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## AN OVERVIEW OF HADITH

Main Sources for this chapter:

[Sources of Hadith, Muhammad Al-Jalali.](#)

[Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar.](#)

[Nahjul Balaaghah, English Translation of certain selections, Farouk Ebeid.](#)

[Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doi.](#)

[Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim.](#)

### WHAT IS HADITH? الحديث ▲

The Hadith is the record of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The sayings and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) constitute the Sunnah.

The Hadith has come to supplement the Holy Quran as a source of the Islamic religious law. The Hadith is the second pillar after the Quran upon which every Muslim rests his faith. Hadith consists of Mat'n متن and Isnad اسناد. Mat'n means the text of the Hadith, while Isnad means the chain of transmitters to that Hadith.

The scholars of the Hadith literature divided the Traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) into categories according to the degree of authenticity and reliability, each category had to meet certain criteria. The categories are as follows:

1. *Sahih*: صحيح The genuine Traditions, the authentic ones.
2. *Moothaq*: موثق Almost like the Sahih but the narration is not as strong as those of the Sahih.
3. *Hasan*: حسن The fair Traditions although inferior in matter of authenticity.
4. *Dha'eef*: ضعيف The weak Traditions which are not so reliable.

In the Shari'ah (Islamic Constitution) *deeds and actions* are divided into five classes:

1. *Fardh or Wajib*: فرض او واجب An obligatory duty the omission of which is Islamicly punishable.
2. *Mus'tahab*: مستحب An action which is rewarded, but whose omission is not punishable.
3. *Mu'baah*:: مباح An action which is permitted but legally is indifferent.
4. *Mak'rooh*: مكروه An action which is disapproved by the Shari'ah but is not under any penalty.
5. *Haram*: An action which is forbidden, and Islamicly punishable. [1]

### THE FABRICATED HADITHS: الاحاديث المخلقة ▲

#### History of Fabrication:

During Benu Umayya's Rule: Bringing forth a Counterfeit Hadith was widespread throughout this period.

During Benu Abbas' Rule, producing and circulating counterfeit Hadiths was widespread, in particular with the advent of the schools of thought in Islam.

By the year 200 H.: Total of 600,000 Hadiths were in existence, out of which 408,324 Hadith were fabricated (counterfeit) Hadiths by 620 forgers, whose names and identity are known. [2]

Most Notorious Forgers: Ibn Jundub, Abu Bukhtari, Ibn Basheer, Abdullah Al-Ansaari, Al-Sindi. One of them, Ibn Au'jaa, professed before he was hanged (for his heresy) that he alone had forged 4,000 Hadiths. [3]

#### Reason to Fabricate (To do Hadith forgery): ▲

1. Financial incentive by the Khalifas, for example Mu'awiya awarded Ibn Jundub and others hundreds of thousands of Dinars for coming forth with Hadiths that suited him. [4]
2. As a means of self-promotion in the government.
3. In a drive to enhance a particular school of thought.
4. Fanaticism for a school of thought at the expense of others. [5]
5. Al-Qassassoon (The story-tellers): القصاصون Their operation and major role in the public.

### SUNNI COLLECTION OF AL-HADITH ▲

#### DURING THE 1ST CENTURY H.

- a. The administration of the early Khalifas discouraged putting the Hadith in writing, instead, they encouraged *committing the Hadith to memory*. The general public went along but soon it was discovered that confusion about the authenticity of the Hadith was taking place. For one thing many of the Sahaaba had died, and for another, that committing to memory was not reliable at large, especially if you want the Hadith verbatim as the Prophet (pbuh) had said it at the circumstance it was said.
- b. Al-Zuhri, Al-Hazm were both commissioned by Khalifa Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz to collect the Hadith but the work was probably not done, due to early death of the Khalifa in 101 H. No record of their work exists.

#### DURING THE 2ND CENTURY H.:

- a. Collection of Hadith was mainly by: a) Ibn Jarir, b) Al-Thawri, c) Ibn Basheer, and d) Malik Ibn Anas in his Mu'watta. [6]
- b. The necessity of I'Im Al-Rijaal, علم الرجال (Science of men of Hadith Transmitters): The Background, Intelligence, Authenticity, Reliability, Capacity to Memorize, Manner of living, Reputation, Criticism, were all considered before reliability of the narrator could be established. This was necessary because of the numerous counterfeit Hadiths circulated at the time.
- c. Compiling books about forged (counterfeit) Hadiths: This was necessary to warn the Scholars as well as the public about the plethora of the forged Hadiths at that time.

