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## HADĪTH — A SUBJECT OF KEEN INTEREST

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### The significance of Hadīth

The word *hadīth* primarily means 'new'. It is used as opposed to *qadīm* which means 'old'. From this followed the use of the term for a piece of news, a tale, a story or a report — be it historical or legendary, true or false, relating to the present or to the past immediate or remote. In this sense the word has been used by the pre-Islamic poets, and in the Qur'an and the Tradition of the Prophet. The story-tellers also were called *huddāth*.

This general connotation of the word *hadīth* has, like that of many other words (e.g. *salāt*, *sujūd*, *rukū'*, *zakāt*, etc.), been changed under the far-reaching influence of Islam. The Muslims since the very life-time of the Prophet called the reports with regard to his sayings and doings the best Hadīth, and by and by its use was confined to the reports of the Prophet's words and deeds only.

The Prophet himself as well as his immediate followers have used it in this sense more than once. When the Prophet said to Abū Hurayrah that he knew his anxiety about the Hadīth<sup>1</sup>, he did not mean but his *own* Hadīth. 'Utbah referred to this kind of Hadīth only

when he said that Ibn 'Abbās related only two or three Ḥadīths in a month.<sup>2</sup> 'Umar I did not mean but the Ḥadīth<sup>3</sup> of the Prophet when he asked his friends not to relate too many Ḥadīths.<sup>4</sup> When 'Alī said: "If you write the Ḥadīth write it with the *Isnād*," he meant the Ḥadīth of the Prophet only.<sup>5</sup>

### **Ḥadīth and Sunnah**

With this significance of the word Ḥadīth is very closely connected the connotation of the word *sunnah* which originally meant 'precedent' and 'custom'<sup>6</sup> and which has been used by the Muslims for the doings and practices of the Prophet only. Some of the Muslim writers, as Goldziher says,<sup>7</sup> have completely identified the significance of these two philologically unconnected words; others have drawn a line of distinction between their connotations. But the distinction between them is only theoretical, as has been pointed out by him.

### **Ḥadīth — a subject of keen interest**

The Ḥadīth in this sense — i.e., the report of the sayings and the doings of the Prophet — has been a subject of keen interest among the Muslims since the very life-time of the Prophet himself. His remarkable, stirring career could not have failed to draw the serious attention of his people. Having lived forty years of quiet, almost uneventful life, he started one of the most stirring and the greatest movements which influenced all the various aspects of human thought and life for all times, and he achieved his objective with astounding success. At the very beginning of his life as a prophet he struck at the very root of the firm beliefs and the long-established customs of the pagan Arabs. They hated and boycotted him, insulted and injured him, and compelled him to leave his home and hearth for a distant town. But he, by his implicit faith in his cause, his tenacity of purpose and his never failing zeal for his mission within ten years from his exile, destroyed the established prestige of the Quraysh of Makkah, shook the foundations of the pagan customs and the heathen

beliefs of the Arabs, humbled down their boastful tribal chiefs, persuaded the Christians of Najrān to come to terms with him, demolished the strongholds of the Jews in Arabia, and founded a theocracy which was destined to measure sword simultaneously and successfully with the tremendous, well-equipped and trained armies of Persia and Byzantium, and to influence the thought and life of mankind for ever.

Such a career was bound to attract the attention of the people who witnessed it. The Prophet, with his many-sided activities and revolutionary utterances, could not have passed unobserved and unnoticed by the people among whom he lived and moved. At least, since the time he began to preach his mission, both his deadly foes and his faithful and devoted friends must have been equally interested in him as well as in his sayings and doings.

To his enemies he had been a revolutionary bent upon destroying the whole fabric of their society whose activities they keenly watched in order to stop the progress of his mission. His utterances must have served them as an important topic for reflection, conversation and sometimes even heated discussions. They watched his movements so closely and carefully that many of his secretly conceived plans could not escape their watchful eyes. Their leader, Abū Lahab, kept close to him when he preached his faith to the Arabian tribes, and dissuaded them from paying any attention to his peaceful preachings.<sup>8</sup> They discovered his plans when his followers were migrating from Arabia to Abyssinia. They followed their footsteps in order to try to stop them from getting out of their clutches.<sup>9</sup> They found out that he talked with the people of Madīnah when he conversed with them in secret, and threatened the Madīnites with open hostility if they continued their friendship with him.<sup>10</sup>

