

Tadwin al-Hadith Part 2: A Historical Study of the Writing and Compilation of Hadith

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This is second part of the article on Tadwin al-Hadith. It deals with some of the issues related to the writing and documentation of Hadith and takes up extensively the issues in scholarly manners.

It indeed is an enjoyable amount of reading for people interested to know about Hadith in the Islamic literature.

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Tadwin al-Hadith Part 2: A Historical Study of the Writing and Compilation of Hadith

By Rasul Ja'fariyan

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One of the evidence indicating the lack of authenticity in the Hadith ascribed to the Prophet (S) about prohibition on the writing of Hadith is the statement of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab on his intention to have Hadith compiled. 'Umar is reported to have said, "I had intended to write down the texts of the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S). But then it occurred to me that people in the past wrote certain books and due to their relying heavily on such books, they abandoned the Divine Scriptures. By God, I will not

allow anything to cover (obscure) the Book of God”.[1](#)

The above Riwayah, report, shows that the Second Caliph had at first intended to write the Hadith. In some versions of this Riwayah it is stated that he consulted other Sahabah, Companions of the holy Prophet (S) about this matter. They also approved it, but he later changed his mind for a reason that he himself stated, not on account of the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S).

Another evidence of the lack of authenticity in the Hadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith is the statement of the Prophet (S) on the last Thursday of his terrestrial life. On that day when his Sahabah, Companions had assembled around his death bed, the Prophet (S) asked them: “Bring me ink and paper that I may write for you something after which you will not fall into error.” Thereat some people with ‘Umar at their lead opposed him (a.s), saying, ” The Book of God is sufficient for us.”

This Riwayah reveals that the writing of anything aside from the holy Quran was not prohibited. The Prophet (S) considered it necessary to protect the Ummah against falling into error and misguidance. When the Prophet (S) was asking to write down his instructions – and a group of Companions – led by the Second Caliph according to al-Shahristani in al-Milal wa al-Nihal – opposed him – it was because he (S) was aware of the disasters that would follow in the wake of this incident. Details, as recounted by Sunni scholars, of the harms caused for not writing down the Ahadith will be explained later. Is it right to consider the Prophet (S) responsible for something which caused so much harm to the Islamic system and Sunnah?

Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S) on Recording in Writing of Hadith

In a number of his Ahadith the Prophet (S) has permitted the writing of Hadith in general or that he has given such permission to particular individuals. These Ahadith, alone are sufficient to invalidate the ones that prohibit the writing of Hadith. To say the least, the conflict of Riwayat, reports would cause both of them to lose authority (Hujiyyah). The number of these Ahadith is larger than those prohibiting the writing of Hadith. The possibility of the authenticity of such large number of Ahadith is very real. These Ahadith contain the permission and the obligation to write down the Ahadith.

These Ahadith have been reported through several chains of narrators.

A man complained to the holy Prophet (S) about his inability to remember. The Prophet (S) told him, “Take the assistance of thy right hand i.e. writing against the defects of thy memory.”[2](#)

It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (S) stood up and delivered a speech on the occasion of the liberation of Makkah. Abu Shat requested the Prophet (S) for a transcript and a copy of the sermon, whence he (a.s) ordered the sermon to be written down for Abu Shat.[3](#)

The Prophet (S) is reported to have stated, "Define, preserve and record knowledge by means of writing it down."[4](#)

It is reported from Rafi' Ibn Khadija who has said: "We asked the Prophet (S), 'Should we write some of the things that we hear from you?' "Write it down; there is no harm in it." The Prophet replied[5](#).

It is reported on the authority of 'Amr Ibn Shu'ayb that his grandfather asked the Prophet (S), "We hear things from you but we cannot commit them to memory. Do we have permission to write them down?" "Yes, write them down." The Prophet (S) replied[6](#).

It is reported through several chains of narrators from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As who has said: "I asked the Prophet (S), 'Can we write down what we hear from you?' 'Yes.' The Prophet (S) replied. "Irrespective of whether you are angry or calm?" I added. 'Yes.' I do not speak anything but the truth whether be I angry or pleased.' The Prophet (S) replied.[7](#)

In another Hadith the narrator is reported as asking the Prophet (S), "Can we write down knowledge (facts to know, meaning Hadith thereby)?" "Yes". The Prophet (S) replied.[8](#)

The same 'Abdallah Ibn 'Amr reports, "I used to write down whatever I would heard the Prophet (S) say with the purpose of recording it. Then Quraysh stopped me from doing it and I, also abstained from writing them down. Later I mentioned the matter to the Prophet (S). He said, "By God, in whose hands is my life, I do not speak anything but the truth."[9](#)