#### DURING THE 3RD CENTURY H.: ▲

The Hadith was collected and categorized in the later part of the third century of Hijrah resulting in six canonical collections called (Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah):

1. Sahih of Al-Bukhari, d.256 A.H: صحيح بخارى Selected 7275 (2712 Non-duplicated) out of 600,000 available Hadiths he was aware of.
2. Sahih of Muslim, d.261 A.H: صحيح مسلم Selected 9200 (4,000 Non-duplicated) out of 300,000 available Hadiths he was aware of.
3. Sunan of Abu Dawood, d.276 A.H. سنن ابو داود Selected 4,800 of 500,000 available Hadiths he was aware of..
4. Sunan of Ibn Maajah: d.273 A.H. سنن ابن ماجه
5. Jami' of Tirmidhi, d.279 A.H. جامع الترمذى
6. Sunan of al-Nisaa'i, d.303 A.H. [7] سنن النسائي

It is worthy of note that the number of the Shi'a transmitters of Hadith whose quotes appear in the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah is over 300. [8]

#### Al-Bukhari, —of Sahih Bukhari, 194-256H: البخاري ▲

Al-Bukhari's mother tongue was Persian for he was born in Bukhara. Part of Persia in those days. He collected the Hadith over a period of many years, having established certain strict criteria. Political times during Bukhari's lifetime were very troublesome especially against Ahlul Bayt (led by the weird ruler Al-Mutawak'kil المتوكل). As a consequence Bukhari was cautious and circumspect,

having mentioned less about Ahlul Bayt's narrations than any of the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah. Of the 2210 Hadiths claimed to have been narrated by Abu Hurairah quoting A'isha, by using their criteria Bukhari and Muslim accepted only 174 Hadiths as worthy and valid. Therefore, the remaining 2,036 Hadiths produced forth by Abu Hurairah were flatly rejected by them simply as unacceptable.<sup>[9]</sup>

Bukhari was born to a slave family of Bukhara in 194H. His father died while Bukhari was a child, leaving him a considerable fortune. Bukhari was of weak physique, but with strong intellect, sharp retentive memory, great capacity for hard work, he was methodical. He began to study Hadith at the early age of eleven and gathered all the Traditions within six years. Then he went to Mecca for pilgrimage from where he took a journey for the collection of Hadith. He traveled nearly forty years in quest of knowledge throughout the Muslim world. He then returned to Nishapoor in Iran but he had to leave as he could not yield to the wishes of the Governor. Bukhari settled afterwards in a village at Samarkand where he died at the age of 62 years in 256H. It has been said by some that he died in Baghdad.-

Throughout his life Bukhari was pious, and the Prophet's Tradition was his hobby while archery was his pastime. He selected 2712 non-duplicated Hadiths which became 7,275 when duplicated by many narrators. These Hadiths were selected out of 600,000 Traditions available to him at the time. It can be said that Bukhari found the remaining 592,725 Hadiths of unworthy basis and were to be ignored. The fact is that if one Hadith was narrated by six narrators, then this Hadith was reported as 6 Hadiths though with minor variation in expression of the Hadith in question. Thus the number of Hadiths would increase depending on how many narrators report it.

**Muslim, —of Sahih Muslim, 204-261H: مسلم ▲**

It is said Muslim was a student of Al-Bukhari and 8 years younger. He differed from Bukhari in his methodology and criteria. He collected the Hadith over a number of years, having established his own criteria. Political times then were less troublesome against Ahlul Bayt, (since Al-Mutawak'kil was killed by his own son), therefore Muslim narrated a large number of Hadiths about Ahlul Bayt (far more than Bukhari), now that the political atmosphere had become less charged and the circumstance more favorable.

Muslim al-Nishaapori was born in a distinguished family of Arab Muslims in Khurasan, Iran in 204H, and his mother tongue was Persian for he was born in Nishapoor of Persia. His forefathers occupied prominent positions during the time of four Khalifas; and Muslim himself inherited a large fortune from his father who was also a Traditionist of some repute. Muslim traveled to many places for learning Hadith, and after finishing off his studies he settled down at Nishapoor, spending the remainder of his life in sermonizing the Hadiths. He died in the year 261H.

