

Meeting 2: The Tragedy of Hadith Prohibition; Roots and Reasons

[Some Examples of Hadith Prohibition](#)

1. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Muslim, Al-Darimi (the teacher of Bukhari), Al-Termithi and Nasaei narrated in their Isnad from Abu-Sa'eed Al-Khodri: The Prophet (S) said: "Do not quote me in other than the Quran. So, whoever has written anything from me other than the Quran, shall erase it."
2. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal narrated from Zaid Ibn Thabet: "The Messenger of Allah (S) prohibited us from writing anything from him and he erased them."
3. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal narrated from Abu-Horayra: "We were sitting writing what we had heard from the Prophet (S), when the Prophet (S) arrived. He asked what we were writing. We said: What we have heard from you. He said: Are you (compiling) a book besides the Book of Allah? We said: (we write) what we hear from you. He said: "Write the Book of Allah. Write only the Book of Allah. Are you writing other than the Book of Allah? Write only the Book of Allah." Abu-Horayra said: Following the instruction of the Prophet (S) we collected our writings and burnt them in a fire."

As we shall explain in this lesson 'the Ahadith of Prohibition' are undoubtedly either fabricated to justify the mistakes of the Caliphs or they were special instruction for specific people such as Abu-Horayra. Remarkably, although according to Abu-Horayra, the Prophet (S) had prohibited him to write any Hadith, the Sunni books of Hadith is largely filled with his narrations. In fact, in the Sunni books of Hadith no one has narrated from the Prophet (S) more than Abu-Horayra!

[Stages of Prohibition of Hadith](#)

During the Time of the Prophet (S)

Al-Darami in the introduction of his 'Sunan' and Al-Hakem in his Al-Mostadrak' narrated from Abdullah the son of Amr Ibn 'As: I used to write whatever I heard from the Messenger of Allah (S) until the Qoraysh prohibited me and said to me: Do you write anything you hear from the Prophet (S) whilst he is also a human who has rage and pleasure? I then stopped writing the Hadith until I informed the Prophet (S) about what the Qoraysh had told me. He pointed to his mouth with his finger and said: "Write. By the One my life is in His Mighty Hand, none other than truth has come out of this."

In the last days of the life of the Prophet (S)

Ibn Abbas said: when the Prophet (S) was at his dying bed there where some men around him, among them, Omar Ibn Khattab. The Messenger of Allah (S) said to them: Bring me a book to write something for you that you may never go astray. Omar said: Surely the pain has inflicted the Messenger of Allah and the Book of Allah is with you. The Book of Allah suffices us! Following his (Omar) words those who were at the house disputed amongst themselves. Some agreed with Omar and when the dispute and voices rose the Messenger of Allah (S) said: Stand up and leave me for it is not appropriate to dispute at the presence of a Prophet (S)."

During the reign of Abu-Bakr

Al-Thahabi under the biography of Abu-Bakr narrated: "After the demise of the Prophet (S) Abu-Bakr called people and said: You have been narrating many Ahadith from the Prophet (S) yet you dispute among yourselves about them. People who come after you will dispute more about them. Thus, from now do not narrate any more Hadith from the Prophet (S). Whoever asked you anything tell them: Between us and you is the Book of Allah, thus accept its Halal as Halal and accept its Haraam as Haraam."

Al-Thahabi also narrated the following event from Aiysha; the daughter of Abu-Bakr: "My father has compiled 500 Hadith from the Prophet (S). One night (during his Caliphate) he was uneasy and did not sleep the whole night. In the morning, he called me and said: My daughter bring me those Ahadith that I have with you. I brought them to him and he burnt them all. He then said: I am worried lest I die and there has been any Hadith that I have narrated it from the Prophet (S) through a person that I assumed him to be honest and trustworthy whereas he is not. I do not wish to carry the responsibility of a wrong narration on my neck!"

