

Comparative Critical Analysis of Methodologies for Establishing the Validity of Hadith Among Sunni and Shia

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Abstract

From the perspectives of Sunni and Shia, Hadith holds immense significance, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) assured his followers that they would not go astray as long as they held onto both the Hadith and the Quran. However, these two groups significantly differ in terms of the classification and formulation of the quality of Hadith, even concerning the status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a source of Hadith and the credibility of the companions, including the criteria for the authenticity of Hadith, which ultimately impacts whether a hadith is accepted as a source of Islamic teachings. This research is a library research conducted with an analytical-descriptive approach, utilizing primary sources related to the methodology of Hadith authenticity and complemented by secondary sources from various relevant journals and books. The findings of this research reveal that from the perspective of Sunni, one of the conditions for the authenticity of a Hadith is that its chain of transmission (sanad) must be continuous and unbroken back to the Prophet Muhammad. In contrast, the Shia view requires the authenticity of Hadith to be traced back to the Prophet and the infallible Imams without interruption, relying on the Ahlul Bayt lineage, while rejecting sources from Sunni except to reinforce their methodology. These differing viewpoints undoubtedly influence the acceptance of the hadith of the Prophet as a source of Islamic teachings between Sunni and Shia.

Keywords: Methodologies, Hadith, Sunni, Shia.

INTRODUCTION

As an authoritative source, the hadith holds paramount importance in comprehending the landscape of conflicts and integration between Sunni and Shia communities, including their respective perceptions (Said:1-2). Within the Islamic heritage, the spectacular and perennial events that have surfaced since the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on Monday, the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 10H, have remained subjects of debate between these two groups to this day, particularly concerning the authenticity and authority of hadith. Throughout the historical journey of hadith as an intellectual legacy, it has seldom been exempt from scrutiny and criticism, encompassing aspects of its chain of transmission (*sanad*), its content (*matan*), and its practical application. The configuration of their disagreements has given rise to factions within the Muslim community. Regarding the historical polarisation, Sunni and Shia have forged distinct identities and elements within their respective diversities. The accumulation of these events, especially within hadith studies, has prompted them to comprehensively identify the status of hadith, including its definition, classification, and interpretation, through their evolving procedures and critical methods, keeping pace with the changing times (Said:1)

This internal polarization within the Muslim community has given rise to several Islamic schools of thought. It has formed the three traditional streams of Islamic school, namely Sunni, Shia, and Khawarij (al-Tabari, 1357H ; 72). However, they continue to value the existence of hadith as an authoritative and original source of fundamental Islamic teachings following the Quran (Said, 2-3). While all three traditional streams of Islam concur on the hadith's status as an authoritative source of Islamic jurisprudence, there are distinctions in their specific approaches to authenticating hadith through methods and criteria ('Ajaj al-Khatib, 1989; 36-41). The

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emergence of factionalism within the Muslim community has driven them to possess their compilations of hadith, methodologies, and the historical documentation (*tadwīn*) of their respective Hadith traditions, history of hadith '*tadwīn*', each with different chains of transmission (*sanad*), diverse content (*matan*), distinct figures, and *rjāl* (narrators of Hadith). These differences, as noted by Arkoun (d. 2010 CE), essentially trace back to the distinct cultural roots of each competing sect, vying to monopolize and simultaneously control the hadith. This competitive nature is expressed in various aspects, including the chapter titles within each sect's compilations, with each group asserting that the hadith compilations of others are invalid and counterfeit (Arkoun, 1990; 102). Perceptions like these have given rise to tensions and clashes between Sunni and Shia, often characterized as a clash of civilizations (al-Fadhli, 1996; 114-116).

The Authenticity of Hadith from the Shia Perspective

Shia, whether seen as competitors or potential partners with Sunni, have initially idealized their hadith collections with a distinct format. This distinct approach to Hadith can be observed in both early and later Shia Hadith scholars (al-Fadhli, 1996; 114-116). During the 4th and 5th centuries, prominent Shia hadith scholars codified four major collections of hadith, collectively known as "*al-kutub al-arba'ab*" (the four books). These include the monumental work "al-Kāfī" authored by Muhammad bin Ya'qūb al-Kulaini (d. 329 H), who held the title of Hujjah al-Islām; "Man Laa Yahduruhu al-Faqīh" by Muhammad bin Buyah al-Qummi (d. 381 H), also known as al-Sadūq; and "Kitāb al-Tahdzīb" and "Kitāb al-Istibsār," both authored by Muhammad al-Tūsī (d. 460 H).

According to Shia, the works of these scholars hold a similar status to the authentic hadith collections in Sunni Islam. Although Shia Hadith scholars from both early and later periods may have differences in establishing criteria for hadith selection, the concept of hadith can complement each other according to the needs of their time. According to early Shia scholars, the authenticity of a hadith does not solely depend on the righteousness ('*adalah*) of a narrator; instead, a hadith can be recognized as authentic if it is narrated from a reliable source, even if it is one of the four hundred foundations (*Usūl Arba'miah*) or if it is found in a book that was shown to one of the Imams, such as the book of Ubaidillah al-Halabi, which was shown to Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq (peace be upon him). In contrast, later Shia scholars of the Imāmiyah school believe that the authenticity of a hadith, after meeting certain conditions, primarily relies on its uninterrupted chain of narrators back to the *ma'sūm* (infallible) in a just manner. Alternatively, the chain should connect to Imam al-Ma'sūm, as narrated by narrators who are just ('*ādil*) from the Imāmiyah school or their equivalents from all levels of narrators, without considering the controversy (*syudzuz*) of the Hadith (Ja'far Subhani, 57). In constructing Imāmiyah Shia beliefs, the authenticity of a hadith is heavily determined by the authority of the Imams, and the continuity of the hadith chain to the Imam is an absolute requirement, at the very least acknowledged or tolerated (Said, 49-50).

In the narrations of the Shia Imams, Hadith holds an exalted and highly esteemed position. In these narrations, the Imams also emphasize the role of Hadith in explaining and interpreting the verses of the Qur'an. They instruct their followers to understand the true intentions and meanings of hadith, memorize and preserve them, and transmit them to future generations. While evidence supports this, only a few narrations will be mentioned in broad strokes.

Ja'far Sādiq narrated from his father, who said to him:

قَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): يَا بَنِيَّ أَعْرِفْ مَتَازِلَ الشَّيْبَعَةِ عَلَى قَدْرِ رِوَايَتِهِمْ وَمَعْرِفَتِهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْمَعْرِفَةَ هِيَ الدِّرَافَةُ لِلرِّوَايَةِ وَبِالدِّرَافَاتِ لِلرِّوَايَاتِ يَغْلُو الْمُؤْمِنُ إِلَى أَفْصَى دَرَجَاتِ الْإِيمَانِ.

Meaning:

O my dear son, evaluate the status of every Shia based on the number of narrations they preserve and their knowledge of them. Knowledge is nothing but the recognition and understanding of these narrations. By understanding these narrations, a believer can attain the highest levels of faith (Baqir Majlisi, 1403 ; 184).

