

### Earliest Collections of Ahadith:

The companions of the Prophet ﷺ went very deep and to great lengths to preserve his sayings, verdicts and his tacit approval. The Prophet ﷺ himself is reported to have instructed his companions to record his Hadith and take care that nothing should be falsely attributed to him.

Amongst thousands of the Ahadith written during his lifetime, there were letters, instructions, treaties and other official documents of the government. Some of these were,

- 1) **Kitab-As-Sadiqa:** This was dictated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself and contained detailed rules regarding the levy of Zakah. The original remained for a long time and copies were made for official use by the provinces.
  - 2) **Sahifa Amr bin Hazm:** The Holy Prophet ﷺ dictated this to Ubay bin Kaab رضي الله عنه and contained rules of Shariah about purification, Zakat, Salah, Ushr, Taxes, and other administrative laws. It was given as an official guide to Amr bin Hazm when he was appointed the Governor of Yemen.
  - 3) **As-Sahifa As Sadiqa:** Containing one thousand Ahadith, this was written by Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه on the instructions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.
  - 4) **As-Sahifa Anas bin Malik:** He was the voluntary servant of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from the age of ten and wrote down many of his sayings. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself was pleased to see him doing *so and accorded him his wholehearted approval.*
  - 5) **As-Sahifa Ali:** This is a detailed book of instructions that was compiled by Ali رضي الله عنه bin Abi Talib. This was a momentous work and served as a guide not only to himself but also to the governments of the future.
- Other Directives: the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to dictate to his scribes many documents and directives as well as complete books. These included instructions for government and letters to rulers and delegations.

### Compilation of the Hadith in the 1st Century of Hijrat

In the first century of the Hijrat, several hundred books of varying formats dealing with Ahadith had already been prepared. These books which

ii. Another Sahih Hadith is that the Prophet ﷺ validated the previous Nikah

#### 4) Al-Mau'do (The Fabricated)

A false Hadith made up. This class of Ahadith have been carefully uncovered by our learned Islamic scholars in the past. They have no place in true and authentic Ahadith collections. The Hadith scientists have meticulously compiled books of these so that at no stage they may be confused with the real thing.

##### Example of Mau'do Hadith

Abdul Wahad narrated from Mubarik from Ibne Bakran from Qazi from Yatiq from Ibne Dakheel from Muhammad bin Abdous from Abu Khutheema from Yazid bin Haroon from Qazat bin Soaid from Asim from Alshath from Shadad bin Aous that the Prophet said, "Whoever related poetry after Isha prayers, his Salah will not be accepted for that night".

- i. Experts say that Qazat bin Soaid's narrations are full of mistakes
- ii. Reciting poetry is not Haram.

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#### The main features of the six collections of Ahadith

The scholars have evaluated different books on the basic criteria of authenticity. The books that are considered of the highest rank are six in number. They are called the 'Six Authentic' (al-Sihah al-Sitta) books of Hadith.

Their names are as follows.

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| 1. The Sahih Al Bukhari | 2. The Sahih Muslim |
| 3. Sunan Ibn Majah      | 4. Sunan Abu Da'ud  |
| 5. Jam'a al-Tirmizi     | 6. Sunan Nasai      |

1. The Sahih al Bukhari (its full name is Al-Jaami' al-Sahih al-Musnad min Hadith Rasool-Allaah wa Sunanihi wa Ayaamihi), was compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Ismail Al-Bukhari (194-256 A.H.), and is considered to be the most authentic book after the Holy Quran. He, along with Imam Muslim,

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is called 'Imam ul Muhadditheen' (Leader of Muhadditheen) and their books are called al-Sahihain (the two authentic books). The author was from the city of Bukhara, now in Uzbekistan. His father was also a scholar of Ahadith. Al-Bukhari began the study of Ahadith when he was less than ten years old. By the age of sixteen, he had memorized many books of the famous early scholars. Not satisfied with just the memorization of the Ahadith, he also studied the biographies of the narrators. He could produce from his memory the dates of birth and death and other important biographical information of the narrator. He began to travel around, going from one Islamic region to another, for sixteen years. For this he spent a vast amount of money to support his research. He visited many centers of knowledge where he gathered Ahadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until he had collected more than 600,000 Ahadith. He referred to one thousand scholars of the Hadith and discussed these reports with them. These scholars were people who were known for their sincerity, piety and sound belief. From this huge number of Ahadith he compiled his book al-Sahih, following the most precise scientific guidelines in his research as to their authenticity and in distinguishing the sahih (sound) from the weak, and in finding out about the narrators, until he recorded in his book, the most sound of the sound. In the compilation of this work, he displayed a great critical ability and the most scrupulous accuracy. He established the rule that the transmitters must stand in a continuous and unbroken chain, meaning they must have lived during the life of each other and must actually have met.

Sahih al-Bukhari is divided into ninety-seven books, which are further divided into 3,450 chapters. The total number of 'Ahadith' in his book is 9,082. However, many of them were repeated with different 'Isnad'. Without repetition, the number goes down to 2,602.

