

# Sisters' Class 4 - The Science of Hadith

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## What Is The Science Of Hadith?

- It is from those types of knowledge which are tools to help us understand something else
- The essence of the science of hadith, is that it lets us distinguish between those ahaadeeth which are authentic, and those which are not

## The Virtues of The Science of Hadith And It's People (1)

- Every type of knowledge takes its virtue from its subject
- The subject of the science of hadith is the statements & actions of the best of Allah's creation
- As-Sam'aani said: "Know, may Allah give you success, that the knowledge of hadith is the most honourable type of knowledge, after knowing the book of Allah, because its rulings are built upon it and extracted from it"
- Allah The Exalted said: "And whatever the Messenger has given you – take it; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from it. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty." [Al-Hashr 59:7]
- There is no way to achieve what Allah mentioned in this aayah, without the science of hadith

## The Virtues of The Science of Hadith And It's People (2)

- Az-Zuhree said: "The knowledge of hadith is male, no one understands it except great men"
- Abu 'Aasim An-Nabeel said: "Whoever seeks the knowledge of hadith, he has sought the greatest thing in this world, so he must be from the greatest of people"
- The closest of all people to the Messenger of Allah, and the most deserving of his companionship after his noble companions are the scholars of hadith.
- Learning about the hadith in general, gets you as close as you can be to being a companion of the Messenger of Allah

## The Virtues of The Science of Hadith And It's People (3)

- Sufyaan Ath-Thawree said: "The angels are the guardians of the heavens, and the people of hadith are the guardians of the earth"
- Imaam Ahmad said: "There is no people, in my opinion, better than the people of hadith – they only know the hadith"
- Abu Dawood said: "If it were not for these people, Islam would have been forgotten"

## What Is A Hadith?

- The Sunnah is:
  - The statements
  - Actions
  - Approval
  - and Description of the Messenger of Allah
- A single narration of a part of the sunnah is called a “hadith”
- The plural is “Ahaadeeth”
- The word has a broader meaning in the Arabic language, but this is the technical meaning that we understand now

## How Is A Hadith Transmitted?

- A hadith has two components: a chain of narrators, and a text
- The ahaadeeth are recorded in books; most of which were written down between 200-300 years after the hijrah
- However, the strong oral tradition means that the ahaadeeth have been preserved. As Allah says: Allah says: “Indeed, it is We who sent down the *dhikr* and indeed, We will be its guardian.” [Al Hijr 15:9]

## The Books of Hadith (1)

- The two ‘Saheehs’ (As-Saheehain):
  - The Saheeh of Imaam Al-Bukhari
  - The Saheeh of Imaam Muslim
  - What was their aim in collecting these ahaadeeth?
  - Do these books contain weak hadith?
- The four ‘Sunan’:
  - Sunan At-Tirmidhi
  - Sunan Abi Dawood
  - Sunan An-Nasaa’i
  - Sunan Ibn Maajah
  - What is the status of their ahaadeeth?
  - How do we tell what is authentic from what is not authentic?
- Collectively known as the ‘six books of hadith’ (Al-Kutub-us-Sitta)

## The books of Hadith (2)

- Other important books of hadith:
  - The Musnad of Imaam Ahmad
  - The Muwatta of Imaam Maalik
  - The Sunan of Imaam Ad-Daarimee
  - As-Sunan Al-Kubraa’ by Al-Bayhaqi
  - Al-Mustadrak ‘ala As-Saheehain by Al-Haakim
  - Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah

- Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan
- ...and many more

## Knowledge of The Narrators of Hadith (1)

- An important part of the science of hadith is knowing about the narrators of the chain
- The original principle of this is Allah’s statement: “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.” [Al-Hujuraat 49:6]
- In one way of reading, instead of investigate: “make certain”
- Discussing the narrators – even their faults – is not backbiting because it is a necessity by which we distinguish between the authentic and the unauthentic

