

An Introduction to the



SUNNAH

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Cover Design: Al-Husna

© 2000
ISBN 0952-7834

Publisher:
AL-QURAN SOCIETY
34 Francis Road
London
E10 6PW
UK

Tel/Fax: 020 8558 0581

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUNNAH

Chapter 1

Revelation Besides the Quran

The Quran is the word of Allah which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and preserved both verbally and in writing by his Companions. Apart from the Qur'an, whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) uttered or did was also preserved by the Companions. Thus the Sunnah includes the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ), known commonly as Hadith, his practices, and actions which gained his approval.

Both the Quran and the Sunnah fall under a common title "Wahy" (وحى) ("revelation"); the difference between the two is that the Quran is a revelation which is recited (مستأن) while the Sunnah is not recited. The importance of the Sunnah as the second source of Islam is covered in Chapter Two.

First of all, we will establish that the Prophet (ﷺ) not only received the verses of the Quran from Allah, but he also received other revelation from time to time which is now preserved in Hadith. The following examples show how the Quran itself refers to this revelation.

1. According to ayah 144 of Surah al-Baqarah, Allah Almighty commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) to face the Ka'bah in his daily prayers instead of Jerusalem.

قَدْ زَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبُ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَلَوْلَيْسَكَ قِبْلَةٌ تَرْضَاهَا قَوْلٌ وَجْهِكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهُكُمْ شَطْرَهُ

"We see the turning of thy face to the heavens: now shall We turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque; wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction."

But why was the Prophet (ﷺ) facing Jerusalem before that? Ayah 143 shows that Allah Himself had appointed Jerusalem as the initial Qiblah for the Prophet (ﷺ).

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ
الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ

“And we appointed the Qibla to which thou wast used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (from the Faith).”

The appointment of the previous Qibla is referred to as being in the past. But there is no verse in the Quran which commands the Prophet (ﷺ) to face Jerusalem at the beginning of his mission! Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) must have received this guidance from Allah in a form other than the Quran. As we have said above, this alternative revelation is preserved in the Sunnah.

2. In ayah 3 of Surah al-Tahreem, a certain incident is cited.

وَإِذْ أَسْرَأْتِنِي إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَرْوَاحِهِ حَدِيثًا
فَلَمَّا نَبَأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ، وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ
فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَّاهُ بِهِ، قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَأَنِي الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) disclosed a matter in confidence to one of his wives, and she then divulged it, and Allah made it known to him, he confirmed a part of it and repudiated a part. Then when he told her of it, she said, ‘Who told you this?’ He said, ‘He told me Who knows and is well-acquainted (with all things).’”

We must consider carefully the phrases “Allah made it known to him” and “He told me Who knows and is well-acquainted”. The question is, how did Allah make it known to him and tell him? Certainly not via the Quran, since there is no mention of it anywhere else in the Book of Allah. Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) must have been told via revelation from Allah which is not part of the Quran.

3. In ayah 5 of Surah al-Hashr, a reference is made to the expedition against the rebellious Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir, during which the Muslims cut down some palm-trees and left others alone.

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لَيْسَةٍ أَوْ نَرَكَةٍ شُمُوها قَائِمَةٌ
عَلَىٰ أَسْوِلِهَا فَيَآذِنُ اللَّهُ لِلْحَرِي وَالْفَسِقِينَ

“Whether ye (O Muslims) cut down the tender palm-trees or ye left them standing on their roots, it was by leave of Allah, and in order that He might cover the rebellious transgressors with shame.”

Here, their action is attributed to the “leave of Allah” given to them. Nowhere in the Quran is such permission found. Hence Allah guided the Prophet (ﷺ) in this matter but not via the Quran.

4. According to ayaat 17-18 of surah al-Qiyamah, Allah took it upon Himself to collect the Quran. The Prophet (ﷺ) directed the scribes of the Quran to arrange its surahs in the order found today; this is not the order in which they were revealed. Therefore, since this was Allah’s responsibility, it shows that He guided the Prophet (ﷺ) with respect to the order of the surahs.

These are just a few examples out of many which leave no doubt that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to receive revelation from Allah either directly or through the medium of the angel Jibreel. A part of this revelation was preserved word for word under the title of the Quran. All other revelation was embodied either in the Prophet (ﷺ)’s sayings or in his practices which were carefully preserved by the Companions as the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The various purposes served by the Sunnah

Ummul Mu’mineen (Mother of the Believers) ‘Aisha was once asked, “What was the character of the Prophet (ﷺ) like?” She replied, “His character was nothing but the Quran”. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) was an embodiment of the Quran itself: whatever he practised or said, i.e. the Sunnah, is related to the guidance of the Quran. Let us explore the role of the Sunnah in relation to the Quran.

1. The Sunnah explains Quranic injunctions in detail.

a) Allah says in ayah 43 of Surah al-Baqarah

وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“Establish prayer and practise regular charity”, and many similar ayaat also exist.

All issues related to the prayer, such as the required number of daily prayers, the number of rak’at and the recitation in each prayer, as well as how to perform the prayer from beginning to end, are explained by the Sunnah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Pray as you have seen me praying.” (transmitted by Bukhari)

Similarly, all issues related to Zakah, e.g. the minimum amount on which Zakah becomes payable, the percentage paid, the kinds of wealth, goods, and animals on which Zakah is obligatory, etc. are clearly expounded by the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Again, a detailed picture of fasting and Hajj can only be seen in the Sunnah, for the Quran has touched upon both subjects briefly.

b) Allah says in Surah al-Ma'idah, ayah 38,

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوْا
اَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنْ اَللّٰهِ وَاَللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ

“As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hand – a punishment from Allah by way of example for their crime. And Allah is exalted in Power, Wise.”

The Sunnah explains the minimum of stolen goods for which a thief deserves this punishment and the manner in which the hand should be cut off.

To reject the Sunnah, as some misguided “Muslims” advocate, will render the whole Quran open to a hotch-potch of interpretations inspired by the individuals’ whims and desires, which often come from the devil. For example, someone who does not accept the practical demonstration of salat (prayer) given by the Prophet (ﷺ) will make a mockery of salat by doing it in a way suitable to his wishes. But how can a Muslim worship Allah, if he does not know the way in which Allah wants to be worshipped?

2. The Sunnah can establish a specific meaning when a number of meanings are possible.

a) Allah says in ayah 82 of Surah al-An'am

اَلَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوْا اِيْمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ الْاَمْنُ
وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ

“It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with *dhulm* that are in security, for they are on (right) guidance.”

