



Ayaat Sunnah

Ayaat Foundation's

Ayaat Sunnah Program

# Teachers' Science of Hadeeth Guide (English Version)

## Part 1



## Curriculum of the Science of Prophetic Tradition (Hadeeth)

### Chapter 1: What is the meaning of the term “Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah)”?

Any legal term which is defined in the Fiqh or the language.

#### a. The Linguistic Meaning of the Term Prophetic Tradition

This term is a derivative from the term “al-Sann” which means sending something. The term has been used in different ways according to the context. These are

##### i. A Practice or a Tradition

Some scholars considered that this term could be good or bad according to the Prophetic Hadith<sup>1</sup>, “He who introduced a good practice in Islam which was followed after him by others, he would be given its reward as well as a reward like given to whoever followed him in that practice, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduced an evil practice in Islam which had been followed subsequently (by others), he would be bear its sin as well as the sin committed by whoever followed him in this evil practice, without their sin being diminished in any respect.”

Others considered the term to imply only a good practice or a good tradition. An example of its use to praise individuals, “Such person is a follower of the tradition.” Another example is, “I have established a practice which you should follow.”

##### ii. The Intrinsic Nature of the Individual

The term is used to describe how people intrinsic nature of individual compel them to behave.

##### iii. The Established Tradition

This is the behavior which the person practices habitually. Imam Al-Qurtobi<sup>2</sup> used it explain the verse, “*And what prevented people from believing now that guidance has come to them, and from asking the forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened to the ancients (the sunnah of the ancients) should overtake them, or (that) they should be confronted with the torment.*” (Surat al-Kahf: 55) He said, “*the ancients’ sunnah*” means the habitually occurrence which happened to the ancient generations.

#### b. The Legal Meaning of the Term Sunnah

The term has different meanings according to the area in which it is used.

<sup>1</sup> Muslim (2006). *Sahih Muslim: Kitab al-Zakat (The Correct Ahadith Reported by Muslim, the Book of Zakat)*. Al-Riyad: Dar Teebah liInshar wa al-tawzee’.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qurtoubi (1964). *Al-Jami’ Li Ahkam al-Quran (The collection of the Quranic rules)*. Part 11, pp. 6. Cairo: dar al-Kutub al-Masriyyah.



- i. In the area of Doctrine, sunnah is to follow the true doctrine according to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH); as such it is the opposite to the term “innovation.”
  - ii. In the area of Fiqh it means a supererogatory Islamic ritual. A Muslim earns a reward for performing a supererogatory ritual but is not punished if he/she did not perform that ritual. Examples of this are the supererogatory prayers which one performs before or after the obligatory five daily prayers, and voluntary fasting.
  - iii. In the area of Hadith, it means whatever the Prophet (PBUH) said or did, and whatever actions he approved; in addition to his attributes which include his physical attributes as well as his behavior. Sometimes the term Sunnah is used to mean Hadith and visa versa. The objective of this definition is to teach Muslims everything about the character of the Prophet (PBUH) so that they emulate him.
- c. The Definition of Sunnah
- i. The sayings of the Prophet (PBUH)

Everything that the Prophet (PBUH) said in different occasions. This is called the “Oral Sunnah.” An example of this is “Omar ibn al-Khattab (RA) narrated that<sup>3</sup>, ‘I heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying, “Deeds are judged by the intention, everyone will be judged according to his/her intention.””

- ii. The deeds of the Prophet (PBUH)  
Everything that the Prophet (PBUH) did and his practical application of the verses which has been revealed to him from Allah (SWT). An example of this is “Abu Hurarairah (RA) narrated that<sup>4</sup>, ‘The Prophet (PBUH) used to make takbeer whenever he stood to perform a prayer, and whenever he bowed down in ruku’. When he stands up after ruku’, he would say, “Allah listens to whomsoever praised Him” While he is standing up before sujud, he would say, “All praise be to our Lord,” then he would make takbeer and goes down into sujud. When he raises his head from sujud he would say, “Allah Akabar.” He then repeats all this until he finishes his prayer.”
- iii. Things which the Prophet (PBUH) approved  
These include whatever the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) said or did and the Prophet (PBUH) approved, praised, or did not object to.  
If someone asks how can we consider things which the Prophet (PBUH) neither said nor did as part of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), the answer is, since the Prophet (PBUH) showed approval or consented to these things, then they became part of his Sunnah. The Prophet (PBUH) can only approve something good.  
An example of this is the hadith narrated by Ayesha (RA), she said<sup>5</sup>, “I saw the Prophet (PBUH) once standing by the door of my room watching the Ethiopians play in the Mosque. He covered me by his dress and allowed me to watch them as well.”

<sup>3</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>4</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari.

<sup>5</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Bukhari: the book of Prayers. Muslim: the Book of Eid prayers.



iv. The attributes of the Prophet (PBUH)

These include his physical attributes as well as his character.

An example of his physical attributes is illustrated by the hadith narrated by al-Baraa ibn ‘Azeb (RA), he said, “The Prophet (PBUH) had the most beautiful face, and the most beautiful physical shape, neither too long nor short.”

One may ask, how can this be considered as part of the Sunnah, knowing that we cannot emulate these characteristics? The answer is

- We need to know the physical characteristics of the Messenger whom Allah sent to us to guide us along the straight path. The perfection of his physical characteristics is one of the signs of the truthfulness of his message, since Allah (SWT) only sent messengers with perfect physical characteristics.
- Some of the physical characteristics can be emulated like the shape of his beard for example.

