introduction to the development of hadith literature

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part i: introduction, purpose and definition

introduction

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the fundamental source of doctrinall teachings in islam is based on the infallible revelation (wahy) of allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala (swt), revealed to the last messenger and seal of the prophets, muhammad ibn `abd allah ibn abd al muttalib, salla allahu `alayhi wa sallam (s), as codified in islam's sacred text, al-qur'an al karim. for simplicity, the qur'an, can be thought of as the law and the constitution, which sets out the fundamental blueprint and the theological foundation of the faith (islam) and the muslim way of life (din).

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the second source of islamic tenetss and ordinances is based on the prophetic tradition of allah's messenger (s). the prophetic tradition (hadith and sunnah) embodies the entire pattern of liffe of messenger muhammad (s) and includes every detail concerning his utterances, his actions, his conduct and his attitudes whether explicit or implicit as recorded by the early hadith scholars and researchers (muhaddithin).

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the hadith and sunnah can be thought of as interpretatioon, explanation and demonstration of the qur'anic injunctions by allah's messenger (s) and as supplementary regulations that augment qur'anic edicts. the bulk of all extant hadith records relates to the prophetic period during which allah's messenger (s) was commissioned as rasul allah in 610 c.e. (common era) through tthe end of his

ordained mission in 632 c.e., though many traditions relate to the period prior to his prophethood.

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in summary, the combined laws for aall of islam as codified in the glorious qur'an

and the accepted prophetic tradition are generally referred to as the shari`ah. the shari`ah also includes 'consensus of juristtic opinions' (al ijma`) of the learned `ulama' and 'creative exercise of independent legal judgment' (al ijtihad) by legal scholars.

purpose

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the purpose of this paper is to preesent a brief outline on the development of hadith literature and to show its indispensable position and integrality in islamic teachings and practices on the muslim way of life. it should be noted that the science of hadith compilation (`ulum al hadith) is a major field of study in the islamic educational curriculum. this paper does not purport to present an in depth study on this subject but merely intends to summarize the essential elements in the progression and development of the recognized hadith literature.

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definition of the term hadith

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the word hadith (plural ahadith) has several meanings, such as, 'news', 'report' or 'narration', as used in various contexts in the sacred qur'an. it has been defined as 'communication, story, and conversation: religious or secular, historical or recent' [azami]. in the narrow technical sense, "a hadith" refers to a particular report (verbal or written tradition) about what allah's messenger (s) said or did, or his reaction or silence to something said or done by others.

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in a broader sense, "the hadith" can be described as the total body of reports (speeches,
discourses, sermons, statements), deeds (actions, practices, personal behavior) and tacit approval of allah's messenger (s). this term also includes statements made by the messenger's companions about him.

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definition of the term sunnah

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the term sunnah (plural sunan) is used several times in the glorious qur'an, generally in the sense meaning a 'mode of life' or 'standard of conduct' [azami]. the sunnah in common usage refers to the actions and practices of allah's messenger (s) associated with his prophetic mission as emulated and narrated by his companions (sahabas) and the successors (tabi`un). the sequences of actions

for ritual cleanliness (wudu'-ghusl), and the procedures in canonical prayers (salah)
and the pilgrimage to makka (hajj), as taught and practiced by allah's messenger (s), are examples of sunnah. most scholars include the messenger's (s) personal ways and habits, such as, the manner of his eating, sleeping and walking as sunnah [makeen].

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in hadith literature, the terms hadith and sunnah have also been used interchangeably by hadith commentators, each term incorporating, both, the messenger's 'sayings' and his 'practices'. in the interest of simplicity, we will disregard any technical difference and also use both terms synonymously.

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note: it should be noted that the term 'companions' (sahabas) refers to contemporaries of allah's messenger (s); that is, disciples who actually met him and who believed in his divine mission. the term 'successors' (tabi`un) refers to second- generation followers who were disciples of the messenger's companions, but were not contemporaries of the prophet himself (s).