Bukhari relates that some of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) took the word “*dhulm*” in its general meaning, i.e. to do injustice, to do wrong. So they were troubled and said, “Which of us has not done wrong?” The

Prophet (ﷺ) relieved them of this worry by explaining that “dhulm” here means to commit shirk, as in Surah Luqman ayah 13,

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“Indeed, worshipping others besides Allah is the highest injustice.”

b) Allah says in Surah al-Taubah, ayah 34

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يُحْمَى
عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ
وَأُظْهُرُهُمْ

“Those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a most grievous penalty. On the day when heat will be produced out of that wealth in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs . . .”

The Arabic word (كَنْز) “kanz” means a hoard, big or small. So this ayah seemingly dooms a person who hoards any amount and does not spend it in the way of Allah. With this meaning in mind, ‘Umar (رضي الله عن) questioned the Prophet (ﷺ) about this verse, to which he replied that once the Zakat which is due on the hoarded amount is paid, it is no longer considered as “kanz”. (Ibn Majah)

3. The Ahadith explain some historical events in detail since they are mentioned only briefly in the Quran.

a) Allah says in Surah al-Anfal ayah 7,

وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا
لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ
وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحَقِّقَ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“Behold! Allah promised you one of the two (enemy) parties, that it should be yours; ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but

Allah intended to justify the Truth according to His words and to cut off the roots of the unbelievers.”

Which two parties are meant? Which of them is unarmed? From books of Ahadith we learn the relevant details about the battle of Badr, which is the incident referred to in the above verses.

b) Surah al-Taubah, ayah 118 says,

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا

“(Allah turned in mercy) to the three who were left behind;”

Who were these three people, and why did they remain behind? Again, the books of Ahadith explain this.

c) Surah ‘Abasa, ayah 1-2

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى

“He frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man.”

Who frowned and turned away, and why? Who was the blind man? The details are furnished by the books of Ahadith.

4. The Sunnah can specify exemptions from a general injunction.

a) In Surah Nisa’ ayah 11, the share of children in inheritance is given.

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ

“Allah directs you as regards your children’s inheritance . . .”

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that the Muslim child of a Kafir (disbeliever), the Kafir child of a Muslim, and the murderer of his/her own father, none of these can inherit.

b) The Quran declares the flesh of a dead animal and blood as haraam (prohibited) in Surah al-Maidah, ayah 5. The Prophet (ﷺ) exempted fish and locusts from the term “dead flesh”, and the liver and spleen from “blood”.

5. *Deduction of a similar injunction in an analogous case.*

a) Surah Nisa, ayah 23:

وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ

“Prohibited to you are: . . . and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) declared that to marry a woman as well as her aunt in the same wedlock is also haraam.

b) Wine has been declared unlawful by Allah in Surah al-Maidah, ayah 93. The Prophet (ﷺ) extended the prohibition to anything which is intoxicating in large doses, even if it is taken in a small quantity.

6. *The Prophet (ﷺ) gave additional injunctions in a number of issues.*

One of the many duties of the Messenger (ﷺ) was to tell the believers what is halaal and what is haraam (Surah A'raf, ayah 157). For example, he prohibited the flesh of donkeys, dogs, beasts with canine teeth and birds of prey. He also made gold and silk haraam for Muslim men but halaal for Muslim women.



Chapter 2

Significance of the Sunnah

No devout Muslim would ever dare to go against the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, but it is regrettable to note that some of the liberal elite tend to raise the slogan that the book of Allah is enough and that there is no need at all for the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). Slogans like this are raised mainly by people who want to get rid of the Sharia completely. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was well-aware that such ill-natured opinions would arise and hence gave a clear warning of this as reported by Al-Miqdam b. Ma'di Karib, one of his Companions: "I have indeed been given the Quran and something similar to it besides it. Yet, the time will come when a man leaning on his couch will say, 'Follow the Quran only; what you find in it as halal, take it as halal, and what you find in it as haram, take it as haram.' But verily, what the Messenger of Allah has forbidden is like what Allah has forbidden." (Abu Dawud, Darimi)

In fact, ANYONE WHO REJECTS THE SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ) DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE QURAN, for Allah Himself has emphasised the importance of the Sunnah in many ayaat, of which a few are given below.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي
الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ
تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you; and if you differ in anything among yourselves, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most suitable for final determination." (AL-NISA: 59)

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this: they say, ‘We hear and we obey’. It is such as these who will attain success.” (AL-NOOR: 51)

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّىٰ يُحْكِمُواك فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥١﴾

“But no, by your Lord (O Muhammad)! They cannot be believers until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest submission.” (AL-NISA” 65)

Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah said: “I have left among you two things; you will never go astray as long as you hold fast to them: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah.” (Hakim)

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to hold the commandments given by the Prophet (ﷺ) in a very high esteem, making no distinctions between them and those given by Allah.

Once ‘Abdullah b. Mas’ood quoted this Hadith while he was delivering a sermon” “May Allah curse the women who tattoo their bodies and those who pluck their eyebrows; those who separate their teeth to make them look more pretty and those who try to change the creation of Allah.” A woman named Umm Yaqub from the tribe of Banu Asad came to know of these words. She approached Ibn Mas’ood and said, “O Abu ‘Abdur Rahman! It was reported to me that you have cursed such and such women.” He said: “Why should I not curse those whom the Prophet (ﷺ) cursed and who are cursed in the Book of Allah as well.” She said, “I have read whatever is contained between the two covers, “Had you been a good reader, you would have discovered it. Did you not read the following verse?

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

“So take whatever the Messenger gives you and keep away from what he forbids you.” (AL-HASHR: 7)

There are numerous examples set by the Companions which show how emphatically they abided by the Sunnah of the Prophet to the extent of severing their relations with their kith and kin once they discovered someone going against the Sunnah. Let us have some examples from the

lives of the great Khulafa of Islam followed by a host of other Companions.

Just after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), three major issues confronted the Muslim community. They could have left it apart and disunited, had it not been for the wise guidance of Syyedina Abu Bakr who settled them amicably in the light of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). The first issue was related to the appointment of the Khalifa. Assembled in Saqifa Bani Sa'ida, a great number of Muhajirin and Ansar had been busy arguing this issue. The Ansar proposed that the *AMIR* should be appointed from both the above communities. Syyedina Abu Bakr cited the saying of the Prophet: "Imams would be from Quraish as long as they have the understanding (of the religion)." The Ansar conceded to this quietly. Syyedina Umar proposed the name of Abu Bakr as the Khalifa which was accepted unanimously by those present there and later followed by all the inhabitants of Madina through the oath of allegiance.

