



AHADITH SERIES

BOOKS OF
AHADITH

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BOOKS OF AHADITH

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PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

A brief account of the historical background, **books of Ahadith**, **classification of Ahadith** and **categories of the books of Ahadith** have been given in this book. It is an important book for our youth who are generally unaware of Islamic subjects.

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BRIEF HISTORY

There are two main sources of Islamic Sharia, Quran and Sunnah. Quran is the word of God, while the Hadith is its translation into pragmatic terms, as exemplified by Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). These two sources are interrelated because it is not possible to understand Qur'an without reference to Ahadith; and it is not possible to explain a Hadith without relating it to Qur'an. The words 'Sunnah' and 'Hadith' are synonymous. Sunnah means 'the way' or 'conduct of life'. It refers to statements, acts, approvals and character descriptions attributed to Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

During the life of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), the emphasis was more on recording, memorizing and preserving Quran. However, some Sahabah used to write whatever the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said or did in their presence. It is reported that 1,060 Sahabah have narrated Ahadith from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

After the death of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) Sahabah shared and collected Ahadith. This continued for a few decades. Later, within the first two centuries, Hadith scholars conducted a thorough review of these Ahadith, tracing the origins of each Hadith along with the chain of narrators through whom the Hadith was related. The Ahadith which were verifiable were deemed authentic (Sahih) and other were either considered as weak or in some cases, concocted.

During the time of Companions (رضى الله تعالى عنهم اجمعين) and their Successors (تابعين), Islam spread to a large area in the world. It was this time when it became necessary to record Ahadith in a systematic way. During the era of the 'Successors of the successors' (تبعه تابعين), Ahadith were systematically collected and written in a text format. The first such book was compiled by Imam Malik bin Anas (رضى الله تعالى عنه) titled 'Muatta' (موطأ). The period that followed, witnessed critical research by Hadith scholars. Ahadith were compiled systematically and were grouped under various headings. The history of collection of Ahadith can be summed up as follows.

(i) First period (1st century AH) was the age of companions and their successor. This is known as the age of 'Saheefah' (صحيفه), like the collections of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Abu Huraira (رضى الله تعالى عنهما) and others. Among the well known manuscripts of Hadith collections of the first century Hijri are as follows.

(a) 'As-Sahifa as-Sadiqa' of Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn al-Aas (d 63 H)

(b) 'As-Sahifa as-Sahihah' of Hammam Ibn Munabbih (d 118 H), narrated from Abu Hurairah (رضى الله تعالى عنه).

(c) The collection of Aban Ibn Uthman (d 105 H) from whom Mohammad Ibn Ishaq narrated.

(d) The collection of Urwa bin az-Zubair Ibn al-Awwam. This collection was burnt during the sack of Madina by Yazid bin Muawiya in 63 H.

(e) Sira of Mohammad Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri (d 120 H).

(f) 'Munaqib as-Sahabah' by Asim Ibn Umar Ibn Qatada Ibn al-Numan al-Ansari (d 120 H), etc.

(ii) The second period covers middle of second century AH that witnessed planned compilation of Ahadith, like Imam Malik (رضى الله تعالى عنه) compilation titled 'Muatta' (موطأ).

(iii) The third stage began towards the end of second century AH, in which classified and organized work on Ahadith was carried out, like Musnad of Imam Ahmad (رضى الله تعالى عنه).

(iv) The fourth and most important period is known as 'the period of Sahih'. It began at the beginning of third century AH, in which books like Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and others were compiled.

One of the common accusations made by non-Muslims against Islamic sciences and the study of Hadith is that there is no way of verifying the Hadith and that they should not be used as a source of Fiqh. This argument is based on a very rudimentary and flawed understanding of how the Ahadith were collected and the incredible care and effort Hadith scholars (محدثين) have taken in verifying their authenticity.

Hadhrat Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) used to judge the narration of every claimant of the tradition on the basis of the 'Principle of testimony.' Meaning, he would accept it only if two men, or one man and two women, would narrate the same thing. Hadhrat Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) used to ask the narration on oath and considered oath as one witness. All authentic Ahadith have been collected and published by our Imams of Ahadith in voluminous books. Every single Hadith has been investigated and it is clearly written the type of Hadith it is. In the encyclopedia of narrators, particulars and circumstances are investigated. All these books are elucidated and are pure from weak Ahadith. We are grateful and indebted to our Hadith scholars for their unparalleled work in the history of mankind. With the monumental work of our Hadith scholars, we are able to know what words and actions can truly be attributed to Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) even after 1400 years of his life.

