

Meeting 8: The Science of Al-Mostalahaat Part 1

Meeting 8: The Science of Al-Mostalahaat Part 1 (Science of Derayatul-Hadith)

In the next two lessons, we shall learn about the third science of the sciences of Hadith; i.e. the science of Al-Mostalahaat (terminologies) which is also historically called 'science of Derayatul-Hadith (understanding the Hadith). The main topics in this science include:

1. Definition of Al-Mostalahaat and its aim
2. The difference between this science and the science of Fiqhul-Hadith
3. The difference between this science and the science of Rijal
4. The main references on this science
5. Common Hadith terminologies
6. Types of Hadith
7. Conditions of accreditation of a narrator
8. Methodology of proving the justice of a narrator
9. Etiquettes of writing and teaching the Hadith

Definition and historical background

Historically this science has been referred to as 'the science of Derayatul-Hadith'. Derayah literally means to understand and reflect on something. Derayatul-Hadith coupled with the science of Rijal (knowing the biography of narrators) have been the only names for the sciences of Hadith for several centuries.

Al-Shahid Al-Thani (martyred in 966 A.H.) in defining the science of Derayah said: "It is a science which

deals with the body of the Hadith and the chain of its narrators; whether they are just and true or weak, and whatever is needed to know the accepted and unaccepted Hadith." [1](#)

It seems the reason because of which the science of Hadith is traditionally called the science of 'Derayah' is the number of Ahadith in which the Imams (a.s.) have encouraged their followers to understand the Hadith more than mere narrating them. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

حديث تدريه خير من الف ترويه.

"To understand (Derayah) a Hadith is better than one thousand Hadith that you may narrate." [2](#) The Science of Derayah in this sense includes Fiqhul-Hadith (understanding the meaning of the body of the Hadith) too.

In the recent years, the scholars of Hadith have opened a separate science for understating the text of the Hadith called the science of Fiqhul-Hadith. Thus, in order for them to avoid any confusion between the science of Derayah and Fiqhul-Hadith, they changed the name of Derayatul-Hadith to the science of Al-Mostalahaat, i.e. the science of Hadith terminologies. Under the shadow of the above explanation we can conclude that the expression of 'Derayatul-Hadith' has two meanings:

1. Acquaintance with what involves in understanding a Hadith. Derayah in this sense is the antonym to Rewayah (narration without reflection). Historically, Derayah was the only main science of knowing the Hadith
2. Acquaintance with different types of Hadith in terms of authentic, weak, etc. and the conditions for accreditation of a narrator. In the recent years the scholars of the Hadith use the term 'Al-Mostalahaat' rather than Derayah to refer to this science. For the main subject in this science is acquaintance with various Hadith terminologies.

The main purpose of studying the science of Al-Mostalahaat is to be able to distinguish between the acceptable and unacceptable Hadith.

Difference between Al-Mostalahaat and Rijal

The science of Rijal is one of the very important sciences of Hadith. It deals with studying the biography of each and every narrator to find out whether or not he is a reliable narrator. For instance, in that science we study about 'Abu-Baseer' to find out firstly who he was and then whether or not he is a reliable narrator. [3](#) Thus, the science of Rijal deals with specific people, whereas the science of Al-Mostalahaat teaches us the definition of an authentic or unauthentic narrations and narrators.

Main References

The Shia scholars have compiled many useful books on the science of Al-Mostalahaat (Derayatul-Hadith). The followings are the most famous ones:

1. Al-Re'ayah Fe Elme-Derayah: written by Ali Ibn Ahmad Al-Ameli, known as Al-Shahid Al-Thani (martyred in 966 A.H).
2. al-Wajiza Fe Derayah, written by Muhammad Ibn Husain Al-Ameli known as Al-Sheikh Al-Bahaei (died in 1031 A.H). Al-Wajiza is a concise yet very useful reference.
3. Meqbasul-Hedayah Fe Elme-Derayah, written by Abdullah Mamaqani; known as Al-Allamah Mamaqani (died in 1351 A.H).