An example of the Prophet’s (PBUH) character is given in the hadith narrated by AbduAllah ibn Amr ibn al-‘Ass (RA), he said<sup>6</sup>, “The Prophet (PBUH) was neither obscene in his language nor did he has a loud voice on the streets, he used to say, ‘The best of you is the one who has best character.’”

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<sup>6</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari in the Book of the attributes and Muslim in the book of virtues.



## Chapter 2: The Status of Sunnah in Islam

The Sunnah is highly regarded in Islam. It is one of the two principal sources of Islamic law, the first being the Qur'an. It is the consensus of the scholars that it is obligatory for Muslims to follow the Sunnah which has been proven to be correct in its wording and its chain of narration starting by the Prophet (PBUH). This principle has been confirmed by Imam Ibn Taymiyyah<sup>7</sup>.

It is the consensus of the scholars that the Sunnah which deals with legal issues should be followed. This has been confirmed by the Qur'an, *“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it). And remain conscious of God. God is severe in punishment.” (al-Hashr: 7), “You have indeed an excellent example in the Messenger of God for any who hopes for (the meeting of) God and the Last Day and remembers God much.” (al-Ahzab: 21), and “Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys God, but whoever turns away, We have not sent you as a keeper over them.” (al-Nisaa: 80).*

Allah (SWT) commanded us to go back to the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) to settle any disputes, *“The answer of the believers, when they are summoned to God and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than to say, ‘We hear and we obey;’ those are the successful.” (al-Nur: 51) and “You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you; then if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you believe in God and the Last Day; this is better and more seemly in the end.” (al-Nisaa: 59).*

The Prophet (PBUH) stressed the importance of following the Sunnah the same way Muslims follow the Qur'an. Al-I'rbad Ibn Sariyyah (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) led the prayer one day, then he started giving a sermon. It was a very emotional sermon, to the extent that people started to cry. One of the companions asked the Prophet (PBUH) saying, *“This sermon gave us the feeling that you are going to leave us soon, what do you advise us to do?”* The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>8</sup>, *“I advise you to remain conscious of Allah (SWT), and to obey your leader, even if your leader was an Ethiopian slave. Whoever will live after me will see that there will be many differences among people. You should follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold tight to this Sunnah, and avoid the innovations in the religion, these innovations will lead people astray.”*

The Prophet (PBUH) refuted strongly the opinions of those who claimed that it is enough to follow the Qur'an and ignore the Sunnah. U'baidullah ibn abi Rafe' narrated that his father heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying<sup>9</sup>, *“I don't want to see one of you reclining on his couch refusing to follow my command about whether a certain thing is allowed or forbidden saying, ‘We will follow what is mentioned in the Qur'an.’”* Similarly, Al-Miqdan ibn Ma'di Karib (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>10</sup>, *“Whenever a dispute arises, no one should say, ‘we will only refer the matter to the Book of Allah, So whatever we find in it lawful, we will consider lawful, and whatever we find in it unlawful, we will consider it unlawful’. Indeed, whatever the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) made unlawful is the same as what Allah made unlawful.”*

<sup>7</sup> The Collection of Fatwa by Ibn Taymiyyah

<sup>8</sup> Reported by Abu Daoud and Ibn Majah

<sup>9</sup> Reported by Abu Daoud, Ibn Majah, and al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>10</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhi



Muslim scholars have agreed that the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) should be followed, whether the Sunnah emphasize the Qur'an, explains what came in the Qur'an, or added to what came in the Qur'an. All of this was a revelation from Allah (SWT) that should be followed. Imam al-Shafi' said, "Allah (SWT) indicated in the Qur'an that obedience to the Prophet (PBUH) is an obligatory duty for all Muslims. No one has an excuse not to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). Imam ibn al-Qayyim explained that if we don't follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) then most of the Sunnah would become irrelevant. The exception for this are the Sunnah which do not deal with legal issues, the Sunnah which deals with the personal preferences of the Prophet (PBUH) in food or dress, or the Sunnah which dealt with details which were relevant to the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and has long been replaced by more modern detail.



### Chapter 3: The Relationship between the Qu'an and the Sunnah

The Qur'an and the Sunnah are complementing each other. They are both principal sources of legal edicts, and they explain one another. The Qur'an indicated that the Sunnah explains the verses of Qur'an and provides an interpretation of its objectives, *"We have sent down to you (also) the Message; that you may explain clearly to the people what is sent for them, and that they may reflect."* (al-Nahl: 44).

The Sunnah includes several legal rules which organizes the relationships among people, and between the Islamic state and other states. Such rules were not mentioned in the Qu'ran.

The relationship between the Sunnah and the Qur'an can be divided into three categories. These are

- The Sunnah which emphasizes what has been mentioned in the Qur'an.
- The Sunnah which explains and clarifies and sets the limits for the use of the legal rulings mentioned in the Qur'an.
- The Sunnah which provides independent legal rulings.

1. The Sunnah which emphasizes what has been mentioned in the Qur'an

These include all rulings which reiterates the rulings of the Qur'an in all aspects. These rulings are then confirmed by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Examples of this are the rulings regarding the obligatory prayers, zakat, fasting and pilgrimage. Also, the rulings regarding shunning associating partners with Allah (SWT), disobeying parents, and committing suicide.