Sahih of Muslim is considered as next to Bukhari in authenticity. It is somewhat superior to Bukhari's work in the details of arrangement of Traditions. The commentary of this book can be found in Ibn Khalikan's work Vol. II, Page 91, and in Fehrist (page 231). Sahih Muslim contains 4,000 non-duplicate Hadiths becoming 9,200 when duplicates are registered. These Hadiths were selected out of 300,000 circulating Hadiths he was aware of.

**Abu Dawood—of Sunan Abu Dawood 203-276H ابو داود ▲**

Abu Dawood received his education in Tradition at Khurasan, in Iran. He traveled to all the important centers of Hadith, learned and collected them wherever they were found. He was so respected by the general body of the Muslims that after the city was sacked and depopulated on account of the invasion of the Zinjies, he was requested by al-Muaffiq (the Commander-in-Chief of the Khalifa al-Mu'tadhid) to settle there in order that the people and the students might be attracted to that town by his presence. He acceded to the request, but refused to teach the Commander's son in private. He said to the Abbasi General (and the founder of the Suffari dynasty) that he was unable to degrade knowledge by making difference between the princes and the poor students.

Abu Dawood wrote many books on Tradition and Islamic laws of which his "Sunan" is the most important. The Sunan contains 4,800 Traditions which were sifted from 500,000 Hadiths he was aware of. This work took him nearly 20 years.

[al-Tirmidhi](#): —of [Jami'i al-Tirmidhi](#) : 209-279H الترمذی ▲

This is another standard work on Hadith and is considered by the Sunni Muslim jurists as one of the six authentic Traditions works. Tirmidhi was the first man to determine the identity of the names, surnames, and titles of the narrators of Traditions.

[al-Nisaa'i](#) —of [Sunan al-Nisaa'i](#): 215-303H: النسائي ▲

Al-Nisaa'i made a good Hadith collection, quite credible. He wrote Al-Khasa'is book, about the eminence of Imam Ali and Ahlul Bayt and the Hadiths on their behalf. Al-Nisaa'i was 88 years old when in Damascus he expressed his views about Mu'awiya by saying, "All I know is that the Prophet (pbuh) had said about Mu'awiya, 'May Allah make a glutton out of him to eat and not feel full'." This infuriated Mu'awiya's sympathizers, they attacked al-Nisaa'i, trampled upon him, crushed his testicles, after which the infirm Nisaa'i was taken to Mecca where he died. He was buried between Safa and Marwa. [10]

Sunan of al-Nisaa'i work on Tradition has been recognized as the best Tradition work of his time, and his smaller work is now considered as one of the Sihaah Sittah. He was the foremost Traditionist of his age and spared no pains in having Hadith recorded in his Sunan. He admitted that in his work there are many weak and doubtful Hadiths (Traditions).

[Ibn Maajeh](#) —of [Sunan Ibn Maajeh](#), 209-295H: ابن ماجه ▲

In search of Hadith Ibn Maajeh traveled to Baghdad, Basrah, Kufa, Syria, and Egypt. Some reject his work in favor of al-Mu'watta of Malik.

[Imam Ahmad](#) —of [Mus'nad Ahmad](#), 164-241H: إمام احمد ▲

Imam Ahmad was born in Baghdad, and his was the most important and exhaustive of all Mus'nad works. His pious and selfless life created a halo of sanctity around his great collection of Traditions and in spite of its great bulk, it survived the vicissitude of time and revolution of empires. His Mus'nad contains 30,000 Traditions on various subjects, reported by as many as 700 companions of the Prophet. He died before he gave it a final shape and his son Abdullah completed it in the course of 13 years. This book occupied a very important position in Hadith literature and served for a long time as the chief source of Hadith. It was read up to the 12th century. Afterwards it fell into relative disfavor owing to other better works.

### SHI'A COLLECTION OF AL-HADITH ▲

It was during the Khilaafah of Abu Bakr and early Khilaafah of Omar that Imam Ali (a.s.) set to the task of registering the Hadiths. Imam Ali was incomparably strict about Islam, and could foresee the need to render the Hadith in written form to be the source for future generations. Ali was fanatic about the accuracy of his writing, and in an agonizingly methodical manner he accomplished the following:

[During Abu Bakr's Khilaafah](#): Ali rendered in writing the following:

1. Holy Quran: *Chronological* order of the Quran's revelations called القرآن حسب ترتيب النزول
2. Tafseer of the Holy Quran, 3 volumes: called: *Mus'haf Fatima*. مصحف فاطمه

[During Omar's Khilaafah](#): Ali rendered the following:

1. *Hadith* of the Prophet (pbuh): Voluminous, called: *Saheefa of Ali*. صحيفه علي
2. *Fiqh*: Al-Ah'kaam and Mu'aamatat, the Halal and Haram called الاحكام والمعاملات

[During Uthman's Khilaafah](#): Ali rendered the following:

1. History of the various Prophets as he learned from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), called: *The White Al-Jafr*. الجفر الابيض .