The second issue was related to the place where the Prophet should be buried. Again Syyedina Abu Bakr cited the saying of the Prophet: 'A Prophet is to be buried where he breathes his last.' Accordingly his burial took place in the apartment of his wife, Ummul Muminin Aisha where he died. The third issue was related to the inheritance of the Prophet as raised by his daughter Fatima who came to Syyedina Abu Bakr asking for her share. Abu Bakr replied by reminding her of the saying of the Prophet: "We, the community of the Prophets, are not inherited. Whatever we leave behind us is a charity." Fatima didn't argue further but retired quietly.

Once Syyedina Umar saw Khalid bin Walid wearing a silk shirt. He asked him to take it off. Khalid replied that Abdul Rahman bin Auf used to have one as well. Umar said: 'The Prophet allowed him because he suffered badly from itching.' Khalid then, had no alternative but to take it off.

Following the news of the Muslim's victory in the conquest of Syria, Umar advanced to Damascus with a number of Companions. On reaching the outskirts of 'Amwas, a town in Syria, the news of a wide-spread plague in the town reached him. Umar consulted his people whether or not he should venture into the town. The heated discussion that followed came to an end when Abdul Rahman b Auf cited this saying of the Prophet: 'If you are inside a place where an epidemic breaks out, don't come out of it. And don't go in if you happen to be away from such a place.' Umar, eventually commanded his people to retreat. Someone still remarked: 'Umar! do you run away from a destiny decreed by Allah?' To this Umar replied: "Yes, we run away from one destiny to the other decreed by Allah as well."

Such was the wisdom of the Prophet and centuries ago it fore-shadowed today's quarantine regulations. Syyedina Uthman once agreed to buy a piece of land from a person. On the completion of the verbal agreement, he asked the man to collect the money the following day. But the man turned up after a few days, only to renounce the agreement. He had changed his mind because his friends had blamed him for selling the land at a low price. Uthman could have been adamant about the sale, particularly when it had been agreed upon completely. But he remembered the saying of the

Prophet which admired a person who treated the people easily and wholeheartedly in his sales. So, Uthman preferred to concede to the man's wish without raising any objection.

Once Syyedina Ali was approached by a person who wanted his counsel concerning the engagement of his daughter whose hand was sought by three persons: Hasan, Husain and Abdullah bin Ja'far. Syyedina Ali found himself involved personally as his two sons were among the candidates. But he recalled the saying of the Prophet, 'The one whose counsel is sought, should be honest'. So after giving some thought, he told the man: 'Don't go for Hasan because he is known to have divorced his women many times. And don't go for Husain as well as he loves to be admired. Rather go for Abdullah bin Ja'far.'

In one of his journeys, he found a merchant hoarding a stock of grain in the hope of a good price. Syyedina Ali reminded him of the saying of the Prophet: "The hoarder is cursed" and instructed his people to set the stock on fire as a punishment. This is how the four Khulafa reacted to the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Let us have some more examples from the lives of the Companions. Abdullah b Mas'ud heard a man saying after a sneeze: "Al-hamdu Lillah was Salatu was Salamu Ala Rasulullah." Ibn Mas'ud said to him: 'Whatever you have said is true. But that is not the way the Prophet has told us. He instructed us to say simply 'Al-hamdu Lillah' after sneezing.

It would be appropriate to remind the brothers of this Sunnah which is commonly abandoned by a great number of the Muslims. Say 'Al-Hamdu Lillah' whenever you sneez. If you hear someone saying this after sneezing, say to him: 'Yarhamukumu Allah' (May Allah have mercy upon you). The sneezer should pray for you as well by saying: "Ya'ahdi Kumullah wa Yuslihu Balakum" (May Allah guide you and set your affairs right). There are plenty of occasions when you should say: "As Salatu Was Salamu 'ala Rasulullah". You should say it, for example, whenever you hear the name of our beloved prophet or whenever you enter a Masjid or step out of it adding these words respectively: "Allahumma Iftah li abwaba Rahmatik" and "Allahumma Inni As'aluka min fadlika".

Once Abdullah b Abbas was sitting beside the Ka'ba when Amir Mu'awiya entered the Grand Mosque and began circumambulating (Tawaf) around the Ka'ba, kissed the black stone in the beginning but he rubbed his hand on the other three corners of Ka'ba (i.e. Syrian, Iraqi and Yemeni corners) as well. Ibn Abbas knew that the Prophet – apart from kissing the black stone and rubbing the Yemeni corner – had never touched the other two corners during Tawaf. So he objected to Mu'awiya, to which he replied: "To me none of the four corners of Ka'ba is deserted." "But that was not the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ)," Ibn Abbas emphasised. Mu'awiya could only say: 'You have said the truth.'

Ibn Abbas saw a man drawing a picture of a living being. He advised him not to do that because the Prophet forbade such practice. Abdullah b 'Umar was well-known for his adherence to the Sunnah. He once saw his

son Bilal stopping his wife from going to the Mosque. Abdullah b 'Umar said "Don't do that because the Messenger of Allah has said: Don't stop the slave-girls of Allah from entering the Houses of Allah." Bilal was adamant that he would not allow her even after listening to this saying. Ibn Umar was so upset that he swore never to speak to him again until his dying day.

Abdullah b Amr b As had a very large garden with a great number of palm trees. Water in this was so abundant that his assistant planned to sell the extra amount of it after irrigating the whole garden to a neighbour at an exorbitant price of thirty thousand dirhams. That offer could have attracted anyone except a companion like Abdullah b 'Amr who refused to approve his sale because the Prophet forbade the selling of any extra water.

Abu Huraira used to address a gathering of Muslims on Thursday evening (Friday night). Once, before beginning his sermon he said to the people: 'Whoever has cut off from any of his relations should leave this place.' No one stood up. On repeating these words thrice, a young man left the place and went to his aunt whom he had deserted a long time before and reconciled with her. Abu Huraira said this because he knew that all actions are presented to Allah on each Friday night. He didn't like his assembly of the devout to be smeared by a person who had committed the sin of deserting his relatives. By doing so, he saved a person from a major sin. Anas b Malik was known to be a faithful servant of the Prophet. Once he was invited to a party where a Magian offered him *FALUDA* (a well-known drink) in a silver glass. Anas refused to accept it. He preferred to drink in an earthen pot than to use the silver one because the Prophet forbade the Muslims to eat or drink in golden or silver utensils.

This is how the Companions behaved throughout their lives setting sublime examples of adherence to the Sunnah.