Regarding the importance of understanding the hadith of the Prophet, Ja'far Sādiq said:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: حَدِيثٌ تَدْرِيهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفٍ تَزُويهِ وَلَا يَكُونُ الرَّجُلُ مِنْكُمْ فَفِيهَا.

Meaning:

One Hadith you understand is better than a thousand hadith you narrate (without understanding) (Baqir Majlisi, 1403 ; 184).

Mu'awiyah bin Ammar said to Abu Abdillah al-Sâdiq, "There is a man who diligently conveys your words (the words of the infallible, the *ma'sum*) and instils faith in the hearts of the Shia; alongside him, there is a worshipper who does not engage in propagation like him. Which of the two is more virtuous?" He (al-Sâdiq) said, "The one who exerts effort in disseminating our hadith and instils faith in the hearts of the Shia is more virtuous, even more so than a thousand worshippers (Ya'qûb Kulaini, 1363 ; 60)

'Ali bin Abi Thalib said:

عَنْ أَبِي عَلِيٍّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّهُمْ أَرْحَمُ خُلَفَائِي ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ قِيلَ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، وَمَنْ خُلَفَاؤُكَ ؟ قَالَ : الَّذِينَ يَأْتُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي وَيَزُودُونَ أَخَارِيثِي ، وَسَتِّي وَيَعْلَمُونَهَا النَّاسَ.

Meaning:

O Allah, have mercy on my successors! He was asked, 'Who are your successors, O Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'They will come after me, narrate my sayings, and teach them to the people (al-Tabrani, 1415 ; 77)

The authenticity of hadith in the Imāmiyah Shia community is undoubtedly at odds with the concept of hadith in the majority Sunni tradition. Their chain of narration, doctrinally, differs from that of the Sunnis. In practice, they rely exclusively on the lineage of Ahlulbait (the family and descendants of the Prophet) and reject Sunni sources except to reinforce their own beliefs. The implications of these differences result in variations in the application of Hadith, interpretation (*tafsir*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), independent legal reasoning (*ijtihad*), and scholarly consensus (*ijma*).

In narrating Hadith, the Shia community represents a major school of thought within Islam that doctrinally differs from orthodox Muslims (Rahman, 1979 ; 76) Their sources of hadith are not limited to the sayings or actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but also encompass the entire speech and conduct of the infallible Imams and the statements of Fatimah bint Muhammad (peace be upon them). This is because they are considered part of the address of Ahlulbait, a designation affirmed by revelation, as explained in the Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, verse 33. This concept is elucidated in a Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim from Shafiyah binti Syaibah, which states:

عَنْ صَفِيَّةَ بِنْتِ شَيْبَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَتْ غَائِشَةُ خَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَدَاةً وَعَلَيْهِ مِرْطٌ مَرْحَلٌ مِنْ شَعْرِ أَسْوَدَ فَجَاءَ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ فَأَدْخَلَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَ الْحُسَيْنُ فَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَتْ فَاطِمَةُ فَأَدْخَلَهَا ثُمَّ جَاءَ عَلِيٌّ فَأَدْخَلَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ { إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا }

Meaning:

From Shafiyah binti Syaibah, she said, 'Aisha said, "One morning, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came out of his house wearing a black cloak with decoration. Hasan bin Ali came shortly after, and the Prophet asked him to enter the house. Then, Husain came, and he, too, was invited into the house. After that, Fatimah arrived, and the Prophet welcomed her inside. Finally, Ali came, and the Prophet invited him into the house. Then, he recited the Quranic verse: 'Verily, Allah intends but to remove impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you with thorough purification.' (Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 33)." (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

In another narration found in at-Tirmidhi, reported by Umar bin Abi Salamah, it is mentioned as follows:

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ زَيْبِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ { إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا } فِي بَيْتِ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ فَدَعَا فَاطِمَةَ وَحَسَنًا

وَحَسْبُنَا فَجَلَّلَهُمْ يَكْسَاءِ وَعَلِيٌّ خَلْفَ ظَهْرِهِ فَجَلَّلَهُ يَكْسَاءِ ثُمَّ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْلُ بَيْتِي فَأَذْهِبْ عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْسَ وَظَهِّرْهُمْ تَطْهِيرًا قَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ وَأَنَا مَعَهُمْ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَنْتِ عَلَى مَكَانِكَ وَأَنْتِ عَلَى خَيْرٍ قَالَ أَبُو عَيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ مِنْ حَدِيثِ عِظَاءٍ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ

Meaning:

From Umar bin Abu Salamah, a pupil of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said: When this verse was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "Verily, Allah intends but to remove impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you with thorough purification." (Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 33), the Prophet was at the house of Ummu Salamah. He called for Fatimah, Hasan, and Husein and dressed them in clothes, with Ali standing behind him. Then, he also dressed himself. After that, the Prophet prayed: "Allahumma haa'ulai ahlu baitii, fa'adhib 'anhum arrijsa watahhir hum tathiiiran" ("O Allah, these are the members of my household, so remove all impurity from them and purify them with a thorough purification"). Ummu Salamah asked, "Am I also included with them, O Messenger of Allah?" He (the Prophet) replied, "You are in your place, and you are upon goodness." Abu Isa said, "This Hadith is considered Gharib (singular or rare) through this chain, narrated by Atha' from Umar bin Abu Salamah." (Hadith narrated by At-Tirmidhi)

In another narration found in Ahmad's collection, narrated by Ummu Salamah, it is as follows:

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جَلَّلَ عَلَى عَلِيٍّ وَحَسَنٍ وَحُسَيْنٍ وَقَاطِمَةَ كِسَاءً ثُمَّ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَخَاصَّتِي اللَّهُمَّ أَذْهِبْ عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْسَ وَظَهِّرْهُمْ تَطْهِيرًا فَقَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنَا مِنْهُمْ قَالَ إِنَّكَ إِلَى خَيْرٍ

Meaning:

From Ummu Salamah, it is narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) covered Ali, Hasan, Husein, and Fatimah with a cloth and then prayed, "Allahumma aulaa'i ahlu baiti aakhasshati Allahumma adhib 'anhumurrijsa thahirhum tathhira" ("O Allah, these are my family members and the special ones among them. O Allah, remove any impurities from them and purify them"). Ummu Salamah said, "O Messenger of Allah, am I also included among them?" He (the Prophet) replied, "Certainly, you are in goodness." (Hadith narrated by Ahmad)

The issue of compatibility between Shia and Sunni Hadith has arisen because, in Shia Hadith books, narrations typically conclude with one of the Imams and are not linked through the chain of narrators back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) via their fathers, grandfathers, or other routes. It is important to note that in Sunni hadith books, some Shia Imams can be found as narrators within the chain of narrations. For example, in Sahih al-Bukhari, there is a hadith that includes a narrator who follows the Shia school of thought, namely 'Ubbad ibn Ya'qub al-Asadi, as follows:

حدثني سليمان حدثنا شعبة عن الوليد وحدثني عباد بن يعقوب الأسدي أخبرنا عباد بن العوام عن الشيباني عن الوليد بن العيزار عن أبي عمرو الشيباني عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه أن رجلا سأل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (أي الأعمال أفضل قال الصلاة لوقتها وبر الوالدين ثم الجهاد في سبيل الله).