It is reported from Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s) that the Prophet (S) said, "Write this knowledge ('ilm) from which you will benefit in this world and also in the hereafter. Know that knowledge protects one against ruination."[10](#)

Another famous Hadith of the Imams from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s), which has been narrated both by Sunni and Shi'ah Muslim sources, refers to an inscription on the Prophet's sword. Al-'Imam al-Sadiq (a.s) is reported to have said, "There was a Sahifah, inscription, in the hilt of the Prophet's sword, that said, "Condemned is he who steals land at the boundaries. Condemned is he who befriends people other than his own friends" or he said," Condemned is he who repudiates the bounty of his Benefactor."[11](#)

Abu Hurayrah is reported to have said: "No one is better informed than me about the Prophet's Ahadith except 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar, because he would write with his hand and memorize with his mind, whereas I would only memorize and would not write. He had requested permission from the Prophet (S) to write the Ahadith and the Prophet (S) had granted him such permission.[12](#)" 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar is reported to have said: "I went to the Prophet (S) and said to him, 'I want to narrate your Ahadith and if you permit I will use my hands to write them down to assist my heart, memory.'[13](#)

The Prophet (S) said, "If it is my Hadith then take the assistance of thy hand." He also reportedly possessed a Sahifah, which was well-known as al-Sahifat al-Siddiqah,[14](#) although some have denied

that it contained the Prophet's Ahadith. [15](#) Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah is reported to have confirmed that 'Abdallah possessed such a Sahifah called al-Sahifah al-Siddiqah [16](#).

In another Hadith the Prophet (S) is reported to have stated, "When a mu'min, a believer dies, the page on which he had recorded 'ilm will serve as a barrier between him and the Fire on the Day of Resurrection." [17](#)

Al-Tirmidhi has reported that Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah possessed a Sahifah in which he had recorded a number of the Ahadith of the Prophet (S). [18](#) His son also used to narrate Ahadith from the Sahifah. According to al-Bukhari's report, it was a copy of the Sahifah of 'Abdallah Ibn 'Awf, who used to write Ahadith in it with his own hand writing. [19](#)

Samrah Ibn jundab had also collected many Ahadith in a big book and his son, Sulayman, who inherited it, used to narrate Ahadith from it. It was probably the same treatise about which Ibn Sirin says: "In the Risalah given by Samrah to his son there is a great amount of 'ilm. [20](#)

It is reported from Anas that pointing to a Mushaf, a book, he would say, "These are the Ahadith, which I heard from the Prophet (S). I wrote them down and presented them to the Prophet (S) for his approval)." [21](#)

Al-Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s) narrates from his ancestors (a.s) that the Prophet (S) said, "When you write a Hadith, write it with its sanad (chain of narrators). If it is true, you will share its reward; if false, the sin will lie on its narrator." [22](#)

The Prophet (S) is also reported to have said, "Confine knowledge." When asked as to what he meant, he explained that he meant writing it down.

Umm al-Mu'minin Umm Salamah (r) may God be pleased be with her, is reported to have said, "The Prophet (S) asked for Adim (tanned sheep skin). Ali (a.s) was also with him. Then he dictated so much to Ali (a.s) that both sides of Adim and even edges were filled."

All these Ahadith are evidence that the Prophet (S) permitted the writing of Hadith.

Many scholars believe that the Prophet (S) prohibited its writing earlier and permitted it later. [23](#)

If this is the case, what was the basis for some of the Caliphs to prohibit the writing of Hadith? After that the Prophet (S) had permitted it and after a great number of Ahadith had already been written how can the Caliphs' prohibition be linked with the holy Prophet (S)?

Rashid Rida has analyzed the Ahadith prohibiting and permitting the writing of Hadith. He has tried to prove that the prohibition superseded earlier permission and hence the Ahadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith ought to be accepted as genuine. He writes:

“If we assume that there is a conflict between Ahadith prohibiting the writing of Hadith and those permitting it, one may say that one of them abrogates the other. The Ahadith prohibiting supersede the permitting ones for two reasons: Firstly, the Sahabah, Companions of the holy Prophet (S) narrated the Ahadith prohibiting writing even after the Prophet (S). Secondly, the Companions did not write The Ahadith; for had they done so, their compilations would have reached us”.[24](#)

This explanation, however, may not stand the test for the following reasons.[25](#)

First, the Companions narrated the Ahadith permitting the writing of Hadith along with those prohibiting it, and, as seen above, some Companions did continue to write the Ahadith.

