

Meeting 4: The History of Hadith amongst the Shia

[Some examples of the Shia resistance against the law of Hadith prohibition](#)

[Abu Dharr Al-Ghefari](#)

Abu Dharr during the reign of Omar and Othman made a pilgrimage to Hajj. He was sitting nearby the Middle Stone (Jamaratul-Wosta resembling Satan and whereat pilgrims throw stones) at Mena. The pilgrims who knew him and his status had circled around him asking their religious questions. All of a sudden one of the agents of the government abruptly stood above his head saying: "Were you not forbidden from giving any verdict?"

Abu Dharr looked up at him and said: "Are you appointed to watch me? If you put your sword here (pointing at the back of his neck) to behead me, because I am narrating a Hadith, while you would sever me head if I can narrate another Hadith from the Prophet (S) I would certainly do so." [1](#)

[Roshayd Al-Hajari](#)

After his execution and before his martyrdom Roshayd cried out to his relatives: "Stop crying! Rather bring a pen and a piece of paper to narrate to you what I have learned from my mentor; Imam Ali (a.s.)."

[2](#)

[Maytham Al-Tammar](#)

Ibn Ziad had put Maytham on the cross to die. From the top of the cross he said: "O people! Whoever wishes to hear the secrete knowledge from Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (should listen to me)." Consequently, Ibn Ziad had his tongue pulled out from his throat. [3](#)

The First and the Most Complete book of Hadith in Islam

The Late Kolayni is his Isnad from Sulaim Ibn Qais Al Hilali narrated the Hadith concerning the compilation of that book. Due to the significance of the Hadith I shall quote the full Hadith.

Sulaim said, "I said to Imam Ali I heard some Prophetic Hadith from Salman, Abu thar and Meqdad concerning the interpretation of the Quran that are different from what people narrate. I also hear from you that you confirm their narration and you believe that the narrations of people are incorrect. Do you believe that people intentionally related lies to the Prophet and have interpreted the Quran based on their self-assumptions?

Imam Ali approached me and said, 'You asked the question so make sure you understand the answer. Indeed, what people have access to include right and wrong, truth and lies, abrogating and abrogated, general and specific, established and ambiguous and what is heard and what is assumed.

Even in the lifetime of the holy Prophet, people did attribute false statements to him so such an extent that he himself stood up and addressed the people, 'O people, those who attribute false statements to me secures his abode in hell.' Then the people went on attributing false statements to him after his death. Whatever traditions you (people) have received are from four categories (of narrators). There is no fifth category.

The first is a hypocrite who poses himself as a believer and actually is a shame Muslim. Attributing false statements to the Prophet intentionally, is not considered by him as a sin, nor does he mind such an attribution. Were the people even to know how false and hypocritical he is, they would never accept a word from him, nor would they confirm his statements. It was this type of man about whom people started saying, 'This is the one who had been honoured by the company of the Prophet and who has actually seen and heard the Prophet.'

People accepted traditions from him without knowing his credentials. Allah the Almighty has told His Prophet about the hypocrites all that was to be told and has detailed all the characteristics that were to be detailed. Allah the Almighty has said so;

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانَتْهُمْ قُشُوبٌ مَّسْنَدَةٌ ۚ يَحْسِبُونَ كُلَّ صِيحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ۚ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

***'When you see them, you marvel at their personalities; and if they speak, you listen unto their speech.'* (63:4)**

Such people remained there after the Prophet as well. Then they got near the leaders (rulers) who misguided and invited people towards the hell fire through the means of their fabrications, falsehood and

slander. They were entrusted with big jobs by the rulers of the time and were thus foisted on the people, and their rulers exploited the situation through them. Except the few whom Allah saved, the common people were always with their rulers and with their mundane business of the world. All this is the description of the one out of all categories.

The second is the category of a person, who has actually heard something from the Prophet but was not able to retain it in his mind and fell into doubt. He never intentionally told a lie, but he started speaking, practicing and propagating what he remembered incorrectly and sketchily, and at the same time claimed that 'I have heard the Prophet say so.' If the Muslim community had known that he was in error, they would never have accepted his words. And if the man himself had known that he was mistaken, he would have himself rejected his own version.

The third category is of the person who has heard the Prophet ordering something to be done, but the Prophet later on forbade the same. The man knows the former but is unaware of the latter. Or the man has heard the Prophet forbidding something but afterwards the Prophet has made it permissible. The man knows the former, but does not know the latter.

Thus, the man was in the know of the abrogated (as-Sunnah), but was not aware of its abrogative. If he had been aware that it has been abrogated, he himself would have withdrawn his own narrated tradition. If the Muslims had been in the know that the Prophet had cancelled what the man had related (in the authority of the Prophet) they would have themselves rejected his version.