Meanwhile, in Shia hadith literatures, narrations often end with one of the Imams, and their chains of transmission do not extend back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is exemplified in a hadith found in the book "al-Bihâr al-Anwâr" by Sheikh al-Majlisi, as follows:

أحمد بن محمد عن الأهوازي عن القاسم بن محمد عن علي بن أبي بصير قال سمعت أبا جعفر عليه السلام يقول: أسر الله سره إلى جبريل وأسره جبريل إلى محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم وأسره محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى علي وأسره علي إلى من شاء واحدا بعد واحد.

For someone outside the Islamic culture, particularly those unfamiliar with the Shia perspective 'tasyayyu', when they encounter narrations from the infallible (*ma'sûm*), it is highly likely to raise various questions and doubts (*syubhal*) regarding the relationship between Shia tradition and the sunnah and hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The differences in the authenticity of Shia and Sunni hadith, evaluated in terms of their quality as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), can be attributed to the principles of hadith as previously outlined. These differences can be summarized as follows:

SANAD IT'TISĀL (CONTINUOUS CHAIN) TO A MA'SŪM IMAM

The Concept of Continuous Sanad

Generally, Shia Imāmiyah hadith scholars acknowledge the concept of *sanad* (chain of narration) continuity, similar to the principles of hadith in Sunni, *usūl hadīth*. In the Shia perspective, a hadith can be categorized as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) if it meets various criteria, including the requirement of a continuous sanad.

However, the meaning of a continuous sanad among Shia differs from the Sunni concept. This difference becomes apparent when relating to terms like *muttasil* (continuous), *musnad* (supported), or *marfū'* (elevated). In Sunni tradition, a *marfū'* hadith has a continuous chain back to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In contrast, among Shia, a *marfū'* hadith does not necessarily have to end with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but can also extend to one of the '*ma'sūm*' infallible Imams, whether the chain '*sanad*' is continuous (*muttasil*) or not (*munqati'*) (al-'Amili, 1401 H ; 103)

Muttasil and *Musnad* Hadith in Shia terminology have both common and specific differences. A *muttasil* hadith refers to a continuous *sanad* of narration, whether it reaches a *ma'sūm* narrator (Prophet or Imams) or a non-*ma'sūm* narrator. On the other hand, *musnad* is a term reserved for narrations with a continuous chain back to a *ma'sūm* narrator (Ja'far al-Subḥāni, 1418 ; 66-67)

Within the Shia Imāmiyah faction, the authenticity of hadith is greatly determined by the authority of the Imam. The continuity of the narration back to the Imam of their time is an absolute condition that must be met and, at the very least, recognized or not objected to. In their view, the Imam holds the authority and is the conduit for the firm statements (*naṣ*) from Allah through the messages of the Prophet Muhammad. They receive these laws and rulings through divine inspiration from Allah or encounters with previous Imams (al-Muzaffar, 1419 H ; 63)

According to the early Shia scholars (*Mutaqaddimīn*), the authenticity of a hadith is not limited to narrators who follow the *Imāmiyah* school. They accept narrators from different schools of thought as long as they are honest and trustworthy, and their narration chain '*sanad*' reaches Prophet Muhammad and the Imams. Authenticity can be attributed to these narrations from sources other than the Imams as long as there is supporting evidence '*qarīnāt*' that confirms their origin from the '*ma'sūm*' infallible Imams.

However, some Shia scholars add a condition to the definition, stating that the narrators must belong to the Imāmiyah Shia school. According to this perspective, a hadith is not considered *ṣaḥīḥ* if the narrators are not from the Imāmiyah Shia school in all aspects (al-Salūs, 2001 ; 126) The first person to introduce this division of hadith within the Imāmiyah Shia context explained this requirement: "Narrations from non-believers are not accepted, even if they are known for their honesty in their religion. We must still scrutinize narrations from sinful individuals and those who differ from the Muslims (meaning those other than Imāmiyah)" said the first person who placed the division of hadith within the Shi'a *Imāmiyah* circle.

Al-Mamqani stated, "What aligns with research is that justice cannot coexist with a corrupt belief, and faith is a requirement for the narrator." He also said, "This is the stance chosen by Al-'Allāmah (referring to Ḥasan bin Mutahhar al-Ḥilli) in his fundamental works, as it aligns with the majority opinion, based on the verse from Allah in Surah al-Hujurat [49]:6, as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَيَّ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ تَادِمِينَ

Meaning:

“O believers, if an evildoer brings you any news, verify 'it' so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done.”

From this statement, it can be concluded that faith is a mandatory requirement for the narrator, and the narration of a sinful person must be scrutinized (Mamqani, 207) Additionally, anyone other than followers of Imâmiyah is considered either a disbeliever or sinful, making their narrations entirely unacceptable. This demonstrates the influence of Imâmiyah on the assessment of hadith authenticity.

On the other hand, the Imams hold the status of narrators who transmit the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, and what originates from them can be categorized as Sunnah. The Imams also inherited knowledge through generations, as documented by Imam 'Ali, based on what was dictated by the Prophet Muhammad (Al- Askari, 1405 H ; 321-322) This is reflected in the statement of Ja'far al-Sâdiq:

حَدَّثَنِي حَدِيثَ أَبِي وَ حَدِيثَ أَبِي حَدِيثَ جَدِّي وَ حَدِيثَ جَدِّي حَدِيثَ الْحَسَنِ وَ حَدِيثَ الْحَسَنِ حَدِيثَ الْحَسَنِ وَ حَدِيثَ الْحَسَنِ حَدِيثَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ حَدِيثَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

Meaning:

"My hadith is the hadith of my father, the hadith of my father is the hadith of my grandfather, the hadith of my grandfather is the hadith of Husein, the hadith of Husein is the hadith of Hasan, the hadith of Hasan is the hadith of Amîr al-Mu'minin 'Ali, the hadith of Amîr al-Mu'minin 'Ali is the hadith of the Messenger of Allah, and the hadith of the Messenger of Allah is the word of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic." (Ya'qûb al-Kulaini, 80)

The Shia community believes that from the beginning, they have preserved hadith through writing. This practice originated from the Prophet Muhammad's recommendation to write down hadith, which they consider a highly significant command. The Imams then continued this practice. Umm Salamah narrates:

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ زَوْجِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: قَالَتْ: دَعَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِأَدِيمٍ، وَعَلِيٌّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عِنْدَهُ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَمْلِكِي، وَعَلِيٌّ يَكْتُبُ، حَتَّى مَلَأَ بَطْنَ الْأَدِيمِ، وَظَهَرَ وَ أَكَارَعَهُ.

