

Difference Between Hadeeth And Sunnah

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Q:) Can you please tell me what is the difference between hadiths and sunnah and how the Sahabah (radiallahu anhum) started recording hadiths?

A:)

A Historical Background Of The Refutation Of The Hadith And The Authenticity Of Its Compilation

The Ahaadith of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) have been unanimously accepted by the entire Ummah as the source of Islamic Law, after the Noble Qurān. In fact, upon pondering, it can be concluded that the entire Ahaadith contain the real essence of Islamic Law (Islamic Shariah) as the Ahaadith comprise of the mubarak words, actions and approvals of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) who has interpreted the Noble Quran and defined its object and purpose. However, it is regrettable that a certain group of people influenced by the corrupt western culture and civilization, have began refuting the Ahaadith.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Western nations dominated over Muslims, many Muslims of poor understanding and little knowledge became overwhelmed by the Western Ideologies and concepts. They opined that progress was impossible without upholding and adopting the western lifestyle. They began propagating this concept among the masses. In order to propagate this concept they distorted all the Islamic teachings that opposed this western culture and ideology. This group was called the modernists. Among the leaders of such groups were people like Sir Sayed and Ahmed Khan of India, Taha Hussain of Egypt and Ziyad Khog of Turkey. It should be borne in mind that the objects and aims of this group could not be achieved without rejecting the Ahaadith because, the Ahaadith contain detailed guidelines to every aspect of life which are totally opposed to western norms and trends.

Consequently, a group among this cult began to negate the Ahaadith and called themselves the "Quranic Group". Sir Sayed and his companion Moulvi Chirag Ali were the founders of this movement in India. They did not negate the Ahaadith completely, instead they rejected all those that were contrary to their aims and objects and their limited understanding and reasoning even though all these Ahaadith were authentically narrated. They discreetly propagated that the Ahaadith are not legal Shariah proof in this age and era. This led to the legalising of interest and usury; the rejection of the Prophets, the denial of the Angels, the negation of Purdah and other essentials of Islam, and moreover, legalizing of prohibited things.

Thereafter, Abdullah Chakardalwi formed a group called, Quranic Group and his object was the total rejection of Ahaadith. This concept was further promoted by Aslam Inerajpuri. Finally, Gulam Ahmed Parwez established this erroneous belief among the masses through his influential writings. This fitnah spread widely in his period (era). **Basically this fitnah revolves around 3 different beliefs viz:**

1. The Holy Prophet's (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) mission was to deliver the Quran only. Obedience is restricted to the Quran only. Adherence to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) is not binding upon us, nor was it binding upon the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum). Divine Revelation was only in the form of the Quran. Hence there is no need for the Ahaadith. 2. The Sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) were binding and obligatory upon the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum) only, not upon us. 3. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) are binding upon the entire Ummah. However, due to the Ahaadith being unauthentic, we are not obliged to accept them

All these concepts are totally false and rejected. Numerous verses of the Noble Quran, prove that divine revelation besides the Noble Quran, was revealed to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Missions of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) as mentioned in the Noble Qurān is to teach and explain the Noble Qurān and its wisdom. If the Ahaadith are rejected, can this object of teaching and explaining the Quran be realised? Another clear indication towards the authenticity of the Ahaadith is the fact that the Noble Qurān commands us to show obedience to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) together with obedience to Allah. In one verse, obedience to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) has been regarded as the basis of Imaan. Logically, it is not possible to follow the Quranic injunctions without the Ahaadith as the details of many Quranic injunctions such as Salaat, Zakaat, Haj, etc. are explained in the Ahaadith. The entire Ummah has accepted the authenticity of the Ahaadith in order to make the divine injunctions practical. Can it be claimed that the entire Ummah is misguided?

The fallacy of the second (concept) belief i.e. obedience of the Holy Prophet is binding upon the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum) only, is evident and exposed that needs no further elaboration. This concept implies that the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was restricted only to the period of his companions whereas numerous verses very clearly indicate the opposite. - "O people I am a prophet to all of you". "We did not send you except to all the people' as a giver of glad tidings and as a warner". "We did not send you, except as a mercy to all the worlds". "Blessed is the one who revealed the Furqaan that he may be a warner to the worlds".

