

THE STORY OF HADEETH

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Course Outline

Course topics:

1. Meaning of Hadeeth
2. Meaning of Sunnah in the Qur'an and Hadeeth
3. Books of Sunnah vs books of Hadeeth
4. The Sahabah's conscientiousness in finding the truth
5. The Sahabah's verification of the Sunnah
6. Critical assessment of the Sahabah
7. The Sahabah's reference to people of knowledge
8. Writing down the Hadeeth
9. Reasons for for not writing the Hadeeth initially
10. Preservation of the Hadeeth
11. Administrative documents
12. Formal compilation of the Hadeeth collections

Course objectives:

1. To know the circumstances that beset the compilation and recording of Hadeeth
2. To learn the stages of Hadeeth preservation
3. To prove the legal authority of the Sunnah in Islam
4. To be able to translate the Qur'an and Sunnah into our real life

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

COURSE DURATION

Video	–	2 hours 20 min
Study Guide	–	35 min
Assessment	–	15 min
Total Duration	–	3 hours 10 mins

Lesson 1: The Story of Hadeeth Part 1

1. Meaning of Hadeeth

The original word is taken from 'Haddatha'. 'Haddatha' means 'he reported or narrated, or he talked', so when you say Hadeeth in Arabic language, it means a talk or a conversation or specifically it is a secret talk or a story. It may be actually used as a reference to a statement or a message (Surah 39, number 23)

It may be actually used also as an adjective. And in this sense, it means 'modern' or 'recent'.

In Hadeeth terminology, Hadeeth includes what is reported of the Prophet's:

- i. Sayings
- ii. Actions
- iii. Tacit approvals
- iv. Sirah (Prophet's biography)
- v. Ash Shama'll (the personal and physical features, characteristics and affairs of the Prophet)
- vi. Khasaa'is (peculiar characteristics of the prophet such the number of wives he can marry (more than four, the manner of his fasting (continuous fasting including the night, which is known as Wisaal))

Whatever the messenger of Allah said, did, or approved are considered as sources of legislation. The mere silence of the prophet on a certain practice makes it legally approved, even if the prophet did not do it himself, or did not comment on it.

As we know that we have two primary main sources for the Sharia, or the Islamic law:

- i. The Quran, the speech of Allah
- ii. The Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) or the Hadeeth of the messenger (pbuh) which represents the practical demonstration of Islamic teachings

Lesson 2: The Story of Hadeeth-Part 2

2. Meaning of Sunnah in the Qur'an and Hadeeth:

In the Qur'an and Hadeeth, sunnah has the following meanings:

- i. a manner of acting
- ii. a way of life
- iii. a model behaviour (Uswah)
- iv. a universal norm that governs the universe

So, these are the basic four meanings or literal origins of the word Sunnah.

The technical meaning opted by the scholars is synonymous with the word Hadeeth.

Sunnah vs Hadeeth

The technical meaning of the word Sunnah is exactly like the technical meaning of the word Hadeeth. It stands for everything which is attributed to the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, including his sayings, his actions, his tacit approvals, and it also is extended to his biography, the life story of the prophet (pbuh), and his personal physical features. This is a basic definition of the word Sunnah. It is synonymous with the word Hadeeth if used in separate or different contexts.

But when they are used for the same context, the same verse or in the same statement, the Sunnah refers to the practical laws derived from such Hadeeth. Again, Hadeeth is a vehicle, a statement of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Sunnah is the legal rulings that we derive from Hadeeth. Once they become established and applicable, in the sense that they are being proved through authentic Hadeeth, they become an established Sunnah and established norm of the Prophet (pbuh).

Therefore, we don't have the sense of saying this is a weak Sunnah or a strong Sunnah or this is a reliable Sunnah and this is weak, good sunnah and bad Sunnah.

3. Books Of Sunan vs Books of Hadeeth

That is the reason in the books of Hadeeth literature such as Sunan Abu Dawood, and Sahih Al Buhari represent two types of Hadeeth collections. What is the difference between Sunan Abu Dawood, and Sahih Al Buhari? Sunan Abu Dawood contains the practical Hadeeth that talk about the practical rulings of the messenger (pbuh) which are derived from the Hadeeth of the prophet (pbuh), whereas Sahih Al Buhari may also talk about some reports on history. It may also contain about some Hadeeth on Eman and on some other issues which are not strictly

talking about the practices of the religion of Allah. So, this is the basic difference between the word 'Sunnah' and the word 'Hadeeth'.