The interest of the followers of the Prophet in him and in his sayings and doings was naturally greater than that of his foes. They had accepted him as their sole guide and prophet. They had completely identified themselves with him in his struggle against the Quraysh and the other tribes. With his future and with the future of the faith revealed to him was bound up their own future. On his success depended their own success. All his actions served them as

a precedent (Sunnah), every word falling from his lips was a law to them, and all his actions were virtuous in their eyes, which they wanted to follow as faithfully as they could. When he chose a gold ring for himself, his friends also put it on; and when he put it off, threw it away, and put on a silver ring instead, they also followed his example.<sup>11</sup> If he offered prayers at midnight, all his friends wanted to do the same, and he himself had to stop them from so doing.<sup>12</sup> If he fasted continuously for more than a day, his followers also desired to do the same, and he had to explain to them his special privileges.<sup>13</sup> Zayd b. Khālīd spent one whole night at his door in order to see him offer his night prayers.<sup>14</sup> Nawwās b. Sam‘ān stayed at Madīnah for one whole year in order to enquire from the Prophet what was virtue and what was vice.<sup>15</sup> Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī observed keenly how long he kept standing in his afternoon prayers.<sup>16</sup> Ibn ‘Umar counted how many times he asked pardon of God in one sitting.<sup>17</sup>

The Hadīth in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of the Prophet has been a subject of keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslims throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to the present times. During the life-time of the Prophet many of his Companions tried to get by heart whatever he said, and observed keenly whatever he did; and they reported these things to one another. Some of them wrote down what he said in *ṣahīfahs* which were later on read by them to their students, and which were preserved in their families and also by the Followers (*Tābi‘ūn*). After the death of the Prophet, when his Companions spread in various countries, some of them as well as their Followers undertook long arduous journeys, courted poverty and penury in order to collect them together. They founded independent branches of literature which would help them in understanding the Hadīths of their prophet and in testing its reliability and genuineness. They deduced various theological sciences from them. Their remarkable activity with regard to the preservation and propagation of Hadīth is unique in the literary history of the world. The stage of perfection upto which they developed the system of *Isnād* in Hadīth, the vast literature on the

*Asmā' al-Rijāl* which they created as an aid to the formal criticism of Traditions, the literature on the *Usūl al-Hadīth* which serves as an aid to their material criticism, and the literature on the *Mawdū'āt* which deals with what has been forged and fabricated in the name of the Prophet, remain unparalleled in the literary history of the world even today.

The Companions of the Prophet had so much respect and reverence for him that one of them collected his perspiration, and made a will that it should be sprinkled on his dead body before it was put into the grave.<sup>18</sup> Some of them vied and sometimes even quarrelled with one another in order to get the water left by him after performing his ablution, and considered it a privilege to drink it or to apply it to their bodies.<sup>19</sup> Some of them preserved carefully what was touched by him and used it as a cure for diseases.<sup>20</sup> Some of them presented to him their children for his blessings. Some of them considered it a privilege if their sons were accepted by him as his attendants.<sup>21</sup>

### The writing of Hadīths

Many of these devoted Companions of the Prophet, if not all of them, naturally hankered after the knowledge of what he said or did. Abū Hurayrah kept his constant company for three years at the sacrifice of all worldly pursuits in order to see and hear what he did and said,<sup>22</sup> and regularly devoted a considerable time to getting by heart what he had heard from him.<sup>23</sup> 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās wrote down all that he heard from the Prophet.<sup>24</sup> Abū Shihāb, Zayd and Ziyād also did the same. 'Āzib, when asked by Abū Bakr to deliver his message to al-Barā', did not leave his company until he had related to him what he and the Prophet had done when they came out of Makkah and were followed by the Quraysh.<sup>25</sup> 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, who was living at a distance from Madīnah and was unable to attend to the Prophet everyday, made an agreement with one of the *Ansār* that they would attend him every alternate day and report to each other whatever they saw or heard from him.<sup>26</sup> Such others of his followers as failed to notice any of his sayings or

doings (on account of being away from him) learnt the same from those who had heard them, taking great care about the veracity of their reporters. As a matter of fact, it is said to have been a common practice among the friends of the Prophet that whenever any two of them met, one of them enquired from the other whether there was any Ḥadīth (the news of the sayings and the doings of the Prophet), and the other in his reply reported some sayings and doings of the Prophet.<sup>27</sup> This practice seems to have been in vogue at least among some Muslim scholars even so late as the end of the eighth century A.H., when Ismā'īl 'Aqūlī of Baghdad on meeting Ibrāhīm of Aleppo asked him, after the customary salutations, whether he knew any Ḥadīth. The latter in his answer recited some Ḥadīths from the *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* with their *Isnads*.<sup>28</sup>