Secondly, the reason for the Companions’ abstinence from compilation was the prohibition imposed by the First and the Second Caliphs, not on account of any prohibition from the Prophet (S).[26](#)

Thirdly, in a conflict the general rule is to disregard both pieces of evidence. Only a powerful evidence supersedes a not so powerful one. In this case neither side is proved to be as such.

Regarding Aba Hurayrah’s admission that ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar used to write down the Ahadith, Rashid Reda says, “There is no reason that we should regard it as evidence of the permissibility of writing, because it is not mentioned in the Hadith that ‘Abdallah wrote with the Prophet’s permission.”[27](#)

It has already been cited above that the Riwayah shows Abdallah Ibn ‘Umar indeed possessed such a permission. There are many Riwayat which bear this out, and in the one cited above Aba Hurayrah expressly states that ‘Abdallah had obtained such a permission from the Prophet (S).[28](#)

On the contrary, others, like Aba Zuhrah, are of the opinion that the Prophet (S) permitted writing of Hadith towards the end of his ministry when the danger of the intermingling of Hadith with the Quranic text was removed.[29](#)

If the practice of some Companions, especially that of the Caliphs would be considered this opinion may not be able to stand valid. On the other hand, if it would be accepted it would subject the practice of some of the Caliphs to blameworthiness. It would then be up to Abu Zuhrah as to which of the two alternatives he would approve.[30](#)

Views of Some Companions Regarding the Writing of Ahadith

Despite the belief of some Companions that Hadith should not be recorded in written form, a group of them continued to do so. This is an indication that the related prohibition was imposed by the order of the Caliphs and not by the command of the Prophet (S). Among the Companions who believed in its permissibility were Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s) and his son al-Hasan (a.s) who wrote down the Ahadith and also stressed others to write them down.[31](#)

From ‘Abdallah Ibn Abbas it is reported as having said, “Record ‘ilm, knowledge by writing it down.” [32](#) Harun Ibn ‘Antarah narrates from his father that ‘Abdallah Ibn al–Abbas after narrating a Hadith to him asked him to write it down.[33](#)

Salami reports that he saw some tablets with Ibn ‘Abbas on which he had written the deeds of the Prophet (S) as narrated to him by Abu Rafi’. [34](#)

It is reported that Anas Ibn Malik used to tell his son, “Record knowledge.”[35](#)

Al–Kattani reports that ‘ayad used to narrate the permissibility of writing the Ahadith from most of the Sahabah and Tabi’in.[36](#) Nonetheless, most of the companions, it seems, had either no conviction in what they stated about the permissibility of writing or had no courage to express it in deed; the evidence of this is their abstention from compilation of Hadith.

Zazan reports, “I took some lines of rosary (Tasbih) from Umm Ya’fur and went to Ali (a.s). He taught them (i.e. their meaning) to me and then told me to return them to Umm Ya’fur.” [37](#)

It is narrated that Ibn ‘Abbas used to write the sunan of the Prophet (S) on tablets which he carried with himself during sessions of learned assemblies. It has been unanimously reported (Mutawatir) that on his death he left behind a camel–load of books.[38](#)

The report according to which abu Bakr wrote some Ahadith after the Prophet (S) and then burned them after some time,[39](#) also indicates that the writing of Hadith was an accepted practice among the Companions.

The Hadith reported from Ali (a.s) in which he said that whoever wrote a Hadith should write it with its sanad[40](#) also supports this view. The sources are explicit that a number of the Companions considered the writing of Hadith as permissible.[41](#)

The report about the Sahifah of Jabir Ibn ‘Abdallah which contained the Ahadith of the Prophet (S) also supports the fact that the practice of writing down of Hadith existed among the Companions[42](#). This proves that a group of Companions and the Caliphs approved the writing of Hadith. The holy Prophet (S) had not prohibited the documentation and the recording of Hadith in written form[43](#).

The Holy Quran and Writing

Al–Khatib al–Baghdadi, to support the permissibility of writing down Hadith, cites the following evidence from the holy Quran. On the basis that the holy Quran enjoins us to write down about things for which there is fear of loss, he argues that Hadith, being subject to such a danger, should be documented and recorded in written form. He cites verses 2:282, 6:91 and 37:157 of the holy Quran. al–Tahawi also, cites the following verse.