2. The Sunnah which clarifies, details, sets the limits for the use of, and specify the legal rulings mentioned in the Qur'an

This includes four categories: clarifying equivocal verses of the Qur'an, providing the details of certain verses, specifying the conditions in which the rulings can be applied, and providing exceptions for certain generalized rulings.

a. The Sunnah which clarifies verses of the Qur'an

*"We have sent down to you (also) the Message; that you may explain clearly to the people what is sent for them, and that they may reflect."* (al-Nahl: 44). The scholars agreed that the best ways to explain the Qur'anic verses is by using other verses of the Qur'an, using the Sunnah, using the interpretation of the Companions, and using the linguistic meaning of the wording, in that order.

An example of this category of the Sunnah the hadith narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn Maso'ud (RA), he said, "When the verse, *'Those who believe and do not obscure their faith with wrongdoing, those who shall have the security and they are the rightly guided.'* (al-An'am: 82) was revealed, we asked the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), 'Who among us would be able not to wrong himself?' He said, 'This refers to those who associate partners with Allah (SWT). Did you not read, what Luqman said to his son, *"And (remember) when Luqman said to his son, when he was exhorting him, 'My son, do not associate partners with God. Associating partners (with God) is a tremendous wrong.'"*' (Luqman: 13)"

The Prophet (PBUH) explained that associating partners with Allah (SWT) is the greatest wrongdoing.



Another example is given by the hadith narrated by Suhaib al-Rumi (RA). He narrated that Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>11</sup>, “Allah (SWT) will ask the people who are destined to Paradise, ‘Do you want anything more?’ They will respond, ‘Did You not make our faces white? Did You not admit us to Paradise and save us from the Hell fire?’ Then the barrier is lifted, and they will be given something which is dearest to them than anything else! This is a look at the face of Allah (SWT). Then the Prophet (PBUH) recited, ‘*For those who did well is a good (reward) and more.*’ (Yunus: 26) The Prophet (PBUH) interpreted that ‘more’ here means the look at the face of Allah (SWT).”

b. The Sunnah which provides the details of certain verses of the Qur’an  
An example of this is the verses, “Establish prayers.” (al-Baqara: 43) The verse does not explain how we establish prayers; it was the Sunnah which provided the times when to perform the prayers and the details of how to perform the prayers.

The Qur’an made a general reference to the times of the prayers in the verse, “*Establish regular prayers at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and (the recital of) the Quran at dawn. (the recital of) the Quran at dawn is ever witnessed.*” (al-Israa:78) The “sun’s decline” is a reference to Zuhr and Asr prayer, the “darkness of the night” is a reference to Maghreb and Isha prayer, while “dawn” is a reference to Dawn prayer. The Prophet (PBUH) determined exactly the times for the different prayers. Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>12</sup>, “Gabriel (PBUH) led me (in prayer) twice at the House. So, he prayed Zuhr the first time when the shadow was similar to (the length of) the strap a sandal. Then he prayed Asr when the shadow of everything was equal to it in length. Then he prayed Maghrib when the sun had set, and the fasting person breaks fast. Then he prayed Isha when the twilight had vanished. Then he prayed Fajr when Fajr (dawn) began, and when eating is prohibited for the fasting person. The second time he prayed Zuhr when the shadow of everything was like (the length of) it, at the time of Asr the day before. Then he prayed Asr when the length of the shadow of everything was about the double of its length. Then he prayed Maghrib at the same time as he did the first time. Then he prayed Isha, the later one, when a third of the night had gone. Then he prayed Subh when the land glowed. Then Gabriel (PBUH) turned towards me and said, ‘O Muhammad! These are the times of the Prophets before you, and the (best) time is what is between these two times.’”

The Prophet (PBUH) clearly described the way one should pray. Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>13</sup>, “We were commanded to make Sujud on seven points, and not to tuck up our garments or hair.” The seven points are the forehead and the nose in the face, the two hands, the two knees, and the tips of the two feet.

The Prophet (PBUH) gave the details of how and when to pay Zakat. One can cite many other examples related to fasting, pilgrimage, and other obligatory duties that were mentioned in the Qur’an without detailed description.

c. The Sunnah which sets the limits for the use of the legal rulings mentioned in the Qur’an  
The Quran mentioned that one is forbidden to marry one’s “*sisters by suckling*” (al-Nisaa: 23) but did not elaborate on how many times of suckling are necessary to make a person a “sister by

<sup>11</sup> Reported by Muslim: the Book of Faith.

<sup>12</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhi: The Book of Prayer

<sup>13</sup> Reported by al-Bukhari: The Books of Prayer; and Muslim: The Book of Prayer.



suckling.” It was the Sunnah which determined that a baby girl must suckle full five times to qualify as a sister by suckling. The Prophet (PBUH) said to the wife of Abu Hudhayfa<sup>14</sup>, “Suckle him five times, he would then be considered your son.” The Prophet (PBUH) was referring to Salem the servant of Abu Hudhayfa (RA).

Another example, is the verse about the punishment of the thieves, “*Cut off the hands of thieves, whether they are male or female as a recompense for what they have done – a deterrent from God, God is Eminent, Wise.*” (al-Maeda: 38) It did not specify which part of the hand to be cut. This was determined by the Sunnah. The Prophet (PBUH) stated that the verse refers to the right hand at the elbow.

#### d. The Sunnah which provides exceptions for certain generalized rulings

The Sunnah provided an explanation for exceptions for the application of generalized Qur’anic rulings. An example of this is the ruling given in the verse, “*God commands you regarding your children: the male shall have the equal of the portion of two female,*” (al-Nisaa: 11) which implies that children will inherit their parents. However, the Sunnah indicated that children inherit their parents only if they are both Muslims, so if the parent or the child were non-Muslims, then they do not inherit each other. This was given in the Hadeeth which was narrated by Usama ibn Zayed (RA)<sup>15</sup>, “People who belong to two different religions should not inherit each other. A Muslim does not inherit a non-Muslim, and a non-Muslim should not inherit a Muslim.”

Another example given by the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurriarah (RA), that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>16</sup>, “The murderer does not inherit.” Thus, a son who kills his father has no right to inherit his father and vice-versa.

A third example is given by the verse which states that all dead animals and all blood is forbidden, “*You are forbidden to eat carrion; blood.*” (al-Maeda: 3). The Prophet (PBUH) stated the exceptions for this rule<sup>17</sup>, “We are allowed to consume two types of carrion and two types of blood. The two carrions are the fish and the locust; and the two types of blood are liver and spleen.” The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>18</sup>, “The water of the sea and its carrion are both pure.”

### 3. The Sunnah which provides independent legal rulings

This is a Sunnah which establishes a new ruling which was not mentioned in the Qur’an. Examples of this are the rules about intercession and passing judgement using one witness and an oath.

<sup>14</sup> Reported by Ibn Habban in his Book.

<sup>15</sup> Reported by al-Hakem in his book al-Mustadrak from the two correct books.

<sup>16</sup> Reported by Ibn Majah: Sunnan Ibn Majah, the Book of the Obligatory Duties.

<sup>17</sup> Reported by Ibn Majah: Sunnan Ibn Majah, the Book of Food.

<sup>18</sup> Reported by Abu Dawoud: Sunnan Abu Dawoud, the Book of Purification; and al-Tirmidhi: Sunnan Al-Tirmidhi, the Book of Purification.



Another example, has been narrated by A'li ibn abi Taleb (RA), that the Prophet (PBUH) held silk in one hand and gold in another hand and said<sup>19</sup>, “Wearing these are allowed for Muslim females but are forbidden for Muslim males.”

Ibn U'mar (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) prohibited the consumption of the flesh of the animals used by people for riding and to perform certain types of work in the field and otherwise, like donkeys and mules.

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<sup>19</sup> Reported by Ibn Majah: Sunnan ibn Majah, the Clothings



## Chapter 4: The Science of the Hadith Terminology

The science of Hadith terminology is one of the noblest sciences. It is extremely important and greatly needed because it is needed to identify whether the Hadith has been uttered by the Prophet (PBUH) or not. This way we can use the authentic Hadith to learn the doctrine, the rituals, the rules, the good behavior of Islam.

### Definition

The science of the Hadith terminology is the science which embodies the principles and rules which can be used to determine the authenticity of the chain of narrators and the text of the Hadith. This science deals with the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) which includes his sayings, his actions, the actions of the companions which he approved and his physical and moral attributes.

The component of the science which deals with the authenticity of the chain of narrators is called “the science of narrations.” The component of the science which deals with the authenticity of the text is called “the science of knowledge.”

The science of the Hadith terminology encompasses all the rules and principles which can be used to determine the authenticity of the chain of narrators and the text of the Hadith.

In a group of people where there is only a single scholar in Hadith, knowledge of this science becomes an obligatory duty. However, if the group has several scholars in this area, it becomes only a communal duty.

The two components of this science are

### The Chain of narrators (al-Sanad)

Linguistically, the Arabic word (Sanad) means the support. The Hadith is supported by the chain of narrators. The meaning of the word Sanad used in the science of Hadith means the chain of narrators through which the Hadith has been transmitted. It is also called the “Way.”

The word “Isnad” means referring the hadith to a narrator; and it can also refer of the chain of narrators through which the Hadith has been transmitted.

### The Text (al-Matn)

Linguistically the word refers to a strong part of the earth that is higher than the surroundings. The word Matn used in the science of Hadith refers to the wording of the Hadith.

### Example

Al-Humaidi ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr told us that Sufian said to him, that Yahyia ibn Sa’id al-Ansari said that Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Tayimi said that he heard A’lqamah ibn Waqas al-Laithy saying that he heard `Umar bin Al-Khattab, when he was standing on the podium in the Mosque, saying “I



heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying, ‘O people! The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So, whoever emigrated for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger, and whoever emigrated to take worldly benefit or for a woman to marry, then his emigration is for what he emigrated for.’”

The Chain of narrators (Sanad) is, “Al-Humaidi ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr told us that Sufian said to him, that Yahya ibn Sa’id al-Ansari said that Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Tayimi said that he heard A’lqamah ibn Waqas al-Laithy saying that he heard `Umar bin Al-Khattab.”

The Text (Matn) is, “O people! The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So, whoever emigrated for Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger, and whoever emigrated to take worldly benefit or for a woman to marry, then his emigration is for what he emigrated for.”



## Chapter 5: Science of Hadith Terminology: Origin and Importance

The foundations of the science of the chain of narrators can be found in the Quran and the Sunnah. Allah SWT says in the Quran, *“Believers, if a transgressing person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and you would become regretful for what you have done.”* (al-Hujurat: 6) The Prophet (PBUH) said, *“May Allah brighten a man who hears a tradition from us, gets it by heart and passes it on to others. Many a bearer of knowledge conveys it to one who is more versed than he is; and many a bearer of knowledge is not versed in it.”* The Qur’anic verse establishes the first principle: to ensure the authenticity of what is being narrating. The Prophetic tradition establishes the second rule: whoever transmits a tradition should deliver it exactly as he heard it.

The Companions of the Prophet (PBUT) were an example for the application of these two principles.