## 2. Islamic rules and directives of Wars, called *The Red Al-Jafr*. الجفر الأحمر

As rendered the books of Ali were called Al-Jami'ah الجامعه (the Encyclopedia) and they were left with the Imams of Ahlul Bayt, each new Imam receiving them from the dying predecessor Imam. The Imams referred to these Hadiths and books over a period of about three centuries. Notable among them is Imam Ja'far Al-Saadiq, who was the teacher of Imam Abu Hanifa and Al-Maaliki, and as many as 4000 scholars who graduated from his school. As many as 400 religious books were written by Al-Saadiq's students, referred to as *the 400 Usool* (the 400 books of basics in Islam) الأصول الأربعة .

### THE CORPUS OF ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE ▲

1. The *Holy Quran* in chronological order,
2. The *Tafseer* of the Holy Quran consisting of three large volumes, called Mus'haf Fatima,
3. The *books of Hadith* as Imam Ali had recorded them, called Saheefa of Ali,
4. The books about *Al-Ah'kaam*, detailing the rule and regulations of the Shari'ah, and
5. The books of the *Jafr*:
  - a. The *White Jafr* about knowledge of the Prophets, life happenings, and other special (mystic) matters
  - b. The *Red Jafr* comprised of rules and matters about and involving wars.

Because of the source and chain of narration of the Hadith, the Shi'a (Ja'fari) rely only on the Hadiths as *narrated by Ahlul Bayt* or those Hadiths in the Al-Sihaah Al-Sittah (Bukhari, Muslim and others) that are *similar* to what Ahlul Bayt had quoted.

### JA'FARI (SHI'A) SOURCE OF HADITH ▲

The original books of Hadith as written by Imam Ali are not available, but the sources of Hadith of Ahlul Bayt were best registered by:

1. Al-Kulaini (d.329AH/940AD) in the book of Al-Kaafi which registers 16,199 Hadiths.
2. Al-Siddooq in the book of Man La Yah'dharhu al-Faqeeh.
3. Toosi in the book of Al-Tah'dheeb, and the book of Istibsaar.

### BRIEF PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE: ▲

#### Ø Al-Kulaini

1. Life: Great scholar, taught in Baghdad, wrote many books.
2. Hadith Works: Al-Kaafi took 20 years to write, 34 sections with 326 chapters. Registered 16,199 Hadith or sayings through Ahlul Bayt, 2577 Sahih, 1118 Moothaq, 302 Qawiy, 144 Hasan, and 9380 Weak.

#### Ø Al-Qummi, Al-Siddooq

1. Life: Scholar of exceptional caliber, from Qum. Wrote numerous books and resided in Baghdad, teaching for a while.
2. Hadith Works: Mun Laa Yah'dharhu Al-Faqeeh, 5,973 Hadiths in 446 sections.

#### Ø Muhammad Al-Toosi

1. Life: Leader and scholar of great repute; taught in Baghdad both Shi'a and Sunni. During disturbance between Shi'a and Sunni which the government enticed, Al-Toosi's library was burned, his house attacked, and he left Baghdad to Najaf where he established the Howza Ilmiyyah (Islamic Seminary).
2. Hadith Works:
3. Tah'dheeb Al-Ah'kaam, 12,590 Hadiths, in 390 sections.
4. Al-Istibsaar 5,521 Hadiths.

### SHI'A COLLECTION OF AL-HADITH, HIGHLIGHTS ▲ HADITH IN THE FIRST CENTURY:

<u>Collected by</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Imam Ali	Saheefa of Ali	Referenced by Shi'i and Sunni scholars
Zainul Abideen	Risalat Al-Huqooq Al-Saheefa Al-Sajjadiya	Written by the Imam or Dictated to his companions
Abi Rafi'	Sunan and Ah'kaam	Servant of the Prophet, close to Ali, d 30H
Jabir Al-Ansaari	Mansak	Companion of the Prophet, d 78H

### HADITH IN THE SECOND CENTURY:

<u>Collected by</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Imam Al-Baaqir	Tafseer Al-Quran	Having references to Hadith
Zaid Ibn Ali	Mus'nad	Hadith and Fiqh
Imam Al-Saadiq	Al-Tawhid	Most of the writing by his Companions
Al-Saadiq's Companions	The 400 Usool (400 books) Elaboration and expansion on Hadith	All referencing to Imam Ja'far Al-Saadiq. They were completed over 90-100 years (by the time of Al-Hasan Al-Askari).