“And be not averse to write it down, whether it be small or large, with its term;.... (2:282)”

About the writing of debts he says, “When God commands the writing down of debts to avoid doubts and suspicion, a realm of knowledge that is more difficult to safeguard and more important than recording of debts stands in greater need for protection. Such protection is to commit it to writing to eliminate the possibility of doubt mentioned herein.” Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani are of the same opinion.[44](#)

The Actual Reason behind the Prohibition on the Writing of Ahadith

The above shows that the responsibility for the delay in the writing of Hadith cannot be placed upon the Prophet (S). The Ahadith that suggest such a prohibition to be from the Prophet (S) are not acceptable for various reasons. On the basis of mostly authentic historical sources of the Ahl al-Sunnah as well as Shi’ah sources the readers will evaluate the soundness and validity of this study.[45](#)

‘Aishah is reported to have said, “My father had collected 500 Hadith of the Prophet (S). One morning he came to me and said, ‘Bring the Ahadith that are with you.’ I brought them to him. He burnt them all and said, “I am afraid, should I die leaving these with you.” It is reported on the authority of al-Zuhri that ‘Umar wanted to write the Prophet’s Sunan. He thought about it for a month, seeking guidance from God in this regard. One morning he made a decision and declared, “I recalled the peoples who lived before you. They wrote certain things and were attracted to such writings so much so that they abandoned the Book of God.”[46](#)

Abd al-‘Ala’ says, “Qasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr used to dictate Hadith to me. He said, ‘The amount of Ahadith had increased during the days of ‘Umar. So he ordered that Hadith be collected. When this was done he set them on fire and declared, “No Mishnas like the Mishnas of the followers of the Bible.”[47](#) Mishna is one of the books of the Jews besides their Scripture, the Torah. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab compared it to the Hadith of the Prophet (S) which he did not want to exist alongside of the Book of God.

Yahya Ibn Ju’dah also reports that ‘Umar had intended to write the Ahadith and sunan. But having changed his mind he sent notices to all the cities declaring, “Whoever has with him any Hadith should destroy it.” It has been reported from ‘Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr that, “‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab wanted to write the sunan of the Prophet (S). He consulted the Companions of the Prophet (S). All of them were of the opinion that they should be documented in written form. But ‘Umar reflected upon the matter until one morning he made a decision and said, “I wanted to write down the sunan but then I recalled a people who lived before you who wrote books and abandoned the book of God. By God, I will not cover the Book of God with anything[48](#).

This Riwayah shows that the Companions or at least those of them who were consulted, approved the

writing down of Ahadith. But the Caliph, after a month's reflection, prohibited the writing of Ahadith on the basis that he himself states^{[49](#)}. The argument is not based on the Sunnah of the Prophet (S).

The Opposition of Some Sahabah and Tabi'un to the Writing of Hadith

After the Caliphs' prohibition on the writing of Hadith, since some people regarded their moves as legal precedents (Sunnah), a group of the Sahabah and Tabi'un also abstained from committing Hadith to writing and relied solely upon their memory. They transmitted the Ahadith in oral narration instead of writing them down. To them it was improper to write and compile the Hadith of the holy Prophet (S),^{[50](#)} whereas the Quran and the Prophet (S) had strongly stressed on writing in general.

Abu Burdah is reported as having said that his father told Abu Musa al-'Ash'ari to bring to him whatever he had written of his father's narration. When they were brought he destroyed them and said, "You also, like us, should only memorize."^{[51](#)}

'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salamah al-Jahmi reports, "I heard a Hadith of the Prophet (S) from 'Abdallah ibn 'Amr and wrote it down. After memorizing it, I destroyed what I had written."^{[52](#)}

'Asim said, "I wanted to leave a book with Ibn Sirin but he abstained from keeping it, saying that he would not allow any book to remain near him."^{[53](#)}

Abu Nadrah says, "I asked abu Sa'id to write for us. He replied, "I will not write and I will not make out of something a Quran for you. You take (Ahadith) from us in the same way as we received from the Prophet (S). Abu Sa'id used to say, "Narrate Hadith to one another, for one of them may remind the other."^{[54](#)}

It has been reported on the authority of Ibn Abi Tamim that Ibn Sirin and his companions would not write Hadith.^{[55](#)}

Al-Harawi writes that the Sababah and Tabi'un would not write Ahadith and would record them only in their memory, with the exception of the book of Sadagat.^{[56](#)}

Al-Nuwawi writes, "All the attention of the Sahabah was focussed on Jihad, on struggle against the carnal self, and on worship. Therefore they could not find any time for writing. For similar reasons, the Tabi'un also did not produce any written work (Tasnif)."^{[57](#)}