The numerous examples given above are from the Companions. Let us see what the four great Imams have said about the authority of the Sunnah.

a) *Imam Abu Hanifah* was asked: 'what do we do if we find a saying of yours opposing the Book of Allah?' He replied, "Leave my saying and stick to the Book of Allah." The questioner asked, "What if it contradicts a saying of the prophet (ﷺ)?" He said, "Leave my saying in the face of the Prophet (ﷺ)'s saying." Again he was asked, "What if it goes against the saying of a Companion?" Again he said, "Leave my saying in the face of the Companion's saying." (Al-Qawl al-Mufeed by Shawkani)

Imam Abu Hanifah also declared, "My way (madh-hab) is whatever is proved by an authentic (sahih) hadith." (Shami 1:50, al-Fulani in "Iqaz" p. 62)

b) The saying of *Imam Malik B. Anas* is well-known, "Each of everyone's sayings can be accepted or rejected, except for the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ)." (Ibn 'Abdul Barr, Ibn Hazm, also in al-Yawaqeat wal Jawahir 2:96)

He also said, "I am just a mortal; sometimes I am wrong, sometimes I am right. So check my opinions: whatever agrees with the Book and the

Sunnah, accept it; whatever disagrees with them, reject it.” (Al-Fulani in Iqaz, p. 72)

Once Imam Shafi'i narrated a Hadith, Someone from the audience said, “Do you say so as well?” On hearing this, the Imam was enraged. His face turned pale and he said, “Woe to you! Which earth would carry me, which sky would shelter me, if I narrate a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) and do not hold the same view! Do you see a zunnar (belt worn by non-Muslims) on me? Or have you noticed me coming out of a church? How can I report something from the Prophet (ﷺ) and not agree with it?!”

d) *Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal* said, “Do not follow me or Malik or Shafi'i or Auza'i or Thauri, but take from where they took (i.e. from the Quran and authentic Sunnah).” (al-Fulani, Ibn al-Qayyim) He also said, “He who rejects a saying of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is on the verge of destruction.” (Ibn al-Jauzi)



Chapter 3

Recording of Ahadith

A large number of collections of Ahadith are available today. Among them are the six major books of Ahadith, i.e. Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan Tirmidhi, Sunan Nasa'i and Sunan Ibn Majah.

Since these were not compiled until the third century AH, the question arises as to how Ahadith were recorded from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) until then.

I. DURING THE FIRST CENTURY (until 110 AH, the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Companions and the elder Successors)

Like the Quran, Ahadith were preserved from the very beginning, both in writing and in memory.

a) *Examples of the preservation of ahadith in memory.*

Frequently-done practices of the Prophet (ﷺ), e.g. Adhan, prayer, and his shorter sayings, were known to almost every Muslim. Each generation conveyed it to the following generation everywhere. This is why they are known as Mutawatir (narrated by such a large number of people that they are obviously authentic).

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were very keen to acquire whatever he had said. 'Umar used to attend the court of the Prophet (ﷺ) every other day and deputise someone else on the remaining days in order not to miss any teachings. Abu Huraira, a late entrant into Islam at the conquest of Khaibar in 6 AH, used to accompany the Prophet (ﷺ) as much as possible. As narrated by Bukhari, Abu Huraira relates:

I once said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "I hear many of your sayings but forget them." He said, "Spread your cloak." I did accordingly. He moved his hands as if filling them with something and emptying them into my cloak, and then said, "Take this and wrap your body with it." I did so and after that I never forgot a single Hadith.

A'mash (a successor) said, "Abu Huraira was the best preserver of Hadith among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)."

'Abdullah b. Abbas said, "We used to memorise the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ)."

Anas said that he and his companions used to sit in a circle in order to read Ahadith to each other from memory; sometimes as many as sixty people joined these circles.

'Umar once asked the people around him, "Which of you remembers the

saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) about Fitnah (afflictions)?" Hudhaifah replied that he knew it. (Bukhari)

Abu Bakr once enquired about a certain issue. A Sahabi (Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ)) quoted a Hadith, to which Abu Bakr exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah who has made some of us preserve the sayings of our prophet (ﷺ)"

'Abdullah b. Mas'ood, who was commissioned as a teacher in Kufa by 'Umar, said, "Remind each other of Ahdith often because that is its life (i.e. its purpose)."

'Ata b. Abi Rabah (a successor) said, "Whenever we left after meeting Jabir b. 'Abdullah, we used to repeat the Ahadith we had heard from him. Abu al-Zubair was the best at remembering them amongst us."

In fact, so enthusiastic were the Companions in committing the **Hadith** to memory that they memorised the Prophet (ﷺ)'s sayings word for word, especially when the sentence was relatively short. A reporter once mentioned the following Hadith in the presence of 'Abdullah b. 'Umar, "Islam is founded on five (pillars): to bear witness that there is none to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; to establish prayer; to give zakat; to perform Hajj; and to fast (the month of) Ramadan." Ibn 'Umar corrected him by saying, "To fast Ramadan and to perform Hajj."

In view of the stern warning of the Prophet (ﷺ). "Whoever intentionally ascribes to me what I have not said, then let him occupy his seat in Hell-fire." (Bukhari), the Companions were extremely careful before accepting a Hadith. Hence, 'Ali used to demand the reporter of a Hadith to swear by Allah that he had heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ); 'Umar would seek a witness for a Hadith if it was new to him. Once, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari knocked on his door saying "Assalmau alaikum". When 'Umar did not reply, he repeated the greeting twice more but with the same result, so he left. However, 'Umar caught up with him asking, "why did you leave after asking permission to enter three times?" Abu Musa quoted the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) which obliges a Muslim to return if permission is not granted after three attempts. 'Umar threatened to beat him if he could not bring another witness to this Hadith. Abu Musa rushed to a gathering of Sahabah in the mosque, trembling with fear and asked for corroboration. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri stood up and confirmed to 'Umar that he had indeed heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying so. (Muslim)

Interesting examples of the lengths to which the Companions went in order to learn a single Hadith are related in the books of Ahadith. For example, Abu Ayub Ansari travelled all the way from Madinah to Egypt to meet 'Uqba b. Amir. He knocked on the latter's door, introduced himself and asked about the text of a certain Hadith. 'Uqba said that he had heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, "Whoever conceals a Muslim (i.e. his sins), Allah will conceal him on the day of Resurrection." After listening to this, Abu Ayub set out on the return journey without even entering the house.

Bukhari reports that Jabir b. 'Abdullah undertook a one-month long journey to Syria to hear a single Hadith from 'Abdullah b. Unais.