The fourth and the last is the category of the person who had never attributed false statements to the Prophet and who hated false statements because of his fear of Allah and reverence for the Prophet. He never forgets anything from what he had heard from the Prophet. He always relates exactly what he had heard from the Prophet without adding anything to or subtracting anything from it. He is in the know of both what supersedes and also what has been superseded. Hence, he acts according to what supersedes, leaving aside the superseded.

Verily, the commands of the Prophet are also like the verses of the Quran which consist of the superseded and the superseding (general and the specific) precise (Muhkam) and the ambiguous and multi meaning (Mutashabih). Like the quran, the Prophet's wordings also had two aspects, that is, the general and the specific. As Almighty Allah Himself has said;

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَإِنَّ السَّبِيلَ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ
دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“And whatever the Apostle gives you, you accept it, and from whatever he prevents, you be away (from it).” (59:7)

Thus, the one who was not aware of all these (complications) would fall in doubt and would not

understand what Allah and His messenger exactly meant. It was not at all a fact that all the companions of the prophet had the ability of either asking the Prophet a question or of understanding his answers.

There were some who used to put question to the Prophet but could not understand his answer. There were also others who did ask the Holy Prophet a question but did not understand his answer until they did like some Bedouins or a wayfarer to come and ask the Prophet some questions so that they could have a chance to be enlightened by the Prophet's answer.

Verily, I was the person who had admittance to the Prophet (at least) once every day and once every night when I used to be alone with him. On such occasions, I had the honour to talk with him on whichever subject he was inclined. The companions of the Prophet were in the know that to no other person did the Prophet extend such a privilege (of proximity) as he did to me. Many a time, I had been at my house and the prophet used to come to see me and this was his usual practice.

When I was to enter any of his (Prophet's) room to see him he used to vacate the room for the sake of privacy with me. In vacating the room, even his wives were not spared and there would be none with him besides myself. But when the Prophet had his turn to visit my house for private conference, he would not exclude Fatima (my wife) and any of my sons (a.s.) from his conference. On such occasions, he would reply to my queries and when I had exhausted my queries and remained silent, he would himself initiate further discussions.

Never was there any case of revelation of any of the verse of the Quran, which the Prophet did not recite and dictate to me and which I did not write down in my own hand. Further, never was there any revelation of which the Prophet has apprised me with the basic import, its complete elucidations, with the verses that were abrogative and with the verses that were abrogated, with the verses clear and the ambiguous and with the verses general and specific.

And then the Prophet prayed to Allah to bestow upon me its true understanding and its unfailing memory. Ever since the Prophet had prayed for me, I never forgot a single verse from the Book of Allah, nor did I forget the knowledge which the Prophet had imparted to me and which I had taken down in my own hand.

Nothing from what was revealed to the Prophet, the lawful and the unlawful; nothing from the divine imperatives and the prohibitions, nothing from what had been and what would be, and nothing from the books revealed previously to any of the Prophets regarding divine obedience and disobedience did the Prophet spare teaching me. I had fully grasped it and forgot not a word from it.

Then the Prophet put his hand over my chest and prayed to Allah to fill my heart with knowledge and understanding, wisdom and enlightenment. I, then, inquired: O Prophet of Allah, may my parents be sacrificed for you! I have never forgotten anything ever since you have prayed for me. Nor did I forget what I had not noted down. After all this, are you still afraid of my being forgetful?' Hearing this, the Prophet replied, "No, I am never afraid of your being either forgetful or ignorant."⁴

The Book of Al-Jame'a in the Hands of the Imams

The Late Al-Kolayni in his Isnad from Aban narrated "A man asked Imam Sajjad concerning the meaning of 'thing' as someone has written in his will that something from his wealth should be given to someone. The Imam replied, 'Thing' in the book of Ali (i.e. Al-Jame'a) means 1/6 th of the wealth." [5](#)

Najashi; the eminent Shia expert in biography of narrators (died in 450 A.H), quoted from Muhammad Ibn Azafer Al-Sayrafi: Hakam Ibn Oyaynah (one of the Zaidis) and I visited Imam Baqir (a.s.). Hakam was asking the Imam (a.s.) and the Imam (a.s.) was honourably [6](#) answering him until they disagree over an issue. Imam Baqir (a.s.) asked his son to bring the book of his grandfather. His son brought a huge rapped book.