The Prophet himself attached a good deal of importance to the knowledge of his own Ḥadīth. He asked his friends and followers to make them as widely known as possible, taking care that they should not attribute to him anything falsely.<sup>29</sup> He asked his followers to acquire knowledge and teach it to others;<sup>30</sup> and while explaining knowledge, he included in it the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The course of study prescribed by him to the *Ashāb al-Suffah* included the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the art of writing.<sup>31</sup> In the appointment of the state officials also he gave preference to those who combined the knowledge of the Sunnah with that of the Qur'an. Such was the case with the appointment of the *Imams*<sup>32</sup> and the *Qādīs*, and is likely to have been the case with other appointments also. He asked Mu'ādh when the latter was going out as governor of Yemen on what basis he would govern. "On the basis of the Qur'an", Mu'ādh replied. "Suppose", said the Prophet, "that you do not find it in the Qur'an". "Then on the basis of the Sunnah" answered Mu'ādh.<sup>33</sup>

After the death of the Prophet the importance of Ḥadīth grew greater and greater. Von Kremer rightly says:

The life of the Prophet, his discourses and utterances, his actions, his silent approval and even his passive conduct, constituted next to the Qur'an the second most important source of law for the young Muslim empire.<sup>34</sup>

Von Kremer has correctly pointed out the importance of the Hadīth as a source of Muhammadan law. But actually the part played by it in the development of Arabic literature is much greater than this. It is the Hadīth and the Qur'an that have been the main cause of the origin of many branches of Arabic literature, e.g., History, Geography, the collection of the ancient Arabian poetry, Lexicography, etc. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the Hadīth and the Qur'an had been the basis of all the scientific activities of the Arabs.

Thus, the Hadīth originated in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely throughout his life, and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam throughout the vast Muslim dominions. The Muslim armies which conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt included a large number of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad, who carried his Hadīth wherever they went. Even the distant lands of North Africa and Spain<sup>35</sup> received the reports of Prophet's sayings and doings before the end of the first century. Similarly, the message of the Sunnah and the Qur'an had been received by India before its conquest by Muslims before the end of the first century A.H.<sup>36</sup>

### **The collection of Hadīths**

Hadīth which thus spread throughout the vast Muslim dominions had been preserved for about a century partly in writing (in the form of laws and letters dictated by the Prophet himself, and in the form of various *sahīfahs* ascribed to many of his Companions), and partly in the memory of those who had associated with him and watched carefully his words and deeds. After the death of the Prophet, 'Umar I intended to collect the Hadīths. He gave the matter his careful consideration for one whole month, invoking the help of God in his decision, and seeking the advice of his friends. But he had to give up the great project for the fear of the Qur'an being neglected by the Muslims.<sup>37</sup>

'Umar II (61-101 A.H.), the saintly Caliph of the dynasty of the worldly Umayyads, initiated and partly carried out the tremendous

task which was only thought of by his great predecessor whom he tried to follow in many respects. This saintly Caliph had a great zeal for his religion which he tried to purify from the evils that had crept into it by the time he came to power.<sup>38</sup> The teaching and the collection of Hadīth naturally formed an important part of his plan. He appointed paid teachers to teach the Qur'an to the ignorant Bedouins,<sup>39</sup> supported and helped the teachers and students of *Fiqh*,<sup>40</sup> sent instructions to the governor of the Hijāz that weekly lectures should be delivered on Hadīth,<sup>41</sup> and sent out men well-versed in the subject to Egypt and North Africa as instructors to the Muslims living in those countries.<sup>42</sup>

Fearing the loss of Hadīth, he took steps towards their collection. To a great traditionist, Abū Bakr b. Muhammad b. Hazm (d. 100 A.H./719 A.D.) who lived in Madīnah, he wrote to ask him to write down all the Hadīth of the Prophet and of 'Umar — particularly those he could learn from 'Amrah, the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahmān, who was at that time the best custodian of such Hadīth as were related by 'A'ishah.<sup>43</sup> 'Umar II is also reported to have asked Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm<sup>44</sup> and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī<sup>45</sup> to collect Hadīth in the form of books in order to have them circulated throughout his dominion. According to Abū Nu'aym's *History of Isfahān* (cited by Ibn Hajar),<sup>46</sup> 'Umar even wrote a circular letter asking the traditionists living in the various parts of his dominion to collect in the form of books as many Hadīth as were available.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that these works have not been mentioned by any of the later writers on the subject, and that there appear to be some contradictions in later references to the persons concerned, has led an eminent orientalist to hold that what has been attributed to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz in connection with the collection of Hadīth is only an expression of what the Muslims would expect from the Pious Caliph.<sup>48</sup> But another eminent orientalist, Dr. Sprenger, had already shown<sup>49</sup> that the early Muslim writers used to refer to the authors instead of referring to the books. As regards the contradictions, they are only apparent, and can be easily explained. Therefore, it is not merely an expression of what later Muslims expected from the Pious Caliph, but as a matter of fact all the attending circumstances point



to the probability of what is attributed to him.

