

Stages Of The Prohibition Of Recording The Hadith

Let us now have a look at the stages of the prohibition from recording the Hadith and the gradual method followed in this respect, as well as the solution due to which the idea of the prohibition and the practice of Ijtihad became the legality adopted through all the confusing aspects explicated in this book.

It is now understandable that the decision of the prohibition of recording the Hadith, which led to the invention of Ijtihad and Opinionism, passed by essential stages and definite periods since it was not originated by the Holy Prophet or deduced from any of his instructions. These stages will be hereinafter mentioned in the form of events.

(1) The Hadith Circulated Increasingly

As a natural result of the wide scope of the personal opinions (Ijtihad) of Abu-Bakr and `Umar, as well as the Sahabah who imitated their conceptual course, and the emergence of contradiction between the mujtahids' decisions and the Holy Prophet's traditions (*Sunnah*), the reporting of Hadith expanded very far and wide since it was seen as an essential matter for the conclusion of the most authentic and purest form of the religious law.

In addition, such personal opinions were very manifestly discriminated from the reporting of Hadith in general. For the Sahabah, the reporting from the Holy Prophet was such a natural matter.

Accordingly, it is probable that Abu-Bakr's famous saying ("You are reporting from the Messenger of Allah matters about which you are discrepant. People who will come after you will be more discrepant that you are.") carried an indication to the multiplicity of trends during his reign and the Sahabah's having adopted private views, which were different from the others'.

This was the very reason behind the extension of the discrepancies among the Muslims that occurred later on. The reporting of Hadith was thus a very strong trend whose influence can be clearly understood

from `Umar ibn al-Khattab's famous saying, "You have reported very much Hadith from the Messenger of Allah," and from the statement of Ibn Sa`d, in *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, that reads, "During the reign of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, the Hadiths were noticeably big in number," and from the statement of al-Khatib al-Baghdadiy, in *Taqyid al-`Ilm*, that reads, "When `Umar knew that people had kept books of Hadith..." as well as many other historical texts.

(2) Abu-Bakr Prohibited The Reporting And Set Fire To His Book Of Hadith

After the reporting from the Holy Prophet had increased so prominently that it had become a sweeping trend, Abu-Bakr, having been the caliph, ordered the Sahabah not to report any material from the Holy Prophet to any further extent. He thus said, "Do not report anything from the Messenger of Allah.

If one asks you about it, you should say: only does the Holy Qur'an stand between you and us." He then set fire to his book of Hadith after he had said to his daughter `U'ishah, "Daughter; collect and bring me the papers comprising Hadiths that you have." When she brought these papers to her father, he set fire to them... etc.

(3) `Umar Ordered The Sahabah To Reduce Reporting The Hadith

Because the reporting of Hadith continued increasingly during his reign and because the Sahabah did not comply with the instructions of Abu-Bakr, `Umar ibn al-Khattab, more insistently, continued Abu-Bakr's proposal of prohibiting the reporting and recordation of the Hadith. As he saw off a group of the Sahabah that he had delegated to al-Kufah, `Umar asked them, "Do you know why I am seeing you off?"

"Yes, we do," they answered. "This is because for the sake of our being the companions and supporters of the Holy Prophet."

Replying them, `Umar said, "This is true. But I am seeing you off for another matter that I wanted to tell you in private... you must reduce reporting the Hadith and I am responsible for this decision."

On another occasion, he said to them, "Reduce reporting from the Messenger of Allah except the affairs that are needed (or apparently needed)... etc."

(4) `Umar Collected And Set Fire To The Sahabah's Records Of

Hadith

The Sahabah did not comply with or carry out Abu-Bakr's instructions of stopping recording the Hadith in the same way as they had not been influenced by the event that he had set fire to his own book of Hadith; rather the majority of the Sahabah kept many books of Hadith and this matter was not welcomed by `Umar since the existence of such books would prevent the caliph from achieving his will. `Umar therefore ordered these books to be collected before him.

Firstly, the Sahabah thought that `Umar wanted to check these documents and books and then decide the most authentic among them. Nevertheless, they were surprised when he set fire to them all!