Abu Kathir al-Ghubri reports Abu-Hurayrah as having said, "Ahadith should neither be concealed nor should they be written down."^{[58](#)}

'Abdallah ibn Muslim reports that Sa'id ibn Jubayr had a detested writing.^{[59](#)} Similarly, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i declared that he had never written down anything.^{[60](#)} When asked why he did not write, he replied,

“When man writes something, he comes to rely on that writing.”[61](#)

Habib ibn abi Thabit is reported to have said, “I do not have any book in the whole world, except for a Hadith, which is for my coffin.”[62](#)

Al-Hasan ibn abi al-Hasan at the time of his death ordered his servant to ignite the oven and to throw all his books with the exception of one into it.[63](#) Ibn Sirin used to say, “If I had to write a book, I would make a book of the letters of the holy Prophet (S).”[64](#) Yahya ibn Sa’id says, “I found the scholars opposed to writing.”[65](#) Sulayman ibn Harb reports, “Yahya ibn Sa’id came to us and he would narrate Hadith. At first, our companions would not write his Ahadith, but after sometimes they began to write them.”[66](#)

Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn abi-Bakr would ask ‘Abdallah ibn al-‘Ala’ not to write Hadith. [67](#)

Sufyan reports that when ‘Amr ibn Dinar was told that he wrote ‘Amr’s Ahadith, ‘Amr stood up and said, “Whoever writes should leave my place.” Sufyan says that thereafter he did not write anything that he heard from ‘Amr but would only memorize.[68](#)

It is reported from Ibn Tawus that his father said, “Someone asked ‘Abdallah ibn al-‘Abbas a question which pleased Ibn ‘Abbas. The man told Ibn ‘Abbas to write the answer for him. But Ibn ‘Abbas said that they would not write anything of the ‘ilm.” [69](#) This Riwayah conflicts with the earlier ones about Ibn ‘Abbas cited above.

Malik ibn Anas reports that when Ibn Musayyab died he did not leave behind any book. The same was true of Qasim ibn Muhammad, ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri.[70](#) Mansur ibn Mu’tamar is reported to have said, “I have not written anything until now.”[71](#)

A similar statement is reported from Yunus ibn ‘Ubayd.[72](#) It is reported of Ibn abi-Dhu’ayb that he would only memorize Ahadith and abstain from writing them. He belonged to the fifth Tabaqah, generation, and lived during the middle of the 2nd/8th century.[73](#) It has been said of Sa’id ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz that he would not write anything.[74](#)

Isma’il ibn ‘Ayyash, who belonged to the sixth Tabaqah, remembered ten thousand Hadith by heart but would not write anything.[75](#) Abu Hatim reports that he never saw any writing in the hands of abul-Walid al-Tayalisi.[76](#) Both of them belonged to the seventh Tabaqah, generation, and detested writing Hadith. It is also said of al-Nufayli that no books were ever seen with him.[77](#) Also Sahib al-Basri is said to have detested writing.[78](#)

Book Besides the Book of God

The above Riwayat, reports show that those who considered the writing of Hadith impermissible, they did so because the writing of Hadith would lead to the emergence of ‘a book by the side of the Book of God’. That the People would abandon the holy Scripture for other books.

In examining the validity of this fear it will come to light that it was just a pretext. The Book, the holy Quran only with the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (S) completes the Shari'ah.

The supporters of prohibition to writing of Hadith—the Caliphs or others who followed them in this matter and sought to justify their acts, had in their mind a statement of the Prophet (S), “a book by the side of the Book of God.” Unfortunately, by mistake or otherwise, they applied it improperly.

It is a fact that during the lifetime of the holy Prophet (S) certain Companions had acquired some copies of the Torah and other books of the Jews. When the Prophet (S) heard about it, he told them to abstain from making other books a parallel authority with the Book of God, the Quran. In this regard it is worth to note the following Riwayah narrated on the authority of Jabir. Jabir reports that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab brought a copy of the Torah to the Prophet (S) and said, “This is a copy of the Torah which I read.”