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note: readers are advised to recite appropriate "words of praise/greetings" whenever the names of allah (swt) and the prophet (s) are mentioned.

broad categories of the prophetic tradition

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the literature embodying hadith and sunnah has generally been categorized into three primary groupings by the early traditionists (muhaddithin), according to most hadith commentators.

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these are:

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(1) the body of sayings (speeches, sermons, discourses and statements) of the allah's messenger (s) containing prescriptions for all muslims. in technical terms, this is referred to as al sunnah al qawliyyah. these utterances are considered &"inspired speech" though they are not in the same class of divine revelations (wahy) as contained in the glorious qur'an.

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(2) the body of deeds, actions, and practices which allah's messenger (s) taught his companions to do and which have been performed by the early generation muslims ever since. in technical terms, this is referred to as al sunnah al fi`liyyah.

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(3) the body of ahadith reporting that allah's messenger (s) had approved or disapproved, commended or condemned certain types of conduct. this group also

includes the messenger's tacit approval on matters, which occurred either in his presence or elsewhere about which he had come to know. in technical terms, this is referred to as al sunnah al taqririyyah.

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there is also another category of rreports which have been collected by compilers and which have been treated as the messenger's sunnah. these relate to statements made by his companions about him, such as his physical features (sifat);
human characteristics; personal ways; or events about his life, for example, his birth, marriage, or emigration to madina.

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in summary, these various categoriees of reports (words, practices, approval and disapproval) on the life of allah's messenger (s) form what is generally defined by hadith scholars as al sunnah al tashri`iyyah, that is, that which either have a legal value or which provide guidance to the muslim community.

part ii: historical background

preservation of the qur'anic text in brief

oral and written communication: the historical records of seventh century arabia show that oral communication (based on memory) was a primary mode of transmitting literature, history, culture, social customs and local tradition from one generation to the next. the art of writing was known but not everyone had mastered this skill. the messenger himself (s) did not read nor write (according
to most authorities), and so, he orally dictated allah's divine messages (received

from angel jibra`il) to his appointed scribes who wrote down verbatim the revelations dictated to them by the messenger (s). at the same time, many of the sahabas memorized the qur'anic revelation as taught to them by the messenger (s). the qur'anic manuscript was thus being preserved in two forms, oral and written.

collection of the qur'anic manuscript: one year after the messenger's death, the qur'anic manuscript was finally collected and assembled under two covers (mushaf) during the reign of the first rightly-guided (rashidun) caliph, abu bakr, radiya allahu `anhu (r). two decades later (653 c.e.), the third rashidun caliph, `uthman

ibn `affan (r) commissioned the reproduction of several copies of the qur'an (based
on the mushaf assembled and preserved under caliph abu bakr (r), then in the custody of the prophet's widow hafsa bint `umar (r), to be distributed to the leading centers of the existing islamic commonwealth in order to assure uniformity and standardization of the qur'anic text. the sacred qur'an in use today is based on the original `uthmani edition [denffer].

>

allah's promise to protect the sacred qur'an: the wider circulation of the qur'an in book form coupled with its increased memorization by scores of thousands of the early muslims and succeeding generations and its constant recital in ritual prayers and liturgical services cemented its authenticity as the final divine scripture. this reality was not unexpected since allah (swt) promised to protect and preserve the sacred book intact as noted in the following verses of the

glorious qur'an:

>

� we have, without doubt, sent down the message; and we assuredly shall preserve it (from corruption). [al hijr/15:9]

>

� and indeed it is a book of exalted power. no falsehood can approach from before or behind it: it is sent down by one, full of wisdom, worthy of all praise. [fussilat/41:41-42]

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� . . . we ourself shall see to its collection and recital. when we read it, follow its words attentively; we shall ourself explain its meaning. [al qiyamah/75:16-18]

prohibition on writing down hadith

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in the early period of the messengeer's mission (during islam's infancy), many companions maintained small private collections of the prophet's other speech; that is, speech other than direct divine revelation (wahy). this practice by the companions was discouraged, and it was eventually forbidden by allah's messenger (s) during the makkan period. moreover, in some cases, those companions who might have kept written records for personal use were asked to destroy them [al faruqi].