Getting the reward of the trend one sets whether bad or good

The prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever introduces something good in the religion of Allah, and the people follow him, he will have the reward of that specific act, and the reward of people who follow him, up to the Day of Judgement". This Hadeeth may create confusion among the people, thinking it to be a justification for creating things presumed to be good. However, it does not legalise such a practice. It was stated by the Prophet to encourage people to give charity. As he encouraged them to give charity to some people who came with ragged clothes, and a man started and gave a charity to them, and when the prophet saw the people following the example to that man, he made such comment on the reward of someone who does some good and people follow them.

Lesson 3: The Story of Hadeeth - Part 3

4. The Sahabah's conscientiousness in finding the Truth

- i. Whenever the Sahabah had any dispute on any issue, the Sahabah referred to Allah (the Qur'an) and the messenger (pbuh). Whenever they asked the prophet (pbuh) when he had knowledge, he would answer them immediately. Otherwise, he would wait for revelation. In the Qur'an, many times, Allah says "they ask you, [O Muhammad]"
- ii. Whenever they were not with the prophet (pbuh), they would do their best in finding the truth in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Amr Bin Al Aas was once on a campaign, he got Janabah, and due to the cold weather, he made dry ablution (Tayammum).
- iii. Whenever the prophetic instruction was not a clear cut one, and they understood it differently, each acted according to their understanding, as in the case when the Prophet instructed them saying, "do not perform Asr Salaah except in Bani Quraydhah. Some understood it to mean that the Salaah should only be there; others understood it to be an encouragement to go fast. The Prophet approved both groups.
- iv. They were very conscious not to quote the prophet except when they were very sure. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Attributing a lie to me is different from attributing a lie to anybody else. Whoever intentionally puts a lie on my tongue, he must prepare a resting place for himself in the Hellfire".
- v. Allah says, "Oh, you who believe if there comes to you a disobedient one, with information, investigate it lest that you harm people out of ignorance and then you will become or you'll regret what you have already done." This made investigating reports including those attributed to the Sunnah of the Prophet one of the major characteristics of the Sahabah.
- vi. Total acceptance to whatever the messenger said. The story of Night Journey and the Ascension to heaven showed how submissive and how much trust the Sahabah had in the Prophet. When the disbelievers asked Abu Bakr As Siddique whether he believed the Prophet's claim of ascension to heaven, he said to them, "if he said that, he must be true". Thus, he made two conditions for the acceptance of any report: a) making sure that the Prophet (pbuh) said that (this is verification), and b) if it is true, I should actually believe him.

- vii. Some of the Sahabah devoted their entire life to collecting the Hadeeth of the Prophet, such as Abu Hurayrah, who as a result, reported prolifically about the Prophet (pbuh).
- viii. Some Sahabah used to take turns with their friends to go to learn from the Prophet (pbuh). This is exactly what Omar did with his friend.

Lesson 4: The Story of Hadeeth - Part 4

5. The Sahabah's verification of the Sunnah

After the death of the messenger (pbuh) the Sahabah started having some questions, and some incidents that they did not know how to deal with them. For example:

At the time of Abu Bakr, a grandmother came asking for her inheritance, but he did not know that she was entitled to any. He asked the Sahabah and Al Mughirah bin Shu'bah narrated to him a Hadeeth that she is entitled to one sixth. Abu Bakr asked if any other Sahabi knew the same from the Prophet, and Muhammad bin Maslamah confirmed that.

So, whenever they had or faced any problem, the Sahabah referred to the Sunnah of the messenger (pbuh) in all of the affairs that they differed on.

So, during the time of the Sahabah, we have three specific features:

- i. that they did not encourage a lot of proliferation of reports about the messenger (pbuh) for fear that people would be occupied with the Hadeeth at the cost of the Qur'aan.
- ii. that they did not accept anything without due verification and authentication. They did not accuse anybody of committing a lie, but simply they were in need to investigate that the messenger (pbuh) has already stated that in such an occasion, even if it may cost them sometimes to ask for double and treble testimonies.
- iii. That they conducted a comparative analysis of texts. By comparative analysis of texts, they subjected the Hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh) to an intensive comparison.