The Prophet (S) was silent but the color of his face changed. Abu Bakr noticed this and said to ‘Umar, “May thy mother mourn for thee, do you not see the face of the holy Prophet (S)?” ‘Umar glanced at the face of the holy Prophet (S) and said, “I seek refuge with God from the anger of the holy Prophet (S). I accept God as the Lord, Islam as the Din, religion, and Muhammad (S) as the prophet.” Thereupon the Prophet (S) said, “By God, if Moses were to come here and were you to follow him and abandon me, you would have deviated from the straight path. If Moses were alive and had he seen me he would have followed Me.”[79](#)

This Hadith shows that the Prophet (S) was angry because ‘Umar had taken some other scripture as a parallel authority to the holy Quran. In another Hadith of a similar kind a man from the Ansar’ takes the place of abu-Bakr. It is also probable that the two refer to different incidents of this kind and that this happened on several occasions.

It is reported from abu-Qallabah that once ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab passed by a man who was reciting from a book. After listening for a while ‘Umar liked what he read. He asked the man to write from this book for him. The man consented to do so. ‘Umar then bought a leaf to him on, which the man wrote filling both sides.

Later, he came to the Prophet (S) and read it out to him (S). Thereupon the color of the face of the holy Prophet (S) changed. There at a man belonging to the Ansar said to ‘Umar, “May your mother mourn for you. Do you not see the face of the holy Prophet (S)?” On this the Prophet (S) said, “I am raised as a prophet, as the opener (fatih) and the sealer (khatim), and I have brought everything that I should have had.”[80](#)

It is reported on al-Zuhri’s authority that Hafsah, ‘Umar’s daughter, brought a book to the Prophet (S) in which there were stories of Joseph (a.s). She began to read them to the Prophet (S), whose face reddened as he listened. Thereupon the Prophet (S) said “By God, if Joseph himself were to come here and were you to follow him and leave me you would have gone astray.”[81](#)

These Ahadith indicate that what the Prophet (S) disliked was the reading of corrupted texts, whose inevitable effect was propagation of Jewish misinterpretation, which have been known as Israeliyat – amongst the Muslims. The Prophet (S) did not want the Jewish books to take a place by the side of the Holy Quran, the exact words of God Almighty. The books that did not acknowledge the infallibility of the previous Prophets could make the people deviate from the straight path and the true doctrine of religion that the holy Quran contains.

The Ahadith just cited also show ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab who later became the Caliph and his daughter showed interested in books of this kind and the Prophet (S) had often to check them. Unfortunately, later on when Ka’b al-‘Ahbar, a Jew who had outwardly converted to Islam, came to ‘Umar and asked his permission to read the Torah, ‘Umar told him, “If you know that it is the same Torah that was revealed to Moses (a.s) on Mount Sinai, then read it day and night.”⁸² This was ‘Umar’s view even after the Prophet (S) had expressly forbidden him personally not to read such things.

There are other Riwayat which confirm this point that the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S) regarding ‘setting another book by the side of the Book of God’ relates to Isra’ili texts. It has been reported that when ‘Abdallah ibn Mas’ud heard that some people had a book whose contents amazed them, he took it away and destroyed it. He said, “The People of the Book were ruined because they relied upon the writings of their scholars (‘ulama’) and neglected the Divine Scripture.”⁸³

The term ‘ulama’ to the Arabs of those days meant the scholars of the Jews and the Christians. The books referred to in this Riwayah were Jewish writings.

The following Hadith further clarifies this matter. Murrah al-Hamadani says, “Abu-Murrah al-Kindi brought a book from Syria (al-Sham) and gave it to Ibn Mas’ud. Ibn Mas’ud glanced through it, brought water and washed away its written contents. Then he said, “The peoples who lived before you perished for following such books as this. They abandoned the Scripture of God.” Al-Husayn says, “Indeed he would not have destroyed that writing had it been the holy Quran or the Sunnah. Rather, it was a book belonging to the Ahl al-Kitab.”⁸⁴

Imam Ali (a.s) is reported to have said, “Any of you who has a book should destroy it. The peoples who lived before you were destroyed for following the statements of their scholars and abandoning the Book of God.”⁸⁵

Al-‘Imam al-Sadiq (a.s) is reported to have said, “Some scholars search after the Hadith of Jews and Christians, whereby they seek to increase their knowledge. The place of such people, scholars, is in the bottommost level of Hell.”⁸⁶ It is reported on the authority of ‘Amr ibn Yahya ibn Ju’dah that when a book was brought to the Prophet (S) he said, “It is a great witlessness and misguidance for an ummah, nation, to neglect what her own prophet has brought to see what some other prophet has brought.”⁸⁷ This Hadith also reveals the kind of book that was brought to the Prophet (S) and explains the meaning of ‘misleading books.’