Meaning:

The Prophet requested adîm (tanned sheepskin) to be brought, and at that moment, 'Ali was with the Prophet Muhammad. He dictated so many hadiths to 'Ali that both sides of the sheepskin were filled with writings (Al-Sanm'ani, 1409 H ; 71)

Furthermore, the words of Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr state: "If you have understood this, then you should know that the Shia were the first to compile (codify) reports and traditions - 'atsar and *kehabar*' - during the time of the *Rashidun* Caliphs, following their Imam, Amîr al-Mu'minin 'Ali, may peace be upon him." He then mentioned the book of 'Ali and the scroll (*sabîfal*) he hung from his sword. He also mentioned a book belonging to Abu Râfi', a close associate of the Prophet, known as "*Kitab al-Sunan wa al-Abkâm wa al-Qadaya*." It is worth noting that Abu Râfi' passed away at the beginning of the 'Ali bin Abi Talib caliphate. Therefore, Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr stated, "The beginning of 'Ali's caliphate was in the year 35 AH, so no one preceded Abu Rafi' in compiling (codifying)" (al-Sadar, 1951 ; 279-280, 'Ajjâj al-Khatîb, 2007 ; 190) This contradicts the widely accepted opinion among the Sunni community that the codification of hadiths began during the caliphate of Umar bin Abdul Aziz (d. 99-101 AH).

Thus, it can be understood that the hadiths narrated by the Shia Imams are always connected to the Prophet Muhammad. Through this transmission process, their narrations have become a continuous chain, with no gaps no foreign or unknown narrators, ultimately reaching the Prophet Muhammad.

The Concept and Definition of the Ma'sum Imam

The word "*Imam*" etymologically means someone who is followed. In the Qur'an, the term "*Imam*" is also used to describe certain books, such as the Qur'an, the holy book of Moses, and the book containing records of human affairs. Meanwhile, "*imâmah*" is defined by the Shia as a divine position in which Allah selects individuals among His servants based on His eternal knowledge (al-Ghiṭa', 134)

Based on the *Tashayyu'* belief, the knowledge of the Imams is not acquired through conventional means of learning (*iktisâb*) but rather occurs through a divine (*ladûni*) and supernatural process (*ifâdal*). This does not necessarily imply that they possess absolute knowledge of the unseen, as even the Prophet Muhammad did not have absolute knowledge of the unseen. What is being asserted here is that the knowledge used by the Imams to answer various questions from the community is derived from the same source as the knowledge of Prophet Muhammad, without claiming that angels of revelation descended upon them.

In Shia tradition, the Imams are believed to be among the "*muhaddatsin*." (al-Kulaini, 270, Majlisi, 66). *Muhaddats* is a term used to describe individuals who can hear the voices of angels without seeing them. At the same time, the Prophet Muhammad could see and directly receive revelations from Angel Gabriel and other angels (al-Kulaini, 270, Majlisi, 66) It is worth noting that the term "*muhaddats*" with the definition mentioned above is also accepted by some Sunni scholars, who attribute this status to certain companions of the Prophet (Naisyabûri, 4). The Shia Imâmiyah community believes that all the Imams from the Ahlul Bayt (the family of the Prophet) possess the quality of '*ismah*', similar to the Prophets (al-Muzhaffar, 1380 H ; 91). Etymologically, the term '*ismah*' can mean restraint, prevention, or self-protection (al-Fairuz Abadi, 1412 H/ 1991 M ; 2) Within the context of Shia *Imâmiyah*, '*ismah*' is defined as:

(al-Taba'tabai, 1391 H/1971; أَمْرٌ فِي الْإِنْسَانِ الْمَعْتُومِ يَصُوِّلُهُ عَنِ الْوُقُوعِ فِي مَا لَا يَجُوزُ مِنَ الْخَطَا وَالْمَعْصِيَةِ. 144)

Ibrahim al-Amin has also defined it as a spiritual power or strength that prevents its possessor from falling into sin and wrongdoing, ensuring that the possessor never neglects an obligation and never commits a forbidden act (Ibrahim al-Amin, 1416 H/ 1996;143,Ja'far al-Subhâni,1413H/1992;288)

The term *Imam* or *Imâmab*, according to the Shia Imâmiyah school of thought, is not the same as the terms *kebilâfah* and *imarâh*, as understood by the Sunni school of thought. The terms *kebilâfah* or *imarâh* are more political, referring to someone who holds the position of head of state in an Islamic political system. *Imâmab* in the Shia Imâmiyah school does not necessarily equate to the position of head of state. According to their belief, an Imam is entrusted with the responsibility of continuing the message of Islam after the Prophet Muhammad. This is because their function is similar to prophethood. Therefore, an Imam is considered *ma'sûm* (infallible), and they never commit mistakes or sins as their purity is guaranteed by divine revelation. Everything they say and do reflects the truth and serves as proof (*hujjah*), just like the Prophet Muhammad. The only difference lies in the reception of revelation: the Prophet Muhammad received direct revelation from Allah, whilst the Imams did not. Instead, the Imams receive guidance and inspiration from Allah through *ilham* (inspiration) or *firasah* (intuition) (Ja'far Subhâni, 1413H/1992; 69)

Therefore, '*ismah*' can be understood as an inner quality resulting from self-control that emanates from a source of belief, piety, and extensive knowledge. It enables individuals to resist all types of sins and moral deviations. This potential and grace originate from Allah and are bestowed upon His deserving servants who consistently strive to adhere firmly to him (al-Mailani, 1421H; 13; al-Murtada, 1405H; 236)

The position of *Imâmab* in the Shia school of thought is established through '*nas al-sarîb*', a clear and explicit *nas* (designation). Claiming the position of *Imâmab* without proper designation is considered falsehood. A clear (*sarîb*) and explicit *nas* is the only guarantee that an Imam is *ma'sûm* (infallible) because, according to the *Imâmiyah* theory, only an Imam who is *ma'sûm* can appoint and designate another *ma'sûm* Imam (Ja'far Subhani, 57-70)

According to al-Tûsi, the belief of the Imâmiyah Shia obliges them to believe that the *Imâmab* (spiritual leadership) and succession or 'Caliph' after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) belong to 'Ali bin Abi Thalib based on the hadith of the Prophet. The Prophet said, "O 'Ali, you are my brother, the inheritor of my knowledge, and the caliph after me. You are the judge of my community, and your position with me is like that of Aaron with Moses, except there is no prophet after me." (Fuad Abdul Bâqi, 120-121, al-Bukhârî, 1407 H ; 19) On another occasion, the Prophet said, "Hand over the affairs of the Muslims to 'Ali, listen to him, obey him, learn from him, and do not teach him." (Ahmad, 1398 H ; 84-152, al-Turmudzi, 1400 H ; 633) The Imams who succeeded 'Ali bin Abi Thalib, according to the *Imâmiyah* Shia, are eleven individuals from his descendants, starting with Imam Hasan and ending with Imam al-Mahdi al-Hadi bin Hasan al-Muntazar. These

Imams are believed to be *ma'sûm*, meaning they are free from all major and minor sins, intentional or accidental, in their actions and words. If any of the Imams were to sin, they would lose their status as an Imam, which is considered impossible.