As a matter of fact, this process of burning such books and documents was for the reason that they comprised materials that would act as official documents against `Umar and as clear evidences on ascribing mistakes to him. In order to avoid the occurrence of such matters of bad results, `Umar decided to wipe out these documents.

As another motive, the records that belong to the first age of Islam and that were written down by one of the Sahabah enjoyed such an effective value that could refute the ruler's opinion. Accordingly, a Hadith that is found in a written form cannot be opposed or ascribed to forgery.

The reporting of Hadith, on the other hand, can be opposed by another Hadith that is immediately fabricated without exerting huge efforts. For that reason, the ruling authorities allowed the reporting but disallowed the recordation of the Hadith.

Some authors have argued that the permissibility of reporting the Hadith and the impermissibility of recording it was because a sect of the Jews had believed that the religious heritage should be recorded while the opposite sect had believed that it should be memorized.

In addition, in view of the fact that Ka`b al-Ahbar and Wahab ibn Munabbih were intimate counselors of `Umar, it is likely that he was influenced by their opinions as regards the reporting and recordation of the Hadith, since he needed to keep a tight rein on some of the reports from the Holy Prophet.

The best treatment of this issue would be to separate between the two. It has been narrated that `Umar, once, asked Ka`b al-Ahbar about the origin of poetry, and the latter answered, "Some of the descendants of Isma`il (Prophet Ishmael) would have their Gospels (i.e. divine book) in their hearts and would speak of wisdom."¹

According to another narration, Wahab ibn Munabbih said, "Once, Musa (Prophet Moses) said to the Lord: 'In the Torah, I have read that a nation would keep their Gospels in their hearts wherefrom they would recite them, while they would be preceded by a nation who read their Gospels from their books but they would not retain them. I implore to You to make this nation mine.' Yet, the Lord answered, 'This is the nation of Muhammad.'"²

Dr. Hasan Dha'dha', in '*al-Fikr al-Diniy al-Isra'iliy* (The Israelite Religious Creed)' pp. 97, quotes the following statement from the Talmud, Temura 14:

“As for a nation that narrates orally, you do not have the right to prove it in a written form.”³

(5) `Umar Detained Some Of The Sahabah And Ordered The All To Stop Reporting And Recording The Hadith

In spite of all the continuous steps and the collaborating measures, some of the grand Sahabah, indifferent to the ruling authorities' opinions and trends, did not stop reporting and recording the Hadith. Nevertheless, `Umar ibn al-Khattab did not assume an indifferent attitude towards this; rather he issued strict decisions preventing unfalteringly any process of reporting and recording the Hadith.

He furthermore addressed to the Sahabah, preventing them from reporting the Hadith, saying, “Certainly, your talks are the most evil talks and your words and the most evil words. Anyone of you who intends to say something must quote from the Book of Allah (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) otherwise he must sit motionless.”⁴

Very often, `Umar threatened the reporters of the Holy Prophet's heritage. Previously in this book, `Umar ibn al-Khattab's situations against and menacing words to `Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Musa al-Ash`ariy, and many others have been cited.

As a consummative step, `Umar detained the Sahabah who used to report the Hadith in the holy city of al-Madinah, the capital of the Islamic State, so that they would be always under his supervision and sight and also they would not disperse Hadiths violating his personal opinions.

In this regard, historians have written down that `Umar ibn al-Khattab arrested some of the Holy Prophet's companions... etc. Other narrations have quoted `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf as saying, “Before his death, `Umar ibn al-Khattab ordered the companions of the Messenger of Allah, namely `Abdullah (ibn Mas`ud), Hudhayfah, Abu'l-Darda', Abu-Dharr and `Uqbah ibn `Amir, to be present before him although they lived in remote countries. He then reproached them for having spread the traditions of the Messenger of Allah in these countries.

“Are you now preventing us from such?” asked they.

“No, I do not,” answered `Umar. “Yet, you will reside here, and you will never depart me so long as I am alive. I am more knowledgeable. I will hear from you and reply.”