Also, Ibn ‘Abbas says, “Why do you ask Ahl al-Kitab about your questions and problems when the Book of God is amongst you?”⁸⁸ All these Ahadith show that the prohibition of the holy Prophet (S) regarding ‘setting another book by the side of the Book of God’ were related to the danger of diffusion of Isratiliyyat, Israelite tales. They did not, by any means, relate to his own Sunnah, which is complementary to the holy Quran and laws wherein are Divinely binding (wajib al-‘ita’ah). All Muslims accepted it. The existence the acclaimed collection of Hadith known as Sihah al-Sittah further supports this point.

The Muslim scholars of Hadith did at last write down and compile the Ahadith of the holy Prophet (S). These scholars are honored for doing what the earlier generations disliked. It was due to a serious misunderstanding on the part of those who like ‘Urwah burnt the Ahadith that they had written with the rationale, “We do not want to set a book by the side of the Book of God.”⁸⁹

1. Jami’ Bayan al-‘ilm, I, 57, cites this Riwayah through several chains (turuq); see also Taqyid al-‘ilm, 49–51.
2. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, VI, 47, 106, 116; I, 90, 22, 29, 32, 336; III, 346; Tahdhib ta’rikh Dimashq, VI, 451; ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s al-Musannaf, V, 438, 439.
3. Bihar al-Anwar, II, 152; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 65–68; Mizan al-‘itidal, I, 653; Lisan al-Mizan, II, 298, IV, 21.
4. Musnad Ahmad, I, 238; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 84; Fath al-Bari, I, 184; Taqyid al-‘ilm 86.
5. Al-‘iqd al-farid, II, 419; al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, II, 38; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 68–70; see also Sunan al-Darimi I, 127; Husn al-Tanbih, 194; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 72; Kanz al-‘ummal, V, 224; Abu Nu’aym’s Akhbar Isfahan, II, 228.
6. Majma’ al-Zawayid, I, 151; Kanz al-‘ummal, V, 225; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 72–74; al-Manar, I, 763; al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 245.
7. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 74, 79; Musnad Ahmad, 215; Bihar al-Anwar, II, 147; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85. Taqyid al-‘ilm, I, 85.
8. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 74, 79; Musnad Ahmad, 215; Bihar al-Anwar, II, 147; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85.
9. Taqyid al-‘ilm, I, 85.
10. Ibid., 74, 75; Fath al-Bari, I, 184; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
11. Musnad Ahmad II, 162, 192; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85.
12. Kanz al-‘ummal, X, 157.
13. Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 85; see also Fath al-Bari, I, 182, 199, 203, 246, 247; Taqyid al-‘ilm, 88, 89; al-Bukhar’i’s al-‘Adab al-Mufrad, 129; Musnad Ahmad, I, 100.
14. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 24, quoting from al-Tabaqat al-kubra, Musnad Ahmad and Sunan al-Tirmidhi; see al-Musannaf, XI, 254; Sahih al-Bukhari, I, 148; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, I, 84; Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar, IV, 318–320; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 42; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
15. Sunan al-Darimi, I, 126; Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 66.
16. Al-Taratib al-‘idariyyah, II, 245; al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII 494, IV, 262 Taqyid al-‘ilm, 84; Ta’wil al-Mukhtalif al-Hadith, 93; Ibn Qutaybah’s al-Ma’arif, 200.
17. Hashim Ma’ruf al-Hasani, Dirasat fi al-Hadith wa al-mahaddithin.
18. Bihar al-Anwar’ II, 144.
19. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Ahkam, bab al-Yamin ma’a al-Shahid.
20. Al-Sayr al-Hathith fi Ta’rikh Tadwin al-Hadith, p. 9; ‘Ulum al-Hadith, 13.
21. Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, IV, 236; ‘Ulum al-Hadith, 14.
22. Taqyid al-‘ilm, 96.
23. Al-‘imla Wa al-‘istimla 5.
24. Bihar al-Anwar, II, 152; Jami’ bayan al-‘ilm, II, 34.
25. Al-‘imla’ wa al-‘istimla 12.