Another question that arises with this concept is: Are the Sahaba who witnessed the revelation of the Noble Qurān more in need of its explanation or are the ones that came after them more in need?

The third concept is also totally unacceptable because the Quran has reached us through the same method as the Ahaadith have reached us. If the Ahaadith are unauthentic, can one declare the Noble Quran unauthentic as well. The divine promise of safe-guarding Noble Qurān embodies the safeguarding of the Ahaadith also, because the Ahaadith explain the Quran without which one cannot practise upon the Quran.

The Stages Of The Compilation Of Ahaadith

The Ahaadith were not compiled and codified in the time of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) like it is today. There existed no real need for this as the Sahaba memorised virtually every word spoken by the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Allah Ta'ala had granted them

such perfect and excellent memories that once they heard anything they used to remember it throughout their lives. The remembering of lengthy poems and the ancestral details of horses and camels bears testimony to this fact. Once Hazrat Ibn Umar (RA) repeated Ahaadith to a bedouin, in order for him to memorize it well. The bedouin remarked, **"Enough, once is sufficient I shall not forget it till death. I have performed 60 pilgrimages on 60 camels and I know perfectly well which Hajj I performed on which camel."**

This was the condition of the bedouins in ordinary matters and mundane talk. How much more did they preserve the speech of Rasulallah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Not only his speech but every action notion, indication, approval, disapproval and deed of Rasulallah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) was preserved by them. They valued these more than their lives and wealth. They used to alternate with their business partners in sitting in the gathering of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Each partner used to narrate to his companion what he had heard the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) say. Extreme measures were taken to safeguard the words of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). Many of them (did not know how to write) were not literate. However, the Sahaba who knew how to write used to record and write down the Ahaadith as well. The Ahaadith were recorded in the presence of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam)

The Prohibition Of Recording The Hadith And Its Answer

The Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) has mentioned in one Hadith, 'Do not record (write) from me anything except the Quran. Whosoever has written anything should obliterate it. (Muslim vol.2 Pg.44)

This prohibition is of a temporary nature when the Quran was initially being revealed (and there was a possibility of the hadith and Quran being mixed up) so that the hadith and the Quran do not get mixed up. When this initial period has passed and this possibility was ruled out, this prohibition ceased and an order was given to write and record the Ahaadith as Allama Ibne-Hajar (rahmatullahi alaih) has detailed in his commentary on Bukhari Shareef. Allama Nawawi (rahmatullahi alaih) in the commentary of Muslim Shareef has stated that the prohibition was when the mixing was feared. Thereafter when it was safe, permission was granted for writing.

The Three Methods Of Preserving And Safeguarding The Hadith

We hereby detail all the methods utilised to preserve Ahaadith from the prophetic era upto this day. There is consensus that recording and writing was not the only method of safeguarding Ahaadith. There existed other reliable methods as well:

1) Memorising The Ahaadith

The most reliable method adopted by the Sahaaba (radiallahu anhum) to safeguard the Ahaadith was through memory.

2) Preservation Through Action And Practise

This was another reliable means of protecting and safeguarding the Ahaadith. The Sahaaba (radiallahu anhum) used to transform the words of Rasulallah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) into

action immediately and every Sahaabi used to practice upon the Hadith. This resulted in every word of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) becoming a practical action and deed, which was thoroughly remembered and preserved. Therefore, many traditions contain the phrases: "This is how I saw the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) carry out and perform this."

This practical method was very effective in preserving the Ahaadith. It is continuing upto this day.

3) Writing And Recording The Hadith

This method was also customary in the prophetic era. This procedure had passed through four stages (phases)

1. Recording of Ahaadith without any arrangement or sequence
2. Arranging the Ahaadith relating to certain subject (topic) or subjects into one small book
3. Accumulating of various Ahaadith into one book.
4. Compiling Ahaadith and codifying.

The first two types of compiling were extensively practised during the time of the Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum). The following details will suffice for the Rejectors of Hadith.

