

[Home](#) > [Sciences of Hadith](#) > [Meeting 9: The Science of Al-Mostalahaat Part 2](#) > Etiquettes of writing and teaching the Hadith

Meeting 9: The Science of Al-Mostalahaat Part 2

Meeting 9: The Science of Al-Mostalahaat Part 2 (Science of Derayatul-Hadith): Types of Hadith

Types of Hadith in terms of the number of narrators

A Hadith in terms of the number of people who have narrated it is divided into four types:

Motawatir (recurrent)

A Hadith is called Motawatir if the numbers of narrator in every generation are so many that normally there is no possibility of collusion among them. The Hadith of Motawatir is also divided into Motawatir Lafzi (verbal recurrent), and Motawatir Ma'nawi (meaning recurrent). Motawatir Lafzi is that one that the wordings of Hadith in all different Asnad are the same. The examples of Motawatir Lafzi are: Hadith Al-Ghadir which is narrated by more than 110 companions of the Prophet (S) [1](#), and the Hadith of Thaqaalayn which is narrated in 39 Asnad in the Sunni books and 82 Asnad in the Shia books [2](#).

Similarly, the Prophetic Hadith "Whoever tell someone a lie about me (intentionally), then his abode shall be in the Fire" which is narrated by 62 companions of the Prophet (S) [3](#) is counted as Motawatir Lafzi. Examples of Motawatir Ma'nawi are the bravery of Imam Ali (a.s.), obligation of Hijab, daily prayers and the like. In these examples although the wordings of narrations are not exactly the same they reflect the same concept. There is no dispute on the validity of Hadith Motawatir. In fact, this is the best type of Hadith.

Waahid (one)

A Hadith is Waahid if it is narrated only by one or a few narrators. Most of the Ahadith about the details of Shari'a law are Hadith Waahid. Hadith Waahid is valid if it meets other the criteria of the validity of a Hadith.

Mostafidh (elaborate)

A Hadith is Mostafidh if the numbers of narrators in every generation is more than three—but less than Motawatir—. Mostafidh is a strong example of Waahid. The validity of Mostafidh is stronger than Waahid if it meets other criteria of validity of a Hadith.

Mash-hoor (famous)

A famous Hadith is the one that is well known to the narrators whether it has any authentic origin or not. Scholars disagree on the validity of the Mash-hoor.

Types of Hadith in terms of the characteristics of the narrators

Hadith Sahih (Authentic)

The late Al-Allamah Al-Hilli argued the ancient definition of Sahih. He instead suggested that a Hadith is Sahih only if all the transmitters to the Ma'soom are named and they are all the Twelver just Shia. They must be also Dhabit, i.e. they should be learned enough to narrate a Hadith accurately. Post-Hilli scholars have largely accepted his definition for Sahih.

Useful notes on a Sahih Hadith

The definition of the ancient scholars is more inclusive. That means the number of authentic Hadith according to the pre-Hilli scholars were far more than the post Hilli scholars. Scholars of Hadith often consider a Mursal Hadith as authentic such as the Mursals of Ibn Abi Omair. The reason being that a narrator such as Ibn Abi Omair does not quote from unreliable people. We shall further discuss the matter on the topic of 'Ashabul-Ejma' (People about whom there is a scholarly consensus).

It may be that a Hadith is authentic yet most of the scholars do not act upon it. When majority of scholars turn away from a Hadith it makes it weak. For instance, Abu-Baseer in an authentic Hadith narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

ان عرض للمرأة الطمث في شهر رمضان قبل الزوال فهي في سعة ان تأكل و تشرب؛ و ان عرض لها بعد زوال الشمس فلتغتسل و لتعتدّ بصوم ذلك اليوم ما لم تأكل و تشرب.

"If a woman starts her menses before noon in the month of Ramadhan, she may eat and drink (does not keep her fast); but if she starts her menses in the afternoon then she has to perform her ritual shower and count on the fasting of that day so long as she has not eaten or drank." [4](#)

None of the jurists have given a verdict to the content of the above Hadith. For once a woman starts her menses even five minutes before sunset she has lost the fasting of that day. Further discussion on this

issue shall be sought in analytical Fiqh books. On the other hand, a Hadith may be weak as long as the chain of its transmitters is concerned– yet the Shia jurists have acted upon it. This will compensate the weakness of the Hadith. For instance, one of the conditions of washing a dead body is that the one who washes the dead must be of the same sex (save in the case of husband and wife).