CLASSIFICATION OF AHADITH

Hadith is composed of three parts, viz., **(i)** Text (متن), **(ii)** Chain of narrators (اسناد) and **(iii)** 'Object' (طرف) - the text of the Hadith that refers to Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله) saying, action, or concurrence of others' action.

The primary Hadith terminology (مُصْطَلِحُ الْحَدِيثِ) that specifies the acceptability of Ahadith developed by Hadith scholars, is as follows.

(i) As regards to the authority, there are 4 types of Ahadith, as follows.

(a) Divine (Qudsi - قدسي) Revelation of Allah relayed with the words of Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

(b) Elevated (Murfu - مرفوع) Murfu Ahadith are narrated in the following manner, 'I heard the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله) saying' -

(c) Stopped (Mauquf - موقوف) A Hadith narrated by the companion (صحابي) - for example, 'we were commanded to -'

(d) Severed (Maqtu - مقطوع) A narration from the 'successors of Sahabah' (تابعين).

(ii) As regards to the Chain of Narrators, there are 6 types of Ahadith, as follows

(a) Supported (Musnad - مُسْنَد) A Hadith which is reported by a Hadith scholar, based on what he learned from his teacher at a time of life suitable for learning. In turn his teacher learned it from his teacher until the chain reaches to a well known Sahabi and eventually to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله).

(عليه و آله وسلم). Also Ahadith that are arranged in alphabetical order as per Sahaba names as narrators, are also included in this category.

(b) Continuous (Muttasil - متصل) A Hadith with an uninterrupted chain of narrators that goes back to a companion (صحابي) or a Successor (تابعي).

(c) Missing link (Mursal - مرسل) The link of the Hadith missing between the 'Successor' (تابعي), and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). Like the Successor (تابعي) says, 'the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said - .

(d) Broken Link (Munqati - منقطع) A Hadith whose link is broken before the successor (تابعي).

(e) Perplexed Link (Mu'dhal - معضل) A Hadith whose narrator omits two or more consecutive reporters in his Chain.

(f) Hanging Link (Mu'allaq - معلق) A Hadith whose narrator omits the entire chain of reporters and directly quotes the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

(iii) As regards to the number of reporters in the Chain of Narrators, there are 2 types of Ahadith, as follows.

(a) Continuous (Mutawatir - متواتر) A Hadith which is reported consecutively by a large number of people in different chains, and it is not possible that they all will agree upon a lie. There are two kinds of Ahadith in this category, (1) Mutawatir in wording, and (2) Mutawatir in meaning.

(b) Infrequent (Ahaad - أحدات) A Hadith which is narrated by people whose number does not reach to the state of 'Perpetual Narration' (حديث متواتر).

The 'Infrequent Hadith (حديث احد) is of three types, as follows.

(1) Famous (Mash'hur - مشهور) A Hadith reported by **more than** two reporters.

(2) Strong (Aziz - عزيز) A Hadith reported by two narrators.

(3) Strange (Gharib - غريب) A Hadith reported by only one narrator.

(iv) As regards to the nature of text and the chain of narration, there are 2 types of Ahadith, as follows.

(a) Inconceivable (Munkar - منكر) A Hadith reported by a weak narrator and the text is against an authentic Hadith.

(b) Interpolated (Mudraj - مدرج) A Hadith in which addition has been made in the text of Hadith by the narrator.

(v) As regards to the reliability, there are 4 types of Ahadith, as follows.

(a) Sound (Sahih - صحيح) A Hadith whose narrators are trustworthy in religion. Each narrator in the chain is truthful and understands how a different expression can alter the meanings of the Hadith. The narrator reports the Hadith verbatim, not just in meaning.

(b) Good (Hassan - حسن) A Hadith whose source is known and the reporters are unambiguous.

(c) Weak (Dha'eef - ضعيف) A Hadith that does not reach to the status of Hassan Hadith.

The weakness could be related in discontinuity in the chain of narrators or it could be related to one of the narrator making excessive mistakes, or he is a liar. It could also be related to ambiguity surrounding the narrator.

(d) Concocted (Maudu - موضوع) A Hadith whose text goes against the established norms of Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم) traditions or its reporters include known liars. Concocted Ahadith are also identified by external evidence related to a discrepancy found in the date and time of a particular incident.

CATEGORIES OF BOOKS OF AHADITH

The books of Ahadith are broadly divided into following categories.

(i) Sahifah (صحيفه)

Initial collections of Ahadith written down during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم), like the Sahifah of Hadhrat Abu Huraira (رضي الله تعالى عنه).