Isma'il b. Raja, a successor, used to gather children around him and narrate some Ahadith to them in order to avoid forgetting them. 'Ata b. Rabah used to visit the poor people of the town and relate Ahadith to them in order to preserve them in his mind. Sufya al-Thauri said, "Learn Ahadith. When you have one, commit it to your memory and you have preserved it, put it in to practice."

Yazid b. Harun memorised twenty-four thousand Ahadith with their isnad (chain of narrators).

b) *Examples of written hadith.*

1. Since most of the people of Arabia did not know how to write, they were known as Ummiyin (اميين). However, many literate Arabs were always around. The scribes of the Quran amounted to around forty.

2. At the beginning of his mission, the Prophet (ﷺ) disliked the writing of Hadith to avoid confusion with the Quran; but once it was clear that the Quran was preserved separately from Ahadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) allowed the writing of Ahadith, as Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri says. "The prohibitions on writing goes back to the early days of Islam, but it was later abolished. What he did not like was to write the Ahadith on the same parchment which had the Quran on it."

3. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Abu Huraira, "Assist your memory with your right hand (i.e. by writing)". Abu Huraira himself did not know how to write, but others used to write for him. He himself said, "None of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had more knowledge of the Ahadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) than I, except 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. 'As, who used to write while I could not." His famous pupil, recorded about 138 Ahadith in his collection known as the Sahifa of Hammam b. Munabih. In total, he reported 5374 Ahadith, the majority of which are preserved in Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal.

4. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ood said, "I did not write down anything in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) except Du'a of Istakharah and tashahhud." (Ibn Abi Shaiba)

5. Anas b. Malik said, "preserve knowledge by recording it." (Mustadrak al-Hakim)

6. On the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (ﷺ) delivered a sermon. A man from Yemen called Abu Shah asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to have it written down for him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to one of his scribes, "Write it down for Abu Shah." (Bukhari & Muslim)

7. The people of the tribe of Juhaina gave the following statement: "A letter of the Prophet (ﷺ) reached us which said 'Do not benefit from the dead bodies (of animals)'" (Abu Dawud)

8. The Prophet (ﷺ) wrote to the people of Jarash telling them not to mix dates and raisins (to avoid fermentation which leads to intoxications). (Muslim)

10. He wrote to the people of Yemen that one-tenth should be charged on honey as zakat.

11. He wrote to Mu'adh to charge every dhimmi man or woman one dinar as jizya.

12. He dictated the details of blood money.

A number of Sahaba had their own collections of Hadith which were known as Sahifa.

13. Sahifa 'Ali: He said, "I did not carry anything which I received from the Prophet (ﷺ) except the Quran and the contents of this sahifa." (Bukhari) It contained Ahadith related to zakat, details of blood-money, issues concerning the non-Muslims in an Islamic state and certain prohibitions.

14. Sahifa Sadiqa: 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. 'As recorded about a thousand Ahadith in this collection, as well as narrations from Jews and Christians in his Sahifa Yarmukiyya. His grandson 'Amr b. Shu'aib was one of the famous muhadditheen (traditionists) who reported Ahadith from the former collections.

15. Sahifa b. 'Abdullah (d. 78 AH, about which Qatada said, "I used to memorise this sahifa a little better than surah al-Baqarah"). Out of this, the manasik (Ahadith related to the Prophet (ﷺ)'s Hajj) are recorded completely by Muslim in his Sahih.

16. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ood used to have a collection which was mentioned by his father 'Abdul Rahman.

17. Samura b. Jundub (d. 60 AH) left a collection for his son Sulaiman.

18. 'Abdullah b. Abi Aufa used to have a collection which was actually a copy of the sahifa of Sa'ad b. 'Ubadah, a Sahabi.

19. 'Umar used to have a detailed account of zakat issues in the sheath of his sword.

20. Abu Rafi', the free slave of the Prophet (ﷺ), kept a record of the supplications of the Prophet (ﷺ) at the beginning of the prayer.

21. The books of Ahadith speak of the collection of 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas.

22. The collection of Nubait b. Shurait was reported by his son Salamah.

23. Sahifa of Khirash b. 'Abdullah, the slave who reported Ahadith from his master, Anas b. Malik.

24. Sahifa of Hammam b. Munabih (d. 101 AH), containing Ahadith of Abu Huraira. It has been published by Dr. Hamidullah in Paris.

25. 'Abdul 'Aziz b. Marwan, the ruler of Egypt, wrote to Kathir b. Murrah (d. 80 AH), a scholar from Hims in Syria, asking him to write down all that he has heard of the Prophet (ﷺ)'s sayings with the exception of those narrated by Abu Huraira, which 'Abdul 'Aziz already had.

26. Later, 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Aziz, the son of the above-mentioned and one of the famous caliphs, ordered Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. Amr b. Hazm, his governor in Madinah, to collect Ahadith. A similar order was

given to ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, the well-known successor of the early century. It is aptly said that the credit for the collection of the Quran goes to 'Umar b. Al-Khattab who convinced Abu Bakr about it; similarly, the credit for the collection of Ahadith goes to 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Aziz, a descendent of the second caliph through his mother.

II. DURING THE SECOND CENTURY (until 210 AH)

A) The elder successors such as al-Zuhri, Shu'ba b. al-Hajjaj, Sufyan al-Thauri, Sufyan b. 'Uyaina and al-Hasan al-Basri, were known as the great sources of knowledge at that time, and their many pupils passed on this knowledge either orally or through writing. In the early part of this century, many successors and their pupils produced their own collections based on what they had learnt from their teachers. Some of these sahifas, which were later incorporated in major hadith collections are listed below.

1. Sahifa of Abu al-Zubair Muhammad b. Muslim (d. 126 AH), which contains the narrations of Jabir b. 'Abdullah.
2. Collection of al-Zubair b. 'Adi (d. 131 AH). He reported from several Companions, including Anas b. 'Abdullah.
3. Collections of Abul 'Ushara Usama b. Malik.
4. Collections of Zaid b. Abi Unaisa (d. 125 AH). Who narrated from successors like 'Ata and al-Zuhri.
5. Collection of Ayyub al-Saikhtiani (d. 131 AH), who saw Anas b. Malik when young.
6. Collection of Yunus b. 'Ubaid (d. 139 AH), a pupil of al-Hasan al-Basri.
7. Musand of Abu Burda Buraid, the grandson of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, a Sahabi.
8. Collections of Hisham b. 'Urwa (d. 146 AH), who reported Ahadith from his father, his Uncle 'Abdullah b. Zubair and a host of other Companions.
9. Sahifa of Humaid al-Tawil (d. 142 AH), who reported from Anas b. Malik and made copies of the books of al-Hasan al-Basri.
10. Hadith collection of 'Ubaidullah b. 'Umar, a great-great-grandson of 'Umar b. al-Khattab.