### HADITH IN THE THIRD CENTURY:

Depending on the 400 Usool (the 400 Books) three massive works of collecting the Hadith through Ahlul Bayt, well categorized and indexed, were done. It became a reference for about two centuries.

They are:

1. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Al-Warraaq Al-Hadhrami
2. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Ash'ari
3. The Collection (AL-Jami') by Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan ibin Al-Waleed

### HADITH IN THE FOURTH CENTURY TILL NOW:

<u>Collected by</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Al-Kulaini	Al-Kaafi	16,199 Hadiths, about half are Sahih, Hasan, or Moothaq

Al-Siddooq	Mun Laa Yah'dharhu Al-Faqeeh	5,973 Hadiths, with 3913 References
Al-Toosi	Tah'dheeb Al-Ah'kaam	12,590 Hadiths, in 93 chapters
Al-Toosi	Al-Istibsaar	5,521 Hadiths

Hadiths (See Sources of the Hadith to the Ja'fari (Shi'a) by Muhammad Husain Al-Jalali.)

### The Golden Chain of Narration: السلسلة الذهبية ▲

Because of being the trusted Prophet's family and the most learned, the narrations of Ahlul Bayt were often referred to as the Golden Chain of Narration. Ahlul Bayt's care in transmitting, and their meticulousness, and righteousness made people flock to them for quotes of Hadith, taking them as examples, and writing numerous books about Hadith, Fiqh, Ah'kaam, Halal and Haram among other subjects. The Shi'a believe that the Imams were Divinely Commissioned, therefore they were Ma'soom, معصومون meaning safeguarded by Allah from:

1. Religious error,
2. Sin, and
3. Forgetfulness.

Therefore, to the Shi'a the narration of the Imams was binding, their teaching binding, and the Hadith they narrated was the only one acceptable to them. If the Hadith in the Sihaah Al-Sittah (Sunni) is confirmed by the Hadith from one of the Imams, then that Hadith is acceptable, otherwise it would be questionable.

Each Imam used to say: "My Hadith is the Hadith of my father, and his is the Hadith of his father, up to Ali, who directly narrated the Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)."

### Al-Kulaini Al-Baghdadi, died 329H: الكليني ▲

Al-Kulaini Al-Baghdadi belonged to a noble family of Kulain which has produced a group of outstanding scholars in Islamic Jurisprudence and Hadith. At Baghdad Al-Kulaini was the outstanding Shi'i scholar in Islamic Jurisprudence during the reign of Khalifa al-Muq'tadir. The unique qualification of al-Kulaini, the compiler of al-Kaafi الكافي, is that among all other compilers of Hadith, he alone was the contemporary of all four successive deputies (or ambassadors) of Imam al-Mahdi المهدي —the twelfth Imam. Hence he had all the facilities of collecting traditions from the requisite sources. Therefore, al-Kaafi is rightly regarded as a unique collection and compilation during the life time of all the four successive deputies of Imam al-Mahdi. Al-Kulaini compiled this book on the request of the prominent Shi'i scholars who wanted to have a comprehensive book containing all information of Islamic literature which would be sufficient for them.

Al-Kulaini's court was the rendezvous of the great scholars in Islamic studies who used to go in search of knowledge to different places. The great scholars of the time used to present themselves in Al-Kulaini's court to discuss, to exchange notes, to confer with him, and to acquire full understanding of Islamic problems.

Al-Kulaini was a great scholar, a reliable Traditionist and a man of great learning. He was the most outstanding jurist and authority in Traditions' Science. He was the dominant chief of the Islamic jurists and a superb scholar of Islamic literature. He was a man of great temperance, piety, integrity and holiness.

Al-Kulaini's book, al-Kaafi, is no doubt an outstanding collection of Traditions in the largest measure. It is a treasure of Islamic literature, Shari'ah (code), divine commandments inclusive of imperatives, prohibitions, reprimands and Sunan —the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the twelve Imams. It is a collection about Islamic education and culture. It contains the record of the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet and the twelve Imams.