The Imam (a.s.) showed the answer in the book and said: This book is dictated by the Prophet (S) and is written by Imam Ali (a.s.). O Aba Muhammad (Hakam)! You and Salama and Abul Meqdam may go where ever you wish, but by Allah! You shall never find a reliable knowledge unless with those in whose house Gabriel is descended." [7](#)

Hammad Al-Saegh said: "I heard from Mofadhhal Ibn Omar who said: I was with Imam Sadiq (a.s.) asking him some question that Abul-Hasan Musa (Imam Kadhem) entered the room. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: Would you be happy if you see the one who will own the book of Ali (a.s.)?! I would be honoured? I replied. The Imam Said: This (Imam Kadhem) is the owner of the book of Ali (a.s.) after me." [8](#)

Soma'e said: I asked Imam Kadhem (a.s.): Is whatever you say from the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet (S), or it is you opinion too? The Imam (a.s.) replied: "Nay, whatever we say is from the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet (a.s.)." [9](#)

Al-Jame'a in Sahih Bukhari

1. Bukhari in his Isnad from Abi-Johayfa narrated: I said to Ali: Is there any book with you? He replied: No, except the Book of Allah, an understanding that a Muslim is granted and what is in this Sahifa (book or paper). I said what is in this Sahifa? He replied: the expiation of a murder, (the rules concerning) freeing the captives and that a Muslim shall not be killed for a Kafir." [10](#)

2. Bukhari from Ibrahim Al-Taymi from his father from Imam Ali (a.s.) narrated: "There is nothing with us save the Book of Allah and this Sahifa from the Prophet (S), (in which there is): Madina is sacred between A'er and so and so." [11](#)

3. Bukhari with the same Isnad narrated: Ali delivered a sermon for us and said: We do not have any book to read save the Book of Allah and what is in this Sahifa, in which there is (the expiation of) wounds, and the (number of) teeth of a camel (for Kaffarah) and the radius sacred area of Madina is what is between A'ir and so and so ." [12](#)

Ibn Hajar (died in 852 A.H) in explanation of the first Hadith said: "The Sahifa of Ali (a.s.) included all that the Ahadith of the Prophet although every narrator has narrated one part of it. This is because either the narrator was only concerned about the part he has narrated or he has forgotten the rest of it or the narrator was unaware of the rest of the Sahifa. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the narrators did not quote the actual words of the Sahifa, thus their wordings are quite different." [13](#)

Other Ancient Books of Hadith

Apart from Al-Jame'a there were some other companions who did not submit their books to the then government. Unfortunately, however, most of these books have been destroyed or perverted throughout the history. For instance, Ibrahim known as Abu-Rafe' was a slave freed by the Prophet (S). During the reign of Imam Ali (a.s.) he was appointed as his treasurer. Abu-Rafe' had compiled a book on recommended acts, statutes and judgments. [14](#)

Unfortunately, we don't have access to his book unless some Ahadith narrated through him from Imam Ali (a.s.) or the Prophet (S). Most of the available Ahadith him are in virtues of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.).

The Secretes of the Family of Muhammad (S)

One of the most ancient books of Hadith that fortunately by and large it is available today is the book of Solaim Ibn Qais Al-Hilali published as 'Asrar Ale Muhammad (the Secrets of the Family of Muhammad (S)).

Solaim was one of the distinguished companions of Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain, and Imam Sajjad (peace be upon them). It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

من لم يكن عنده من شيعتنا و محبيننا كتاب سليم بن قيس الهلالي فليس عنده من امرنا شيء و لا يعلم من اسبابنا شيء و هو ابجد الشيعة و هو سر من اسرار آل محمد

"Whoever of our followers and lovers does not have the book of Solaim Ibn Qays Al-Hilali he does not have any knowledge about us and does not know anything about (causes of) our affairs. It is the alphabets of the Shia and it is a secret from the secrets of the Family of Muhammad (S)."

In his book, Solaim narrated some Hadith from Imam Ali (a.s.), Salman, Abu Dharr and Miqdad (may Allah be pleased with them). The Shia scholars are quite unanimous about the high status and of Solaim and his virtues. There is however a scholarly debate about the authenticity of the present book, as it contains some obvious perversions. For instance, the number of the Imams (a.s.) according to this book seems to be thirteen Imams!

In my opinion this is not the first book that contains some perversions. As we shall demonstrate in the

next lessons, Al-Kaafi; the best Shia book of Hadith is not also free from such perversions. The fair judgment about the book of Solaim is what the late Sheikh Mofid at the end of his book Tas-Hihul-E'teqad' (Correction of the Belief) has asserted: "This book (of Solaim in its present version) is not reliable, for there has occurred perversion and deception in it. Thus, it is imperative for the believers not to accept all that is written in that book. They must refer to the scholars to distinguish for them the correct from the incorrect narrations." [15](#)

The Psalms of Islam

Another ancient book of Hadith is Al-Sahifa Al-Sajjadiyah translated into English as 'the Psalms of Islam. Al-Sahifa Al-Sajjadiyah is a heritage from Imam Sajjad (a.s.). The present version of it consists of fifty-four supplications. The original copy of the book has been more than the present one and it has always been kept with the Imams (a.s.). The present copy has been dictated by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to Motawakkil Ibn Haroun. 'The Treaties on the Rights' (Resaltul-Hoqouq) is another book of Imam Sajjad (a.s.) that is available today.