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the primary reason for the prohibittion on writing down the messenger's other speech was obvious. the prophet (s) did not want his companions to mix up, confuse or call into question the revelations of allah (swt) with those of his own messages and discourses so as to compromise the purity of the qur'anic text. hence, anything that would cast doubt on the integrity of the divine message was forbidden especially during the first half of the messenger's mission [al faruqi].

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note: it is well known that the qur'anic text was progressively revealed over a period of twenty-three (23) years (610 to 632 c.e.). this period spans the entire length of the messenger's (s) mission. in fact, according to qur'anic exegetes, the last divine revelation was received by the messenger (s) nine days before his death in 632 [denffer].

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lifting of prohibition on writing down hadith

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after the messenger's emigration (<hijrah) from makkah to yathrib (later known as madina al nabiyy: city of the prophet) in 622 c.e., the prophet's (s) message began to solidify and islam grew firm and strong. this was especially true in

madina, the first islamic city-state, with the allah's messenger (s) as the temporal and spiritual leader).

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[note: the islamic year (hijrah) came into existence with the messenger's migration to madina in july 622 c.e., but the actual calendar was introduced in the reign of the caliph `umar.]

>

as islam began to spread throughoutt the hijaz, the prohibition on writing down hadith was reported to have been lifted by the messenger (s). however, some of the prophet's companions were still hesitant to commit themselves to writing down hadith records for the same reason that they were originally reluctant to assemble the qur'anic manuscript in book form simply because allah's messenger (s)

had not explicitly instructed them to do so [`abdul-rauf].

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existence of written records

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historical evidence shows that towaard the second half of the messenger's mission a wide variety of written materials and other records of the prophet's discourses, statements and legal rulings was already in existence [azami]. in fact, a great many volumes of the prophetic tradition, which were in written, form survived intact. these include the covenant (charter) of madina, the first written constitution (dictated by the messenger himself (s)) of the first islamic state. the covenant of madina predated the british magna carta by several hundred years. other important documents, such as, local agreements, diplomatic correspondences to heads of neighboring states, and terms of treaties, etc. are also extant today [hamidullah].

reasons for the hadith movement

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by the middle of the first century a.h. (after the hijrah), a few decades after the messenger's death, there existed a vital need for islam's orthodoxy to research, collect and classify the authentic traditions and practices of the messenger (s) in order to provide legal and religious guidance to the growing muslim nation. this need became imperative especially after the end of the regimes of the khulafa' al rashidun (the four rightly-guided caliphs) in 661 c.e. the successor islamic governments became more political, divisive and sectarian, and they departed from governing in accordance with the shari`ah.

>

thus, the hadith movement emerged ffor many compelling reasons, including the following:

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❷ messenger muhammad (s), the final aauthority on secular and spiritual matters, was no longer around to clarify, adjudicate or resolve questions and disputes.

>

� the ever-increasing converts of thee islamic commonwealth needed the correct guidance on the true islamic way of life based on the exemplary model of the messenger himself (s).

>

� from the middle to the latter half of the first century, most of the messenger's

companions who had direct and first hand knowledge of the prophetic tradition were themselves dying out.

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� corrupt political leaders and partiisan theological parties began to exploit the existing hadith and sunnah in order to promote their own sectarian views especially after the reigns of the four rashidun caliphs.

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� some leaders fabricated hadith to eenhance and justify their own false political position. many overzealous teachers (some with good intention) made up ahadith to advance moral and religious teachings in the name of islam. also, heretics and atheists (zindiqs) under the guise of scholarship falsely attributed sayings to allah's messenger (s) with the sole intention of undermining islam.