6. Critical assessment of the Sahabah:

There are many instances that show how keen the Sahabah were to cross-check narrations of Hadeeth:

- i. Omar's verification of the Hadeeth of seeking permission three times and leaving if there is no response from the owner of the house.
- ii. Aishah did not accept the Hadeeth that says that the deceased is punished because of the bewailing of his relatives. She quoted the context of the Hadeeth and showed that it was misunderstood.
- iii. She criticised the quick manner Abu Hurayrah recited the Hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh).

7. The Sahabah's reference to the knowledgeable among them

Whenever the Sahabah faced any situation, they referred to people who had something from the prophet that help in that situation. Examples:

- i. Omar commanded that the knowledgeable Sahabah remain in Madinah for consultation.
- ii. Omar sought the counsel of the senior Sahabah regarding the plague of Amwas
- iii. After the death of Omar Bin Al Khattab, the Sahabah spread in the whole Muslim world teaching people. They travelled to Iraq, Shaam, Egypt, etc.

What characterises this period?

- i. Investigation
- ii. Scrupulousness
- iii. Non-Proliferation of a lot of Hadeeth,
- iv. The Sahabah of the Prophet (pbuh) made some critical assessments as Aisha did.

Lesson 5: The Story of Hadeeth - Part 5

8. Writing Down the Hadeeth

Phases of writing the Hadeeth:

- i. Total ban on writing anything apart from the Qur'an, which was initiated by the command of the Prophet, not to write anything and to erase whatever had been written. The prophet (pbuh) said (Whoever wrote down anything other than the book of Allah, he must immediately erase it).
- ii. Individual recordings of Hadeeth attempted by the individual Sahabah
- iii. Formal documentation of the Hadeeth, in huge collections in the Umayyad

9. Reasons for not writing the Hadeeth in the initial stage

- i. Muslims were actually fresh, and they were not fully accommodated to the style of the Quran, and he actually desired that they pay more of their attention to the book of Allah, and nothing else. Writing both will actually distract the proper preservation and the proper keeping of the book of Allah.
- ii. Some of the Sahabah also used to write some explanatory notes on the margins of their Mushafs. Such notes might be Hadeeths of the Prophet. Therefore, there was justified fear of interpolation and confusion in the Qur'an.

But later on, when the messenger (pbuh) was very comfortable that the Sahabah and confident that the Sahabah could discriminate between his speech and the speech of Allah, the Qur'aan's style and the Sunnah's style or the Hadeeth style, the messenger (pbuh) gave them permission.

Following that, many companions of the Prophet had their own documents of Hadeeth:

- i. Abdullah bin Amr bin Al Aas had a small collection of Hadeeth, he called As Sahifah As Sadiqah. It was known to the Sahabah and was incorporated in later compilations of Hadeeth. He was commanded by the Prophet to write his statements, and not listen to those who tried to prevent him from writing everything he heard from the prophet.
- ii. The document of Sa'd bin Ubadah. This is actually attested and confirmed by Al Imam At Tirmidhi and Al Imam Al Bukhari.

- iii. The document of Samurah bin Jundub, who died in 60 after the Hijrah of the Prophet (pbuh). He wrote Hadeeth which were actually later inherited by his son Sulayman bin Samurah bin Jundub.
- iv. The Sahifah of Hammam bin Munabbih. Hammam is a student of Abu Hurayrah. And Abu Hurayrah is the most prolific narrator of the Hadeeth. This Sahifah was actually narrated as a whole in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad.
- v. The Hadeeth recorded by Jabir bin Abdullah, who died in 78, after the Hijra of the prophet (pbuh) who documented the rituals of Hajj, the longest tradition, the longest report, which talks about the detailed practices of Hajj. This was actually inherited by most of the compilers of Hadeeth in Sahih Muslim in Full authenticity, where Jabir's Hadeeth is given the priority over all other reports when it conflicts with others with respect actually to the practices of the prophet (pbuh) during Hajj.
- vi. the Constitution of Medinah, which is the Prophet (pbuh) has committed into writing, and it was a matter of covenants between him and the Jews. And it was a pact of security and safety for a pluralistic Madani society where the prophet (pbuh) lived side by side to the non-Muslims. It was known as Sahifatil Madinatil Munawwarah.
- vii. Ali bin Abu Talib's document wherein he wrote the Zakaah details from the Prophet (pbuh)
- viii. The book of Abu Bakr As Siddique.
- ix. The letter the Prophet wrote for the tribe of 'Ukaym wherein he prohibited for them the hides of dead animals.