- [26.](#) Ulum al-Hadith wa Mustalahuh, 8,9; Ta'rikh al-Madhahib al-Fiqhiyyah, 24; al-'imla' wa al-'istimla 146.
- [27.](#) Adwa' ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 48.
- [28.](#) Ibid., 50, quoting al-Manar.
- [29.](#) Abu Zuhrah, Ta'rikh al-Madhahib al-Fiqhiyyah, 24; al-'imla' wa al-'istimla, 146.
- [30.](#) The sources for this statement are cited below.
- [31.](#) Taqyid al-'ilm, 92.
- [32.](#) Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, IV, 319; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 128.
- [33.](#) Al-Taratib al-idariyyah, II, 246; Taqyid al-'ilm, 92.
- [34.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-kubra, VII, 21; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 127; Taqyid al-'ilm, 96, 97.
- [35.](#) Al-Taratib al-idariyyah, II, 247.
- [36.](#) Ibn abi-Shaybah's al-Musannaf, II, 390.
- [37.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, II 123; Sayr al-Hadith, 9; Taqyid al-'ilm, 136; 'Ulum al-Hadith, 20.
- [38.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 123; al-Ma'rifah wa al-tatrikh, II, 142, 143, 661; al-Tabaqat al-kubra, V, 467; Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, IV, 319; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI, 183.
- [39.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 5.
- [40.](#) Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 67.
- [41.](#) Sunan al-Darimi, I, 127, 128, al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 279; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 84, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, II, 371; Taqyid al-'ilm, 113 – 199.
- [42.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 123; al-Ma'rifah wa al-tatrikh, II, 142, 143, 661; al-Tabaqat al-kubra, V, 467; Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, IV, 319; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI, 183.
- [43.](#) Taqyid al-'ilm, 71.
- [44.](#) Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, IV, 319.
- [45.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 5; Kanz al-'ummal, I, 174.
- [46.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, III, 287; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI 257; Taqyid al-'ilm, 49; Tatrikh al-Khulafa 138.
- [47.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 188.
- [48.](#) Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 77; Taqyid al-'ilm, 53.
- [49.](#) Tadrib al-Rawi, II, 68.
- [50.](#) Ibid., II, 65.
- [51.](#) Kashf al-'Astar, I, 109.
- [52.](#) Al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 523.
- [53.](#) Al-Kifayah, 353; al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 59.
- [54.](#) Hayat al-Sahabah, I, 243, 244.
- [55.](#) Al-Taratib al-idariyyah, I, 62; al-Turuq al-Hukmiyyah, 256.
- [56.](#) Al-Taratib al-idariyyah, II, 249.
- [57.](#) Ibid.
- [58.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, II, 364.
- [59.](#) Ibid., VI 258; on page 257 that he wrote Ibn 'Abbas's Ahadith.
- [60.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VI, 258.
- [61.](#) Ibid., VI, 271, whereas his pupil regretted not having written Hadith, see p. 270.
- [62.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VI, 320.
- [63.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII, 157.
- [64.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII, 157; Sunan al-Darimi, I 120.
- [65.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, VII, 141, Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 81.
- [66.](#) Taqyid al-'ilm, 111, al-Ma'rifah wa al-Ta'rikh, II, 829.
- [67.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, V, 188.
- [68.](#) Ibid, V, 480; Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, I, 113.
- [69.](#) 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI 258; Taqyid al-'ilm, 42.
- [70.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 111.

- [71.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 142.
- [72.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 145.
- [73.](#) Tadhkirat al-Huffaz., I, 192.
- [74.](#) Ibid, I, 219.
- [75.](#) Ibid., I, 254.
- [76.](#) Ibid., I, 382.
- [77.](#) Ibid. I, 441.
- [78.](#) Ibid. I, 461; see Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 78–79; Sunan al-Darimi, I, 119, 120
- [79.](#) Sunan al-Darimi, I, 116; 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, X, 313.
- [80.](#) Ibid., VI, 113, XI, 111; Majma' al-zawa'id, I, 182.
- [81.](#) 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, XI, 110; Mizan al- 'i'tidal, I, 666; Lisan al-Mizan, II, 408; Bihar al-Anwar, XI 99; Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 49, III, 28, 29; al-Zamakhshari's al-Fa'iq, IV, 114.
- [82.](#) Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 262; al-Fa'iq, I, 651.
- [83.](#) Sunan al-Darimi, I, 122; Taqyid al-'ilm, 53, 56.
- [84.](#) Gharib al-Hadith, IV, 48; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 52, 53; in Taqyid al'ilm, 34, there is a similar Riwayah that a book was brought to him from Yemen in which there were Ahadith related to the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s) and that he destroyed it.
- [85.](#) Jami' bayan al-'ilm, I, 76.
- [86.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, II. 108.
- [87.](#) Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 50
- [88.](#) 'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Musannaf, X, 314; Jami' bayan al-'ilm, II, 51.
- [89.](#) Abu Zuhrah, al-'Imam Zayd, 167.

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