According to their beliefs, how can an individual who is considered to be misled offer guidance, especially when there are no individuals considered infallible apart from the twelve Imams? According to consensus (*ijma'*), no one is considered *ma'sûm* other than these twelve Imams as follows:

1. Imam 'Ali bin Abi Thalib (d. 40 H)
2. Imam Hasan (d. 50 H)
3. Imam Al-Husein (d. 60 H)
4. Imam Zainal Abidin al-Sajjad (d. 95 H)
5. Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (d. 114 H)
6. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣadiq (83-148 H)
7. Imam Musa al-Kazhim (128-183 H)
8. Imam Ali Riḍa (148-203 H)
9. Imam Muhammad al-Taḳī (al-Jawwad) (195-220 H)
10. Imam Ali al-Hadi (212-254 H)
11. Imam Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari (232-260 H)
12. Imam Muhammad Mahdi al-Muntazar (255 H) - According to Imâmiyah Shia, *itsn' 'Asy'ariyah* this Imam disappeared before adulthood and is believed to have reappeared as the awaited Imam Mahdi (Shihab, 1428 H/2007 M ; 127-128)

The twelve Imams succeeded one another in continuing the Islamic community's leadership (*imâmah*) after the Prophet Muhammad's passing (peace be upon him). The Imâmiyah Shia, specifically the *Itsni' asyariyah* branch, believe that the legitimate caliph after the Prophet's death was 'Ali bin Abi Thalib, not Abu Bakr and the others. This leadership was then continued through the descendants of 'Ali bin Abi Thalib and Fatimah al-Zahrah, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are referred to as *al-naqfiyah* because they believe this line of imams, comprising 12 Imams, closed the cycle of *imâmah* over the Islamic community until the end of time. From the description above, it becomes evident that the quality and authority of the Imam are highly regarded in Shia Islam. According to their perspective, the authenticity of a hadith, considered truly *ṣahîḥ* (authentic), must be traced back to an Imam.

The Concept of Narrators Being 'âdil' and 'dâbi'

The concept of a just and reliable narrator in the Shia tradition is evaluated based on the quantity of narrations they transmit. In Shia (*Imâmiyah*) belief, the concept of 'âdil (just) differs from that of Sunnis. According to them, *al-'adalah* (justice) refers to an individual's character that motivates them to consistently maintain piety by avoiding major sins, minimizing minor sins, and refraining from actions that could tarnish their integrity (*muruah*) (Zainuddin, 201). According to al-Kâshî, based on a hadith from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣadiq, a person can only become a *faqîh* (jurist) after becoming a *muhaddith*, meaning an honest person with a correct perspective who narrates things exactly as he heard them, with wisdom and prudence. *Rijâl* (narrators) are considered to be experts in Islamic jurisprudence, trained by the Imams to represent them in various matters related to faith. They are direct representatives of the Imams in their respective functions (al-Mustafa, 1)

The Shia group further elaborates on the criteria for justice by borrowing from the concept of Al-Hakim al-Naisabûri (d. 405H), a Shia scholar. Their criteria are as follows: 1) Being a Muslim, 2) Not promoting innovations in religious practices, and 3) Avoiding sinful actions that could compromise their justice (Al-Naisabûri, 201)

The *âdil* of a narrator can be determined by the recommendations of an Imam or hadith experts who praise their credibility, as well as their reputation for scholarly quality, honesty, and piety within the community and among scholars (Said, 1408 H ; 92, al-Suyuti, 1399 H ; 301) Similarly, among the Shia, the justice of a narrator can be discerned through the recommendations of hadith experts, which provide clear signals to the community about the narrator's credibility. It can also be verified by referring to books on hadith narrators (*rijâl al-hadîs*) written by experts, which contain praises and justifications (*tazkijyah*) for these narrators (Ja'far Subhâni, 1366 H ; 36-37)

Furthermore, the concept of a narrator being '*dâbit*' in the Shia tradition refers to their memorization skills and their ability not to forget when narrating hadiths. A narrator with the attribute of '*dâbit*' is someone skilled, has a strong memory for the hadith they narrate, especially when it involves oral transmission, and can safeguard their written records from various forms of alteration when narrating through their written accounts (Ja'far Subhâni, 1412 H ; 135)

However, the presence and significance of the '*dâbit*' requirement for a narrator remain debated among Shia hadith scholars. For example, Sheikh Husein bin Abdul Samad al-'Amili considers '*dâbit*' one of the conditions for a hadith's authenticity (*sahîh*). According to his definition, a *sahîh* hadith is one with a continuous chain of transmission (*sanad*), narrated by an upright ('*âdil*') narrator from the *Imâmiyah* sect, possessing the attribute of '*dâbit*' like the preceding narrators up to the infallible (*ma'sûm*) Imam, and devoid of any anomalies (*Syudzudz*) or defects (*Illah*). However, some scholars do not explicitly mention '*dâbit*' as a separate criterion for a *sahîh* hadith. This is not because '*dâbit*' is considered unimportant or unnecessary but rather because they argue that the requirement of '*adâlah* (uprightness) already encompasses the concept of '*dâbit*'.

Based on the definitions provided earlier, the concept of hadith authenticity for the Shia *Imâmiyah* can be summarized as follows: **Firstly**, the chain of narration (*sanad*) must be continuous and traceable back to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or an infallible Imam (*ma'sûm*). **Secondly**, all narrators transmitting the hadith must belong to the *Imâmiyah* sect at every transmission level. **Thirdly**, all narrators must possess the quality of being upright and trustworthy ('*âdil*'). **Fourthly**, all narrators must demonstrate strong memory and the ability to accurately preserve the text of the hadith ('*dâbit*'). **Lastly**, the hadith must be free from anomalies or discrepancies (*syadz*).

However, the concept proposed by contemporary Shia scholars (*mutaakbirîn*) differs slightly from earlier scholars (*mutaqaddimîn*). According to *mutaqaddimîn* scholars, a hadith can be considered authentic (*sahîh*) if it meets the following criteria: **Firstly**, it must be obtained from a trustworthy source, even if that source is one of the *Uyûl al-arba' Mi'ab* (the four hundred sources) (Majid Ma'arif, 2012; 338-339). **Secondly**, it must align with other definitive (*qat'i*) evidence and be consistent with trustworthy texts (al-Hasani, 1992M ; 32) In summary, while the criteria for hadith authenticity among Shia *Imâmiyah* include considerations related to the chain of narrators and conformity with trustworthy sources, earlier scholars emphasized the importance of trustworthiness as a key criterion.

The Authenticity of Hadith in Sunni Perspective

In the study of hadith, the issues of *sanad* (chain of narrators) and *matan* (content) are two crucial elements that determine the existence and quality of a hadith as a source of authoritative teachings from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These two elements are so significant that they are closely related to each other, and the absence or weakness of either one can affect and even undermine the existence and quality of a hadith (Erfan Soebahar, 2003 M ; 74)

In constructing the *Sunni* perspective, it has always been understood that the material of hadith is a collection of authentic rules and teachings (Said, 44). Both the early scholars of hadith (*mutaqaddimîn*) and the later scholars of hadith (*mutaakbirîn*) within the Sunni tradition have fortified the development of a concept and procedure as a standard for hadith and its selection criteria. Some of the early scholars of hadith (*mutaqaddimîn*) include figures like Imam al-Syafi'i (d. 204 H), Imam Bukhari (d. 256 H), and Imam Muslim (d. 261 H). Meanwhile, scholars of hadith from the later period (*mutaakbirîn*) include Ibn al-Salâh (d. 643 H) and those who

followed after Ibn Ṣalāḥ, such as Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalāni (d. 852 H), al-Suyūṭi (d. 911 H), and al-Qasimi (d. 1332 H) (Said, 44-45).

