

## CHAPTER TWO

### HADITH

#### Meaning of the concepts

**Ulumul-Hadith:** This is the scientific study of Hadith, which involves the analysis of the components of hadith, growth and development, classification and transmission of the prophetic traditions.

**Ulumul-Rijaal:** This is the scientific study of men, which deals with the biography of the transmitters of hadith and all the prophetic traditions.

#### Role played by *ilmul-rijal* in the development of hadith

The following are roles played by *Ilmul-Rijal* in the development of hadith:

- a) It exposed the weakness of the inventors of false hadith.
- b) It led to the emergence of many branches of knowledge such as history and theology.
- c) It led to the rise of six scholars of hadith (*sahih-sita*).
- d) It was important because it determined the reliability of hadith.
- e) This science prevented the compilers from attributing falsehood to the prophet (p.b.u.h)

**Rawii:** This is the collector or compiler of hadith.

**Muhadith:** A Muslim scholar who is concerned with the study and narration of hadith, therefore, he or she memorized a great number of Hadith from either the prophet or his close companions and narrated them.

#### Qualities of a Muhadith

The following are qualities that *Muhadithun* should fulfill:

1. They should be muslims and not from any other religious groups.
2. They should be persons of sound mind (i.e. mentally upright or sane).
3. They should be exemplary in character and uphold good moral standards.
4. They should be pious and righteous (God fearing).
5. They must have good knowledge of the Qur'an and its related sciences.
6. They should be conversant with hadith and its related sciences.
7. Muhadithun should be conversant with Arabic language.

8. They must possess a good and retentive memory.
9. They should be trustworthy, reliable and have a good leadership record.

### **Growth and development of Hadith literature**

Meaning of the term growth and development as related to hadith:

**Growth of hadith** refers to the increase in the number of users of Hadith as Islam expanded to other parts of the world while **development of hadith** is the advancement in standards or improvement in the collection of the Hadith to be studied and preserved.

### **Stages of growth and development of hadith literature**

**First period:** Time of the prophet

The first stage of hadith was during the prophet's time till his death. During the time of the Prophet, hadith came as instructions from the prophet himself since he was alive. He used to give guidance to his companions through *khutbahs* and acting according to his teachings. And later, instructed them to teach other Muslims. When the Islamic empire expanded, the prophet would send teachers with instructions containing his Hadith to teach new converts. The mosques and Madrassas were used as learning centers. The main method used to preserve hadith was through memorization and teaching. And he discouraged the writing of hadith in fear of tempering with the Quran.

### **Reasons why hadith were not compiled in a book during the time of the prophet**

The following are some of the reasons as to why the hadith were not compiled during the time of the prophet:

- a) The inadequacy of the writing materials. There were scarcity of materials and instruments such as papers and pen to put down the hadith and sunnah.
- b) There was high rate of illiteracy among the Muslim community, therefore, there were less people to write and read the prophetic traditions.
- c) The prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) feared that the hadith and sunnah if written would mixed with the Quran and therefore, interfered with the preservation of Quran.
- d) The prophet (p.b.u.h) wanted to avoid confusion among the Muslim ummah

- e) The prophet was aware that the Arabs had wonderful and retentive memory and that they preferred memorization to writing. Therefore, they memorized the hadith and sunnah instead of writing them.
- f) The prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) was alive who could be referred to in case of any need.
- g) There was inadequacy of time since the prophet and his companions were busy preaching Islam.
- h) During that time, writing was mostly used only in selected areas such as keeping of contracts, business dealings, pledges and among others.

### **Methods by which hadith was transmitted during the life of the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h)**

The following are methods used by the prophet to ensure that his hadith and Sunnah was learnt:

1. The prophet (p.b.u.h) used to teach his companions through addressing them publicly and he would ask his Swahaba to repeat the Hadith they had just learnt from him.
2. The prophet himself would repeat severally the instructions until the Swahabas had learnt. For example, repeating of the important part of hadith three times.
3. The prophet used to receive delegations in his house and he would teach them his sunnah.
4. Through practical demonstrations: The prophet would carry out certain actions then ask them to repeat after him, for example the performance of wudhu, praying and among others.
5. He taught his wives who in turn would teach the other women especially matters concerning womanhood such as pregnancies, menstruations, postnatal blood and among others.
6. Swahabas with weak memory were allowed to write down the Hadith.
7. The prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h) used to answer the questions asked by his companions accordingly so as to make them learn appropriately.