B) During the later part of this century, variations arose in the way Ahadith were arranged. Some sorted each Hadith according to the Companion who reported it; such collections were called *musnad*. Other traditionists and historians tried either to arrange their compilations topic-wise, e.g. seerah (the biography of the Prophet (ﷺ)), or to cover a number of issues related to fiqh (jurisprudence) only: such works are called *sunan*. Those books covering all aspects of shari'a, seerah, tafsir, etc. were later known as *al-Jami'*. Examples from this period are listed below.

1. Sunan of 'Abdul Malik b. 'Abdul 'Aziz b. Jurajj (d. 156 AH)

2. Kitab al-Maghazi (Book of Jihad expeditions) by Muhammad b. Ishaq (d. 150 AH)
 3. Al-Jami by Ma'mar b. Rashid (d. 154 AH), which was entirely incorporated by his pupil 'Abdul Razzaq b. Hammam (d. 211 AH) in his al-Musannaf, which contains 21033 Ahadith and Athar (sayings of Companions and successors).
 4. Sahifa of 'Abdullah b. Lahiy'a, Qadi of Egypt (d. 174 AH)
 5. Muwatta' of Imam Malik b. Anas (d. 179 AH). This compilation is mainly concerned with shari'a (Islamic Law). It contains:
 - 600 Marfu' Ahadith (going back to the Prophet (ﷺ))
 - 613 Mauquf Ahadith (going back to the Companions)
 - 222 Mursal Ahadith (link between successor and the Prophet (ﷺ) is omitted)
 - 285 opinions of the successors
 6. Kitab al-Zuhd by 'Abdullah b. al-Mubarak (d. 181 AH)
 7. Kitab al-Zuhd by Muhammad b. Fudail (d. 195 AH)
 8. Collection of Sufyan b. 'Uyainah (d. 196 AH)
 9. Al-Musannaf by Waki b. al-Jarrah (d. 197 AH)
 10. Al-Musnad of Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (d. 203 AH, not the Abu Dawud of the more well-known Sunan)
 11. Kitab al-Maghazi by Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi (d. 207 AH); this book is based on the writings of his predecessor Muhammad b. Ishaq.
 12. Kitab al-Seerah by 'Abdul Malik b. Hisham (d. 208 AH), one of the authentic sources of the biography of the Prophet (ﷺ).
 13. Al-Musannaf by 'Abdul Razzaq b. Hammam (see no. 3 above)
- These few examples out of many collections of Hadith and seerah from the second century, all of which are available.

III. DURING THE THIRD CENTURY (until 310 AH)

Although the collections of Hadith related to specific topics began appearing in the second century, the traditionists of the third century now had a vast amount of material to scrutinise, distributed in the memory of elder contemporaries and in the rich Hadith literature. Thus they selected, from tens of thousands of Ahadith, a limited number of them in their collections. Since they incorporated most of the previously-collected material of the first two centuries, some of these new compilations gained unprecedented popularity throughout the Muslim Ummah.

The most renowned ones are listed here in chronological order:

1. Al-Musnad of Abu Bakr 'Abdullah b. Zubair al-Humaidi (d. 219)
2. Al-Sunan of Sa'eed b. Mansur (d. 227)
3. Kitab al-Fitan by Nu'aim b. Al-Hammad (d. 228)
4. Kitab al-Tabaqat by Muhammad b. Sa'd (d. 230); he based his work on that of al-Waqidi.
5. Kitab al-Tarikh by Yahya b. Ma'in (d. 233), which is mainly

composed of biographical sketches of the reporters of Ahadith.

6. Kitab al-'Ilal by 'Ali b. 'Abdullah al-Madini (d. 234), one of the Shaikhs of Bukhari. This treatise deals with the science of Hadith known as Usul al-Hadith (see Chapter Four)

7. Al-Musnad of Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaiban (d. 234); it is also known as al-Musannaf since it is so comprehensive.

8. Al-Musnad of Ishaq b. Rahawy (d. 238)

9. Al-Musnad of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241), the largest collection, containing about twenty-nine thousand Ahadith. The Ahadith of over 1200 different Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) are given.

10. Al-Musnad of 'Abd b. Humaid (d. 249)

11. Al-Sunan of Muhammad b. 'Abdullah al-Darimi (d. 255), containing 3456 Ahadith.

12. Al-Jami' al-Sahih by Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 256), recognised as the most authentic book after the book of Allah. This collection of 7563 Ahadith covers all aspects of shari'a, seerah, tafsir, fitan, etc., hence its title "al-Jami'". Imam Bukhari also compiled a number of other books including al-Tarikh al-Kabir which deals with the biographies of reporters.

13. Al-Jami' al-Sahih by Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 261), which ranks closest to Sahih Bukhari in its authenticity and popularity. Unlike Bukhari, Muslim tries to arrange all Ahadith relevant to one issue together, providing an easier reading. It contains 7422 Ahadith.

14. Al-Sunan of Muhammad b. Yazid b. Majah (d. 273). This book, which is based on al-Musannaf Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaiba, is ranked last among the Sihah Sitta (the "six authentic books", i.e. those of Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah). It contains 4341 Ahadith.

15. Al-Sunan of Abu Dawud Sulaiman b. Ash'ath (d. 275), one of the finest collections of Ahadith related to shari'a; it contains 5266 Ahadith.

16. Al-Musnad of Baqi b. Makhlad al-Qurtubi (d. 276). Had this work been traced, it would have been the biggest collection of Ahadith, since it contained about forty thousand. However, as he reported mainly from Imam Ahmad and Ibn Abi Shaiba, its extinction does not mean the loss of those Ahadith because they are covered in other collections.

17. Al-Jami' by Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (d. 279). This book has a distinctive character because it contains the author's personal opinions on the authenticity of the Ahadith, which number 4051.

18. Al-Musnad of Muhammad b. Abi Usama (d. 282)

19. Al-Musnad of Ahmad b. 'Amr al-Bazzar (d. 292)

20. Al-Sunan of Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Shu'aib al-Nasa'i (d. 303), a comprehensive work on Islamic shari'a containing 5761 Ahadith.

21. Al-Musnad of Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali (d. 307)

From all the above information, it is very clear that the preservation of Hadith in writing was a continual process from the time of the Prophet

(ﷺ). Later collections incorporated earlier ones: for example, the Ahadith of Abu Huraira were passed onto the following generation through a number of reporters; his pupil Hammam b. Munabih (d. 102) recorded them separately; Hammam's pupil Ma'mar b. Rashid (d. 154) later included them in his work *al-Jami'*; then came his pupil 'Abdul Razzaq (d. 211) who collected them in his *al-Musannaf*; his contemporary Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241) placed them together in his *Musnad* as well, therefore it erroneous to think that Abu Huraira's Ahadith did not appear in writing until the third century.