>

finally, the collection of the propphetic tradition by hadith scholars can be justified on the basis of the statements of allah (swt), as noted in the glorious qur'an:

>

� you have indeed in the messenger of allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in allah and the final day and remember allah much. [al ahzab/33:21]

� so take what the messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you. [al hashr/59:7]

>

� he who obeys the messenger obeys allah. [al nisa'/4:80]

� for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure). [al a`raf/7:157]

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the `ulama' thus had the responsibility of refuting false and fabricated traditions propagated by heretics and unscrupulous political and religious leaders. they also had the task of collecting, appraising and classifying the sound and trustworthy traditions. this important work, which took several generations to complete, was formidable but was performed in earnest and with

great care by dedicated men (and women) of powerful faith and indomitable spirit, outside the governing political authority of the day.

part iii: stages of hadith development

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as mentioned before, hadith collecttions began on a small scale during the messenger's prophethood and accelerated tremendously a century after his death. by the second and third century, the hadith movement was moving at full speed in its important task of compiling and publishing the authentic traditions. it has been stated that by the end of the second century there existed one million or more ahadith in circulation [al faruqi].

>

the chronology of classic hadith liiterature can be divided into many stages according to its historical development. the following is a brief summary of the growth of the hadith movement with reference to some of the standard texts compiled by the early traditionists between the first and third century a.h.

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note: the history of the hadith movement shows that the early hadith scholars (muhaddithin)
who undertook the difficult task of compiling hadith and sunnah were not commissioned or funded by any islamic government at any time during the early islamic period. in fact, the researchers who undertook this formidable task were simple men of strong faith who did their research voluntarily.

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the sahifah compilation (first century a.h.)

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the earliest stage in the developmeent of hadith literature has been described as the sahifah type [`abdul-rauf]. sahifah (plural suhuf) literally means 'sheet' or 'part of a writing'. the word suhuf also refers to "sheets of revealed text" relating to the scriptures of previous prophets.

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in our context, suhuf refers to a small book or pamphlet in which a relatively small number (few scores) of ahadith were written by some companions. this rudimentary collection, based on the memory of the compiler, developed by the second half of the first century a.h. it had no specific academic purpose than its use as a private source of reference for the individual compiler. moreover, it was put together in no logical order, and it was not divided into chapters or subchapters, nor was it classified by subject matter [`abdul-rauf]. hence, jurists found little use for this rudimentary collection.

>

among the well-known collections off the sahifah class is al-sadiqah, "the truthful one," attributed to the prophet's companion, `abd allah bin `amr (died 65 a.h.). another noted work of this type is al-sahihah, "the authentic one," compiled by hammam ibn munabbih, (died 131 a.h.). this compiler was a successor

who related his hadith on the authority of abu hurayrah (r). this collection is
the earliest extant work on hadith literature sstill available today [hamidullah].

the musannaf compilation (second century a.h.)

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the need for a compilation with a ssystematic arrangement (chapter and subject)
that facilitated legal decisions became paramount. this was especially evident
since the sahifah type of hadith was inadequate as a manual that enhanced legal
rulings. and so, by the middle of the second century a.h., the next type of
hadith emerged. this second stage known as musannaf (literally, 'compiled
together') was put together in an orderly and classified manner. the ahadith of
this type were divided into chapters according to their subject matter,
generally based on legal themes [`abdul-rauf].

>

in the musannaf class of hadith, the compiler narrated the hadith text (matn)
through a chain of narrators (isnad) going back to the prophet; but he also
included statements and opinions attributed to companions, successors, and other
leading jurists. the compiler, in many cases, also included his own comments.
these additional textual materials made legal decisions easier than the sahifah
type. moreover, each chapter of the musannaf was devoted to a special theme,
primarily of a legal nature [doi].

>

the main criticism leveled against the musannaf compilation was that it focused
esssentially on legal matters, thus subordinating the study of the prophetic
tradition as a general source of guidance its own right in deference to legal
demands and preference [`abdul-rauf]. in addition, the subject matter of the
musannaf traditions was limited since it did not cover all aspects of the muslim
life but focused mainly on legal themes.