Lesson 6: The Story of Hadeeth Part - 6

10. Preservation of the Hadeeth

The following should be noted:

- i. Oral transmission was initially more common than writing the Hadeeth, due to the fact that the Arabs were an illiterate nation. They depended strongly on memorisation, and they showed phenomenally great examples in this connection.
- ii. The Arabic script had some deficiencies at that time, as we know that the Arabic script was rudimentary, in the sense that it did not have a dotting system, and it didn't have the diacritical or inflectional marks that are added to words. Dotting in Arabic language came afterwards. The lack of this vocalisation marks could have led to confusion.
- iii. Such diacritical marks were introduced at the time of Al Hajjaj Bin Yusuf Ath Thaqafi, in the Umayyad dynasty, in the Marwani's family when they gave him the governorate of Iraq. So, Abul Aswad Ad Du'ali was the first person to introduce this new thing during the reign of Al Hajjaj Bin Yusuf Ath Thaqafi.

11. Administrative documents

There is a very important book about this point by Dr Hamidullah, who verified the political and administrative documents at the time of the Prophet (pbuh)

The Prophet sent to the heads of the neighbouring states, inviting them to accept Islam. Such letters are considered authentic original documents that contain direct guidance of the prophet (pbuh):

- i. The Prophet's letter to the sovereign of the Persian empire
- ii. The Prophet's letter to the sovereign of the Roman empire
- iii. The Prophet's letter to the sovereign of Egypt
- iv. The Prophet's letter to the sovereign of Abyssinia

The messenger of Allah also signed a number of agreements, which are preserved in their original form:

- i. The agreement of Hudaibiyyah
- ii. The constitution of Madinah or Sahifatil Madinatil Munawwarah

Despite all that is presented so far as regards the preservation of the sunnah of the Prophet, we can admit that the whole Sunnah had never been committed into writing, before Az Zuhri (d. 124 H).

12. Formal compilation of Hadeeth collections

No attempt has been made to compile the Hadeeth of the Prophet in complete books, before the Umayyad ruler, Omar Bin Abdul Aziz, after the second half of the first Islamic century or in the middle of their first Islamic century. He commanded Al Imam Az Zuri, who passed away in 124, after the Hijrah of the Prophet, (pbuh) — to write down the Hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh). This should not be confused with the earlier individual attempts that had been made by the Sahabah directly from the Prophet (pbuh). Such private writing called Al Kitabah, whereas the formal documentation of Hadeeth is called Tadween.

Here, the Sunnah was collected from all narrators and reporters, and from all territories, especially in Medinah of the prophet (pbuh) and it was actually committed into a writing form into classified compilations. Those compilations became the essence of similar compilations that were written.

Question and Answer Bucket

1. Is there recent research into the old manuscripts of the Prophet's sayings?

Ans. Subhi As Salih wrote a book after a thorough research and came to the conclusion that during the lifetime of the Prophet, (pbuh), we have solid proofs to state that the Sunnah had been documented, or at least a number of Hadeeth of the Prophet, (pbuh) were committed to writing. And also, the same conclusion was reached by the orientalist or by the Western scholar, Nabia Abbott, who actually verified some of the manuscripts. She has two volumes about early manuscripts in Islamic history. She discovered a number of written manuscripts, which were in the library of Chicago University. She concluded that the Sunnah of the messenger, (pbuh) had a remnant of early documents, not only talking about the statements of the Prophet, (pbuh) but it also it talks about some terms or some techniques of transmitting those Hadeeth through the early stages of Islam.

2. Can you give examples of Hadeeth collections that are published and are accessible to the readers today?

Ans. There are huge compilations which are now published and accessible to everybody, some of which are the Musnad of Ibn Abu Shaybah and the Musannaf Abdur Razzaq As San'aani. After them came the Saheeh's of Al Bukhari and Muslim.

3. Was it unanimously adopted among the community of the Sahabah that the ban on writing of the Hadeeth issued by the Prophet in early stages was abrogated?

Ans. No. Some of the companions of the prophet (pbuh) stuck to the original command that he made, including, for example, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood, Zayd Bin Thabit, Abu Musa Al Ashari, Abu Saeed Al Khudri. These kept prohibiting their students from writing the Hadeeth.