Al-Kulaini has himself written preface of his book al-Kaafi and has also added some needed explanatory notes on some of the chapters which are indicative of his high skill and proficiency in the art of writing and in his knowledge of Arabic literature, its depth and its hidden wisdom. It also

indicates his convincing presentation, his fluency, his eloquence and also his high place in the art of Arabic composition.

Kulaini taught at the university in Baghdad, and he was an expert historian, was well versed in categorizing the narrators of Hadith and the Traditionists. He is also an author of many books, among which is a book in the art and science of Traditions (Hadith). He was expert in scrutinizing the narrators. Of all the books he had written however, Al-Kaafi stands out in value and popularity. Al-Kaafi consists of two volumes about Usool اصول (Fundamentals of Faith), and 6 volumes of Furoo' فروع (Islamic Rituals and Dealings).

Book Al-Kaafi took 20 years to be written, consisting of 34 sections with 326 chapters. It registered 16,199 Hadiths or sayings, 2577 Sahih or authentic, 1118 Moothaq or reliable enough, 302 Qawiy or strong enough, 144 Hasan or fairly credible, and 9380 Dha'eef meaning Weak.

al-Siddooq al-Qummi, 306-381H:  الصدوق

*Author of Mun Laa Yah'dharhu Al-Faqeeh, 5,973 Hadiths, with 3913 References*

Muhammad al-Qummi ibn Babawaih al-Siddooq (c. 306-381), lived in Ray [Iran] where he died and was buried. His tomb is still there, and visited by crowds of people, in what is known as the "Ibn Babawaih Cemetery" in a southern suburb of Tehran.

Numerous scholars said of him: "As a scholar, al-Siddooq was of the first rank, had a good memory, was knowledgeable in Fiqh and had memorized Hadith. He was our leader, our jurist and the symbol of our sect in Khurasan (and the East). He came to Baghdad in 355H, and the leading scholars of the sect heard (Traditions) from him. If he is compared with those who heard Traditions from him, they were older than he, had been hearing Traditions before he had, and had precedence over him in the order of chains of transmission. He wrote about three hundred (300) works."

Al-Siddooq grew up in Qum, the famous Iranian city which was built after Islam. Qum has been distinguished since its foundation by its loyalty towards Ahlul Bayt [the family of Muhammad (pbuh)] embracing their tutoring and enlightenment, and it is a place of learning in their sciences. Since the dawn of the third Hijrah century (8th AD) Qum has become one of those Shi'i sites acting as a center for the sciences of the Ahlul Bayt in general, and their traditions (*Hadiths*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in particular. At present, Shi'a scholarship and learning have been revived in Qum after a certain lapse, and it is now considered as one of the most famous cities of learning in Shi'a branch of Islam.

Al-Siddooq (Al-Qummi) was born in a well-known scholarly family known through several generations as famous in the field of Hadith and its sciences. Al-Qummi's father, his brother, his nephews and their grandsons are counted as transmitters of Hadith and students of its science. This scholarly activity was uninterrupted in the family for about 300 years, starting from the fourth century H., and continuing until the seventh century H.

Though the hometown of the family was Qum, the family moved to the city of Ray, one of the largest cities in Iran in those days, a city boasting many outstanding Muslim scholars. Ray was completely destroyed some years later by the Mongol savage invasion, and the city of Tehran, which was originally a village near Ray, was built nearby at a later date.

Al-Siddooq al-Qummi is particularly famous for the long journeys he undertook for learning and teachings. He visited most parts of what were the eastern lands of Islam in those days. He traveled in Khurasan and Transoxania in the northeast, as well as in the central Islamic lands like Iraq and the Hijaz. He visited most of the towns and centers of learning in these places studying and transmitting Hadiths (Traditions), learning and teaching, giving and taking. In the beginning it was he who profited more, but in the end it was others who profited more from him, and this was because he himself narrated from so many *sheikhs*, whose names totaled more than 250 in those of his books we still have.

Of the 300 books and/or treatises al-Siddooq wrote, however, we now have only eighteen books and treatises, which represents a small portion of his works. Moreover, his largest work on *Haf'ih Madinatul 'Ilm* (The City of Knowledge) does not exist any more. If we had all of as-Siddooq's

numerous writings, and the inventories of the names of those he met and transmitted from (mashyakhah) and other references, the real number would probably be many times greater.

The most important references for the study of al-Siddoq's works are: an-Najashi, al-Fihrist, pp. 302--306; at-Toosi, al-Fihrist, pp. 184--186; Majma'u al-Rijal, vol. 5, pp. 269 - 273; and an-Nur; among others.