1. Imam Tirmidhi (rahmatullahi alaih) has included a special chapter in the Chapter of knowledge titled, The chapter of the permissibility of recording Hadith - Hazrat Abu Hurairah (radiallahu anh) reports that the Holy Prophet indicated to a certain Ansari Sahabi whose memory was weak, to write. One Ansari Sahabi (RA) used to sit by Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and listen to the Hadith; it used to please him, but he was unable to memorise it. He complained to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) who replied, "Seek assistance with your right hand and he indicated towards writing with his hand (Jamia Tirmizi vol. 2 pg. 107).
2. In a tradition recorded in Mustadrak-e-Haakim, Hazrat Amr bin Aas (radiallahu anh) reports, 'I used to record everything the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) used to say with an incitation of (accumility) and gathering same. The Quraish stopped me saying: "Do you write everything the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) says? He is a human being, he speaks in anger and happiness." I abstained from writing. I mentioned this to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and he indicated towards his tongue and said, 'Write! By Him in whose hand is my life. Nothing except the truth comes out of it.' (Mustadrak Vol.1 Page 104)
3. In one Hadith recorded in Mustadrak-e-Haakim, an explicit and clear order of writing is given. The words are 'Tie down knowledge', the Sahaabi enquired, 'What is tying down knowledge?' The Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) replied, 'It's writing.' (Mustadrak vol. 1 pg. 106)
4. The incident of Abu Shah Yemani is famous. Once the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) mentioned an incident and upon the request of Abu Shah the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) instructed the Sahaaba to write for Abu Shah - this Hadith is recorded in Jame Tirmidhi vol. 2 pg. 107 and Bukhari vol. 1 pg. 23

There are numerous traditions indicating the instruction of writing Ahaadith. Therefore, many Sahaaba recorded ahaadith in the Prophetic era. References are many of such collections and compilations.

1) The Sahifa (Collection) Of Abdullah ibn Amr (radiallahu anh)

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) is the greatest narrator of Hadith. Despite this he says, 'No person has learnt more Hadith than me. However, Abdullah bin Amr (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) used to write the Hadith and I should not write.' This is clear evidence that Hadith used to be written in that era. Hadhrat Abdullah bin Amr (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) possessed a collection that exceeded one thousand Ahaadith. Ibn-Rushd has mentioned in his Kitaab Asadul Ghaaba (vol. 3 pg. 233) that, this collection was named As-sadiqah.

2) The Sahifa (Collection) Of Hadhrat 'Ali (radiallahu anh)

Imaam Bukhari (rahmatullahi alaih) has mentioned in this Sahifa in the chapter of "Ilm" (vol. 1 pg. 21) and, he has mentioned it in four places The narrator Abu Juhaifa reports that, 'I enquired from Hazrat Ali (radiallahu anh), do you possess a book?' He replied: "No, except the Book of Allah or the understanding granted to a Muslim or what is in this Sahifa." I asked him, "What is in this Sahifa?" He replied, "Orders relating to 'Diyat' (penalty or murder) - the freeing of prisoners and no Muslim will be killed in lieu of a kaafir."

This Sahifa contained orders regarding, murder, compensations, capital punishments, details of Zakaat and matters relating to non-Muslim citizens in an Islamic State.

3) Kitabus - Saqah

This collection was personally dictated by the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). It contained details regarding Zakaat, Ushar etc. According to some reports it seems as though this was written for the Zakaat collectors. However, the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) left this world before it was sent to them. This kitaab remained with Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar (radiallahu anh). Eventually Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz memorized it and thereafter Ibn Shihaab Zohri memorised it.

4) Sahifa Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anh)

Ibn Saad (radiallahu anh) mentions in his kitaab "Tabaqaat" that the slave of Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anh) said 'He found a large collection of the kitaabs of Ibn Abbas equal to a camel-load.'

5) Sahifa Jaabir ibn Abdullah (radiallahu anh)

Imaam Muslim has reported that Hadhrat Jaabir (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) had compiled a book on Hajj. Imaam Bukhari mentioned this is his Taarikh-e-Kabeer vol. 7 pg. 186) - Hadhrat Qataaqda bin De'aama as-Sodusi had memorised this Sahifa.

6) Sahifa Samura ibn Jundub (radiallahu anh)

Hafiz ibn Hajar (rahmatullahi alaih) reports that Hadhrat Samoora (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) has narrated a big (volume) chapter from his father. Imaam Muhammad ibn Sireen (rahmatullahi alaih) reports that the Kitaab which Hadhrat Samoora (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) has written for his children contains great knowledge.