## Knowledge of The Narrators of Hadith (2)

- Narrators are judged in two main areas:
  - Their religion
  - Their reliability
- The aspect of religion covers:
  - Their truthfulness – with regard to the ahaadeeth and with regard to their dealings with the people
    - *Kadhaab* (liar)
    - *Matrook* (abandoned – because of lying to the people)
    - The story of Imaam Bukhari and the man with his horse
  - Their adhering to the religion
    - *Faasiq* (someone who commits major sin, or is known for persisting in minor sin)
  - Their manners
    - Sometimes a narrator may be left because he does not observe the manners of the people of the area in which he is
    - This is rare

## Knowledge of The Narrators of Hadith (3)

- The aspect of reliability covers their ability to memorise and pass on ahaadeeth, either in written or verbal form
  - *Sayyi’ul-Hifdh* (bad memory)
  - *Fuhsh-ul-ghalat* (consistent mistakes)
  - *Shadeed-ul-ghaflah* (very absent minded)
- Written form can include people who were poor at writing, or who only wrote, and then lost their book, or people who were careless with their writings
- All weaknesses can be general, or specific. Specific weaknesses can relate to a particular teacher, or a particular place, or a particular time.

- We judge narrators by gathering together all of the opinions of the scholars of hadith, and evaluating them.
- Not every scholar of hadith is equal – some are harsh (like Shu’bah) and some are very lenient (like Ibn Hibbaan)

## Levels Of Authenticity

- *Saheeh* (Authentic)
  - Many different levels
    - The best of which is what we find in both Bukhari & Muslim
    - Then what Bukhari narrated
    - Then what Muslim narrated
    - Then what is on the condition of both Bukhari and Muslim
    - Then what is on the condition of Bukhari
    - Then what is on the condition of Muslim
    - Then what fulfills the basic conditions of authenticity
- What do we mean by ‘conditions?’

## The Conditions of ‘Saheeh’

- The basic conditions:
  - The chain must be connected, from the first person to the last
  - All of the narrators must be of strong memorisation (i.e. *Thiqah* – reliable)
    - Note that there are different levels, even amongst the reliable narrators. For example, Maalik -> Naafi’ -> Ibn ‘Umar, is considered the best of all chains
  - All of the narrators must be trustworthy
  - This memorisation and trustworthiness must be extremely high
  - The chain must be free from *shudhood* (*shaadh* is a form of weakness normally related to contradicting a person or group who are more reliable)
  - The chain must be free from *‘ilal* (an *‘illah* is a hidden weaknesses)
    - The science of hidden weaknesses is the hardest science in Islam – only the greatest of the great Imaams understood it

## Bukhari & Muslim

- Many Imaams adapted these basic conditions, adding conditions of their own.
- Imaam Muslim did not take from every ‘reliable’ narrator, he only took from the higher levels of reliable narrators, in general
- Imaam Bukhari was even stricter about the narrators which he took from, and he added a further condition:
  - What was it?
    - The other scholars used to consider that if it was possible for two people in the chain to have met (ie. Lived in the same country/region, travelled at the same time etc), and it was not

specifically mentioned that they did, that we give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that they met. Imaam Bukhari would not accept a hadith unless all of the people who were not specifically mentioned that they met, were proven to have met.

## Levels Of Authenticity (2)

- 'Hasan' (Fair/Good)
  - A hadith which fulfils all of the conditions of 'saheeh', except one
  - Which one?
    - It is allowed for the reliability of the narrator to be slightly less than the reliability of the narrators of 'saheeh' hadith. It must still be of a good standard though.
- Saheeh li-ghayrihi & Hasan li-ghayrihi
  - A hadith which has reached the level of saheeh or hasan, not because of itself, but because of other narrations which lift it up to that level
  - In the case of hasan li-ghayrihi this can be a number of weak narrations (with **minor weaknesses**) which come together
- Da'eef
  - Has many different types and reasons, some of which are minor weaknesses and some of which are major weaknesses
- Which of the above do we act upon?
  - Everything other than da'eef

## Classifying A Hadith

- Hadith can be classified in a number of ways
  - According to their end:
    - *Musnad* – that which ends at the Prophet
    - *Mursal* – that which ends at a taabi'ee
    - *Mawqoof* – that which ends before a taabi'ee
  - According to the number of different chains:
    - *Mutawaatir* – a hadith which has so many chains, from so many different places, it would have been impossible for their to have been a mistake – this can be according to the exact wording, or according to the general meaning
    - *Mashoor* – a hadith which has more than one chain of narration but hasn't reached the level of *mutawaatir*
    - *Aahaad* – a hadith which has only a single chain of narration

## Classifying A Hadith (2)

- According to who is being narrated from:
  - *Hadith Qudusee* – a hadith which the Prophet narrates from Allah
    - How is this different from the Qur'aan?