Example 1: When a grandmother asked Abu Bakr (RA) about her share in the inheritance, he answered, *“To my knowledge, neither the Qur’an nor the Sunnah specified a share for the grandmother. However, you should wait until I consult with others.”* He asked, and al-Mughiera ibn Shu’ba (RA) said, *“I was with the Prophet (PBUH) when he specified one sixth of the estate to the grandmother.”* Abu Bakr (RA) asked if anyone else can corroborate what al-Mughiera said, a companion by the name of Muhammad ibn Muslimah al-Ansari (RA) confirmed what al-Mughiera (RA) said. Abu Bakr (RA) gave the woman her share of the inheritance<sup>20</sup>.

Example 2: It was reported that Abu Musa al-Ash’ari (RA) came see ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA). He sought permission to enter his office to speak to him three times, when he did not get a response, he left. ‘Umar (RA) sent for him, when he came ‘Umar (RA) asked him why did he not enter? Abu Musa (RA) said, *“I heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying, one should seek permission three times, if one did not get permission, he should leave.”* ‘Umar (RA) said, *“Bring me someone who can confirm what you said, otherwise, I will punish you.”* Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (RA) went with him and confirmed what Abu Musa (RA) said. ‘Umar (RA) said, *“It is not that I mistrusted you, but I want to give an example for people to make sure that what is being said about the Prophet (PBUH) is authentic. In another version, ‘Umar (RA) has been quoted to have said to Abu Musa (RA), “It is not that I mistrusted you, but quoting the Prophet (PBUH) is great responsibility.”<sup>21</sup>”*

This is evidence for the careful consideration which the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) had given to making sure of the authenticity of the text and the truthfulness of the narrators of the Hadith.

The followers (of the Companions) followed in the footsteps of the Companions of making sure to verify the authenticity of the text and the chain of truthfulness of the narrator.

It is thus clear that the origins of the fundamentals of the Science of Hadith started in the era of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) soon after the Prophet (PBUH) had passed away. Soon after that other components of the Science started to develop slowly, e.g. the Science of the truthfulness of the narrators, biographies of the narrators, knowledge of the continuity of the chain of narrators, knowledge of the hidden tricks. These components were slow in development in the beginning because the

<sup>20</sup> Reported by Malek, Abu Dawoud, and Ibn Majah.

<sup>21</sup> Reported by Malek and Abu Dawoud.

untruthful narrators were few. Ibn Sereen mentioned that “At one time, the verification of the chain of narrators was not necessary, until the time of Sedition. After the occurrence of the Sedition, people started to verify the authenticity of the chain of narrators. Only Hadith that has been transmitted by narrators who belonged to the People of Sunnah (Ahl al-Sunnah) were accepted, otherwise the hadith was rejected.”

More rules started to appear in the eras of the followers and the followers of the followers. At the same time, discussions of the principles of the Science of Hadith started to appear in books which discussed other Islamic sciences e.g. the Science of the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh), the science of Jurisprudence (al-Fiqh), and the Science of Hadith. Examples of this can be seen in the books of “the Message” (al-Risalah) written by Imam Al-Shafi’e and the Introduction to Sahih Muslim, written by Imam al-Nawawi. These books outlined the criteria for acceptance of the Hadith and the criteria to be satisfied by the narrators to be considered as an authentic narrator.

In addition, Imam al-Tirmidhi added to his book, “al-Jami’e” a chapter by the name, “the Book of Tricks,” also Abu Hatem discussed some of the principles in his book, “Principles of de-authenticating and reforming.” (al-Jarh wa al-Ta’deel).

By the 4<sup>th</sup>. CH, when some of these sciences matured enough, independent books started to appear. Al-Hafiz ibn Habban al-Bustti discussed these sciences in the introduction to his books, “Divisions and Varieties,” the book entitled, “The Unacceptable Narrators,” and the book entitled, “The Trusted Narrators.” These introductions, especially the ones in his books, “Divisions and Varieties,” and “The Unacceptable Narrators,” are considered some of the important books on the Sciences of Hadith.

Imam Abu Sueliman al-Khatibi wrote a short introduction for his book, “The Highlights of Traditions” (Ma’alim al-Sunnan), which classified the Hadith into three categories, Sound (Sahih), Good (Hassan), and Weak (Da’ief).

Imam Abu al-Hassan al-Qabissi wrote an introduction for his book, “A Summary of Mouwataa al-Imam Malek” which is known as, “The Summary,” in which he discussed the topics of continuity and discontinuity, the forms of expressions, the Hadith which is narrated by a chain in which the name of the Companion which heard the Prophet (PBUH) is missing, and other topics.

Al-Qadi Abu Mohammed al-Hassan ibn Abdul al-Rahman ibn Khallad al-Ramhurmuzi (d. 360 AH) wrote the first fully dedicated book on the Science of Hadith. The title of the book was, “The Clear Distinction between the Narrator and the One who Understands). Imam Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysabury (d. 405 AH) wrote a book entitled “The Knowledge of the Science of Hadith.”

Al-Hafiz al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 AH) wrote several books on the science of Hadith, among which, “The Comprehensive Book on the Characters of the Narrator and the Etiquette of the Listener” and “The Sufficient Book on the Science of Narration.”

Imam Abu ‘Amr ‘Uthman ibn Abdel Rahman (d. 643 AH) collected the different accounts on the Science of Hadith which had been written by Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in one book entitled, “The Knowledge of the Different Types of the Science of Hadith,” which is known as the “Ibn al-Salah’s Introduction.”