The early hadith scholars up to the 3rd century AH did not explicitly define the criteria for hadith to be considered authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*). Instead, they established certain concepts and principles for evaluating the information they received. Some of these principles include:

- 1) Hadith narration is only acceptable if it comes from trustworthy individuals (*ṣiqāḥ*);
- 2) Narrations from individuals known for lying, following their desires, or not fully understanding what they narrate are rejected;
- 3) Paying attention to the personal behaviour and religious devotion of the narrators;
- 4) If narrators are known for unbecoming behaviour and irregular performance of prayers, their narrations are to be rejected;
- 5) Narrations from individuals not recognized as experts in hadith science are not accepted; If a narrator’s testimony is rejected, their narrations are also rejected (*la tubadditsū ‘amman la tuqbalu ṣaḥādatuhū*). (al-Razi, 1371 H/1952 M ; 27-30, Kamaruddin Amin, 2009 M ; 16).

These concepts are related to the quality and character of the narrators, which determine the acceptance or rejection of their narrations. However, it is important to note that these criteria did not encompass the comprehensive requirements for an authentic *isnad* (chain of narrators) as later established, nor did they address the concept of the authenticity of the *matn* (text) of the hadith. These early concepts were primarily based on the reliability of the *isnād* itself.

Here is a collection of early books on *Mustalah* *Ulūm al-Hadīts* (the science of hadith) that began with *Al-Risālah* by Al-Shafi’i (d. 204 H), followed by *al-Muḥaddīts al-Fāṣil Baina al-Rawī wa al-Wa’i* by Al-Ramahurmuzi (d. 350 H), *Ma’rifat’ Ulūm al-Hadīts* and *Al-Madkhal ila Ma’rifah al-Iklīl* by Al-Hakim Al-Naisabūri (d. 405 H), *Al-Kifāyah Fī ‘Ilm al-Riwāyah* by Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H), *Al-Ilma’ ila Ma’rifah Uṣūl al-Riwāyah wa Taqyūd al-Sama’* by Imam Al-Qaḍi ‘Iyād (d. 544 H). (Kamaruddin Amin, 2009 M ; 15)

Following that, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 H) wrote the book *‘Ulūm al-Hadīts*, adding the results of his research to the materials collected by his predecessors. Other scholars who have written books on *‘Ulūm al-Hadīts* include Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676 H), Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalāni (d. 852 H), Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H), Imam al-Suyuti (d. 911 H), and many others (Kamaruddin Amin, 2009 M ; 15-16)

Imam al-Shafi’i (d. 204 H) was one of the scholars who explicitly defined and emphasized the minimum criteria required for a narration to be considered a valid basis for religious evidence (*ḥujjah*). It is the information from someone who was either directly from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or someone close to him (i.e., a companion). In other words, for a hadith to be deemed authentic, it should have an uninterrupted chain of transmission (*isnād*) tracing back to the Prophet Muhammad. However, there are several qualifications for the validity of a narrator that Imam al-Shafi’i explained as follows:

1. The narrator must be trustworthy in their religion (*an yakūna man haddatsa bibi tsiqqatan fī dīnihil*);
2. They must be known for consistently conveying information truthfully (*ma’rūf bi al-ṣidqī fī ḥadītsihil*);
3. They must understand the content of the narration and accurately comprehend how changes in wording can affect the conveyed meanings (*‘āliman bimā yubīlu ma’āni al-ḥadīts min al-lafẓī*);
4. They should convey the report verbatim (*lafẓī*), exactly as they heard it, without adding their own words (*yakūna mimman yu’addi al-ḥadīts bi burūfīhi kama samī’a, la yuḥadditsu bibi ‘ala al-ma’na*);
5. They must possess a strong memory, especially when transmitting or receiving a narration orally, and they should preserve their written records if they transmit or receive it from written sources (*ḥafīẓan in haddatsa bibi min ḥifẓīhi, ḥafīẓan li kitābīhi in haddatsa min kitābīhi*);

6. Their narration must align with the narrations of individuals known for their high accuracy in memorization when they also transmit the same hadith (*idzā syarika ahl al-bijzī fi al-ḥadīsi waḥīd al-ḥadītsabum*); their reports should not differ from those of trustworthy individuals (*siqab*);
7. They should not attribute narrations to individuals they met but have yet to learn from (*barīyyan min an yakūna mudallisan*). All narrators should meet these conditions, from the first generation to the last. (al-Syafī'i, 1358 H/1940 ; 369-372; Al-Baghdadi, 1357 H ; 24; Kamaruddin Amin, 2009 ; 17-18)

Although *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H) and *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim (d. 261 H) are considered the most authentic hadith collections, particularly *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī, they did not provide detailed explanations of the criteria they applied to assess hadith authenticity. Subsequent scholars attempted to deduce the criteria used by Bukhārī and Muslims, and it was concluded that, in general, their criteria were not significantly different except for specific points. The common criteria shared include:

- 1) An unbroken chain of transmission from the first narrator to the last (*an yakūna al-ḥadīts muttaṣil al-isnād*);
- 2) All narrators, from the beginning to the end, must be known for their trustworthiness (*siqab*), meaning they are 'adl (pious) and *dābit* (possess a high level of memorization accuracy) (*bi naql al-siqab 'an siqab min anwalibi ila muntahābi*);
- 3) The narrated hadith must be free from defects (*'illah*) and irregularities (*syudzūdz*) (*sāliman min al-syudzūdz wa al-'illah*). According to Ibn Ṣalāḥ, if these criteria are met, a hadith is considered *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) by the majority of hadith scholars. (Al-Nawawi, 1924 ; 15).

Prominent hadith scholars like Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 H), al-Nawawi (d. 676 H), Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H), Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 H), Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911 H), and others have proposed definitions of authentic hadith (*ṣaḥīḥ* hadith). While their wording may differ, the core of their definitions represents what is believed to have been applied by al-Bukhari and Muslim. Their definitions can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Uninterrupted chain of transmission (*isnad*).
- 2) Narrators must be trustworthy (*ādil*).
- 3) All narrators must be accurate in memorization (*dābit*).
- 4) *Isnad* and *matn* (content) must be free from irregularities (*syādz*).
- 5) *Isnad* and *matn* must be free from defects (*'illah*). (Ibnu al-Ṣalāḥ al-Syahrāzuri, 1996; 10; As-Suyuti, 1966 ; 63).

All of these criteria will be critically elaborated on in the following sections:

Continuous Chain of Narration (*Ittisāl al-Sanad*)

The continuity of the chain of narration is the first step in establishing the attribution of a hadith to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). After that, the narrators who transmitted the hadith are examined. It has been explained that the continuity of narration is one of the fundamental conditions for a hadith to be considered authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*). The continuity of the chain of transmission means that all narrators in the chain, from the beginning (the source or *mukharrij*) to the end (the companion of the Prophet), have transmitted the hadith in a trustworthy manner according to the concept of “*tabammul wa ada' al-ḥadīts*.” This means that each narrator in the chain has transmitted the same hadith directly from the preceding narrator, and all the narrators are considered “*siqab*,” meaning they are 'adl and have a strong memory (*dābit*).