(ii) Ajza (اجزا)

These books include Ahadith passed down on the authority of a Sahabi or a Taba'ee. This category also includes Ahadith concerning a specific subject which are known as **Rasa'il**.

(iii) Sunan (سنن)

Sunan are collections of Ahadith narrated to authors by their teachers; which were narrated to them by their teachers, and so on; until the chain reaches to Sahabah, and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). In this category, Ahadith are generally related to specific subjects of laws of Islamic Sharia.

(iv) Musannaf (المصنف)

In this category, Ahadith are collected on various topics, like Bukhari, Muslim, etc.

(v) Jami' (جامع)

Jami is a comprehensive version of Musannaf. Sahih Muslim is considered a Musannaf, not a Jami' like that of Sahih Bukhari.

(vi) Musnad (مسند)

In this category, Ahadith are collected alphabetically as per Sahaba's names as narrators. The famous book in this classification is Musnad of Imam Ahmad. The Hadith scholars of such books, differ in their method of arrangement. In some, Ahadith are arranged as per their Isnad (chain of narrators) in alphabetical order. In others, these are arranged based on the reliability of the people in Isnad.

(vii) Mu'jam (معجم)

If Musnad is arranged in alphabetical order, it becomes Mu'jam. In Mu'jam, Ahadith are taken in alphabetical order irrespective of their content, like at-Tabarani.

(viii) Mustadrak (المستدرک)

Mustadrak are those books that are written in continuation to the Ahadith books that were written by Hadith scholars earlier. This happens when Ahadith that conform to the criteria of an earlier work were missed in the earlier work. Mustadrak al-Hakim is an example in this context. It is said that Mustadrak al-Hakim (المستدرک على الصحيحين للحاكم) contains Ahadith that conform to the criteria of Bukhari and Muslim.

(ix) Mustakhraj (المستخرج)

Mustakhraj is similar to Mustadrak. These books are written when the Hadith scholar finds new chains to previously recorded Ahadith. Abu Nu'aym Isfahani's Mustakhraj is an example in this context that contains fresh isnad (chain of narrations) to Ahadith in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim.

(x) Arba'in (الأربعين)

These books contain 40 Ahadith, the authors consider as important. Book of Imam Nawawi (أحاديث الأربعين النووية) is an example in this category.

The famous six major collections of Ahadith, 'Al-Kutub al-Sitta' (الكتب الستة) are **(i)** Sahih al-Bukhari (صحيح البخاري), **(ii)** Sahih Muslim (صحيح مسلم), **(iii)** Sunan an-Nasa'i (سنن النسائي), **(iv)** Sunan Abi Dawud (سنن أبي داود), **(v)** Jami at-Tirmidhi (جامع الترمذي), **(vi)** Sunan Ibn Majah (سنن ابن ماجه).

Three more Ahadith books, after the above six major collections are **(vii)** Al-Muwatta Imam Malik (امام مالك الموطأ), **(viii)** Musnad Imam Ahmad (مسند امام احمد), and **(ix)** Sunan al-Darimi (سنن الدارمي) or Musnad al-Darimi (مسند الدارمي).

Some other important books of Ahadith are **(i)** Adab al-Mufrad, **(ii)** Mishkat al-Masabih, **(iii)** Sunan al-Kubra al-Bayhaqi, **(iv)** Sunan ad-Daraqutni, **(v)** Musannaf of Abdur Razzaq, **(vi)** Musannaf Ibn Jurayi, **(vii)** Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, **(viii)** Musannaf Ibn Khuzaymah, **(ix)** Sahih Ibn Hibban, **(x)** Mustadrak Al-Hakim, **(xi)** Mujma az-Zawa'id, **(xii)** Sahifah Hammam Ibn Munabbih, **(xiii)** Al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer, **(xiv)** Bulugh al-Maram, **(xv)** Talkhis al-Mustadrak, **(xvi)** Tahdhib al-Athar, **(xvii)** Kitaab-ul-Aathaar, **(xviii)** At-Tareeq al-Islam Musnad Imam-ul-Azam, **(xix)** Musnad al-Shafi'i, **(xx)** Musnad al-Siraj, **(xxi)** Musnad al-Firdous, **(xxii)** Musnad Abu Ya'la, **(xxiii)** Musnad al-Tayalisi, **(xxiv)** Musnad Abu Awaanah, **(xxv)** Sunan Sa'id Ibn Mansur, **(xxvi)** Kanz-ul-Ummal (كنز العمال), etc.
