📑 Introduction

The Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam, considered the verbatim word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. However, the practical implementation of the Qur'anic commandments and the explanation of divine guidance were primarily preserved through the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet ﷺ—known collectively as Hadith.

The Hadith literature holds immense importance in Islamic scholarship. It serves as the second source of Islamic law (Sharīʿah) after the Qur'an. Without Hadith, the meanings of various Qur'anic verses would remain ambiguous, such as the details of Salah (prayer), Zakah (charity), and Hajj (pilgrimage).

📖 What is a Hadith?

The word Hadith (حديث) literally means "speech," "narration," or "report." In Islamic terminology, it refers to the recorded words, actions, tacit approvals, or descriptions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Each hadith consists of two essential parts:

1. Isnād (إسناد) – The chain of narrators who transmitted the hadith.

2. Matn (متن) – The actual text or content of the hadith.

📝 Example:
On the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, "Actions are judged by intentions, and every person will get what they intended..."
(Sahih al-Bukhari 1)

This Hadith is used as a foundation for understanding sincerity in all acts of worship.

📄 Page 3: Definition of Hadith in Detail

📌 Linguistic and Technical Definitions

Linguistic meaning:
The word "Hadith" (حديث) comes from the root ḥ-d-th, meaning to speak, to report, to inform.

Technical meaning in Islamic sciences:
A Hadith is defined as:

Translation:
"That which is attributed to the Prophet ﷺ in terms of his sayings, actions, tacit approvals, or physical/characteristic descriptions."

🧭 Difference Between Hadith and Sunnah

Hadith refers to the recorded narration.

Sunnah refers to the established practices of the Prophet ﷺ, which are derived from the Hadiths.

While all Sunnah is based on Hadith, not all Hadith necessarily represent established Sunnah, especially if the hadith is weak .
Page 4: Classification of Hadiths (Part 1)

The scholars of Hadith have classified Hadiths using several criteria to determine their authenticity, chain strength, and origin. This helps scholars decide how reliable and applicable a Hadith is.

🔷 A. Classification Based on Authenticity

1. Ṣaḥīḥ (صحيح) – Authentic
A Hadith that meets the following five conditions:

Continuous chain (متصل السند)

Trustworthy narrators ('adl)

Accurate memory (ḍābiṭ)

No hidden defects ('illah)

No contradiction with stronger sources

✅ Example:
"Actions are judged by intentions..."
(Sahih al-Bukhari 1)

2. Ḥasan (حسن) – Good

Similar to Ṣaḥīḥ, but the memory of the narrators is slightly less precise. Still acceptable in legal rulings and beliefs.

✅ Example:
"Modesty brings nothing but good."
(Sunan At-Tirmidhi 2009 – حسن)

3. Ḍaʿīf (ضعيف) – Weak

Fails to meet one or more of the conditions of Ḥasan or Ṣaḥīḥ. Scholars differ on its use; it's generally avoided in legal rulings.

🔷 B. Classification Based on Number of Narrators

1. Mutawātir (متواتر)

Reported by such a large number of people that it's impossible they agreed on a lie. Used to prove essential beliefs.

✅ Example:
"Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Hellfire."
(Mutawātir Hadith – narrated by more than 70 Companions)

2. Aḥād (آحاد)

Reported by one or a few narrators at some level of the chain. It is further subdivided into:

Gharīb (غريب) – Only one narrator at any level

ʿAzīz (عزيز) – Two narrators

Mashhūr (مشهور) – Three or more narrators

📄 Page 5: Classification of Hadiths (Part 2)

◆ C. Classification Based on Attribution

    1. Marfūʿ (مرفوع) – Attributed to the Prophet ﷺ

✅ Example:
"The strong one is not the one who can wrestle, but the one who controls himself at the time of anger."
(Sahih al-Bukhari)

    2. Mawqūf (موقوف) – Attributed to a Companion

✅ Example:
'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه said:
"No man should sell in our markets unless he has knowledge of the religion."
(Muwatta' Mālik)

    3. Maqṭūʿ (مقطوع) – Attributed to a Tabi'I (Successor)

◆ D. Classification Based on Presence of Defects

    1. Muʿallal (مُعَلَّل) – Contains a hidden defect

    2. Mudallas (مُدَلَّس) – A narrator hides the identity of a weak teacher

    3. Maqlūb (مقلوب) – Chain or text is reversed

    4. Munkar (منكر) – Weak narrator contradicts a trustworthy one

    5. Shādh (شاذ) – Reliable narrator contradicts someone more reliable

These classifications help Hadith scholars (muhaddithūn) judge whether a narration can be used for law (fiqh), belief ('aqīdah), or moral teachings (akhlaq).

