'Umar)."<sup>56</sup>

The above statement is not true, because Abu-Hurayrah himself was one of those whom 'Umar had forbidden to narrate the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S). Abu-Hurayrah complied with 'Umar's instructions and narrated fewer Hadith as long as the latter was alive.

Concluded, WA al-hamdu lil-Lah

### Notes

1. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 82, Fath al-Bari, Muqaddimah, p. 4, Taqyid al-'ilm, 57, Tarikh al-Fiqh al-Islami, 88.
2. Adwa' 'ala al-Sunnat al-Muhammadiyah, 51.
3. Ibid. 51.
4. Ibid.
5. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 81.
6. Ibid I, 82.
7. Taqyid al-'ilm, 57.

8. Abjad al-'ulum, 110.
9. Al-Sahih min Sirat al-Nabi al-'a'zam (S, I, 27, footnote).
10. Taqyid al-'ilm, 51; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 64; Kanz al-'ummal, V, 239.
11. Sunan al-Darimi, I, 124; Taqyid al-'ilm, 56; see also Taqyid al-'ilm, 57, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 296.
12. Taqyid al-'ilm, 61; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 65; Husn al-Tanbih, 92.
13. See Buhuth Ma'a Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Salafiyyah, 97; for the statement from Talmud, see al-Tafkir al-Dini 'ind al-Yahud, p.79, from Talmud Hittin, 60 Bab Tamura, Bab 14; Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr says, "The number of Ahadith increased during 'Umar's rule. He ordered them to be brought to him and set them on fire, declaring, "No Mishnat like Mishnat of Ahl al-Kitab." See al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 188.
14. Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 282.
15. Adab al-Mufrad, 69.
16. Although some of the compilers began their works of compilation during the 2nd/8th century, the dates of their death occur generally in the 3rd/9th century.
17. Taqyid al-'ilm, 103.
18. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 141. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 81.
19. Taqyid al-'ilm, 60; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 75
20. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 179; Musannaf 'Abd al-Razzaq, XI, 425; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 90.
21. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 89, Taqyid al-'ilm, 111.
22. Musannaf 'Abd al-Razzaq, XI, 259, al-Kifayah fi 'ilm al-Riwayah, 106.
23. Taqyid al-'ilm, 60, al-Muhaddith al-Fadil from al-Ramhurmuzy.
24. Al-Taratib al-'idariyyah, II, 249.
25. Tafsir al-Manar, VI, 288.
26. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 84.
27. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 119.
28. Ibid I, 339.
29. Tabaqat al-Fuqaha, 78.
30. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 84.
31. Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 91.
32. Taqyid al-'ilm, 115.
33. Al-'imla wa al-'istimla 47.
34. Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 65.
35. See Abu Hurayrah by Sayyid Sharaf al-Din and Shaykh al-Mudirah by Abu Riyyah.
36. Adwa' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 268.
37. Ta'rikh al-Fiqh al-Islami, 68.
38. Al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-'arba'ah, I, 260.
39. Adwa' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 52, 53.
40. Al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 762.
41. Ta'wil Makhtalaf al-Hadith, 40; al-Mawdu'at, I, 93; Ta'rikh al-Madhahib al-Fiqhiyyah, 20.
42. Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil, by Abu Hatim al-Razi, I, 43, 44.
43. Al-Mawdu'at, I, 35, 36; Ta'rikh Ibn 'Asakir, II, 10.
44. Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil, I, 263.
45. Ibid., I, 359, 360.
46. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 120; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 56; al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadith, I, 27.
47. Al-Muhaddith al-Fadil, 230.
48. Al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadith, 89; see Fath al-Bari, I, 158, 169; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 111, 113, al-Mujrahan, I, 57; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 108; al-Muhaddith al-Fadil, 215, 223.
49. Kashf al-Zunun, II, 1908.
50. Sunan al-Darimi, 79; Hayat al-Sahabah, III, 257, 258, Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 120; al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VI, 7, Mustadrak al-Hakim, I, 152, (al-Hakim says: 'This Hadith is totally Sahih from the viewpoint of sanad'); Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 7; Ta'rikh al-Fiqh al-Islami, 41.

51. Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, VIII, 107; the author says, “This Hadith of ‘Umar is famous.”
52. Hayat al-Sahabah, III, 272; Kanz al-‘ummal, V, 239.
53. Hayat al-Sahabah, from Majma’ al-Zawa’id, I, 149; al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 239; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 7; al-Mawdu’at, I, 94; al-Muhaddith al-Fadil, 133.
54. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 14.
55. Al-‘Ahkam, II, 139, from al-Sunnah qabl al-Tadwin, 108.
56. Al-Sunnah qabl al-Tadwin, 108.

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