>

among the noted collections of thiss class are:

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� al-majmu` of imam zayd ibn `ali (died 122 a.h.)

� al-muwatta' of imam malik ibn anas (94-179 a.h.)

� al-musannaf of imam `abd al-razzak al-san`ani (died 211 a.h.)

al-majmu` of imam zayd ibn `ali: this compiler is the founder of the zaydi madhhab

(school of islamic law). his al majmu` is also called musnad since all its
ahadith are narratedd (traced) through one single isnad (chain of transmission),
that is, his own father, `ali ibn al husayn, on the authority of imam al husayn
on the authority imam `ali ibn abu talib [`abdul-rauf].

>

al-muwatta' of imam malik ibn anas (94-179 a.h.)

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imam malik ibn anas was a powerful and formidable second century jurist. his
most famous compilation: al muwatta' (literally 'the smooth way'), was the most
dominant work of the musannaf type. traditionists regard the muwatta' as the
first systematic hadith mannual of its kind which laid the foundation for later
development of hadith science and research and a system of law based partly on
the prophetic tradition [doi]. it is not purely a book on hadith. it contains
ahadith of the prophet and legal opinions of the companions, successors and
later authorities.

>

the muwatta', however, was not as comprehensive as the other sahih compilations
which were to appear about 100 years later. it did not cover all subjects and
all aspects of muslim life, and it contains only the traditions, which came
through the people of hijaz [muhammad `ali]. at the same time, voluminous
commentaries were produced on it, and because of this, some writers regard it as
next to the sahih of al bukhari [azami]. the muwatta' remains a powerful source
of legal reference in hadith science and criticism. imam malik is one of the
four recognized sunni imams and the founder of the maliki school of islamic law.

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the musnad compilation (second - fourth century a.h.)

the third stage of hadith developmeent, the musnad hadith, emerged because the>
musannaf type was incomplete and not comprehensive enough as noted before. the
word musnad (plural masanid) is derived from the word sanad meaning authority.
towards the end of the second century, the musnad class of traditions became the
focus of the hadith scholars who continued their quest to compile the 'sound'
and 'trustworthy' ahadith, but this time without the added commentaries and
opinions inherent in the musannaf class.

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primary features of the musnad

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the compilers of the musnad collections discontinued the method of arranging
ahadith by legal themes. instead, they classified traditions under the 'names of
companions' to whom the ahadiths were traced. the musnad compilations were
divided into chapters whose headings were identified by the name of a particular
companion, such as, "ahadith of abu bakr," "ahadith of `ali ibn abu talib," or
"ahadith
of abu hurayrah" meaning "ahadith reported on the authority of abu bakr" or
"ahadith
reported on the authority of `ali ibn abu talib," and so on. some compilation in
this category also carried such heading as "al musnad abu bakr" or "al musnad
abu hurayrah," and so on [`abdul-rauf].

>

since the primary objective of the< musnad compilers was to collect trustwortthy
ahadith of allah's messenger (s), these researchers had to establish strict
criteria for classifying and grading the ahadith, which were collected. hence,

they took great pains to exclude those ahadith that failed to meet the strict standards for acceptability, and, as a result, they rejected those that were obviously false or of spurious and doubtful quality.

>

ahadith in the musnad class include those that were graded as 'sound' (sahih), 'good'
(hasan), and 'weak' (da`if). certain types of 'weak' ahadith were included in these collections due to their value in such areas as morals and religious guidance. if the character of the narrators (isnad) was not suspect or questionable, the 'weak' hadith was not rejected outright as explained later in this paper [muhammad `ali].

>

the primary criticism leveled againnst the musnad collection is, as a source of guiddance and legal reference, it is difficult to use. these compilations are not arranged by subject matter. rather, the musnad compilers titled traditions on the basis of individual companions, that is, the hadiths of a particular companion are shown in one place, in a separate chapter. in addition, some books are arranged alphabetically, and others according to geographic regions [azami].