The great work initiated by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was helped by the spirit of the age, and the result was extensive. Abū Qalābah (d. 104 or 107 A.H.) is stated to have made a will of his books.<sup>50</sup> Makhūl (d. 116 A.H./734 A.D.), who had travelled through Egypt and Syria and had lived for some time in Madīnah in order to acquire knowledge at all these places,<sup>51</sup> wrote a book on the Sunnah which has been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist*.<sup>52</sup> Al-Zuhri (d. 124 A.H./742 A.D.) is stated by Ibn Sa'd to have collected so many Hadith that after his death his manuscripts needed beasts of burden for their removal.<sup>53</sup>

The early students and workers on the Hadith were followed by various *Muhaddithūn* who carried on the work begun by their predecessors almost simultaneously in various provinces of the vast Muslim empire. Of these collectors of Hadiths, 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Jurayj (d. 150 A.H./760 A.D.) worked at Makkah, Sa'd b. 'Arūbah (d. 157 A.H.) at Mesopotamia, al-Awzā'ī (d. 159 A.H.) in Syria, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān (d. 159 A.H.) at Madīnah, Zā'idah b. Qudāmah (d. 160 A.H.) and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 160 A.H.) at Kūfah, and Hammād b. Salāmah (d. 165 A.H.) at Baṣrah.<sup>54</sup>

As almost all these works are entirely lost, no opinion can be expressed on their plan, method or merit. But Ibn al-Nadīm who has mentioned these works has also given a short criticism in each case. He calls the works of Ibn Jurayj, Ibn 'Arūbah, al-Awzā'ī, Ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān and Zā'idah b. Qudāmah works on the Sunnah, and says that they are arranged like books of *Fiqh* — in chapters devoted to its problems. They were probably works of the same type as the *Muwatta'* of Imam Mālik who might have followed in the general plan of it the system adopted by some of these earlier writers. Two of the books of Sufyān al-Thawrī, however, which were related by various scholars, were works of a different type. About one of them Ibn al-Nadīm says that it is similar to Hadith works.<sup>55</sup> But this also has been lost.

### The *Muwatta'*

The earliest work connected with our subject which has been received by us is the *Muwatta'* of Imam Mālik which has been fully described and criticised by Goldziher.<sup>56</sup> He is of the opinion that the *Muwatta'* is not a work on Ḥadīth in the same sense in which the *Sahih al-Bukhārī* and other later works are:

It is a *corpus juris*, and not a *corpus traditionum*. Its object was not to sift the Ḥadīths current in the Muslim world and to collect them together, but to demonstrate the religious laws, rituals and practices which were in keeping with the Sunnah prevalent in Madīnah, and which were in agreement with the *Ijmā'* accepted by the Muslims of Madīnah, and to produce on the basis of the *Ijmā'* and the Sunnah a theoretical standard for doubtful cases.

In order to prove his theory, Goldziher has quoted the fact that Imam Mālik has included in his work a large number of *fatwas* and customs in vogue in Madīnah, without trying to prove them by Ḥadīth; that even in quoting the Ḥadīths he has not given the *Isnād* in all cases, and that he has not made any mention of such Ḥadīths as are of purely historical character.

These facts certainly show that the *Muwatta'* was not intended to serve as a collection of Ḥadīths. But it may be said with equal justice that it is not a book of *Fiqh* in the same sense in which later books on *Fiqh* are said to be works on the subject. It contains a very large number of *Ḥadīth al-Ahkām* (legal traditions). According to al-Zarqānī, as Goldziher has pointed out, there are in it 1,720 Ḥadīths, of which 600 contain *Isnāds*, 222 are *mursal*, 613 are *mawqūf* and 285 stop either at a *Sahābi* or at a *Tābi'i* (i.e. are either *mawqūf* or *maqūl*)<sup>57</sup>. According to al-Ghāfiqī, the total number of Ḥadīths in the twelve versions of the *Muwatta'* is 666, out of which 97 differ in the different versions of the book, and the rest are common in all the various recensions.<sup>58</sup> The great difference between al-Zarqānī's and al-Ghāfiqī's estimates seems to be due to the latter's not taking into account the versions of the *Muwatta'* by al-Shaybānī and others.<sup>59</sup> Originally, however, the number of Ḥadīths in the

*Muwatta'* is reported to have been between 4,000 and 10,000 which were reduced by the author himself to about 1,000.<sup>60</sup>

The *Muwatta'* may be treated as a good collection of Hadīths in the sense of the legal traditions. Some Muslim authorities like 'Izz al-Dīn b. al-Athīr, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and 'Abd al-Haq of Delhi include it instead of the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah in the six canonical collections. Of course the majority of them do not count it as one of the six books because almost all the important traditions contained in it are included in the *Sahīhs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

On the analogy of the *Muwatta'*, however, we may reasonably assume that the other *Sunan* works compiled before or simultaneously with it also contained a fair proportion of the *Hadīth al-Ahkām*, and might therefore be treated like the *Muwatta'* as Hadīth works.