8. Through establishment of centres of learning such as *Sufaha* where the *Ahlul-sufa* used to learn the prophet's sunnah and hadith.
9. The prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h) used to act according to his words, gestures and actions so as to be exemplary to his companions.
10. When the Islamic empire expanded, the prophet would send teachers with instructions containing his Hadith to teach new converts.
11. Encouraged those whom he taught to teach others. 'Convey my message even if it be one single ayah"

### **Reasons why the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h) discouraged the writing of Hadith during his time**

The following are reasons why the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h) discourage the writing of Hadith during his time:

- i) The inadequacy of the writing materials. There were scarcity of materials and instruments such as papers and pen to put down the hadith and sunnah. If the same have been witnessed in the writing of Quran, then there could be a shortage in writing both.
- j) There fact that most of the prophet's companions were unlettered and the few ones were busy writing the Holy Quran.
- k) The prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) feared that the hadith and sunnah if written would mixed with the Quran and therefore, interfered with the preservation of Quran.
- l) The prophet (p.b.u.h) wanted to avoid confusion among the Muslim ummah
- m) The prophet was aware that the Arabs had wonderful and retentive memory and that they preferred memorization to writing. Therefore, they memorized the hadith and sunnah instead of writing them.
- n) The prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) was alive who could be referred to in case of any need.
- o) There was inadequacy of time since the prophet and his companions were busy preaching Islam.

### **The second period:** The era of the Swahabas

This is the period after the death of the Prophet until the last companion who is Anas ibn Malik to die. This phase was characterized by collection and preservation of Hadith. The prophet had just passed on and the Swahabas saw the need to bring together all the teachings of the prophet.

Since Islam had spread far and wide and many people had embraced the religion, it was necessary for the new converts to learn about the prophet's teachings. These converts had not seen the Prophet and therefore relied on the information given to them by the Swahabas led by the first four caliphs.

It is during this period that different learning centers emerged. The caliphs facilitated the process of teaching and learning and would send teachers to various places some of these teachers were; Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA) and Abu Huraira (RA). There were no books written, but the main means of hadith preservation were memorization, writing and learning. The swahabas played a big role in writing down the hadiths. A few examples are as follow:

<b>The writer</b>	<b>The name of the Document</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Abubakar Assidiq (R.A)	Sahifat Abubakar (The script of Abubakar)	Contains 500 hadiths. He only accepted hadith reported by two or more swahabas.
Ali ibn Abi-Talib (R.A)	Sahifat Ali (The script of Ali)	He insisted on the reporter to take an oath before accepting his hadith. Collection included topics of Qisas, Diyah, Miraath, Fidya.
Abu Hureirah (R.A)	Sahifat Abu-Hureirah (The Script of Abu-Hureirah)	He reported about 5374 Hadiths. This is much more than any other swahabas, yet he embraced Islam in 8 A.H. This is because he devoted all his time for the purpose of learning and preserving hadiths.

### **Ways through which swahabas helped in transmission of hadith**

The following are ways in which the Swahabas helped in the Transmission of Hadith and sunnah of the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h):

- a) The Swahabas had excellent memories; they easily memorized what the prophet (s.a.w) did, said and passed it on and taught others.
- b) Some of the Swahabas could read and write, they put in writing what the Prophet (s.a.w) said, did and taught and this was read to their students and to other people.
- c) Some of the Swahabas were sent out as teachers (missionaries) to distant lands to teach and spread Islam and Hadith were part of what they taught and spread.
- d) The Swahabas moved to other places as travelers, traders, migrants with their knowledge of Hadith and taught it to those they came across and lived or settled among.
- e) The Swahabas established learning centres and institutions where they taught Hadith.
- f) The Swahabas love for the Prophet (s.a.w) and their desire to practice his exemplary life made them to strive to live perfect lives with minimum worldly pleasures and others learnt from them. (actions speak louder than words)
- g) The application of their knowledge of Hadith to situations. When faced with challenges/ problems/ issues/decisions making, the Swahabas used relevant Hadith to solve them.