>

the collection of ahadith in the musnad class continued throughout the thiird and fourth century. this stage of the hadith movement was responsible for producing prolific and massive volumes of hadith literature compiled by scores of hadith scholars.

>

a few of the well-known musnad collections are:

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� al musnad of imam ahmad ibn hanbal (164 - 241 a.h.)

� al musnad of abu dawud al-tayalisi (died 203 a.h.) containing 2,766 ahadith

� al musnad of abu bakr al-humaydi of makka (died 219 a.h.) containing 1,300 ahadith.

al musnad of imam ahmad ibn hanbal (164 - 241 a.h.)

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of the compilations in the musnad class, the best known is al musnad of imam ahmad ibn hanbal, the renowned jurist and theologian of baghdad. it was reported that ibn hanbal examined 750,000 ahadith from which he selected 40,000 as trustworthy, 10,000 of which are repetitions. [al faruqi].

>

imam ibn hanbal was a very devout aand staunch muslim who challenged the corrupt religious authority of his time and suffered terribly at the hands of "wrongly-guided"
caliphs (al mu`tasim and al wathiq) for his refusal to abandon his orthodox

belief in favor of the sectarian mu`tazilite's creed. for this, ibn hanbal was
imprisoned and tortured by unscrupulous inquisitors, but the indomitable imam
remained steadfast, refusing to bow to his tormentors. later when the wayward
caliphs were swept away from power, ibn hanbal refused to take revenge on his
former persecutors, strictly on the basis of faith and belief [azami]. imam ibn
hanbal is one of the four recognized sunni imams and the founder of the hanbali
school of islamic law.

>

some of the other famous musnads compiled by other noted hadith writers of that
famous period have been included by islam's orthodoxy (`ulama') among the jami`
classification explained below.

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the jami` compilation (third century a.h.)

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as described above, the musnad compilations contained ahadith all of which were
not of the 'authentic' grade. thus, at the dawn of the third century, hadith
researchers continued to focus their attention and efforts exclusively on the
'authentic'
class of traditions. the hadith movement also recognized the value and
importance of the 'authentic' hadith especially in jurisprudential matters, and
it received tremendous support through the powerful advocacy of the celebrated
imam al shafi`i who defended the position that the 'authentic' hadith was a
valid source of law even in a case where a hadith is related through a single
chain (isnad) [abdul-rauf].

>

this led to the birth of al jami` (literally, 'one that gathers together' or
'comprehensive')
compilation in the early third century. the jami` class of hadith has been
regarded as the final stage in the historical development of classic hadith
literature [abdul-rauf]. the founder of the jami` movement is unanimously
recognizedd as imam al bukhari. the jami` collection arranges ahadith according
to subject matter with the ahadith themselves being more critical in tone than
the musnad type. standards for hadith acceptability of the jami` type were much
more stringent than the musnad type, both with regard to the quality of the text
and the reliability of the narrators [muhammad `ali].

>

the manuals of jami` collections classify reports under various subjects
including faith, liturgy, legal, social, ethical, political, military, qur'anic
(exegesis), and biographic, among others. the variety of the subject matter
covered in the jami` type further augmented the study of hadith science and
criticism. finally, the systematic arrangement by subject matter allows for easy
reference, not only for jurists and judges, but also for students, laymen, and
researchers.

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the reliable six compilations (sihah sittah)

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six canonized hadith texts are univversally recognized by islam's orthodoxy as the most authentic books on prophetic hadith, and these are generally known as the sihah sittah - the reliable six collections.

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the six canonical hadith texts are:

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� al sahih of muhammad ibn isma`il al bukhari (194-256 a.h.)

� (see appendix i for summary of al bbukhari and his al sahih)

� al sahih of imam muslim ibn hajjaj (202-261 a.h.)

� al sunan of abu dawud (202-275 a.h.)

� al jami` al sunan of al tirmidhi (died 279 a.h.)

� al sunan of ibn majah (209-283 a.h.)