Children however are exempt from this condition. A man or a woman can wash a dead baby. The question however remains on the age of the baby. The majority of the Shia scholars view that the exception applies to the babies that are not more than three years old. The reference for this verdict is the following Hadith:

عن أبي نُمَيْرٍ قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع): حَدِّثْنِي عَنْ الصَّبِيِّ الْيَاسِيِّ كَيْفَ تَغْسِلُهُ النِّسَاءُ؟ فَقَالَ الْيَاسِيُّ ثَلَاثَ سِنِينَ.

“Abu Nomair said: I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.): Please tell me about the age of a (dead) baby that women can perform his ritual bath? The Imam said: up to three years of age.”⁵ The narrator Abu Nomair is an unknown person and hence the above Hadith is technically weak. Nonetheless, the verdict of the jurists on it has compensated its weakness. ⁶

Sometimes a Hadith is weak due to its chain of transmitters. Yet, the same Hadith has another chain of transmitters that is authentic. Thus, the scholars endeavour to collect and examine all different chains of transmitters. For instance, there is a consensus that the usage of liquid enema voids the fast.⁷ The reference for this verdict is the following Hadith that is narrated from Imam Redha (a.s.):

الصائم لا يجوز له أن يحتقن.

"It is not permissible for a faster to use enema." ⁸ This Hadith is quoted in two different books with two different chains of transmitters:

1. Kolayni narrated it through Sahl Ibn Ziad from Al-Bazanti from Imam Redha (a.s.).⁹ This Hadith is weak for Sahl Ibn Ziad is weak.

2. Sadooq in his Esnad from Al-Bazanti from Imam Redha (a.s.).¹⁰ the Esnad of Sadooq to Bazanti is authentic, hence the Hadith is authentic.

Hadith Hasan (Good Hadith)

A Hadith is Hasan if the chain of its transmitters is connected to a Ma'soom and they are all good Shia– though not necessarily just– and nothing blameworthy is said about them.

Hadith Mowathaq (consolidated Hadith)

A Hadith is regarded Mowathaq if its chain is connected to a Ma'soom and although some of its transmitters are not the twelver Shia the Shia scholars have consolidated them. Examples of such transmitters are Hafs Ibn Bokair and Hasan Ibn Fadhal.

Hadith Dha'eef (weak Hadith)

A Hadith is weak if none of the conditions of Sahih, Hasan or Mowathaq is found in it. The narrators or transmitters of a weak Hadith are known to be unjust, afflicted by immoral characters or are known for fabricating the Hadith.

Hadith Mosalsal (A serial Hadith)

A Hadith is called Mosalsal if all its transmitters hold the same character or qualifications. For instance, the name of all of them is 'Hasan'. The example of Hadith Mosalsal is the following Hadith narrated from Imam Hasan (a.s.) through a chain of transmitters whose names were all Hasan!

قال الحسن (ع): إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَسَنِ الْخُلُقَ الْحَسَنَ

It is narrated from Imam Hasan (a.s.): "Verily the best beauty is the beauty of character." [11](#)

Hadith Mo'tabar (authoritative Hadith)

Sometimes a Hadith is initially regarded weak. For instance, the narrator is unknown. Then the scholars endeavour and discover that the narrator and that he is a reliable person. They then announce the Hadith authoritative. An example of an authoritative Hadith is Mo'tabara of Al-Halabi. [12](#)

Hadith Maqbool (Accepted Hadith)

A Maqbool Hadith is the one that the scholars considered it acceptable and acted upon it whether it is a Sahih or Hasan or even a weak Hadith. The most famous Maqbool Hadith is the one narrated by Omar Ibn Al-Hanzalah. [13](#)

Types of Hadith in terms of the belief of the narrators

A Hadith in terms of the belief of its narrators and the school of thought they belong to is divided into Mowathaq (consolidated) and non-Mowathaq. As mentioned earlier if the narrator is not the twelver Shia yet he is authenticated by the companions of the Imams (a.s.), his narration is called Mowathaq. For instance, although Al-Sakoni was Sunni the scholars have accepted his narrations. [14](#) The distinction of the non-twelver Shia narrators into consolidated and non-consolidated is important for the narrators

could have fabricated a Hadith in support of their school of thought.

Types of Hadith in terms of its connection to the Ma'soom

A Hadith in terms of its connection or disconnection to the Ma'soom has many types. The followings are the most important ones:

Mosnad (connected)

A Hadith is Mosnad if the chain of its narrators in all levels to the Ma'soom is connected to each other and no narrator is omitted. A Mosnad Hadith is useful in that we can identify whether it is authentic or not, but it does not warrant its authenticity.