Similarly, Imam Bukhari brought together a large amount of scattered material, including all the authentic Ahadith of Muwatta' Imam Malik, in his *Sahih*. Also, Ibn Majah (d. 273) based his work on the *Musannaf* of his Shaikh, Ibn Abi Shaiba (d. 235), who reported from a number of successors like 'Abdullah b. al-Mubarak and Waki b. al-Jarrah, who themselves inherited the knowledge from the elder successors and even some Companions.

Thus these muhadditheen received Ahadith by mouth as well as in writing: the preservation of Ahadith depended on the same two methods as that of the Quran.

IV. DURING SUBSEQUENT CENTURIES

Compilation of Hadith literature continued in a different form. Most of the later work aimed at combining two or more of the previous major books, perhaps to bring forth new titles by omitting repeated Ahadith, or at providing exhaustive commentaries on them. However, some scholars reproduced roughly the same material, with some original additions, by prefixing their alternative isnad (chain of reporters) to the text of Hadith, or by rearranging it in a different order.

The following are the most important collections of later centuries:

1. *Sahih* of Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaima (d. 311)
2. *Mustakhraj* of Abu 'Uwanah ya'qub b. Ishaq (d. 316); the author has ransmitted the Ahadith of *Sahih* Muslim with his own Isnad.
3. *Musannaf* of Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Salama al-Tahawi (d. 320)
4. *Al-Muntaqa* by Ibn al-Sakan (Sa'eed b. Uthman, d. 353)
5. *Sahih* of Muhammad ibn Hibban (d. 354)
6. *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir* by Sulaiman b. Ahmad al-Tabarani (d. 360), which contains 20500 Ahadith arranged in the musnad format, i.e. with the Ahadith of each Companion given separately. Tabarani received the knowledge of Hadith from a thousand shaikhs during thirty years of his youth. Two smaller works of his are *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* and *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir*.
7. *Mustakhraj* of Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ibrahim al-Ismaili (d. 371), similar to no. 2 above, but based on *Sahih* Bukhari.
8. *Musnad* of Al-Hafiz 'Ali b. 'Umar al-Daraqutni (d. 385)

9. Mustadrak of Muhammad b. 'Abdullah al-Hakim (d. 405), in which he claimed to have traced all the authentic Ahadith which had been missed by both Bukhari and Muslim although they satisfied the necessary criteria laid down by the two of them. However, this claim was contested in the case of many of the narrations by a later scholar, al-Dhahabi (d. 748).

10. Mustakhraj of Abu Nu'aim Ahmad b. 'Abdullah al-Isfahani (d. 430), a similar work to that of al-Isma'ili, no. 7 above.

11. Al-Sunan al-Kubra by Ahmad b. Husain al-Baihaqi (d. 458), which contains every existing Hadith related to the issues of shari'a.

V. AFTER THE FIFTH CENTURY

Most of the new titles were intended to combine the Ahadith of the Sihah Sitta plus the later additions. Examples of these are:

1. Misbah al-Sunnah by Husain b. Mas'ood al-Baghawi (d. 516)

2. Tajreed al-Sihah by Ahmad b. Razin al-Sarqasti (d. 535)

3. Jami' al-Asanid by Ibn al-Jauzi (d. 597)

4. Jami' al-Usul by Ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (d. 606), a collection of all the Ahadith found in the Sihah Sitta (with Muwatta' replacing Sunan Ibn Majah) plus an explanation of difficult words. The total number of Ahadith in these six books is 32018; the author reduced this to 9253 by omitting all repetitions of the same Hadith.

5. Mishkat al-Masabih by Muhammad b. 'Abdullah al-Khatib al-Tabrizi (737 AH), based on Misbah al-Sunnah (no. 1 above) with some editing and addition.

6. Jami' al-Masanid wal-Sunan by Ibn Kathir (d. 774)

7. Majma' al-Zawa'id by 'Ali b. Abu Bakr al-Haithami (d. 807)

8. It'haf al-Khiyarah by Ahmad b. Abu Bakr al-Busiri (d. 840)

9. Jam' al-Jawami' by 'Abdul Rahman b. Abu Bakr al-Suyuti (d. 911), and also its concise form al-Jami' al-Saghir which contains 14662 Ahadith in alphabetical order.

10. Kanz al-'Ummal by 'Ali b. Husam al-Hindi (d. 975), a subject-wise version of Suyuti's al-Jami' al-Saghir.

11. Jam' al-Fawa'id by Muhammad b. Sulaiman al-Fasi (d. 1094). This collection is based mainly on nos. 4 & 6 above; thus it consists of the Ahadith of the Sihah Sitta plus any additional Ahadith found in the following eight books: Musnad Ahmad, Muwatta', Musnad Darimi, Musnad al-Bazzar, Musnad Abu Ya'la, and the three "Mu'jams" of al-Tabarani. The total number of Ahadith is 10131, and it can safely be said that this collection covers all aspects of Islam, especially the shari'a.

Chapter 4

Branches of Hadith Learning

In this introductory booklet on Hadith, only a few aspects of Hadith literature have been discussed. A number of sciences are associated with Ahadith, some of which will be dealt with in later publications, Insha Allah. Here, only a brief introduction is given to each branch of knowledge.

1. *Usul al-Hadith* (fundamentals of hadith knowledge) is about the rules governing the authenticity of a Hadith, i.e. how it is decided whether a Hadith is sahih (authentic), da'if (weak), maudu' (fabricated), etc. One of the earliest books in this subject is that of Ibn al-Salah (d. 643).

2. *Rijal al-Hadith* (the reporters of Hadith): separate books on the biography of the Companions, Successors and later muhadditheen were compiled. Such books usually provide authentication or disparaging remarks about each reporter, except the Companions who are labelled trustworthy by Allah Almighty in the Quran. Among the most comprehensive books in this field are those of Dhahabi (d. 748) and Ibn Hajar (d. 852).

3. *Gharib al-Hadith* (explanation of the difficult words); an outstanding book in this regard is al-Nihaya of Ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (d. 606)

4. *Nasikh wal Mansukh* (abrogation of Ahadith by later ones): Ibn Shahin (d. 383) covers this topic well.

5. *Al-Taufiq bain al-Ahadith* (reconciliation between seemingly contradictory Ahadith): one of the famous books in this field is that of Ibn Qutaiba (d. 263).