7) Sahifa Sa'd ibn Ubadah (radiallahu anh)

Ibn Saad reports in 'Tabaqaat' that Hadhrat Saad (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) had a collection of Ahaadith.

8) Sahifa Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anh)

Imaam Hakim (rahmatullahi alaih) mentions in Mustadrak that once Hadhrat Hassan ibn Umar narrated a Hadith to Hadhrat Abu Hurayra (Radhiallaahu Ánhu). Hadhrat Abu Hurayra denied the Hadith. Hadhrat Hassan told him, 'I have narrated this Hadith from you'. He replied, 'If I have narrated it, it will definitely be written down.'

He had written down all his Hadith in the end.

9) Sahifa ibn Mas'ood

Hafiz ibn Abdul-Barr (rahmatullahi alaih) mentions in his Kitaab, 'Jaame Bayaan nul-Ilm' that ibn Mas'ood (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) took out one Kitaab and swore an oath that it was compiled by him.

10) Sahifa Amr ibn Hazam (radiallahu anh)

When the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) appointed Hadhrat ibn Hazam (Radhiallaahu Ánhu) as a governor of Najran, he gave him a Sahifa which was written by Hadhrat Ubayy bin Ka'ab (radiallahu anh). It contained orders regarding cleanliness, purification, Salaat, Hajj, Umra, Jihaad, etc.

11) Sahifa Ibn Mubaarak (rahmatullahi alaih)

Hadhrat Sa'eed ibn Hilaal says, 'When we frequented Hadhrat Anas bin Maalik he took out a volume and said, 'I heard these from the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). I have written it and preserved it.' (Mustadrak Hakim vol. 3 pg. 54)

12) There are many other small Sahifas which the holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) sent to the kings; and, other compilations which have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The Era of Hadhrat Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (rahmatullahi alaih)

Though the writing of the Ahaadith had commenced it was not done in an arranged manner, i.e. it was compiled and codified. Due to the pre-occupations of the Khulafaa-e-Raashideen with the compilation of the Noble Qurān and other important matters, it was not possible for them to accomplish this task.

However, when the politicians at the time of Hazrat Ali (radiallah anh) began to fabricate false Ahaadith Hazrat Ali became concerned about safeguarding the authentic Ahaadith. He used to stand on the mimbar and announce the authentic Ahaadith to the people. This continued till the period of Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz (rahmatullahi alaih) who became the khalifa after the demise of Sulayman bin Abdul Malik. His khilafat lasted only for 2 years. After accepting khilafat, he wrote to the judge of Madinah, Abubakr bin Hazm saying, "**Whatever you find from the Ahaadith of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam), write it down. I fear the loss of knowledge and the passing away of the Ulema.**" (Bukhari vol.1 page 20)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar (rahmatullahi alaih) mentions that this letter was addressed to all the Judges of every province. A large collection of Ahaadith were compiled in this manner in the first century. 1. Hafiz Ibn Abdul Bar has written that Qazi Abu Bakr has compiled many books on Ahaadith called "Books of Abu Bakr." 2. The Risala (Booker) of Saalim ibn Abdullah on Sadaqaat. 3. The Registers of Zohri - he says that whenever we were given any command we compiled a brief register. He had played a great

role in the compilation of Hadith.

The Compilations Of The Second Century

Various collections of Hadith are found in this era like Jame Ma'moon bin Raashid, Jame Sufyaan Sowri, As-Sunem of Ibn Juray - Sunan Abul Waleed - Mu'atta Imam Maalik.

From the above discussion we reach the following conclusion that: 1. The recording and writing of hadith had began from the time of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam). 2. Compiling had began in the time of the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum) especially in the time of Hazrat Ali (radiallahu anh); 4. Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz (rahmatullahi alaih) strived in this matter and a large collection was accumulated during his period; 5. Many books were compiled in the first century; 6. the objections and arguments of the Rejectors of hadith are fully answered; 7. the fitnah of Rejection in hadith is old and detrimental to religion, in fact rejecting the Quran; 8. the Ahaadith are a complementary and explanation of the Quran; 9. the safeguarding of the Quran entails the safeguarding of the Hadith.

And Allah Ta'ala Knows Best.

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