A GENERAL LOOK AT HADITH AND ITS VALUE IN ISLAM

On the history of Hadith: Hadith in the era of the holy Prophet

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Abstract: *The holy Prophet in a time where it is named as ignorance time due to the spread of superstations and unreasonable behaviors, was appointed to guide people far from human morality and ethics. By appointment of Prophet and his continuous efforts, his holiness could lead people from ignorance and hopelessness to light in the light of holy verses of Quran and his words and politeness through applying various methods of educating. Revelations of God, words and religious teachings, his thoughts and behaviors in Muslims meetings and congregations, moved a huge wave of guided and interested people. To manage society, even though the main criterion and law of peoples' life was holy Quran, the holy Prophet was teacher and explainer of Ahkam and divine teachings. His holiness was considered as the source of muslims in solving intellectual and cultural issues and interest in following and practicing his words and sunnah was customary among muslims. Muslims listened to him, and chose his behavior as their role model. What is important in this regard is " Were the narrations of the holy Prophet only used by contemporary Sahabeh of his*

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time or was it a plan to transfer narrations to next generations – especially on behalf of the holy Prophet. Historical evidences declare the plan of Prophet which who had two different methods to keep narrations and to transfer them to next generations; the methods were "saving narrations and passing them to the next generations" and " compiling and writing down narrations in order to next generations' usage"

***Key word**: Hadith, Tradition, quotation, compiling*

Saving and oral quotation of narrations

As most of people contemporary to Prophet were illiterate, unfamiliar with reading and writing, and also lack of tools to record and write down words in that time, people mostly memorized narrations and kept them in their minds. The holy Prophet, also, emphasized firmly on keeping and spreading narrations. In this regard, there are various evidence such as what Shia and Sunni narrated that the holy Prophet said,

من حفظ من امتی اربعین حدیثا مما یحتاجون الیه من امر دینهم بعثه الله عز و جل یوم القیامة فقیها عالما[1]

or

لیبلغ الشاهد الغائب.[2]

The holy Prophet encouraged people to spread narrations by such ahadith and in another hadith, he also emphasized on spreading his narrations as a continues trend among muslims and said, "oh God! Bless my successors." He was asked, who are your successors?" he said, "those who come after me, narrate my narrations and teach their content to people."[3]

He also told the holy Prophet in Hajat al-Vida', " God makes glad and pleased that person who hears my words and memorizes it and transfers to those who does not hear. It may exists those who are carriers of fiqh – and knowledge- but they themselves are not faqih (religious jurisprudence) or able to infer concepts – and it may exists faqih narrators (narrators who are jurisprudence) who transfer narrations based on the judgment of more jurisprudent than them."[4]

In addition to advices of his holiness to spread narrations, the holy Prophet of God, at the same time, was prohibiting people from telling lies about narrations, for this reason, he told in a hadith, "relate whatever you hear from me to others, but tell the truth only and any one who tells lies about me, a house will be instructed for him in hell where he will live."[5]

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Among muslims, that group which was closer to Prophet in terms of family ties or their background in converting to islam or their permanent settlement in Mosque – like Ashab Suffeh – where was the place of spreading hadith, could benefit more from the ahadith of the holy Prophet and they themselves were the source of Ahadith for others. According to reports, more than fifty people of Sahabeh recorded Ahadith of holy Prophet by the facilities at their hand.[6] In addition, the holy Prophet sent some individuals from Sahabeh as judges, or religion propagator to newly islam converted areas and they propagated religion by the use of holy verses and words of him[7], for example sometimes some groups of newly muslims entered Medina and heard something from Prophet directly. They related what they had heard to others after their return to their homeland.[8] Therefore, oral transmission and passing hadith by mouth were considered as one way to spread hadith in that era.

Recording and compiling hadith

The holy Prophet not only advised to learn and spread Ahadith but also to record and restore them; Anas ibn Malik quoted from his holiness that he said, "if a faithful person passes away and leaves behind a piece of paper written on it information of knowledge about something, that piece of paper will make a barrier between him and fire of hell and God Almighty will endow him a city in return for each letter of that writing, a city where is larger than this world for seven times."[9]

There are numerous examples of narrations of the holy Prophet in various sources that all assert emphasis, encouragement, and confirmation to restoring, recording and writing down hadith.[10] From historical perspective, the holy Prophet, himself, was aware of various recorders and writers that some were writing down revelations of God by his order and some also were engaged in recording treaties and letters of Prophets.[11] Therefore, during the period of prophethood, a lot of Ahadith were recorded.[12] In addition, many Sahabeh due to their personal interest and to the extent of their facilities recorded narrations; based on some researchers, the number of them is estimated to be more than fifty.[13]

Of recording hadith at the time of the holy Prophet which are famous as written document we can name Sahifah Sadeqiyah by 'Abdullah ibn 'Amro'As, which is recorded by Prophet's direct permission. He said against ban of Quraish, he wrote down whatever he heard from Prophet and the holy Prophet confirmed him and said, اکتب فوالذی نفسی بیده ما خرج من فی الا الحق which means

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write down. By God nothing comes out of my mouth but truth."[14]

Of other written works in the time of the holy Prophet – besides official treaties which are recorded in History [15]- we can point out to Sahifah al-Nabi and letters and correspondence of his holiness.[16] Even the holy Prophet near his demise was going to write down his last will, he asked for a pencil, ink and paper which confronted resistance of some individuals who were there.[17] On the other hand, some people like imam Ali, Salman, Abuzar, Sa'ad ibn 'Ibadeh Ansari, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah Ansari,[18] Abubakr, … had written works regarding hadith[19], and among them imam 'Ali was doubtlessly the most hardworking one. He not only wrote down Quran in the presence of holy Prophet and for this was considered as the writers of revelation, but also by the order of the holy Prophet, he compiled collections of narrations of him.[20]

Although writing down Hadith of the holy Prophet was carried out in the life time of the Prophet in limited form, for some reasons like having access to the Prophet, relying on memories, lack of facility and tools to write down things fast, recording hadith could not find a public and widespread position and oral quotation of hadith became the current sunnah in transferring narrations of Prophet.