The method used to determine whether a narration is continuous or not involves a thorough examination of the biographies of each narrator. This research focuses on the narrators' birthplace, date of birth, and date of death. Even their attitudes and religious beliefs must be carefully evaluated. This is because such information is believed to assist critical scholars in establishing the trustworthiness (*siqab*) of the narrators and in determining the possibility or impossibility that a narrator had an intellectual relationship with their informants.

Regarding the relationships between each narrator, research on the words connecting one narrator to another becomes crucial because the words used by narrators are believed to imply the method of transmitting a hadith. The words frequently used in the process of narration include “*sami’tu*,” “*haddatsanî*,” “*haddatsanâ*,” “*akbbaranî*,” “*akbbaranâ*,” “*an*,” “*annâ*” and so on. These words have different implications, as each depicts various possible relationships between the narrator and their informant. According to the science of hadith, there are eight ways or forms of narrating hadith:

- 1) *Sama’* (hearing), where a student attends the lectures of a hadith scholar. Narration is done orally or followed by transcription (dictation) either from memory or notes in the form of books, and so on. The terminology often used for this type of narration includes “*sami’tu*,” “*haddatsanî*,” “*akbbaranâ*,” or “*anba’anâ*.”
- 2) *Qirâab* (recitation), where a student reads the hadiths they have collected to the hadith teacher. The terminology used here is “*akbbaranî*” or “*qara’tu ‘ala*.”
- 3) *Ijazab* (authorization), where a student receives permission or *ijazah* from a scholar to convey or narrate the hadiths they have collected. The terminology used in this context is “*akbbaranî*” or “*ajazanî*.”
- 4) *Munâvalab* (handing over), where a student receives a collection of hadiths and permission from the collector to disseminate its contents to others. The term used for this type of narration is “*akbbaranî*.”
- 5) *Mukâtabab* (correspondence), where a student receives written hadiths from a scholar, directly or through written communication, with or without the scholar’s permission to pass them on to others. The terminology used is “*kataba ilayya*” or “*min kitâb*.” (Kamaruddin Amin, 21)
- 6) *Ilam al-râwi* (informing the narrator), where a hadith scholar informs a student that they have received specific hadiths or books from a certain authority, without permitting the student to transmit these materials. The terminology used is “*akbbaranî*” or “*an*.”
- 7) *Wasîyah* (bequest), where a student acquires the works of a hadith scholar upon the scholar’s own will at the time of their passing. The terminology used is “*akbbaranî wasîyyatan ‘an*” or “*wasîsanî*.”
- 8) *Wijâdah* (finding), where one discovers specific hadiths in a book, possibly after the passing of a hadith scholar, without receiving them with recognized authority. The phrases used include “*wajadtû*,” “*qâla*,” “*akbvirtu*,” “*budditstu*.” (Al-Suyuti, 4-92; Al-Mutawalli, 2003 ; 86-96; Kamaruddin Amin, 2009; 22-23).

There are several steps in determining whether a sanad (chain of narrators) is continuous or not, including the following: *First*, record all narrators in the sanad that you will examine. *Second*, study the lifetimes of each narrator. *Third*, study the *ṣiḡbah tabammul wal ada’*, the wording used when receiving or transmitting hadith. *Fourth*, the relationship between the teacher and the student must be examined.

The Reliability or Trustworthiness of the Narrator (‘Adalah al-rawi)

In addition to the continuity of the transmission, the reliability of a narrator is an absolute requirement for a hadith with an unbroken chain of narrators. To be considered a reliable narrator (*siḡab*), one must first be just (*‘ādil*), meaning one must have good character. In other words, the narrator's character should be based on Islamic principles. A just narrator should avoid committing major and minor sins. (Ibnu Al-Atsir, 74)

Islamic scholars of hadith have further elaborated on the specific criteria for a just narrator. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalâni, for instance, listed five conditions: piety towards Allah, having noble character (*murûab*), being free from major sins, not engaging in religious innovations or heretical innovations in Islamic beliefs or practices (*bid‘ab*), and not being a *fasiq* (open sinner). Ibn al-Ṣalâh proposed five conditions as well, including being a Muslim, being an adult (*balîgh*), having sound judgment (*‘aqîl*), having noble character (*murûab*), and not being a *fasiq*. (Ibnu al-Ṣalâh, 1996 ; 4 ; Syuhudi Ismail, 115). Therefore, *‘adalah* is a character trait that guides a person to consistently behave righteously and prevents them from engaging in wrongdoing. (Al-‘Umari, 250). This virtuous behaviour ultimately leads a person to always tell the truth. However, the quality of being does not

guarantee the accuracy of narration and cannot prevent someone from making mistakes, as errors can occur unintentionally.

The term "Adalah" in Islamic scholarship refers to justice or righteousness. In the context of hadith (the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), a narrator (*rawi*) needs to be both "*adl*" and "*dâbit*" to be considered reliable (*siqah*). The narrator is an adult Muslim with full intellectual capacity, has never committed major sins, and rarely engages in minor sins. They must be fully aware of their responsibility in transmitting hadiths. They should have an excellent memory, and if they do not write down the hadiths to aid their memory when conveying them in writing, they must ensure the accuracy of the text. They should also have a good knowledge of linguistic precision related to the text. Both *adalah* and *dâbit* are highly necessary qualities and must be possessed by a hadith narrator; if these qualities are present, they are referred to as "*siqah*" (al-Suyuti, 108).

The definition of '*âdil*' (just) among hadith scholars varies, but they all stem from similar fundamental principles and substantive matters. According to al-Râzi, for example, the concept of '*âdil*' is defined as a spiritual strength that continually encourages one to act in piety. This means having the ability to avoid major sins, refrain from habitual minor sins, and abstain from permissible acts that may tarnish one's dignity (*muruah*), such as eating while standing, urinating in inappropriate places, or indulging excessively in jest (Endang Soetari, 1997;106)

The Competence of the Narrator in Preserving Hadiths (Dâbit al-Râwi)

The term "*dâbit*" refers to the narrator's ability to preserve hadiths through memorization or written records in a manner that allows them to transmit the hadith as it was received (Endang Soetari, 106). The narrator must possess a high degree of accuracy in their memorization (*dâbit*). To determine a narrator's accuracy level, hadith scholars employ two methods: relying on the assessments of scholars regarding specific narrators and comparing their narrations with those of others. These methods are reflected in statements attributed to earlier scholars.

For example, Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani, a young *tabi'in* (68-131 H), is reported to have said, "If you want to know the mistakes of your teacher, then you should also learn from someone else." "To ascertain authentic statements about the authenticity of hadiths, one needs to compare these scholars' words with those of other scholars" (Azami, 1992 ; 52, Kamaruddin Amin, 2009). The theoretical basis for comparing a narrator's narration with other narrators can be found in the classical hadith criticism manual, Ibn al-Salâh's *Muqaddimah*. He stated, "The accuracy of a narrator can be determined by comparing their narrations with those of well-known individuals who are trustworthy (*siqah*). If their narrations consistently match those of such individuals, even if only in content, or if their narrations commonly align with those of trustworthy narrators and rarely differ, then we can conclude that the narrator controls their narrations and is, therefore, *dâbit*. However, if their narrations frequently diverge from those of trustworthy narrators, they are unreliable, and their narrations should not be used as a basis for argument." (al-'Iraqi, 1996 ; 166).