### **Characteristics of hadith in the second stage (period of swahabas)**

The following are the features and nature of hadith during the second period:

- All the hadith were authentic since the swahabas were alive and could verify the presented hadith
- The hadith of this period had short isnad, that is only the narrator
- The hadith were put into practice and transmitted orally as not many people had them written down but were memorized
- The hadith and sunnah were not yet classified into the different levels of hadith
- Hadith were not yet compiled and put in books

**Third period:** The era of the Tabiun

This phase came immediately after the demise of all the Swahabas, the last one to die being Anas ibn Malik. Therefore, this is the stage of the Tabiun. It was this period when hadith met vast progress. Writing of Hadith and compilation of the Qur'an took a center stage. Students made the writing of hadith more vital and they included the name of the transmitter alongside the Hadith. They developed the science of authenticity. i.e Abdul Malik bin Abdul Aziz started his first work known as *Al- Firas*.

Analysis of the transmitters of Hadith was thoroughly carried out with commentaries of the Qur'an. Among the most notable compilers was Imam Malik who compiled his book '*Al-Muwatta*.' Other compilers like Abu Hanifa, Shaffi, and Ahmad bin Hanbal came up with schools of thought to teach Hadith. They taught Hadith as a science and each had students who emerged as their followers who later became prominent scholars of hadith.

The scholars of this period classified Hadith according to their authenticity. However, it should be noted that hadith collected during this phase were not complete and exhaustive since they were gathered from different places or sources.

This period saw a transition of hadith from oral means of transmission to a more definite written form.

#### **Fourth period:** The era of the Tabi' tabiun

This period is considered as the “**golden age**” of hadith. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and Imam Abu Hanifa were among the teachers of the key scholars during this phase. It was during this time when there was emergence of fabricated hadith. Therefore, some authorities and rulers such as Harun Ar-Rashid encouraged the study of hadith. It is also important to note that, it was during this stage when Umar ibn Abdulaziz called for the compilation and collection of hadith in different books, scholars like Abubakar ibn Hazmi and Imam Zuhri accepted his call and worked very hard to fulfill it.

### **Nature of hadith in the fourth period (The time of Tabi'tabiun/ Golden age of hadith development)**

The following are reasons as to why the fourth period of hadith is referred to as the Golden Age of the Development of Hadith:

- a) There was introduction of science of men (*ilmul-Rijal*): The study of the biographers of narrators and transmitters of hadith
- b) There was inclusion of the chain of narrators of hadith.
- c) It was when the classification of hadith conducted so as the nature of hadith be indicated as either sahih, hasan and dhaif.
- d) The hadith were arranged according to the subject matter. This system we call it Jamii, for example Jamii Attirmidhy compiled by Muhammed ibn Issa Attirmidhy.
- e) The scholars wrote the name of the swahaba on whose final authority the hadith laid.
- f) Some of the hadith were arranged according to the reporters of hadith. This system we call it Musnad, for example the Musnad Addaramy (the teacher of Bukhari), Musnad Al-Bazzaar among others.
- g) This period also witnessed the compilation of the six authentic collections of hadith also known as *sahihu sittah*. The sahihu sittah include; sahih Bukhari, sahih Muslim, sunan ibn Ma'ja, sunan Abu Dawoud, sunnan AN-Nasai and sunna Attirmidhy.
- h) Mustalahul-hadith (the study of authenticity of hadith) was introduced. It was through this science, the Muhadithun came up with the criteria of accepting hadith.

### **Fifth period (The period of scholar to present time)**

During this period hadith was made comprehensive and more developed. The scholars developed sanad more comprehensively, and More books on hadith appeared during this period. The Jamu' (compilation) method of analysis was adopted in verifying a hadith. Also, the shia came up with their collection of hadith. The scholars of this era introduced the commentary of hadith and writing a whole book basing on one hadith. The commentary of Imam Bukari was compiled by Imam An-Nawawi, and that of Imam Muslim was written by Ibn Hajari Al-Asqalani. This period closed the doors of collection and compilation of hadith.