Common Hadith Terminologies

Sanad: The chain of transmitters of a Hadith is called Sanad of Hadith.

Esnad: It means narrating a Hadith through a chain of transmitters. For instance we say: Sheikh Sadooq in his Esnad narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.)... It means Sheikh Sadooq has narrated the Hadith through a specific chain of transmitters that he has either mentioned them before the Hadith or he has introduced them elsewhere.

Matn: It means the body and the text of a Hadith which contains the words of Ma'soom.

Sahaabi: Sahabi means companion and its plural is 'Ashaab' (companions). This term is used to refer to those who had the privilege of meeting the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) during his lifetime, believed in him and died with Faith. It is said that the Prophet of Islam (S) had 114000 companions when he passed away. [4](#) In the Shia terminology, the companions of the Imams (a.s.) who had the privilege of meeting them and dying with Faith are also called the companions of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), Imam Baqir (a.s.) etc.

Taabei: It means the one who did not meet the Prophet (S) but met the companions of the Prophet (S) even if he lived at the time of the Prophet (S). Thus, Oways Al-Qarani is regarded a Taabei not a companion.

The Konyah (agnomens) of Ma'soomin

1. Abul-Qasim: is the Konyah of the Prophet (S) as well as Imam Mahdi (a.f). nonetheless, usually it is referred to the Prophet (S) with the Godly given title of 'the Messenger of Allah'.
2. Abul-Hasan or Abul-Hasanayn: it is the title of Imam Ali (a.s).

3. Abu-Muhammad: it is a common title for Imam Hasan, Imam Sajjad and Imam Al-Askari (a.s.). in most of the narrations it is meant for Imam Al-Askari (a.s.).
4. Abu-Abdullah: It is a common title between Imam Husain and Imam Sadiq (a.s.). The narrators almost always use it to refer to Imam Sadiq (a.s.).
5. AbuJa'far: it is the title of Imam Baqir (a.s.). Sometimes it is referred to Imam Baqir (a.s.) with 'Abu-Ja'far Al-Awwal', and to Imam Jawaad (a.s.) with 'Abu-Ja'far Al-Thani.
6. Abu-Ibrahim: It is a title for Imam Kadhém (a.s.).
7. Abul-Hasan: It is a common title for Imam Ali, Imam Sajjad, Imam Kadhém, Imam Redha and Imam Hadi (a.s.). It is, however, mostly-but not always- used for Imam Kadhém (a.s.). Similarly, Imam Kadhém (a.s.) is sometimes referred to with 'Abul-Hasan Al-Awwal', Imam Redha (a.s.) with 'ABul-Hasan Al-Thani, and Imam Hadi (a.s.) with Abul-Hasan Al-Thaleth. Abul-Hasan is also used without any suffix to refer to Imam Kadhém, or Imam Redha, or Imam Hadi (a.s.). In such situations, we can identify the Imam by considering the narrator or other contexts.
8. Al-Aalem, Al-Sheikh, Al-Faqih, Al-Abdul-Saleh: These are the title by which Imam Kadhém (a.s.) is also referred to. The expression of these titles reflect on the then sever insecurity of the Shia community.
9. Ahadohoma (one of the two): It is a title for either of Imam Baqir or Imam Sadiq (a.s.).
10. Al-Askariyyan (the two Askari): It is a title for Imam Hadi and Imam Al-Askari (a.s.).
11. Abu-Saleh is the respectful title of Imam Mahdi (a.f). The narrators sometimes referred to the Imam (a.f) with Al-Asl (the origin).

Types of Hadith

- [1.](#) Al-Re'ayah Fi Sharhel-Derayah, p.45
- [2.](#) Al-Majlesi: Beharul-anwaar 2:184
- [3.](#) In lesson ten we shall introduce this science
- [4.](#) Al-Mamaqani: Meqbasul-Hedayah, p.114

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