**2. The Sahih Muslim**, compiled by Imam Muslim bin Hajjaj رضي الله عنه (204-264 AH), and this is considered second only to the Sahih Bukhari. These two collections, Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, are collectively called Al-Sahihain, the Two Most Authentic Collections. If the two of them reported a Hadith, it has the highest level of credibility and it is called Muttafaqun 'Alaihi (One Agreed Upon).

Imam Muslim began his study of 'Ahadith, at the age of 15. He travelled widely to collect the Ahadith, and went to Hijaz (Saudi Arabia), Egypt and Iraq, where he found great opportunities to listen to famous learned scholars.

He was a remarkable writer and also wrote many books on Fiqh (Islamic Law) and biographies.

The book for which he is best known is the Sahih Muslim. Out of 300,000 Hadith collected, only those which are recognized as absolutely Sahih were selected by him. He established the practice that the narrators must stand in unbroken successions; they must have lived at the same time and there must have been a possibility of their actual contact. He paid so much attention to the Isnad that a Tradition is often followed by several different Isnad. The Sahih is introduced by a very useful discussion on the science of the Hadith itself and many other important topics of the Islamic Law.

**3. Sunan of Al-Tirmidhi'** also known as Al Jam'a Al-Tirmizi رحمته الله, was compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Isa (209-279 A.H.) of Tirmiz in modern day Central Asia. He traveled widely in Iran, Iraq and the Hijaz to collect the Hadith. He studied under al-Bukhaari; they had some of the same teachers. He began to seek Ahadith by travelling to Khurasaan, Iraq and the Hijaz. He became famous for his memorization of hadith, trustworthiness and knowledge.

His shaykhs included Ahmad ibn Hambal رحمته الله and Abu Dawood al-Sajistani رحمته الله. He compiled al-Jaami' which is counted as one of the six reliable books of hadith. In this book he examined the ahadith in detail, which is of benefit to students of fiqh, because he mentions the Ahadith and most of his ahadith deal with rulings of fiqh. He mentions the isnaads and lists the Sahaabah who narrated the hadith, so what he believes is saheeh he says is saheeh, and what he believes is da'eef he says is da'eef. He explains who among the fuqaha' accepted the hadith and who did not. His Jaami' is the most comprehensive of the books of al-Sunan, and is the most useful to the muhaddith (hadith scholar) and faqeeh. He wrote many other books as well. He discussed the legal opinions of early Imams regarding the subject of 'Ahadith. The work is divided into 50 chapters (Kutub) and contains 3,956 Ahadith.

**4. Sunan Abu Da'ud**, which was compiled by Imam Suleman bin Shoaib رحمته الله (202-275 A.H.) of Sajistan (modern day Uzbekistan). He was a trusted narrator of Ahadith and a careful collector and compiler. He was also a well-known Faqih. He traveled to Baghdad where he met Imam Ahmad ibn

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Hanbal and stayed with him. He also travelled to the Hijaz, Iraq, Khurasaan, Syria, Egypt and the borders of the Islamic world. Al-Nasai, al-Tirmidhi and others narrated Hadith from him. He attained the highest degree of piety and righteousness. He collected half a million Ahadith, out of which he selected 4,800 absolutely authentic Ahadith. He adopted the method of arranging Ahadith under different topics.

**5. Sunan Ibn Majah**, was compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Yazid رضي الله عنه, (209-273 AH). He traveled extensively to collect the Hadith of the Holy Prophet, and the scholars of Islam unanimously agree about Ibn Majah's great knowledge and trustworthiness. His travels include Iraq, Basrah, Kufa, Baghdad, Makkah, Syria, Egypt and ar-Rai. He wrote three books during his travels: a book on the Tafseer; a book on history, in which he compiled the reports of men who had written down reports of the Sunnah from the time of the companions until his own time; and his book al-Sunan. His Sunan contains 4,341 Ahadith. It has very little repetition and it is one of the best in arrangement of chapters.

**6. Sunan Nasai** was compiled by Imam Ahmad bin Shuaib رضي الله عنه of Nishapur (210-303 AH). Imam An-Nasai took long journeys to learn the Hadith. He started his study of the Hadith at the age of fifteen, when he began extensive travels to far off places to collect Ahadith. He is known to have visited parts of Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Al-Jazirah. His comments on al-jarh wa'l-ta'deel (the study of the soundness or otherwise of narrators of Hadith) are highly esteemed by the scholars. He is considered the foremost among all scholars of Hadith, and he is the best evaluator of the narrators of his time. His book contains 5662 Ahadith and is divided well into chapters.

### Hadith as a source of guidance for individual conduct

The Quran lays down foundation of guiding Muslims about individual conduct whereas hadith provides details:

*"And We revealed to you the Message (Quran) so that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them." (16:44)*

*"You have indeed in the Messenger of God a beautiful pattern of conduct." (33:21)*

The Prophet provided complete guidance regarding individual conduct of