Al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 AH) wrote a paper entitled, “The Cream of the Thought on the Terminology of the Scholars of Narration,” in which he summarized Ibn al-Salah’s Introduction. He further elaborated on his paper in his book entitled, “The Journey of the Vision in Clarifying the Cream of the Thought.” All authors who came after that used the books by Ibn al-Salah and Ibn Hajar to elaborate, explain and reorganize the Science of Hadith. Some of the best books in this category are the book by Ibn Hajar entitled, “The Nukat of the Ibn al-Salah’s Book,” the book by Shams El-Din al-Sakhawi (d. 902 AH) entitled, “Fateh al-Mughieth Bi Sharh alfiayat al-Hadith,” the book by Galal al-Din al-Siouti (d. 911 AH) entitled “Tadreeb al-Rawi fi Sharh Taqreeb al-Nawawi,” the book by Ibn Qatlobgha (d. 879 AH) entitled “Al-Qawl al-Mubtakar ‘ala Sharh Nukhbat al-Fikr,” the book by ‘Abd al-Raouf al-Manawi (d. 1031 AH) entitled “Sharh Sharh al-Nukhba,” and the book by al-Mulla ‘ali al-Qari (d. 1014) entitled “Sharh Nuzhat al-Nazar.”

Among the recent volumes that were written in the same field are the books written by Muhammed ibn Saleh al-‘athymeen entitled “Sharh Nuzhat al-Nazar,” and “Mustalah al-Hadeeth;” the book written by ‘Abdel Fattah Abu Ghudda entitled “Lamahat min Tatikh al-Sunna wa ‘ulum al-Hadith;” the book written by Akram Diyya’ al-‘Amry entitled “Bohooth fi Tarikh al-Sunna al-Musharafa;” the book written by Mahmoud al-Tahan entitled “Tayseer Mustalah al-Hadeeth;” and the book written by Muhammad ‘Ajaj al-Khatib entitled “Usul al-Hadith: Ulumoh wa Mustalahu.”

The Science of the Terminology of Hadith is of great importance, for the following reasons:

- Preservation of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH)  
One of the functions of the Science of the Terminology of Hadith is to discriminate between authentic and non-authentic Hadith.
- Understanding the Islamic Fundamentals  
The Science of the Terminology of Hadith helps in teaching Muslims the tenets of Islam. The authentic Hadith convey many of the rules that should be observed by Muslims.
- The Implementation of Shari’a  
The authentic Hadith embodies many of the rules of Shari’a
- Protection of Society  
It identifies the unauthentic Hadith which bring misinformation into the understanding of Islamic thought.
- Provides Evidence for the Authenticity of Hadith.

## Chapter 6: The Science of the Terminology of Hadith

### 1. Terminology

- a. The News (Khabar): This refers to any saying referred to the Prophet (PBUH), the Companions, the Followers, or the Followers of the Followers.
- b. The Hadith: This refers to the sayings, deeds, or anything which has been approved by the Prophet (PBUH).
- c. The Trace (Athar): This refers to any saying referred to one of the Companions, the Followers, or the Followers of the Followers.  
Every News is a Hadith or a Trace, every Hadith is a News, and every Trace is a News.
- d. The Companion: A Companion is any person who met the Prophet (PBUH), believed in him as a Prophet, and died as a Muslim.
- e. The Follower: A Follower is a Muslim who met a Companion of the Prophet (PBUH) and died as a Muslim. It was also said that a Follower is a person who followed a Companion and died as a Muslim.
- f. A Follower of a Follower: A Follower is a Muslim who met a Follower and died as a Muslim.

### 2. Sciences of the Terminology of Hadith

There are generally two divisions of the Science of the Terminology of Hadith. These are

- a. The Science of Transmission (علم الرواية) : This includes the group of sciences which deals with the narrations of the sayings, deeds of the Prophet (PBUH) while making sure that these narrations are authentic and its wording is exact.
- b. The Science of Hadith – The Knowledge (علم الحديث دراية): This group of sciences deals with the study of the reliability and memory of the narrator; study of the types of Hadith, and the authenticity of its text.

These two divisions include the following sciences:

- i. Criticism of Narrators: It is also called the “The Knowledge of Narrators- علم الرجال” Determining the rank of the narrators and whether their narrations are acceptable or rejected.
- ii. Hidden Defects (علم العلل) : It is also called the “Science of the Defects in Hadith.” This refers to the study of the hidden reasons which render a Hadith weak, even though the hadith may appear correct and sound.
- iii. The Knowledge of the Ambiguous (علم المبهمات) It is also called “The Art of Discovering the Ambiguous” This refers to the study of the ambiguity in the text and the chain of narrators.
- iv. The Unfamiliar Terms (علم غريب الحديث) This is the study of words of unknown meaning that appear in the text of the Hadith.
- v. Causes of Revelation (علم أسباب ورود الأحاديث) Understanding the time and the occasions surrounding the narration of the Hadith.
- vi. The Abrogating and the Abrogated (علم الناسخ والمنسوخ) Identifying which Hadith may supersede another regarding a legal matter.
- vii. The Reconciliation of the Conflicting Ahadith (علم مختلف الحديث) This is a study for conciliating Ahadith which may seem conflicting.



### 3. The Chain of Transmission and the Text

The Chain of Transmission refers to the Science which investigates the chain of narrators who transmitted the Hadith from the Prophet (PBUH) until it reached the later compiler. It is also called the “Path.”

The Text is the Science which investigates wording of the Hadith.