I-Toosi, 385-460H: **أطوسي** ▲

Sheikh al-Ta'ifa (the Grandmaster of the community) al-Toosi was born in 385H. His career marks the climax of a very great period in Shi'a Islamic scholarship and learning. It was during this period that Shi'a scholars were without rivals in the Islamic world.

In 408H. al-Toosi studied in Baghdad under al-Sheikh al-Mufeed, who died in 413H. whereby leadership of the Shi'a scholars fell to al-Shareef al-Murtadha until his death in 436H. During this time al-Toosi was closely associated with al-Shareef al-Murtadha. Al-Toosi's vast scholarship and learning made him a natural successor of al-Shareef al-Murtadha as the leading spokesman of Shi'a branch of Islam. So impressive was his learning that the Abbasi Khalifa, al-Qadir bi-'Ilaah, attended his lectures and sought to honor him.

In the closing years of al-Toosi's life the political situation in Baghdad and the domains of the Abbasi caliphate was in political turbulence and turmoil. The Turkic Saljuqs **السلجوقه** (who were fiercely anti-Shi'a), were gaining commanding power in the center of the Islamic empire at the expense of the contemporary rulers (the Buwayhis) **البويهين**. In 447H Tughril-Beg the leaders of the Saljuqs invaded Baghdad. At this time, and due to disturbances, many of the Islamic scholars (U'lamaa) in Baghdad, both Sunni and Shi'a were killed. The house of al-Toosi was burned down, as were his books and the works he had written while in Baghdad. In addition, in a fit of vindictiveness, important libraries of Shi'a books, as precious as they are, were burned. This was done along with aggressively plundering the houses and burning many of them. These houses belonged to the elite Shi'a, the cream of the society, they were the bankers, administrators, engineers, writers, merchants, and philosophers, among other professionals. All in all, 30,000 people were put to the sword!

Seeing the grave danger of remaining in Baghdad, al-Toosi left it with a heavy heart to go to al-Najaf. Al-Najaf, the city where Imam Ali had been buried, was already a very important city in the hearts of Shi'a Muslims. However, it was al-Sheikh al-Toosi's arrival which was to give that city the impetus to become the leading center of Shi'a scholarship. There he established the Howza **الحوزه العلميه**, a university-like institute to study Tafseer, Fiqh, Ah'kaam, theological logic, I'Im al-Rijal, besides many other branches of science. The Howza has boasted as many as 15,000 students, the scholars graduating served all over the Ummah. This role has been maintained down to the present day.

Al-Toosi died in al-Najaf in 460 A.H. His body was buried in a house there, which was made into a mosque as he had enjoined in his will. Even today his grave is a place of visitation in al-Najaf. Al-Toosi was succeeded by his son al-Hasan, who was known as al-Mufeed al-Thani, and was himself an outstanding scholar.

Al-Toosi was a learned Traditionist, whose two compilations will be discussed below; but he was not only a Traditionist, he was also an authoritative jurist, who could interpret Traditions to meet the needs of jurisprudence, and many of his works on jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence still survive, in particular al-Mabsut and al-Nihaya. In addition, he was the leading Shi'a theologian of his time. As well as writing works of a general theological nature, he also wrote specific works on individual topics. On the Imamah, he wrote Talkhis al-Shafi **تلخيص الشافعي**, which was based on al-Murtadha's al-Shafi fil-Imamah. He wrote a work on al-Ghayba **الغيبه** (the occultation of Al-Mahdi, the 12th Imam). As a Traditionist, al-Toosi naturally had an interest in the men who related Traditions,

in his Kitab al-Rijaal الرجال , he tries to list most of the important Shi'as up to his time. His (Fihrist) فهرست is an important work of Shi'a bibliography. In it he lists many of the works of early Shi'a writers and sometimes gives an account of their writers and the contents of the works. This work may to some extent reflect al-Toosi's own library before it was so tragically destroyed.