Hence, they could not leave the capital until the death of `Umar.⁵

(6) The Two Caliphs Restricted The Religious Affairs To The Holy Qur'an

As a substitute for the Hadith and as a justification of their decision of prohibiting the reporting and recordation of it, Abu-Bakr and `Umar propagated the notion of “Only does the Holy Qur'an stand between you and us,” and “I will never add anything to the Book of Allah” as well as the like slogan that they had raised in order to escape the thorough compliance with the texts of the Holy Sunnah and to make the practices move to a more expansive circle, which is the Holy Qur'an in which the all believe and sanctify.

(7) `Umar Allowed The Sahabah To Practice Ijtihad And Act Upon Analogy

As he saw the wide range of the religious questions that he should answer,—although he had no acquaintance with sacred texts dealing with these questions—`Umar concluded that it was necessary to allow the Sahabah and himself to practice Ijtihad and to decide *Qiyas* and *al-Maslahah* (public interest) and other matters as principles in the Islamic legislation.

(8) `Umar Attempted To Restrict The Ijtihad

Because the concept of Ijtihad was practiced by the Sahabah in such a limitless manner, their opinions were exposed to contradiction and discrepancy and it became difficult to discriminate between these opinions.

Having noticed that, `Umar ascended the minbar and warned the Sahabah against such discrepancies. For the same reason, he said to those whom he had summoned, “I am more knowledgeable than you are. I will hear from you and reply.”

The confirmation on the conducts of Abu-Bakr and `Umar in the so-called Shura Committee; `Uthman ibn `Affan and Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan's decisions of accepting only the Hadiths that were common during the reign of `Umar ibn al-Khattab; `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz's decision of restriction the recordation of the Hadith to the conducts of Abu-Bakr and `Umar⁶ other than anything else—all these stages by which the Islamic nation passed, and their likes, substantiate that the personal opinions of Abu-Bakr and `Umar became *Sunnah* that must be followed and their practices of *Ijtihad* became a third source of the Islamic legislation (besides the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah) although neither Abu-Bakr nor had `Umar claimed such before.

From the previous, we can conclude that the concepts of Isma`il Ad-ham, Tawfiq Sidqi, Rashid Rida,⁷ and their fans in Pakistan who had denied the Holy Sunnah absolutely and claimed the obligation of the

commitment to the Holy Qur'an alone—these concepts have been an inevitable outcome of the decision of prohibiting the reporting and recordation of the Hadith, which was decided by Abu-Bakr and `Umar.

Besides, all the justifications and motives that were declared by Abu-Bakr and `Umar as pretexts of the issuance of their decision have been proven untrue. The same thing can be said about all the discussions and reasons presented by all the authors and men of letters—Shiites and Sunnites, Orientalists and Muslims—in this respect.

This is because the decision of the prohibition of reporting and recording the Hadith had its private conditions, prior convictions, and personal motives in the view of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, Abu-Bakr, `Uthman ibn `Affan, and the Umayyad rulers... etc.

[1.](#) Ibn Kathir: al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah 6:62; al-Safuriy: Nuzhat al-Majalis 2: 199.

[2.](#) Ibn Kathir: al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah 6:62; al-Safuriy: Nuzhat al-Majalis 2: 199.

[3.](#) See al-Rawhaniy: Buhuth(un) Ma`a Ahl il-Sunnah wa'l-Salafiyyah 97; al-Fadliy: Tarikh al-Tashri` al-Islamiy 40; al-`imiliy: al-Sahih Min Sirat al-Nabiy.

[4.](#) Ibn Shabbah: Tarikh al-Madinah al-Munawwarah 3:800.

[5.](#) Ibn Mandhur: Mukhtasar Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 17:101.

[6.](#) It has been narrated on the authority of Hajib ibn Khalifah al-Barjumiyy that `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, having been the caliph, said in a sermon addressed to the Muslims, "Indubitably, all that which was decided by the Messenger of Allah and by his Two Companions (i.e. Abu-Bakr and `Umar) must be decided as religion that we adopt other than anything else, while any issue decided by others must be suspended." See Abu-Na`im: Hilyat al-Awliya' 5:298; al-Suyutiy: Tarikh al-Khulafa' 1:241.

[7.](#) Mustafa al-A`dhamiy: Dirasatun fi'l-Hadith al-Nubawiy, 32.

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