Mo'allaq (suspended)

If the name of a narrator or more than one from the beginning of the chain is not mentioned the Hadith is called Mo'allaq. It is worthy to mention that Sheikh Sadooq in Man La Yahdhor and Sheikh Tousi in Al-Tahzib and Al-Istibsar very often delete the names of the narrators from the beginning of the chains. However, at the end of their books or in their index they introduce their Esnad. Thus, their Ahadith is not Mo'allaq.

Marfou' (uplifted)

Marfou' is similar to Mo'allaq except the name(S) of the narrator(S) is deleted from the middle or the end of the chain of narrators. The last narrator in the Marfou' Hadith jumps from one or more than one narrator uplifting (Rafa'a) the chain to the Imam (a.s.). The following is an example of a Marfou' Hadith:

(محمد بن يعقوب عن علي بن إبراهيم عن أبيه رَفَعَهُ الي أبي عبدالله ع)

Maqtoo' (broken)

A Hadith is Maqtoo' if it is narrated from one of the narrators who has not even met the Ma'soom. Obviously a Maqtoo' Hadith is not valid by itself.

Mursal (transmitted)

Mursal is a Hadith that the chain of its transmitters– or some of it is not mentioned. Similarly, Mursal is an expression for a narration that a Tabei (such as Sa'eed Ibn Mosayyeb) who has not met the Prophet (S) narrated from the Prophet (S).

The scholars of Hadith disagree on the validity of the Mursal Hadith. Most of the Shia scholars assert

that if the transmitter of a Mursal is a reliable person such as Muhammad Ibn Abi Omair who does not narrate but from authentic people, then his Mursal is valid. On the contrary, the Mursal of other narrators such as Dawood Ibn Farqad is invalid. [15](#)

The Sunni scholars are of the opinion that if a Mursal Hadith is narrated by different narrators among whom there has been no collusion, the Hadith is authentic. [16](#) Most of the Sunni narration on interpretation of the Quran, prophecies on future mischief and the wars of the Prophet (S) are Mursal. It is therefore narrated from Imam Ahmad who said: "There is no Esnad on three issues: Tafsir, Malahem (prophecies on future mischief) and Maghazi (wars)."

Modhmar (Pronounced)

A Hadith is Modhmar if the narrator has referred to the speaker of the Hadith with a pronoun without mentioning his name. For instance, the narrator says: He said: so and so. A Modhmar Hadith is usually regarded invalid for the speaker is unknown. However, if the narrator is one of the eminent companions of the Imams (a.s.) such as Zorarah and Muhammad Ibn Muslim their Modhmar is valid for they do not narrate from other than a Ma'soom. [17](#)

Moreover, sometimes a Hadith has become Modhmar because the author has separated some narrations from each other. For instance, a narrator has narrated two Hadith from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in two different subjects. Naturally in the book of the narrator in the second Hadith it is referred to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) with the pronoun of 'from him' for it was known to whom 'he' refers. However, when Kolayni, for instance, separated the two Hadith and placed them into two different chapters the second Hadith seems Modhmar.

Types of Hadith in terms of the words of a Hadith

Qodsi (Holy)

The Hadith of Qodsi if the words of God narrated to us by the Prophet of Islam (S) but it is not part of the Quran nor does it contain the rhetorical miracle of the Quran. The Prophet (S) also sometimes narrated the Hadith of Qodsi through some of the previous Prophets (a.s.) such as Prophet David (a.s.) in his communication with God. An example of Hadith Qodsi is the famous Hadith: "Fasting is Mine and I am the reward of it (or I reward it)."

Unfortunately, most Ahadith Qodsi are Mursal. Among the Shia scholars, the late Sheikh Al-Horr Al-Ameli (died in 1104 A.H) has collected the Qodsi Hadith in his book "al-Jawaheru-Sanniyah Fil-Ahadith Al-Qodsiyah".

Nabawi – related to the Prophet (S)

In order for a Hadith in the matter of religion to be valid it must be expressed by the Prophet (S). As mentioned earlier the narrations of the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) are in fact from the Prophet (S). They usually don't mention their chain to the Prophet (S) for it is obvious.

Walawi – related to the Imams (a.s.)

Any Hadith related to any Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) is called Walawi. Most narrations in the Hadith books of Shia are related to the Imams (a.s.) especially Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) due to the golden opportunity in their time to announce the school of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.).

Bayani (Descriptive)

The Ahadith that are related to the interpretation of the Ayaat of the Quran particularly the jurisprudential Ayaat are called Bayani for they elaborate and explain the meanings of the Ayaat. An example of Hadith Bayani is the Ahadith related to the Ayah 6 of Surah Al-Ma'edah concerning the method of performing the Wudhu.