One of the remarkable features of this work is that despite the great number of Traditions, which had become known to al-Toosi since the time of al-Kulaini and al-Siddooq, al-Toosi's interpretation of what are the correct Traditions, preserves Shi'a law in a very similar position to that of al-Kulaini and al-Siddooq. The reason for the great spread of diverse Traditions during the period from al-Kulaini's death to al-Toosi's (328 to 460H) may have been the fact that this was a period in which the rulers [the Buwayhis] البويهيون held sway in Baghdad; they were very sympathetic towards the Shi'a. Thus, this was a period in which the Shi'a could explain their beliefs openly notwithstanding reprisals. In such circumstances, there was much more opportunity for outsiders to bring extraneous Traditions into the Shi'a corpus. However al-Toosi had available to him many of the early works of Usool (الأصول) (الأربعمائه) which had been available to the earlier Shi'a compilers of collections of Traditions. Al-Toosi says about this work: "When our companions looked at the Akhbaar (Traditions) connected with what is permitted and forbidden (al-Halal wal Haram) which we had collected in it, they saw that they included most of what the sections of laws connected with jurisprudence. In all its sections and its chapters, only very little of the Traditions of our companions, their books, (the 400 Usool) and compilations has escaped.

#### [Al-Istibsaar: الاستبصار](#) ▲

Al-Istibsaar is the fourth and last of the major works of Shi'a Islamic Traditions. It covers the same field as (Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam) but is considerably smaller. Al-Toosi mentions that his colleagues, after seeing the size of Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam considered: "..... It would be useful that there should be a reference (madhkur) book which a beginner could use in his study of jurisprudence, or one who has finished, but to remind himself, or the intermediate (student), to study more deeply. By so doing all could obtain what they need and reach their soul's desire, what is connected with different Traditions would be set in an abridged way . . . Therefore they asked me to summarize (Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam) and devote care to its compilation and abridgement, and to begin each section with an introduction about what I relied on for the legal decisions and Traditions in it; then I should follow with those Traditions which disagree and explain the reconciliation between the two without leaving out anything which was influential. I would follow my practice in my big book mentioned earlier (i.e. Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam) and at the beginning of the book, I would explain briefly how Traditions are weighed against each other, and how the practice of something was possible through (the authority) of (some of) them to the exclusion of the rest"

Al-Toosi, then, follows this statement with a brief but comprehensive and clear outline of the principles of jurisprudence.

From al-Toosi's own introduction, al-Istibsaar is essentially a summary of Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam. Its methods are similar but briefer; there are not so many Traditions used in the work and the explanations are more concise. In many ways it is closer to Man la Yah'dharhu al-Faqeeh, although unlike the latter it gives full Isnad (referencing) for the Traditions quoted. However it is possible to say that al-Kaafi and Tah'dheeb al-Ah'kaam represent comprehensive collections of Traditions, while Man la Yah'dharhu al-Faqeeh and al-Istibsaar are books intended to be used as ready reference works for students and scholars.

The collections and commentaries of Shi'a Traditions did not end with al-Toosi but his works mark the high point in this process. It had begun with al-Kulaini, whose al-Kaafi, while not the first

collection, and was certainly the first major collection based on the early works of Usool. The process had been continued by al-Siddooq; in his introduction to Man la Yah'dharhu al-Faqeeh he makes it clear that he had also used these Usool. Al-Toosi, the author of the other two major works of Shi'a Traditions also admits his dependence on these early works. As has already been pointed out, these three authors and their four major works of Tradition present a generally consistent picture of Shi'a Islamic legal thinking. It is a remarkable picture of Tradition and shows that, whatever the vagaries of individuals may have been, leading Shi'a scholars had a clear and consistent view of their Traditions.

### Manner of Collection of al-Hadith ▲

<b>Al-Sihah Al-Sittah (Sunni)</b> Registered by highly Qualified scholars in Islam	<b>Narration of Ahlul Bayt (Shi'a)</b> Registered by highly Qualified scholars in Islam
Quoting various people whose narration went back to the Prophet's companions, then to Muhammad (pbuh) himself.	Quoted from the Twelve Imams (Ahlul Bayt). Narration was straight through to Muhammad (pbuh) by way of Ali's registration of Hadiths.

[1] Introduction to the Hadith, A. Rahman Doe, Page 34.

[2] Al-Ghadeer, Al-Amini, Vol. 5, Page 245.

[3] Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim, Vol. 1, Page 17-20.

[4] Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol 1, Page 218

[5] Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol 1, Page 264-268.

[6] Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doi, Vol. 1, Page 34-35.

[7] Introduction to Hadith, A. Rahman Doi, Vol. 1, Page 38-40.

[8] Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1, Page 619.

[9] (See Mish'kaat Al-Masabeeh, Translation by Fazlul Karim, Vol. 1, Page 63.)

[10] See Al-Shatharaat, Vol. 2, Page 240. Also Al-Saadiq and the Four Madh'habs, Asad Haidar, Vol. 1 Page 560.