6. *'Ilal al-Hadith* (hidden defects in a Hadith), e.g. a Hadith may seem to have a sound isnad, but sometimes one of the reporters was only a contemporary of the person next in the chain, and did not actually meet him. To pinpoint such non-obvious defects and thus declare the Hadith weak can only be done by someone well-versed in the knowledge of Hadith. A very few muhadditheen were able to deal with this subject well; among them is Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi (d. 327).

7. *Takhrij al-Hadith*: It is often difficult to ascertain the authenticity of a Hadith if a writer mentions it without giving its source. To locate the origin of Ahadith and hence rank them is known as takhrij. For example, the famous book of Imam al-Ghazali (d. 505), "Ihya 'Ulum al-Deen (Revival of Religious Knowledge)" contains many weak and fabricated Hadith which cannot be detected by the ordinary reader. A later scholar 'Abdul Rahim b. al-Husain al-'Iraqi (d. 806) accomplished this task of takhrij on it admirably in his "Al-Mughni".

Recently, Shaikh Muhammad Nasiruddeen al-Albani, the famous muhaddith of modern times, has contributed greatly to this field. His

takhrij includes Suyuti's al-Jami' al-Saghir" in a work of four volumes; he sorted all these Ahadith into two categories, sahih (authentic); and da'if (weak) and maudu' (fabricated). The sahih Ahadith amount to 8193; the da'if and maudu' to 6469.

Also, Shaikh al-Albani is still engaged in his Silsilat al-Ahadith, which was begun several years ago, in which he picks Ahadith at random from various sources and classifies them as either sahih or da'if, giving the full background behind each verdict. So far, four volumes containing 2000 sahih Ahadith and two volumes containing 1000 da'if Ahadith have been published.

8. *Sharh al-Hadith* (commentary on Ahadith). Throughout the centuries, various scholars have produced valuable notes and explanations on different Hadith books. Some Hadith collections have attracted a relatively large number of commentators. One of the most famous commentaries on Sahih Bukhari is Fath al-Bari, a massive work compiled by Ibn Hajar (d. 852).

CONCLUSION

The Quran and the Sunnah are thus the preserved sources of all Islamic knowledge, which are not meant to be merely studied in an academic way, but more importantly, to be implemented in the daily lives of the Muslims.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾
وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ
نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾

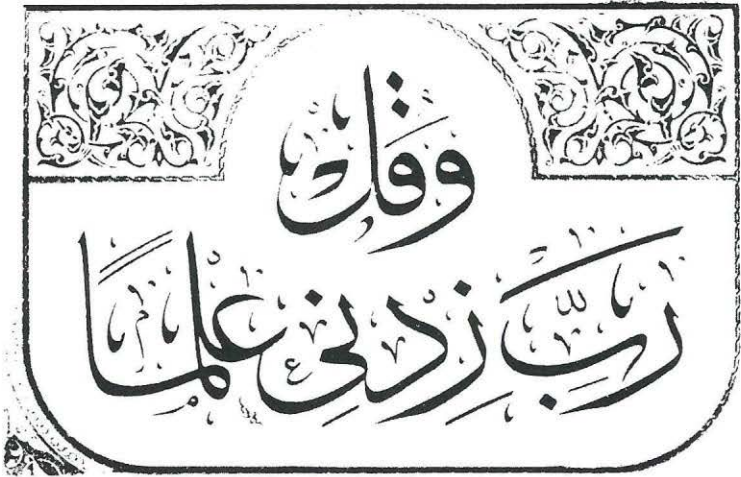
“Those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath to dwell therein, and that will be the Supreme Achievement.

But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment.” (AL-NISA’: 13-14)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَاقْتُوا إِصْرَ ابْنِ مَرْثَدَةَ مَوْلَاكُمْ جَلِيلٍ
وَأَقْرَبَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

إِنَّكُمْ لَأَنْبِيَاءُ مَوْلَاكُمْ جَلِيلٍ وَأَقْرَبَ
وَأَقْرَبَ مَوْلَاكُمْ جَلِيلٍ وَأَقْرَبَ

The study of Al-Quran Correspondence Course

Lesson 1

The story of Adam & Iblis.
Some important facts to know about the Quran.
Hadith: Faith (Iman).
Islam: The Right Path.

Lesson 2

Nuh and his message.
Hadith: Love of the prophet.
Islam: The natural and eternal truth.

Lesson 3

Prophet Hud and the people of 'Ad.
Hadith: The signs of the hypocrite.
Belief in one God.

Lesson 4

Ibrahim.
Hadith: The hereafter.
Tawheed: Oneness of God.

Lesson 5

The supplications of Ibrahim.
Hadith: The call to prayer (Adhan).
Prophethood.

Lesson 6

Isma'il and Ishaq. Lut.
Hadith: Prayer (Salah).
Belief in the Prophets of Allah.

Lesson 7

Yusuf.
Hadith: Prayer (Salah).
Belief in the Prophets of Allah.

Lesson 8

Messengers after Yusuf. Shu'aib & Ayyub.
Hadith: Congregational prayer (Sallah al-Jumu'ah).
Belief in the last Prophet Muhammad.

Lesson 9

Musa and Harun.
Hadith: Friday Prayer.
Belief in Angels.

Lesson 10

Musa.
Hadith: The travellers Prayer.
Belief in the Books of Allah.

Lesson 11

The Children of Israel in Sinai.
Hadith: The Funeral regulations. (Sallah al-Janaza).
Belief In the Last Day.

Lesson 12

Dawud and Sulaiman.
Hadith: Funeral regulations.
Belief in the Nature of Good and Evil.

Lesson 13

Ilyas, al-Yasa' & Dhu'l-kifl; Yunus; Zakariyya & Yahya.
Hadith: Zakat.
Belief in destiny (Qada wa Qadar).

Lesson 14

Isa Ibn Maryam.
Hadith: Zakat.
Belief in Life after Death.

Lesson 15

The two sons Of Adam; the people of the Sabbath; Harut & Marut; Uzair.
Hadith: Zakat.

Lesson 16

The people of the cave;
Dhu'l-Qurnain.
Hadith: Fasting.

Lesson 17

Luqman; The people of the Trenches; The people of the Elephant.

Lesson 18

The Life of the Prophet (1).
Hajj, 'Umrah & visiting the Prophet's Mosque.
The Manner of Creation.

Lesson 19

The Life of the Prophet (2).
How did the Prophet perform Hajj?
The Hadith of Jabir.

Lesson 20

The Life of the Prophet (3).
Hadith: Isra' & Mi'raj.
Mankind: by Creation or Evolution?