The Four Hundred Origins (Al-Osoulul-Arba'a Me'ah)

The time of the Abbasid was the golden age of spreading the Hadith, but then again not for the followers of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.). The following examples spell out the severe pressure on the Shia during the Omayyad and Abbasid dynasties.

1. Abu-Khalid Shinoola said: I said to Imam Jawad (a.s.): "May I be sacrificed for you! Our teachers had narrated some Hadith from Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.). However, due to the severe Taqiyyah (Protection) in their times they hid their books and never narrated anything from it until they died. Today we have accessed their books. Do you allow us to quote from their books? The Imam replied: You may quote from their books for they are authentic." [16](#)

2. The story of the destruction of the books of Muhammad Ibn Abi Omair is even more painful. Muhammad Ibn Abi Omair (Ziad) was an eminent student of Imam Kazen and Imam Redha (a.s.). He even enjoyed a high respect by the Sunni scholars. Muhammad was jailed during the reign of Haroun Al-Rashid (the fifth Abbasid king) and was tortured almost to death.

During the reign of Ma'moun (Haroun's son) he was again jailed for four years. During his imprisonment his daughter hid the books of her father in the attic of her house. When the father was released he attended the books. Unfortunately all his books of Hadith were destroyed by rain. [17](#) Since then Ibn Abi Omair narrated his Ahadith by heart.

It is due to the above incident that the Shia scholars have opened special category for him and similar narrators called 'the Members of Unanimity' (As-Habul-Ejma'). They regard the Ahadith of the members of the unanimity as authentic even if they have not mentioned the name of the narrator they are narrating

from [18](#).

Despite all the difficulties the Shia narrators faced they had compiled numerous books of Hadith. The late Najashi; the famous Shia expert in biography of the narrators (died in A.H) has named about 1200 Shia narrators in his book 'Rejal Al-Najashi' who had compiled books of Hadith. Similarly, the late Sheikh Al-Horr Al-'Ameli asserted that the number of the books of Hadith compiled by the students of the Imams (a.s.) according to his counting exceeds 6600 books.

Of all the books of Hadith, the students of the Imams (a.s.) had selected 400 books known as Al-Osoulul-Arba'a Me'ah' (the four Hundred Origins). The late Sheikh Mofid (died in 413 A.H) confirmed: "From the time of Imam Ali (a.s.) to the time of Imam Al-Askari (a.s.) their students had compiled four hundred original books [19](#).

These books contained Ahadith that the narrators had directly narrated from the Imams (a.s.). the four hundred origins were amongst the main sources for compilation of other books of Hadith such as Al-Kaafi compiled by Al-Kolayni died in (328 or 329 A.H) and 'Man La Yahzor' compiled by Al-Sheikh Al-Sadouq (died in 381 A.H).

- [1](#). Sonan al-Darami 1:136, al-Tabaqatul-Kobra 2:354, Bukhari; al-Sahih 1:161 (in brief).
- [2](#). Al-Majlesi; Beharul-Anwaar 42:121
- [3](#). Ibid 42:133
- [4](#). Al-Kolayni: al-Kaafi 1:62-63 Among the Sunni historians Ibn Sa'd (died 230 AH) has narrated the Hadith in short in the chapter of the virtues of Imam Ali (a.s.): 2/2/101. Similarly, Nasa'i in his Sonan 1:178 has narrated the gist of the Hadith.
- [5](#). Al-Kolayni: al-Kaafi 7:40
- [6](#). In some versions of his book it is written 'Mokreman' (honourably) whereas in other version it is Mokrehan' (aversely).
- [7](#). Al-Najashi: Rejal 2:261
- [8](#). Al-Majlesi: Beharul Anwaar 48:22
- [9](#). Al-Saffar: Basa'erul-Darajat p.301
- [10](#). Bukhari: al-Sahih 1:36
- [11](#). Ibid 2:221
- [12](#). Ibid 4:67
- [13](#). Ibn Hajar: Fathul-Bari 1:215
- [14](#). Al-Najashi, Rejal 1:64-65
- [15](#). Al-Khoei: Mo'jam Rejalul-Hadith 8:216-228
- [16](#). Al-Kolayni, al-Kaafi 1:53
- [17](#). Al-Khoei, Mo'jamul-Rejal al-Hadith 14:279
- [18](#). We shall explain about As-Habul-Ejma' in lesson
- [19](#). We shall introduce these sects in the coming lessons.

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