Nasekh/Mansoukh (Abrogating/Abrogated)

In lesson four we quoted from Imam Ali (a.s.) that like the Quran there are abrogating and abrogated Ahadith, as well as Ahadith that their meanings are clear and those that they don't have clear meanings. An example of an abrogating Hadith is what is narrated from the Prophet (S) concerning the visitation of the graveyards.

كنت نهيتكم عن زيارة القبور؛ فزوروها فإنها تزهد في الدنيا و تذكر الآخرة

"I used to prohibit you from visiting the graves, but now you may visit them. For it detach you from the secular life and remind you of the hereafter." [18](#)

Mohkam/Motashabeh (Clear meaning/Ambiguous)

Mohkam is a Hadith that its text can accept only one meaning. Motashabeh on the other hand is a Hadith that it does not have an established meaning. Examples of ambiguous Ahadith are those concerning the signs prior to the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.f). Imam Sadiq (a.s.) with reference to the ambiguous Ahadith instructed the Shia scholars:

رُدُّوا إلينا علمه فنحن اولي بذلك و لاتقولوا فيه بأرائكم و عليكم بالكف و التثبت و الوقوف و انتم طالبون باحثون حتي يأتيكم البيان من عندنا

"Return its knowledge to us, for we are preferred for (explaining) it. Do not say about it with your assumption. You shall abstain, verify and stop (from self interpretation) whilst you are searching (its meaning) until an explanation from us comes to you." [19](#)

Taqiyyah (protection)

The Ahadith of Taqiyyah are usually according to the famous Sunni schools of thought or jurisprudence, thus their companions were aware that the Imam (a.s.) did not mean the contents of the Hadith.

Israelites

The Israelites are fabricated Ahadith imported to Islam by some Christian and Jewish rabbis who pretended to have become Muslims. These so called converts narrated their fabricated literatures to the Muslims particularly on the stories of the previous Prophets (a.s.). Today Sunni narrative interpretations of the Quran are filled with many Israelites. Tafsir Tabari is a classic example of such books. For instance, on the interpretation of the first Ayah of Surah Al-Nisa' they narrated that Eve was created from the left bottom rib of Adam! Similarly, they have accused Prophet David (a.s.) to have caused Uriah killed in the war to gain his wife; Bathsheba! [20](#)

Modhtareb (confused and disordered)

A Hadith is Modhtareb if there is a discrepancy in its chain of narrators or the body of the Hadith. For instance, a single event is narrated in contradictory ways. For instance, the Sunni scholars have narrated the story of divorce of the son of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab from Nafe' in three different ways. Nafe'; the freed slave of Abdullah son of Omar narrated that Abdullah divorced his wife whilst she was menstruating.

Then in some of his narrations he added that the Prophet (S) did not endorse his divorce for the Almighty Allah states that women can be divorced only when they are not menstruating (Surah 65: Ayah 1). In another group of narrations, he claims that the Prophet (S) endorsed his divorce, and in the third group he is indecisive as whether the divorce was endorsed or not. [21](#)

There is no doubt that there has been confusion from the narrator. The remedy therefore is to accept the one that is in accordance with the Quran (the first one) and leave the rest and if none of them are compatible with the Quran or other authentic narrations then they should be all discarded.

An example of Modhtareb Hadith in the Shia books is a Marfou' Hadith narrated in distinguishing between the bleeding of menses and the bleeding of an injury. Kolayni narrated from Aban from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that if the bleeding is from the right side of a woman's vulva then it is menstruating blood but if the woman is bleeding from the left side of her vulva it is an injury. [22](#)

Sheikh Tousi narrated the same Hadith from the same narrator. However, instead in his narration if the

bleeding is from the right side it is introduced as the sign of menses and if it is from the left side the sign of injury![23](#)

Undoubtedly none of the narrations are authentic for firstly they are Marfou'. Secondly they are Modhtareb and thirdly they are against the reality.[24](#) Thus, none of our jurists have accepted the Hadith.

Modhou' (fabricated)

A Modhou' is a fabricated Hadith to support certain belief or school of thought. We had mentioned some examples of fabricated narrations in lesson three. Modhou' is the worst type of narration.

Conditions of accepting a narrator

The scholars of Hadith have set five conditions for a trustworthy narrator:

Takleef: that means he/she must have reached the age of puberty [25](#) and be sane.

Islam: Thus, the narration of a non-Muslim is unacceptable.

Iman: That means the narrator ought to be a twelver Shia. However, as discussed earlier the narrations of some exceptional Sunni or none 12 Imams would be accepted.