After the demise of the holy Prophet and as the consequence of muslim's conflicts about caliphate and successor ship of holy Prophet, practically muslims were divided into two groups and each group knew themselves as themselves the heir and guardian of sunnah of Prophet. Sunnitte claimed that they learned sunnah of holy Prophet through companions of the Prophet, some other scholars even attached sayings and sirah of Sahabeh to Sunnah of Prophet and even some regarded a religious credit for that[21] by this excuse that companions of the Prophet all were just and did not do anything which could be regarded against piety and justice or they did not attribute any lie to the Prophet.[22]

While in the opinion of Shia there is no authentic reason to claim all Sahabah were just; in contrast, injustices some of them according to the verses of God, narrations of the Prophet and historical evidence are certain and obvious and on the other hand, there were Shia who believed in the successorship of Ahlul Bayt and proved two features of science and Ismah (infallibility) for them , so they regarded their sayings and words as hujjah (proof) and gave credit to the sayings of them as Hadith in continuation of the hadith of Prophet.

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Therefore, in the opinion of Shia, the continuation of Sunnah of the holy Prophet in words and actions of imams of Shia can be traced. The mentioned truth also cause two different systems of hadith , " Shia Hadith" and " Sunni Hadith" formed and each one makes a history for itself.

Summary

- Contemporary to sending down the verses of Quran and announcement of them by the holy Prophet, the responsibility of Tafsir (explanation) and its interpretation were put on the Prophet's shoulder and therefore, hadith in the meaning of قول فعل و تقریر was started.

- The holy Prophet tried hard to spread his hadith as much as he showed interest in compilation and writing down hadith.

- Having belief in divine Knowledge and Isma' of Ahlul Bayt caused Shia only gave credit to narrations of Ahlul bayt and gave no credit to the sayings and narrations of Sahabah.

- Difference in looking at Hadith in terms of their source and the following changes and revolutions caused the history of Shia hadith be different from the history of Sunnitte hadith.

Endnotes:

[1] Hur 'Amili, Vasail al-Shia', 27/77-105

[2] Kulayini, Kafi, 1/403; Hur 'Amili, Vasail al-Shia', 9/547; Majlisi, Bahar al-Anvar, 2/152

[3] Saduq, Ma'ani al-Akhbar, 374; Majlisi, Bahar al-Anvar, 2/145

[4] Kulayini, Kafi, 1/403; Neyshabouri, Sahih Moslim, N.2298; Majlisi, Bahar al-Anvar, 2/160

[5] Qasemi, Qava'id al-Tahdith, 50 quoted from Tabarani

[6] A'zami, Darasat fi al-Hadith al-Nabavi va Tarikh Tadvinah, 1/142

[7] To see its various examples look at: Ramyar, Tarikh Quran, 228, 290; 'Askari, al-Quran al-Karim va Revayat al-Madresatein, 1/163

[8] Abu-Davood Sajestani, al-Sunan, 1/159 and also: 'Askari, al-Quran al-Karim va Revayat al-Madresatein, 1/165

[9] Majlisi, Bahar al-Anvar, 2/144; Qasemi, Qava'id al-Tahdith, 48

[10] Examples of these traditions are cited in: Huseini Jalali, Tadvin al-Sunnah al-Sharifah, 46-105; Qasemi, Qava'id al-Tahdith, 48

[11] To read more: Ma'aref, Tarikh 'Omomi Hadith, 53

[12] In addition to historical sources, some parts of them have been compiled in the books " Makatib al-Rasoul" by 'Ali Ahmadi Miyaneji and " Majmoa' al-Vathaq al-Siyasiyah" by Muhammad Khalafullah.

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[13] Refer to: A'zami, Darasat fi al-Hadith al-Nabavi va Tarikh Tadvinah, 1/142; Huseini Jalali, Tadvin al-Sunnah al-Sharifah, 202-238

[14] Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 2/162; Hakim Neyshabouri, al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin, 1/105; ibn Athir Jazri, Usdul Ghabah, 3/245-246, which includes a thousand hadith.

[15] One of the official written treaties is the treaty in the first year of Hijtrah that the holy Prophet made it among Muhajir, Ansar and Jewish tribes.(refer to: ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabaviyah, 2/148-150

[16] Late Ahmadi Miyaneji compiled more than 316 letters and written documents of his holiness in the book Makatib al-Rasoul. & refer to: Khalafullah, and Majmoa' al-Vathaq al-Siyasiyah.

[17] Bukhari, Sahih, 1/37; 'Askari, Maalim al-Madresatein, 1/97-100

[18] Ibn Sa'ad, 5/216

[19] Of the most significant ones of written works we can refer to: Manasik Hajj of Prophet from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah Absari, a collection of Ahadith of salaat by Samrah ibn Jundab and Sahifah Homam ibn Munbah which was dictated by Abu-Harireh.

[20] Against all these evidence, a group of hadith narrators believe that the holy Prophet in a part of his life did not agree to write down hadith and even he forbid his companions to do so and the most important reason they mentioned was narrations from Abu Saeid Khudri and Abu Hurairah.

[21] "Ijaj Khatib, al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadvin, 18, 19, 78

[22] For detailed discussion refer to 'Askari, Maalim al-Madresateyn, 1/113-137 in a discussion titled: Bohuth al-Madresateyn Haul al-Suhbat va al-Sahabah.

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