- The Qur’aan is the speech of Allah which we are rewarded for reciting. The Hadith Qudusee is when the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrates from Allah, and it is not part of the Qur’aan and we are not rewarded for reciting it.
  - *Hadith (Nabawi)* – A hadith which is narrated from the Prophet
  - *Athar* – A hadith which is from other than the Prophet

## Types of Weakness: A Broken Chain

- We learnt that one of the conditions of an authentic hadith is that the chain be connected
- There are many different types of break that can happen in the chain of narrators, but any break is a weakness
- The break can be:
  - At the beginning of the chain: *Mu’allaq*
  - In the middle of the chain: *Munqati’*, *Mu’dal*
  - At the end of the chain: *Mursal*

## Types of Weakness: Tadlees

- Tadlees is basically a form of deception, where a narrator conceals a fault in the chain, making it appear to be sound
- A narrator who does this regularly may be rejected
- Tadlees has many types, which vary in severity
- Tadlees can be done for a number of reasons, including:
  - The narrator considers the person to be reliable, but many of the scholars of hadith consider the person to be unreliable, so the narrator conceals the fault in order that the hadith be accepted because he believes it to be correct
  - The narrator was narrating from someone much younger than him, and was embarrassed to give his name
  - The narrator was bored of using the same name for his Shaykh because of the large amount of times he narrated from him

## Types Of weakness: Jahaalah

- Jahaalah refers to the chain containing one or more people who are ‘majhool’ (unknown)
- These people can be split into two types:
  - People who we know exist, but we don’t know if they are reliable or not. We know they exist because at least two different people narrate from them. This type of person is called: “majhool-al-haal”
  - People who we do not even know if they exist, or if they’re names are a mistake from one of the narrators. They only have a single person who narrated from them. They are called: “majhool-al-’ayn”

## Types of Weakness: A Weak Narrator

- Weakness in one or more of the narrators can be severe, or it can be mild
- As mentioned, it can be specific, or general
- The worst kind of weakness, is the kind which relates to the religion, such as someone who is a known liar, or even worse, is known to have lied about the Messenger of Allah, followed by people who commit open sin
- There are many kinds of weakness that relate to reliability
- How did the scholars of hadith find if a person is reliable or not?
  - If they met the narrator, he could be tested.
  - The story of Imaam Al-Bukhari when he came to Baghdad
  - Otherwise they could compare his narrations to the narrations of other reliable people. This became very common in later years

## Types of Weakness: Ash-Shaadh

- The word has different meanings, according to different scholars, but the most common description is:
  - Contradicting a person, or group, who is more reliable
- This can mean contradicting a major student of the Shaykh, a famous narrator, or contradicting a large group of people

## Types of Weakness: Al-'Illah

- An 'Illah is a hidden weakness
- Only the greatest of the imaams were able to discover it, because the chain appears to be sound
- The only way to find these hidden defects is to group together all of the chains for a particular hadith
- The example of a goldsmith who can distinguish real gold from fake gold because of his experience – in the same way a scholar of hadith learns to distinguish the authentic ahaadeeth from the false
- There are many types of hidden weaknesses

## Things to bear In Mind

- Only by grouping together all of the chains can you evaluate whether a hadith is authentic or not
- The early scholars are the key to understanding whether a hadith is authentic, and they had an insight which the later scholars did not have
  - Example of the hadith of wudoo before sleep for the junub (a person in a state of sexual impurity)
  - What goes in to Imaam Al-Bukhari's work when he said "Saheeh"
- Having said that, the later scholars, especially those who are well known for their knowledge in the field, can help us to understand the position of the early scholars
  - The example of Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani