

## CHAPTER 2

### HADITH

#### Meaning of the term hadith and sunnah

The word **hadith**, literally comes from the Arabic word *haddatha* which means to give a story, report, narration, piece of information or an account by a person. Technically, the term hadith refers to the prophetic sayings (narrations/ reports/ statement), actions and silent approvals of the Prophet Mohammed that bearing to any Islamic code of life.

**Sunnah**: literally means path, track or way. In broad sense is an action done, commanded, or approved by the prophet (p.b.u.h). Simply means it is the life style of the prophet.

#### Differences between Hadith and Sunna

The term hadith is sometimes used interchangeably to refer to Sunnah although there are significance differences between the two as follows:

Hadith	Sunnah
This is what the prophet said or what he taught	This refers to what he did or his actions
It is what the prophet kept quiet about or approved	It is the way in which he conducted the affairs of the society. That is, the doing of religious act himself.
It is the prophet's interpretation of the Quran	It is his actual reading of the Quran
This is the prophet's treaties and declaration	It is the implementation of those treaties and declarations
It's the prophet's guidance on how to behave towards others	It's how he related to other people
This is the prophet's instruction on how to worship	It Refers to the demonstrations and how the prophet Mohammed conducted the religious acts.

## **EVOLUTION OF HADITH**

### **Meaning of the concept of evolution of hadith**

The term **evolution** has been used to refer to the origin, beginning or emergence. Therefore, evolution of Hadith traces the origin and gradual development of hadith. It can best be looked into by studying the drivers of evolution. These are the factors that made the Prophet to come up with the volumes of hadith and sunnah which Muslims today rely on as a significant code of reference after the Quran.

### **Ways through which hadith evolved**

There are four ways in which contributed to the evolution of hadith:

#### **1. The hadith through the prophet's initiative**

The prophet was devoted to teach the Muslims about the right way. He would come up with an issue of which he felt that there was need for the Muslims to know about. In this case he would talk to the Muslims to address it.

#### **2. The hadith as a response to questions asked by his companions**

The prophet was the leader and reliable authority in all matters concerning the Muslims. People would approach him with questions on religion, social, political and any other issues affecting them. He was the resource of reference in addressing people's issues. Hence, his suggested solutions became part of hadith.

#### **3. The hadith as a demand of circumstances**

Circumstances and situations would arise and the companions would demand the prophet's suggestions and solutions as their leader, hence their suggestions and solutions became Hadith.

#### **4. Hadith as an interpretation of the Quran**

The verses of the Qura'n were revealed to the prophet (P.B.U.H). It was the duty of the prophet to explain the meaning and application of those verses to his companions. Therefore, his explanations and commentaries became Hadith.

### Forms of hadith

Hadith are in four forms as determined by the way they were presented by the prophet. These forms are:

- i. **Qaul:** This is a statement, saying or report given out from the mouth of the holy prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) which has any bearing on any matter concerning the all-embracing Islamic code of life.
- ii. **Fiil:** This is any virtuous deeds or action performed or undertaken by the prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) which has a bearing in any matter concerning the Islamic code of life.
- iii. **Iqraar/ Taqrir:** It refers the deeds done by the Swahabas when the prophet kept quiet about them instead of disapproving them or rather he silently approved them. His silent approval was like giving them a go ahead to continue with the deeds.
- iv. **Sifat:** This refers to general appearance and especially bodily characteristics and the physical tributes the prophet possessed. It includes the qualities and attributes that the prophet displayed in his life. The Swahabas were able to observe his general conduct and follow them.

### Contributions of hadith to Islamic thought and culture

Hadith and Sunnah play a great role in the life of the Muslims. Some of such roles include the following:

- 1) The content of hadith provides an explanation of the verses of the Quran thus enhancing its understanding and application of its teachings. For example; the holy Quran gives a ruling that Muslims should pay Zakat without outlining the details of how much, on which items or when to give the Zakat. We learn all these details from the hadith.
- 2) Hadith is the second source of Islamic sharia. The study of Hadith has made tremendous contributions to the growth and development of Islamic sharia. Muslim

jurists like the four imams of the schools of thought studied the sciences of hadith and simplified its understanding and application.

- 3) Hadith have provided a clear guidance on the code of conduct expected from the Muslims. Muslims should adhere to specific mannerisms of walking, sleeping eating among others as taught by our prophet (P.B.U.H)
- 4) Hadith have summarized the prophet's exemplary life and thus giving the true picture of the prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) so as to uphold the status of the prophet and preserve his traditions.
- 5) Muslims emulate the virtuous actions of the prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) and thus helps them to mould their character.
- 6) Great scholars who mastered science of hadith have developed and contributed to other fields of studies such as theology, history, sociology, medicine, mathematics, anatomy and among others.
- 7) Hadith is a religious and unifying factor. All Muslims are abide together as one due to the fact that they are following one leader—the prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H)

### **Importance of hadith and sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h)**

The following are some of the merits (significance, importance, advantages) of hadith and sunnah:

- i. It is the second source of Islamic sharia after the Holy Quran.
- ii. It interprets and simplifies the Holy Quran by explaining further the facts and messages where necessary.
- iii. It guides the Muslims on all the aspects of life including religious matters, spiritual domains, domestic affairs, political forces, and soci-economic factors.
- iv. It is rewarding for anyone who conduct himself/herself as per the hadith and sunnah.
- v. Its recitation and study is considered as an act of worship hence strengthening one's spirit and gives one total submission to Allah (S.W.T) and His Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H).
- vi. It gives the true picture of our Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H).
- vii. Hadith act as character builder thus regulates the behaviors of the Muslims.

### **How hadith regulates the behavior of a Muslim**

The following are the ways in which Hadith help Muslims regulate their behavior:

- a) Muslims are supposed to get their ways of behavior from the Prophet (s.a.w)
- b) The Prophet taught by word and deed on how Muslims should behave.
- c) The Prophet's whole life was exemplary for Muslims to emulate.
- d) Hadith give guidance on how to behave in daily life and under different situations and circumstances.
- e) Hadith give guidance on how people in society should relate e.g. members of the family, neighbors, relatives, Muslims and non-Muslims, rich and poor etc.
- f) Give guidance on how Muslims should treat those who need help e.g. widows, orphans, travelers
- g) Spell out the etiquettes to be observed by Muslims e.g. manners of eating, sleeping, toileting greetings.
- h) Spell out how Muslims should relate to their leaders.
- i) Spell out the values and virtues that Muslims should keep e.g. humility, respect, honesty, cleanliness, patience, tolerance, simplicity.
- j) Illustrate moral ideals e.g. relationship between men and women.
- k) When Muslims are faced with a moral decision or dilemma they turn to Hadith for guidance.
- l) Spell out how Muslims should relate to their creator.

### **The role of hadith in understanding the Holy Qur'an**

The following are the roles that hadith helps muslims to understand the Holy Quran:

- 1) In issues where the Quran was silent or is too general, hadith was there to give further explanation.
- 2) The prophet himself lived by the Quran in all his was of living.

- 3) Now that the Quran was revealed in Arabic language, it was necessary for the prophet to explain the Quran better for he was an arab.
- 4) The companions used to ask questions where couldnot understand from the Quran, so the prophet could turn to Allah to provide him with explanation in form of hadith.
- 5) Allah himself emphasized the role of the prophet was to expound and explain the ummah for the Quran.
- 6) The prophet used to provide a solution to a problem which was later on would be confirmed by Allah through revelation of the Quran.