### The legal and historical traditions

Since the earliest times the Muslims have made a distinction between the legal traditions (*Hadīth al-Ahkām*) and the purely historical traditions (the *Maghāzī*). In the *Tabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd some Companions are described as being well versed in the *Fiqh* (Law) and others are stated to be authorities on the *Maghāzī* (the historical traditions). In the treatment of the legal traditions they had been careful and critical; whereas in relating the historical traditions they were rather free. Suhayb, a Companion, used to say: "Come along, I will tell you the tales of our battles (*Maghāzī*), but I will not relate to you that the Prophet has said such and such things."<sup>61</sup> Sā'ib b. Yazīd heard Talhah relate the tales of the battle of Uhud, whereas he did not hear other Companions relate any Hadīths of the Prophet.<sup>62</sup> From these and other similar reports it appears that the *Maghāzī* served the early Muslims as topics for their general conversations. But with the legal traditions they had been careful and scrupulous.

The word *Fiqh* itself had been used sometimes in the sense of Hadīth. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, after relating a Hadīth, points out that here

the word *Fiqh* is used in the sense of Hadīth.<sup>63</sup> As a matter of fact, the Islamic law in its earliest period consisted of little else than the legal traditions (*Hadīth al-Ahkām*). It is therefore that all such Companions as are reported to have related the largest number of Hadīths e.g. 'Ā'ishah, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās are described as *Faqīhs*.

The number of the legal traditions appears to be rather small. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī has mentioned only 1,029 of them in his *al-Ahkām al-Sughrah* which is devoted to the legal traditions only.<sup>64</sup> Hāfiz 'Abd al-Ghanī in his *'Umdat al-Ahkām* has mentioned only 500 of them.<sup>65</sup> Ibn Hajar in his *Bulūgh al-Marām* has quoted about 1,338 of them.<sup>66</sup> Ibn Taymīyah (Majd al-Dīn) in his *Muntaqa* has of course quoted a much larger number. But he has often treated the sayings and the doings of the Companions also as Hadīths, and sometimes he treats the various versions of the same Hadīths as independent ones.<sup>67</sup>

### Classification of books of Hadīth

Books of Hadīth have been classified into the following groups:

1. *Sahīfahs*.
2. *Ajzā'*.
3. *Rasā'il* or *Kutub*.
4. *Musannafs*.
5. *Musnads*.
6. *Mu'jams*.
7. *Jāmi's*.
8. *Sunans*.
9. *Mustadraks*.
10. *Mustakhrajs*.
11. *Arba'inīyāt*.

1. The *Sahīfahs* are such collections of the sayings of the Prophet as were written down by some of his Companions during his

life-time or by their followers in the next generation. Several of these *Sahīfahs* have been mentioned by Goldziher according to whom some of them are also described as *Rasā'il* and as *Kutub*.<sup>68</sup> One of them which was collected by Abū Hurayrah and taught and handed down by him to his student, Hammām b. Munabbih, has been edited by Dr. Hamīdullāh.<sup>69</sup> But the most important of them is the *Sahīfah* which was collected by 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, who gave it the title of *al-Sādiqah*.<sup>70</sup>

2. The *Ajzā'* are such collections of the Traditions as have been handed down on the authority of one single individual — be he a Companion or of any generation after him. The term *Juz'* is also applied to such collections of Hadīths as have been compiled on a particular subject-matter — e.g. 'Intention', the 'Vision of God', etc.<sup>71</sup>

3. The *Rasā'il* are such collections of Hadīths that deal with one particular topic out of eight topics into which the contents of the *Jāmi'* books of Hadīths may be generally classified.

These topics are:

- i. Beliefs or Dogma.
- ii. Laws or *Ahkām* which are also known as *Sunan* and include all the subjects of *Fiqh* from *Tahārat* or Purity to *Wasāyā* or Exhortations.
- iii. *Ruqāq*, i.e., Piety, Asceticism, Mysticism.
- iv. Etiquette in eating, drinking, travelling, etc.
- v. *Tafsīr* or commentary on the Qur'an.
- vi. *Tā'rikh* and *Siyar*, i.e., historical and biographical matters which include (a) Cosmology, Ancient History, etc. and (b) the life of the Prophet, of his Companions and Successors.
- vii. *Fitan*, i.e., Crises.
- viii. Appreciation (*Manāqib*) and denunciation (*Mathālib*) of persons, places, etc.