### 4. Ranks of the Sound/authentic Hadith (Sahih)

The Hadith is arranged in a sequence according to its degree of authenticity as follows:

- a) The Hadith which has been approved by al-Bukhari and Muslim.
- b) The hadith which has been approved only by al-Bukhari.
- c) The Hadith which has been approved only by Muslim.
- d) The Hadith which satisfies the criteria developed by al-Bukhari and Muslim but was not reported by any of them.
- e) The Hadith which satisfies the criteria developed by al-Bukhari but was not reported by him.
- f) The Hadith which satisfies the criteria developed by Muslim but was not reported by any of them.
- g) The Hadith which was considered sound by other scholars but did not satisfy the criteria of al-Bukhari or Muslim.

This is a general criterion, however, if there is a Hadith that has not been approved by one of the scholars but can be supported by other means which render it authentic, then in this case the criterion should be overridden.

### 5. Classification of the Sound/Authentic Hadith

The sound Hadith can be classified as

- a. Verbally Recurrent (Mutawater)
- b. Sound (Sahih)
- c. Good (Hasan)
- d. Fair
- e. Free of Flaws (Saleh)
- f. Not Bad
- g. Acceptable
- h. Clean Chain of Narrators
- i. Narrators are one of the Narrators of the Sound Books
- j. Its Narrators are reliable
- k. Straight Chain of Narrators
- l. Chain of Narrators is Free from Flaws

This means that the sound Hadith should be taken for granted and should be considered a rule to be followed.

### 6. Classification of Hadith According to the Number of Scholars Reporting the Hadith

- a. Reported by the two Sheiks- Agreed upon: Hadith reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim
- b. Reported by the Three: Reported by Ahmed, al-Bukhari and Muslim.
- c. Reported by the Four (The authors of the Four Books called al-Sunnan): Reported by Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, and Ibn Majah.
- d. Reported by the Five: Reported by Ahmed and Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, and Ibn Majah.



- e. Reported by the Six: Reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, and Ibn Majah.
- f. Reported by the Seven: Reported by Ahemd, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, and Ibn Majah.
- g. Reported by the Eight: Reported by Malik, Ahmed, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, and Ibn Majah.
- h. Reported by the Nine: Reported by Malik, Ahmed, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawoud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nassaie, Ibn Majah and al-Darmi.



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## Chapter 7: The Classification of Hadith

The Hadith can be either acceptable or rejected.

Acceptable Hadith is the one that can be traced authentically to the Prophet (PBUH). The rejected Hadith is the Hadith which cannot be traced authentically to the Prophet (PBUH).



## I. Classification of Hadith Based on the Chain of Transmission

Name Hadith	Class	Rank of Hadith
Recurrent (Mutawater: large number of transmitters in each generation)	Verbally Recurrent (Mutawater in wording (lafzi))	Sahih (Sound/Authentic): Highest rank of Hadith
	Recurrent in Meaning (Mutawater in Meaning (Ma'nawi))	
Singular (Ahad)	Well-Known (Mashhur)	Some are Sahih (Sound), others are Hassan (Good), and some are Da'eef (Weak)
	Rare/Strong ('Aziz)	
	Strange/Scarce (Ghareeb)	



## II. Classification of Hadith According to its Strength or Weakness

Name Hadith	Class	Type	Rank of Hadith
Sound (Sahih)	Sahih on its own		Sahih
	Supported by other hadith		
Good (Hassan)	Good (Hassan on its own)		Ranks lower than Sahih hadith
	Supported by other hadith		
Weak (Da'if)	Hanging (Mu'allaq)	Rejected due to a break in the chain of narrators	Rejected/unacceptable
	Mursal		
	Mu'dal		
	Munqati'		
	Mudallas		
	Mawdu'	Rejected due to the existence of one or more unreliable narrator in the chain of narrator	
	Matrook		
	Munkar		
	Mu'al		
	Mudraj		
	Maqlub		
	Excess in the continuous chain		
	Mudttarib		
	Musahhaf		
Shaz			



### III. Classification Based on a Mix of Acceptance and Rejection

Name Hadith	Class	Rank of Hadith
Mix of Acceptance and Rejection	Qudsi	Some are accepted some are rejected
	Elevated (Marfu')	
	Suspended (Mawquf)	
	Broken (Maqtu')	



## Chapter 8: Classification of Hadith According to the Number of Narrators

1. Recurrent (Mutawater): This is the strongest Hadith. It has been narrated by many people in each link of the chain it is impossible for them to have all fabricated the same Hadith.
  - a. Criteria for the Recurrent Hadith  
The Recurrent Hadith should satisfy the following criteria:
    - The number of narrators in each link of the chain is more than ten people.
    - The narrators in each link of the chain are known for their truthfulness.
  - b. The Ruling of the Recurrent Hadith  
This Hadith yields absolute certainty in knowledge. It is considered as authentic as the Qur'an. It should be followed.
  - c. Divisions of the Recurrent Hadith
    - Verbally Recurrent: The Hadith is recurrent in both its wording and meaning.
      - Example, “Abū Hurayrah said, the Messenger of Allah, (PBUH), said, ‘Whoever tells a lie about me intentionally, then let him take his seat in the Fire.’” This was narrated by more than seventy of the Companions and was narrated by a similar number by the Followers.
    - Recurrent in Meaning: The Hadith is recurrent in meaning but not in its wording.
      - Examples of this the Hadiths about raising the hands during making Duaa. There is about a hundred Hadith referring to raising the hands during making Duaa, but they came mixed with different issues.
2. Singular (Ahad): This is a Hadith which was narrated by a number less than then number needed for a Hadith to be considered Recurrent even in one link of the chain.
  - a. The Ruling for the Singular Hadith  
This class of Hadith includes sometimes Sound Hadith and sometimes unsound Hadith. The Sound Singular Hadith is considered a highly probable (Dhanni) not fully definitive (Qat'i); however, it is accepted as authentic. The unsound Hadith is rendered unacceptable; therefore, it should not be used.
  - b. Divisions of the Singular Hadith
    - Well-Known (Mashhur): It is narrated by more than three (but less than ten) people in each link of the chain.
      - Example: ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr reported that God’s Messenger (PBUH) said, “God doesnot take away knowledge by removing it from men, but takes it away by taking away the learned, so that when He leaves no learned man, men will take ignorant men as leaders. When the unlearned is asked a question they will pass judgement without knowledge, erring and leading others into error.”
    - Rare/Strong (‘Aziz): It is narrated by two people in each link of the chain.
      - Example: It is reported on the authority of Anas b. Malik and Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said, “None of you is a believer until I am dearer to him than his child, his father, and the whole of humankind.” It was reported that Qtadah and ‘Abdel ‘Aziz ibn Suhaib quoted Anas ibn Malek;