During the reign of Omar

Ibn Sa'd narrated from Orwa: Omar decided to write down the Ahadith of the Prophet (S). He sought the opinion of the Companions about the matter to which they positively consented. Nonetheless, Omar thought about it over for a month and then announced: I had in mind to write down the Ahadith of the

Prophet (S). Yet, I remembered the nations who were before you; those who wrote their books and abandoned the Book of Allah. By Allah! I will never mix the Book of Allah with anything else." Ibn Sa'd continued: "Omar took an oath from people to bring all the books of Hadith that they had compiled. When the Companions brought their books, he set them all on fire."

During the reign of Othman

Othman sent Abu Dharr on exile to Damascus for the so-called crime of narrating the Prophetic Hadith. Subsequently, Mo'awiyah; the then ruler of Damascus, boycotted Abu Dharr and did not allow anyone to communicate with him. Eventually Abu Dharr the distinguished companion of the Prophet (S) died lonely in the wilderness of Rabatha.

During the reign of Mo'awiyah

Mo'awiyah wrote an official letter with the same content to all his delegates announcing that whoever narrates anything in virtue of Abu-Torab (Imam Ali) or his family, he is not under the protection of the government." Ibn Abil-Hadid furthered that during that time the people of Kufa suffered the most.

Analysis of the Motivations behind the Prohibition of Hadith

1. The best evidence of this claim is that many Companions including Abu-Bakr had books of Hadith. Is it possible that the Prophet of Islam (S) has forbidden something yet many Companions disobey him and do otherwise?! The narrations concerning prohibition of Hadith indicate to us that the Companions in general were into the good tradition of collecting the Ahadith of the Prophet (S). It was due to this tradition that when Omar sought their opinion about compiling the Hadith they all consented.

2. If they were truly concerned about the forged Hadith would it not be more reasonable to form a committee of Hadith investigation and then compile the Ahadith that there were enough trustworthy testimonies on them? Moreover, Abu-Bakr had accompanied the Prophet (S) for many years, could he then not at least keep the Ahadith that he had heard directly from the Prophet (S)? Why did he have to burn all of them?! Is it possible that he meant to hide something from the next generations lest they used it against him?

5. Abu-Bakr asserted that he was concerned about the further future disputes amongst the Muslims and hence decided to uproot the problem by eradicating the Prophetic Hadith! Today and for many centuries Muslims suffer various sectarianism primarily due to the fact that the collection of the Prophetic Hadith was prohibited over the first century of the advent of Islam.

3. In our opinion, the main root for prohibition of the Hadith must be sought in the critical issue of the caliphate after the Prophet (S). The following are some proofs for this opinion:

a. As mentioned earlier it was Qoraysh, not the Prophet (S) who forbade Abdullah son of Amr Ibn to

narrate the Prophetic Hadith. The reason mentioned in the narration is interesting: "The Prophet (S) is only a human and has rage and pleasure." This expression is used only when the speaker has spoken about the virtues or vices of someone else. Surely, the Prophet of Islam (S) did not speak in favour of the Qoraysh or else they would never abandon Abdullah from narrating it. Thus, it seems more likely that Abdullah had collected some Ahadith that could be used against the party of Qoraysh.

b. Omar had ordered the Companions of the Prophet (S) to lessen the narrations from the Prophet (S) except if it was about the practical laws of Islam. This again indicates that the main concern of Omar was about the Ahadith that dealt with the virtues of his opponent, i.e. Imam Ali (a.s.). This claim can be proven by studying the trend of the Hadith prohibition at the time of Mo'awiyah who unlike Omar, explicitly abandoned any narration concerning the virtues of Imam Ali (a.s.).

c. The fabricators of the law of Hadith Prohibition did not apply it to their sincere and loyal friends, nor would it apply to themselves. Among those selected people on whom the law of Hadith prohibition did not apply was the mother of the believers; Aiysha the loyal daughter of Abu Bakr. During the reigns of Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman she was the official spokeswoman of the government. Similarly, Omar freely fabricated some narrations concerning himself such as "The Agreements" (Al Mowafiqaat).

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