The *Rasā'il* are also called Books (*Kutub*). To this class belong many of the works of Ibn Hajar, al-Suyūṭī, and others.<sup>72</sup>

4. *Musannafs* are those large collections of Hadīths in which the traditions relating to most or all the various topics mentioned above

are put together and arranged in various books or chapters, each dealing with a particular topic. To this class belong the *Muwatta'* of Imam Mālik, the *Sahīh* of Muslim, etc.

5. The term *Musnad* (supported) was originally used for such traditions as were supported by a complete uninterrupted chain of authorities (*Isnād*) going back to a Companion who related it from the Prophet himself.<sup>73</sup> But later on the term came to be used in the general sense of a reliable and authoritative tradition. In this sense the term is also used for all reliable works in the Ḥadīth literature, and works like the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī and the *Sahīh* of al-Bukhārī are called *Musnads*. But technically it is used only for those collections of Ḥadīths in which they are arranged according to the names of the final authorities by whom they are related, irrespective of their subject-matter. Such are the *Musnads* of Abū Dāwūd Tayālīsī (d. 204 A.H./819 A.D.), Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 233 A.H./847 A.D.), 'Abdullāh b. Muhammad b. Abī Shaybah (d. 235 A.H./849 A.D.), 'Uthmān b. Abī Shaybah (d. 237 A.H./851 A.D.), Abū Khaythamah (d. 234 A.H./844 A.D.) and others.<sup>74</sup> He who collected Ḥadīths in the form of a *Musnad* is called a *Musnid* or a *Musnidī*.<sup>75</sup> The *Musnad* works themselves, however, differ in detail in the arrangement of the authorities who originally related them. In some of them they are arranged in the alphabetical order of their names. In some of them they are arranged according to their relative merit in the acceptance of Islam and in taking part in the early important events of the Prophet's mission. In some of them they are arranged according to the affinity of their tribe to the Prophet.<sup>76</sup>

There are, however, certain *Musnad* works which are divided into chapters devoted to various subjects, and in each chapter the Ḥadīths are arranged according to the original authorities, Companions, by whom they are related. This plan is followed by Abū Ya'la<sup>77</sup> (d. 276 A.H./889 A.D.) and Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān in their *Musnad* works.<sup>78</sup> These works combine the characteristics of the *Musnad* and of the *Musannaf* works.

Some of the *Musnad*-compilers, however, tried to collect together all the available traditions reported by the various Companions.<sup>79</sup> The *Musnad* of Ibn al-Najjār is said to have contained

the traditions related by all the Companions. The *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal contains more than 30,000 traditions reported by about 700 Companions.<sup>80</sup> The *Musnad* of Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān is reported by Hājī Khalīfah on the authority of Ibn Hazm to have contained traditions related by 1,300 Companions.<sup>81</sup> There are, however, many *Musnad* works which are devoted to traditions related either by special group of Companions or by one single Companion only.

6. The term *Mu'jam* is generally applied to such works on various subjects as are arranged in alphabetical order. The geographical and the biographical dictionaries of Yāqūt are called *Mu'jam al-Buldān* and *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, because they are arranged alphabetically. Such *Musnad* collections of Hadīths as are arranged under the names of the Companions in their alphabetical order are also known as *Mu'jam al-Sahābah*. But according to the authorities on the science of Tradition, the term is used technically for such collections of Hadīths only as are arranged not according to the Companions who reported them, but according to the traditionists from whom the compiler himself received them. The names of such traditionists (*shuyūkh*) are arranged alphabetically,<sup>82</sup> and all the traditions received from each *shaykh* are then collected together irrespective of their contents and subject-matter. To this class belong two of the collections of al-Tabarānī (260 A.H./870 A.D.-360/970) and the collections of Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl (d. 371 A.H./981 A.D.) and Ibn al-Qānī' (d. 350 A.H./960 A.D.).<sup>83</sup> The largest collection by al-Tabarānī is in reality a *Musnad* work, not a *Mu'jam* work; for it is a *Mu'jam al-Sahābah*, not a *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh*.

7. *Jāmi'* are those collections of Hadīths which contain traditions relating to all the various subject-matters mentioned under the *Rasā'il*. Thus, the *Sahīh* of al-Bukhārī as well as the book of Tirmidhī is called *Jāmi'*. But the *Sahīh* of Muslim is not described as *Jāmi'*, because (unlike al-Bukhārī) it does not contain traditions relating to all the chapters of the Qur'an.