📄 Page 6: Examples of Hadith Classifications

🔶 1. Ṣaḥīḥ Hadith:

English:
The Prophet ﷺ said:
"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise."
(Sahih Muslim 91)

🔶 2. Ḥasan Hadith:
The Prophet ﷺ said:
"He who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."
(Sunan At-Tirmidhi 1922 – Hasan)

🔶 3. Ḍaʿīf Hadith)

English:
"Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China."
Note: This is often quoted but considered ḍaʿīf or even fabricated by many scholars.

📄 Page 7: Compilation of Hadiths – Early Stages

📜 Early Oral Preservation

During the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Hadiths were primarily preserved orally. The Arabs had strong memories and could transmit lengthy narrations with precision. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged memorization but initially discouraged writing Hadith to avoid confusion with the Qur'an.

📜 Compilation during the Sahaba Era

After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the Companions took active roles in preserving Hadiths. Some began to write down Hadiths privately.

Example: Sahifah of Hammam ibn Munabbih – A student of Abu Hurairah

'Umar ibn al-Khattab was cautious about documentation but permitted it with time.

📄 Page 8: Compilation of Hadiths – Formal Collections

🏛 Umayyad and Abbasid Periods

Under the rule of Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, Hadith compilation was formalized. He instructed scholars like Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri to document Hadiths.

📚 Major Collections of Hadith

1. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (by Imam Bukhari – 256 AH)

2. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (by Imam Muslim – 261 AH)

3. Sunan Abī Dāwūd

4. Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī

5. Sunan al-Nasā'ī

6. Sunan Ibn Mājah

These six books are known as Kutub as-Sittah (The Six Authentic Books).

📄 Page 9: Compilation – Methods and Criteria

Imams like Bukhari and Muslim set strict standards:

Only accepted Ṣaḥīḥ Hadiths

Verified narrators' biographies

Traced chain connections

Rejected fabricated Hadiths

📝 Imam Bukhari examined over 600,000 Hadiths, but only included around 7,000 with repetitions in his Ṣaḥīḥ.

📄 Page 10: Hadiths with Meaning and Example

🟨 Example 1: From Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

English:
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"This world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the disbeliever."
(Sahih al-Bukhari 6512)


🟨 Example 2: From Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

English:
The Prophet ﷺ said:
"Cleanliness is half of faith."
(Sahih Muslim 223)

📄 Page 11: Hadiths with Meaning and Explanation (continued)

🟨 Example 3: From Sunan Abī Dāwūd

English:
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for him."
(Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3641)

Example 4: Hadith on Mercy and Kindness to Animals

English Translation:
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"There is a reward for serving any living being with a moist liver (i.e., every living creature)."
(Sahih al-Bukhari 2363)

Context:
This Hadith teaches compassion toward all creatures, even animals, showing Islam's emphasis on universal mercy.

🟩 Example 5: Hadith on Brotherhood and Unity

English Translation:
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other."
(Sahih al-Bukhari 481)

Context:
This Hadith highlights the importance of solidarity, support, and unity among Muslims.

🟩 Example 6: Hadith on Justice and Fairness

English Translation:
The Prophet ﷺ said:
"Beware of oppression, for oppression will be darkness on the Day of Judgment."
(Sahih Muslim 2578)

Context:
This Hadith warns against injustice and reminds us that even small acts of oppression will have serious consequences in the Hereafter.

📄 Page 12: Conclusion and References

📘 Conclusion

Hadith is a cornerstone of Islamic knowledge. Its preservation, classification, and compilation are a testament to the dedication of early Muslim scholars. Understanding the structure and authenticity of Hadiths helps us connect more deeply with the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and apply Islam correctly in our daily lives.

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