Edalat: That means the narrator must be just. Scholars disagree on the definition of justice. Many suggest that justice is the nature of preventing the mortal sins and not insisting on the minor ones. Sheikh Tousi, however, differentiated between the justice required for witnessing and the justice in narration of a Hadith. He asserted that as long as a narrator is known to be truthful his narration is reliable, even if he has sometimes committed a sin in his person life. [26](#)

Dhabt and Hifz (accuracy and sharp memory). If the narrator is narrating a Hadith by heart he should also enjoy a sharp memory and if he is quoting it from a book he should be accurate. This condition reduces the chance of wrong narrations.

Methodology of proving the justice of a narrator

The justice of a narrator is usually obtained by either living with him or his fame among the just people or by the testimony of two or even one just person. For instance, if the ancient eminent scholars such as Al-Kashi, or Al-Najashi confirm the justice of a narrator the scholars regard him just. Unfortunately, however, if there is a disagreement about the justice of a narrator and there is no preference for his justice then his narration is regarded invalid.

Etiquettes of writing and teaching the Hadith

I would like to bring this science into an end by touching upon some of the etiquettes of writing and teaching the noble Hadith of the Ma'soomin as mentioned by our scholars: When we write a Hadith in a book or thesis we should make sure we write it grammatically correct. When the name of the Almighty Allah is mentioned we should couple it with one of His Attributes.

Similarly, when the name of the holy Prophet (S) is mentioned we should use the prefix of Sallallahu Alayhe Wa Aalehe Wasallam (May the blessing and greetings of Allah be upon him and his pure progeny) and after the names of the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) we should write Alayhe Salam (peace be on him). After the name of Fatima Al-Zahra we should write Alayha Salam (peace be on her). Moreover, it is recommended to exclude the Hadith from the rest of the article by placing it between the quotation marks.

The scholars of Hadith have recommended five issues for professional teaching of a Hadith:

1. Discussing the chain of transmitters,
2. Teaching the vocabularies of the Hadith,
3. Explaining the conjugation (Sarf) of the verbs,
4. Clarifying the syntax (Nahw) of the Hadith.
5. Elucidating the text of the Hadith and its relevance to the subject.

[1.](#) Al-Amini: al-Ghadir 1:14-61

[2.](#) Mir Hamed Husain: 'Abaqatul-anwaar vols. 1& 2

[3.](#) Shahid Thani: al-Derayah, p. 15

[4.](#) Al-Horr al-Ameli: Wasa'elu-Shi'a

[5.](#) Al-Horr al-Ameli: Wasa'elu-Shi'a

[6.](#) The above argument is on the basis that the verdict of the majority of jurists compensates the weakness of a Hadith

[7.](#) Ibn Jonayd is the only jurist who is reportedly disagreed with this verdict. [al-Bahrani: al-Hadaequl-Nadhera 13:144]

[8.](#) Al-Horr al-Ameli: Wasa'elu-Shi'a

[9.](#) Al-Kaafi 4:110 Hadith No.3

[10.](#) Man La Yahdhor 2:69 Hadith No. 292

[11.](#) Al-Majlesi: Beharul-Anwaar 71:386 from al-Khesal

[12.](#) See an example of his narration in Wasa'elu-Shi'a

[13.](#) See the Hadith in Wasa'elu-Shi'a 1:34 Hadith No. 51

[14.](#) Tousi: 'Oddatul-Osoul 1:149

[15.](#) For an example of his invalid Hadith see Wasa'elu-Shi'a

[16.](#) Tafsir al-Kashaf: Introduction p.11

[17.](#) For an example of a valid Modhmar see: Wasa'elu-Shi'a the Hadith is narrated from Bazanti who was an eminent companion of Imam Redha (a.s.) and hence it is valid. However the Modhmar Hadith narrated by Solayman Ibn Hafs [Wasa'elu-Shi'a] is invalid because of the narrator.

[18.](#) Ibn Majah: al-Sonan 1:114, al-Termethi: al-Sonan 3:274

[19.](#) Al-Majlesi: Beharul-anwaar 2:233

[20.](#) See Tafsir Tabari and al-Dorrul-Manthour for instance under the Ayaat 23 & 24 of Surah Saad. This accusation is taken from the perverted Bible: 2 Samuel chapter 11

[21.](#) Al-Bayhaqi has narrated all the narrations in al-Sunanul-Kobrah 7:324, 325

[22.](#) Al-Kaafi 3:94

[23.](#) Al-Tahtheeb 1:385

[24.](#) Scientifically the difference between the blood of menses and the injury blood is that menstrual blood does not clot

[25.](#) Needless to say these conditions are for the narrators not the Ma'soomin

[26.](#) Oddatul-Osoul 1:152

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