### **Factors that necessitated the collection and compilation of hadith**

There are several factors that led to collection and compilation of Hadith in the above periods as discussed below:

1. The death of the prophet who was the key source of knowledge.
2. The Swahabas had time to compile and write down hadith since they were not engaged in any wars at the time.
3. The need to interpret the verses of the Qur'an using hadith.
4. Many Swahabas had dispersed into the expanding Muslim empire and therefore each needed a source of reference for the new converts.
5. Emergence of false hadith. Therefore, hadith were to be compiled so as to protect them from any infiltrations and interpolation.
6. Differences in opinion concerning the Islamic laws. Therefore, there was a need to ensure that the correct sharia is implemented accordingly.
7. Death of most of the memorizers of Hadith, therefore, hadith were to be compiled so as they should not get lost due to their significance in Islam.
8. The need to preserve hadith and sunnah of the prophet for future generations that would have to come.
9. The need to provide solutions of daily problems especially after the death of the prophet (p.b.u.h).

### **Difficulties encountered by the Hadith collectors**

The following are the challenges faced by the Muhadithun while collecting the hadith:

- The main challenge faced by the collectors of hadith was the problem of evaluating the validity of each hadith according to the measures set to test the authenticity of hadith
- The quotations of hadith might have been forgotten by some of the narrators, since the hadith were passed on orally through centuries yet human minds were prone to forgetness.
- There was scarcity of writing materials. There were many hadith that required enough papers, pens and other writing materials which were inadequate and rare to be found.
- Many of the people who had memorized the hadith had died natural death or killed in the battles such as Battles while safeguarding the religion

- There was a problem on whether to include the weak hadith or not in to the Hadith collections.
- There was the problem of communication due to poor transport system. Some of the memorizers of hadith were living in different geographical areas; therefore, it was difficult to reach them. Because the hadith compilers were to travel for several days to search for hadith.
- Some of the materials on which the hadith were written during the prophet's time or the swahabas were likely to have got worn out. Therefore, making it difficult to get the actual text
- The existence of hypocrites who were interested of destroying Islam from within might have presented forged and invented hadith. Therefore, posing a difficulty in scrutinizing the authentic hadith.

### **Importance of studying and collecting hadiths**

The following are importance of studying and collection of the Prophetic hadith and Sunnah:

- It helps to perpetuate and transmit the message of the prophet Muhammed to future generation
- It provides a source of reference: The collected hadith can be easily referred to when need arises and can also be by the researchers as source of reference
- The collected hadith act as a unifying factor for all the Muslims in all places and all generations
- The process of collecting the Hadith helped in protecting the message of the prophet Muhammed from infiltration and interpolation therefore, ensuring its purity.
- The collected hadith provides indisputable source of Islamic sharia and facilitates its implementation
- There is a reward for those who help in the collecting of hadith as well as those who read it
- It has helped Muhadithun and all Muslims to study other sciences related to hadith such as Ulumu-Rijal, classes of Hadith, components of hadith among others.

## **Measures used by the Muslims to spread hadiths and sunnah of the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h)**

The following are methods used by the Muslims to ensure that the traditions of the prophet Muhammed keep on transmitted among people:

- a) Muslims apply and implement the teachings of the hadith and sunnah in their daily life
- b) Through incorporating hadiths and sunnah in Muslims and non-Muslims Daawa programs, lectures, addresses and sermons
- c) Muslims have opened learning centres like madrassa and schools for hadith to be taught and specialized
- d) Muslims advocate for the utilization and use of hadith in their day to day aspects of life including economic, political and social domains
- e) Hadith are printed in books, articles, internet and electronic devices such as mobile phones in audio and visual form.
- f) Hadiths and sunnah are taught in homes to uplift the moral level of the family members

## **Components of Hadith**

The term component refers to the elements, constituents or parts of an item that forms a whole. If used in reference to hadith, it will include the two main parts of Hadith; Isnad and Matn.

**Sanad** or **isnad** is the chain of narrators of the hadith who heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h) saying the hadith or witnessed the actions and silent approvals of the prophet and later transmitted them to the other Muslims.

**Matn** is the actual text, subject matter, content or the intended message found in a given hadith. It can be the statements, actions or silent approvals of the prophet.