Shu'ba and Sa'id quoted Qatadah. Ibn 'Uliah and 'Abdel Wareith quoted 'Abdel 'Aziz.

- Strange/Scarce (Ghareeb): Is narrated by a single person in at least one link of the chain.
  - Example: 'Umar b. al-Khattab (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Deeds are to be judged according to intentions, and a man will be rewarded according to his intention. If a person's intention that his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger, his emigration will be for Allah and His Messenger; but when his emigration is intended for a worldly gain, or to marry a certain woman, his emigration will be for whatever goal he has intended."



## Chapter 9: Classification of Hadith According to its Rank

This classification assigns a rank to the Hadith based on its roundedness and weakness.

The Acceptable News: This is divided into two categories. These are

### 1. Sound Hadith

#### a) Definition of the Sound Hadith:

It is the Hadith which has been transmitted through a continuous chain of entirely reliable narrators known for their strong memories; it is free from any contradictions or hidden defects.

#### b) Criteria to be Satisfied by the Sound Hadith:

- **Continuity of the Chain of Narrators:** The Hadith has been transmitted from one link of the chain directly to the following link without any interruption.
- **Reliability:** All the narrators who transmitted the Hadith are known to be Mature, sane Muslims of good character.
- **Strong Memory:** All narrators are known for their strong memories, with no chance that they would make any mistake.
- **Free from Contradictions:** There is no contradiction between the texts narrated by two different narrators who may be different in their rank.
- **Free from Hidden Defects:** The Hidden Defect is a hidden reason that may render a Hadith, which seems to be good on the surface, unacceptable.

#### c) Its Ruling:

This is an acceptable Hadith.

#### d) Divisions of the Sound Hadith:

There are two divisions for this Hadith

- **The Hadith is Sound On its Own Merits**

This is a Hadith which satisfies the above-mentioned criteria.

Example

Imam al-Bukhari reported that ‘Abdel Allah ibn Yusuf said, Malek quoted ibn Shihab who quoted Muhammad ibn Jubair ibn Mut’im who quoted his father who said, “I heard the Prophet (PBUH) reading Surat al-Tur in Maghreb prayer.” This is a sound Hadith on its own merits, because it satisfies all the above criteria.

- **The Hadith is Sound because it is Supported by Similar Hadith.**

Example

Imam Ahmed reported in his Musnad, “‘Abdahu said that Muhammad ibn ‘Amr heard from Abi Salamah who heard Abi Hurrariarah that the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘If I were not worried that it would be too much for my people, I would have commanded them to use the Siwak before every prayer.’”

Muhammad ibn ‘Amr was known for his truthfulness but he was not known for having a good memory, however, this Hadith was narrated by others which authenticated the Hadith and raised the rank of the Hadith from the rank of “good on its own merits” to the rank of “Sound because it is supported by other Hadith.”

### 2. Good Hadith



a. Definition:

It is the Sound Hadith which is narrated by a less reliable narrator.

b. Its Ruling:

It is lesser in rank than the Sound Hadith, but it can still be used as evidence.

c. Divisions of the Good Hadith:

- Good on its own merits

It has the same definition of the Good Hadith.

Example

Imam Tirmidhi reported in his Sunan, that Qutaibah said that Ja'far ibn Soliman al-Ddubi'I narrated from Abi 'Imran al-Juni, from Abi Bakr from Abi Musa Al-Ash'ari who said, "I heard, when I was in the battlefield, the Prophet (PBUH) saying, 'Indeed the gates of Paradise are under the shadow of the swords.'" This is a Good Hadith because the narrators are all reliable except Ja'far ibn Soliman al-Ddubi'I who is known to be truthful but did not have a reliable memory.

- Good because it is supported by other Hadith

This is a weak Hadith which was narrated through different chain of narrators, as long as it was deemed weak because of the narrator is known to have a bad reputation or known to be a liar.

Example

The hadith that was reported by Imam al-Tirmidhi, he said, "Shu'ba transmitted from 'Asem ibn U'baid Allah, who said, 'I heard 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amer ibn Rabi'a who transmitted from his father that a woman from the tribe of bani Fazara was married to a man who gave her a pair of shoes as a Mahr. The Prophet (PBUH) asked her, 'Did you accept to be married with a pair of shoes as a Mahr?' She replied, 'Yes.' The Prophet (PBUH) approved the marriage.'" 'Asem was known to be less reliable because of his weak memory, but the Hadith was transmitted through different chains of narrators.