8. *Sunan* are such collections of the traditions as contain *Hadīth al-Ahkām* (legal traditions) only, and leave out those traditions which relate to historical and other matters. Thus the collections of traditions made by Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī and many other traditionists

are known as *Sunan* works.

9. *Mustadraks* are such collections of Hadīths in which the compiler, having accepted the conditions laid down by any previous compiler, collects together such other traditions as fulfil those conditions and were missed by the previous compiler. To this class belongs the *Mustadrak* of al-Hākim who collected together such Hadīths as fulfilled the conditions laid down by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and were not included by them in their *Sahīhs*.

10. *Mustakhrajs* are those collections of Hadīths in which a later compiler of them collects together fresh *Isnāds* for such traditions as were collected by a previous compiler on the basis of different chains of *Isnād*. To this class belongs the *Mustakhraj* of Abū Nu'aym Isfahānī on the *Sahīhs* of al-Bukhārī and of Muslim. In this book Abū Nu'aym has given fresh chains of *Isnād* for some of the traditions which were already included by al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their *Sahīhs* with different *Isnads*.

11. The *Arba'inīyāt*, as the name shows, are the collections of forty Hadīths relating to one or more subjects which may have appeared to be of special interest to the compiler. An example of this class is the *Arba'in* of al-Nawawī.

Of all these eleven classes of the collections of Hadīths, the *Sahīfahs*, as their description shows, were the earliest in origin. The *Mu'jams*, the *Mustadraks*, the *Mustakhrajs* and the *Arba'inīyāt* must have been the latest. The *Ajzā'* and the *Ras'ail* in their technical sense described above also must have been later in origin and development than the *Musannaf* and the *Musnad* works. The *Sunan* and the *Jāmi'* being only subdivisions of the *Musannaf* works, the problem of the priority of origin of the remaining classes of the Hadīth works rests between the *Musannafs* and the *Musnads* which is difficult to decide. Goldziher is of the opinion that the *Musnads* are earlier in origin than the *Musannafs* which originated under the influence of the legal system of the *Ashāb al-Hadīth*.<sup>84</sup> But as the collection of Hadīths was greatly due to their legal importance, it is not unlikely that some of the very early collections of them were arranged according to their subject-matter connected with the Islamic legal, ritual or religious problems, as is also suggested by the title



*Kitāb al-Sunan* given to them.

The Hadīth thus collected by the continuous, hard and honest work of many generations of the Muslims of various countries belonging to different schools of thought, has been a subject of study of the Muslim scholars and a source of inspiration to the Muslim world upto the present time. The Hadīth together with the Qur'an served the Muslims as the main basis of their social structure. On this twofold basis originated and developed the various Islamic sciences. To these two turns an average Muslim for inspiration and guidance. On them can be properly based the reconstruction of the Islamic thought according to the requirements of modern times. The efforts of many modern reformers have so far failed because they ignored the Qur'an and the Hadīth, just as some Medieval Islamic sects could not flourish because they had ignored their importance.