Not Contradictory (Not Syâdz)

"Not *syâdz*" refers to the absence of contradiction or conflict in a hadith's chain of narrators (*isnad*). "*Syâdz*," on the other hand, occurs when a reliable narrator (*siqah*) in one hadith contradicts another hadith narrated by someone considered even more reliable (*siqah*) than the narrator of the first hadith (Endang Soetari, 83). According to the Shafi'i school of thought, a "*syâdz*" hadith is narrated by a reliable narrator but conflicts with hadiths narrated by individuals deemed more trustworthy than the narrator. A hadith narrated by only one trusted narrator and not supported by other narrators cannot be considered as a *syâdz* hadith. In other words, a "singular narrator" (*fard muthlaq*) does not affect the credibility of a hadith as long as a trustworthy narrator narrates it (Ibn al-Salâh, 68; al-Hakim 148; Ibnu Katsir, 56; al-Suyuti, 232).

According to this definition, the well-known hadith, "*innama al-a'mâl bi al-niyyah*" (intentions judge actions), is not considered "*syâdz*," even though a single narrator narrates it at each level, namely Yahya bin Sa'id from Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Taimi from 'Alqamah from 'Umar. This is because all these narrators are considered trustworthy (*siqah*). A hadith is considered "*syâdz*" under the following conditions: **Firstly**, all of its narrators

are trustworthy (*siqah*). **Secondly**, it has more than one narrator. **Thirdly**, its text (*matan*) and chain of narrators (*sanad*) contradict with narrations from other sources considered more trustworthy. (Syuhudi Ismail, 123). In this regard, al-Hâkim imposes stricter criteria. According to him, a “*Syâdẓ*” hadith is narrated by a single *siqah* narrator without the support of other narrators (Al-Naisabûri, 1937 H ; 119). In other words, no matter how trustworthy, a solitary narrator (*fard muthlaq*) renders a hadith to be classified as “*syâdẓ*.” Ibn al-Ṣalâh, al-Nawawi, and others share the same opinion as Shafi’i (Ṣubḥi Al-Ṣalîh, 1973 ; 196-203). If al-Hâkim’s viewpoint is followed, many hadiths considered authentic by most hadith scholars would become deemed unauthentic (Syuhudi Ismail, 124). This is because a common characteristic of the hadith literature we have is that a hadith is initially narrated by one person in the generation of the companions, then by another person in the era of the *tabi’in*, and another person in the era of the *tâbi’ al-tâbi’in*. After these generations, the hadith is then narrated extensively.

Hadith scholars indeed acknowledge the difficulty in identifying authentic hadiths (*sahîh*). This is because hadith narrators deemed “*syâdẓ*” are considered trustworthy (*siqah*) by hadith critics, and their chains of narration may appear unbroken. The problem can only be discerned after a thorough examination, such as comparing various chains of narration and the texts of related *isnâd* and *matn* hadiths. Only those trained and skilled in hadith Research Can Detect “*Syâdẓ*” Hadiths (Amin, 31).

There Is No Underlying Cause (‘Illah)

A "ma'lul" or defective hadith is a hadith that appears to be authentic at first glance, but upon meticulous examination, factors are discovered that can invalidate its authenticity. Some of these factors include:

- (1) It is declared as a *musnad* hadith when, in fact, it is *mursal*, claimed to be *marfû’* while it is *mauqûf*.
- (2) A narrator transmits a hadith from a *sheikh* (teacher) despite never having met them or attributes a hadith to a specific companion when it originates from another companion. These defects can occur in the chain of narration (*isnâd*) and the text (*matan*) (al-Suyuti, 252; Ibn al-Ṣalâh, 1996; 81-82; Ibnu Katsîr, n.d. 65).

Only those with extensive knowledge, exceptional memorization abilities, and expertise in the chain of narration (*isnâd*) and the text (*matan*) can distinguish between defective and authentic hadiths (*sahîh*). ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Mahdi (d. 194 H) even stated that identifying a ma’lul hadith requires intuition (*ilham*). (al-Suyuti, 252; Ibn al-Ṣalâh, 1996; 81-82; Ibnu Katsîr, n.d. 65). Ibn al-Madîni (d. 234 H) and al-Khaṭîb al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H) argued that a defect in the chain of narration (*isnâd*) can only be detected when the chains of certain hadiths are collected and analyzed. (al-Suyuti, 252; Ibn al-Ṣalâh, 1996; 81-82; Ibnu Katsîr, n.d. 65).

As a branch of knowledge within the field of *mustalah al-hadîth*, only a few scholars, such as Ibn al-Madîni (d. 234 H), Ibn Abi Ḥatim al-Râzi (d. 327 H), al-Khallal (d. 311 H), and Darâqutni (d. 385 H) have written books on this subject. Based on the explanations above, it can be said that it is neither safe nor responsible to judge a narrator before examining what they have transmitted. Assessing the trustworthiness (*siqah*) of a narrator based solely on the judgments of scholars without prior examination has the potential to lead to erroneous judgments. A defective hadith can be incorrectly deemed perfect or vice versa after a more careful and thorough investigation. A hadith that does not meet the abovementioned criteria cannot be considered a *sahîh* hadith and does not hold religious authority.

These are the concepts recorded in the books of *Ulum al-Hadîth* (the science of hadith) by scholars of *Sunni*, stating that a hadith is considered *sahîh* (authentic) if it meets the five criteria: the continuity of its chain of narration (*sanad*), trustworthy (*âdil*) narrators, narrators who are *dâbit*, the absence of *syâdẓ* (contradiction), and the absence of *'illah* (hidden defect or weakness).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from the explanations above, it can be understood that there are differences in the methodology of authenticating hadith between Sunni and Shia. Nevertheless, both schools agree and believe that hadith is a

source of Islamic teachings alongside the Qur'an. The difference lies in accepting hadiths as a source of Islamic teachings, influenced by differing assessments of the companions' status. Sunni considers all the companions to be just (*ādīl*), so hadiths narrated by them are accepted as a source of Islamic teachings. In contrast, Shia regards the companions' status as '*fasiq*' (sinful) and believes friendship with the Prophet does not necessarily indicate a person's righteousness and honesty. Therefore, a thorough investigation is still required to determine the position of a companion in confirming the authenticity of a hadith. Sunni does not recognize the status of the Imams as a part of hadith authenticity. In contrast, Shia establishes the Imams, considered infallible, as one of the conditions for hadith authenticity. The continuity of the chain of narration up to the Imam is an essential condition that must be fulfilled, at the very least, acknowledged or accepted. In Shia traditions, hadith holds a very high and esteemed position. The Imams emphasize the role of hadith in explaining and interpreting the verses of the Quran. They instruct their followers to understand the true meaning and significance of hadith, memorize and safeguard them, and transmit them to future generations.

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