#### NOTES

1. *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (Egypt 1309 A.H.), i, 20.
2. Abū Muḥammad al-Dārimī, *Sunan* (Kanpur 1292-93 A.H.), ed. 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Kashmīrī, p.46.
3. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadkhirat al-Huffāz* (Hyderabad 1330 A.H.), ed. Sayyid Muṣṭafā 'Alī, vol.i, p.6.
4. *Ibid.*, vol.I, p.7.
5. Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Qastallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-Ladunnīyah* (Egypt 1291 A.H.), vol.v, p.454.
6. *Mufaddaliyāt* (Oxford 1918-21), ed. C.J. Lyall, vol.lxvi p.5; vol.cxxiii, p.16.
7. I. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle 1889), vol.ii, pp.11-13.
8. Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* (Leiden 1904-18), ed. Edward Sachau, *et.al.*, vol.i, pt.I, p.145.
9. *Ibid.*, p.136.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, kitāb *al-'tisām*, bāb *al-iqtidā'* bi *af'āl al-nabī*, vol.iv, p.166.
12. *Ibid.*, k. *al-tahajjud*, b. *salāt al-layl*, vol.i, p.136.
13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, k. *al-I'tisām*, b. *al-ta'ammuq*, vol.iv, p.166.
15. *Sahih Muslim* (Delhi 1309 A.H.), k. *al-Birr*, b. *tafsir al-Birr*, vol.ii, p.314.
16. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan* (Delhi 1346 A.H.), ed. 'Abd al-Aḥad, "*Istighfār*", vol.i, p.119.
17. *Ibid.*, "*Takhfif al-Ukhrayayn*", vol.i, p.124.
18. *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, iv, 62.
19. *Ibid.*, k. *al-Wadū'*, b. *Isti'māl Fadl al-Wadū'*, vol.i, pp.32-33.
20. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.viii, p.234.
21. *Ibid.*, p.73.
22. *Ibid.*, vol.iv, pt.2, p.56.
23. Al-Dārimī, *op. cit.*, p.45.
24. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pt.2, p.125.
25. *Ibid.*, vol.iv, pt.2, p.80.
26. *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, k. 'Ilm, b. *al-Tanāwub*, vol.i, p.19.
27. *Zeitschrift der deutschen moregenlandischen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig), vol.x, p.2.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Waliy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Khaṭīb al-'Umarī al-Tibrīzī, *Mishkāt al-Masābih* (Lucknow 1326 A.H.), p.32.
30. *Ibid.*, p.35.
31. Hammām b. Munabbih, *Ṣahifah* (Paris 1380 A.H.), ed. Ḥamīdullāh, p.9.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pt.2, p.107.
34. Von Kremer, *Orient under the Caliphs* (Calcutta 1920), trl. S. Khudā Bakhsh, p.260.
35. Al-Munaydhir, a Companion, had visited Spain. See Ahmad al-Maghribī al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-Tib* (Cairo 1302 A.H.), vol.i, p.130.
36. See ch.I in *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature* (Dacca 1955).
37. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.iii, pt.I, p.206. However, 'Umar spread in various other ways the knowledge of Hadith among Muslims living in various parts of the Caliphate.
38. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.2, p.34.
39. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Jawzī, *Sirat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz* (Egypt 1331 A.H.).
40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*
42. Al-Maqqarī, *op. cit.*, vol.i, p.130.
43. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pt.2, p.134; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, k. 'Ilm, b. kitābat.
44. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi* (Cairo), pt.I, p.76.
45. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth* (commentary on Zayn al-Dīn 'Irāqī's *Alfiyah*) (Lucknow), p.239.
46. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī* (commentary to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*), (Egypt 1319 A.H.), vol.i, p.174.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pp.210-211.
49. A. Sprenger, "On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musulmans", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta), vol.xxv, pp.103 ff., 1856.
50. Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, vol.i, p.82.
51. *Ibid.*, p.95.
52. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Leipzig 1871-72), ed. Gustav Flügel, pp.225-27.
53. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pt.2, p.136.
54. Ibn al-Nadīm, *loc. cit.*
55. *Ibid.*, p.225.
56. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pp.213-216.
57. *Ibid.*, p.213.
58. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dihlawī, *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn* (Delhi 1898), p.25.
59. viz. Yahyā al-Tamīmī, Abū Hudhayfah and Suwayd b. Sa'īd.
60. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī, commentary on Imam Mālik's *al-Muwatta'* (Egypt 1310 A.H.), i, 8.
61. Ibn Sa'd, *op. cit.*, vol.iii, pt.1, p.164.
62. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, k. al-Jihād, b. man ḥaddatha b' mashāhidihī, vol.ii, p.97.
63. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *op. cit.*, pt.ii, p.27.
64. See Muṣṭafa b. 'Abdullāh Hājī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Leipzig 1835-42), ed. Gustav Flügel, vol.i, pp.174-75.
65. *Ibid.*, vol.iv, p.254 ff.
66. *Ibid.*, vol.ii, p.68.
67. *Ibid.*, vol.vi, p.167. This number is based on my own calculation.
68. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pp.231-32.

69. Hammām, *op. cit.*
70. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pp.10-11.
71. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dihlāwī, *Risālah dar Fann-i-Uṣul-i-Hadīth ('Ujdlah-i-Nāfi'ah)* (Delhi 1255 A.H.), p.22.
72. *Ibid.*, pp.19-20, 22-23.
73. For the difference of opinion about the definition of the *musnad Hadīth*, Tāhir b. Sālih al-Jazā'irī, *Tawjīh al-Nazar ilā Uṣul al-Athar* (Egypt 1328 A.H.), p.66.
74. A large number of *Musnad* works are mentioned by Hājī Khalīfah, *op. cit.*, vol.v, pp.532-43.
75. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, p.227.
76. Dihlāwī, *op. cit.*, p.21.
77. Dihlāwī, *Bustān al-Muhadāithīn*, p.37.
78. Hājī Khalīfah, *op. cit.*, vol.v, p.534.
79. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, p.229.
80. Tāj al-Dīn Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah al-Kubrā*, vol.i, p.202.
81. Hājī Khalīfah, *op. cit.*, vol.v, p.534.
82. Should they be arranged in the chronological order, the work would be called *Mashikhat*. See *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore* (Patna 1920), vol.v, pt.2 (1927), p.41 fn.
3. Dihlāwī, *op. cit.*, pp.56, 95.
4. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, vol.ii, pp.232 ff.