� al sunan of al nasa'i (215-303 a.h.)

among the authentic six, the two boooks of imam al bukhari and imam muslim (known as al sahihayn - the reliable two) are considered the most authoritative. some commentators recognized the deficiencies in the musnad of ibn majah as being less critical in tone than the other five, due mainly to the inclusion of 'weak' hadiths in his collection. and they suggested that ibn majah's musnad be excluded from the 'group of six' and replaced by the muwatta' of imam malik and the musnad of ahmad ibn hanbal, thus forming a new 'group of seven' [al faruqi].

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part iv: the components of a hadith

each hadith is made up of two majorr components: the text (matn) and the chain of transmission (isnad), as explained below.

text (matn):

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the text or content (matn) of a hadith refers to the message, statement, action or decision of the messenger (s) reported in the hadith. the early traditionists stipulated that for a hadith to be 'trustworthy' or 'valid' its text must be consistent with the meaning of the qur'an, be in agreement with accepted facts, and congruent with the texts of other ahadith, the reliability of which have already been accepted and agreed upon. thus, a hadith whose text did not meet these established criteria was generally deemed doubtful and hence was rejected.

>

transmission (isnad):

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the chain of narrators mentioned inn a hadith report, starting from his own teaccher and going back to the companion(s), who related from or about the messenger (s), is known as the isnad. hadith compilers developed speciffic rules governing acceptance of the narrators transmitting ahadith. for example, the narrator mentions the name of his teacher from whom he learned the hadith, then the name of the teacher of his teacher, and so on, until he eventually reaches the final authority (allah's messenger (s)) in the chain. authenticity of ahadith largely depends upon the continuity (non-interruption) of the isnad and the veracity and reliability of the narrators [doi].

>

hadith scholars also developed a seet terms which they used to identify the method through which a disciple learned each hadith from his teacher. for example, they used the term haddathana ('told us') to indicate the idea that the teacher read the hadith unto his disciples, and the term akhbarana ('informed us')

to indicate that a disciple read the material back to the teacher who listened approvingly before giving concurrence [`abdul-rauf].

>

example of a hadith:

>

� haddathana `ubayd allah ibn musa, saying: hanzalah ibn abu sufyan related to us on the authority of `ikrimah ibn khalid on the authority of ibn `umar who said, the messenger of god, peace and blessings be upon him said:

� "islam is built on five (founddations): witnessing that there is no god but allah, and that muhammad is the messenger of allah; (regular) observance of (the mandatory) prayers; payment of alms; pilgrimage and fasting (the month of) ramadan." [al sahih of al bukhari, vol. i, 5-6]

>

hadith researchers also paid criticcal attention to the science of biographies and criticism (asma' al rijal) of the hadith narrators in each generation. and so, narrators of hadith (isnad) were subjected to severe tests and were graded according to varying degrees of reliability and veracity depending upon their character, religious reputation and orientation, depth of knowledge, and the soundness and accuracy of their memories [doi].

>

thus each hadith was graded accordiing to the quality of the text and reliability of its narrators. the authentic hadith was one related by an uninterrupted chain of narrators, all of whom are known for their piety, integrity, and sound memory. the fewer the narrators in the chain of transmission (isnad), the stronger the hadith, as the chance of misrepresentation was less likely. conversely, the more common the text (matn), as reported by various chains of narrators, the stronger the hadith, as the chance of it being false or doubtful was less likely.

part v: classification of hadith

>

hadiths are generally categorized iinto three basic divisions each of which is
also subdivided into multiple grades of sub-groups according to the quality of
the text, veracity and reliability of the narrators, and continuity in the isnad.
we will not present the multitude of hadith sub groupings as these can be found
in any standard book on hadith.

>

the primary divisions of hadith are as follows:

>

� the 'sound' hadith (al sahih al hadith)

� the 'good' hadith (al hasan al hadith)

� the 'weak' hadith (al da`if al hadith)

the 'sound' hadith

al sahih al hadith (the 'sound' hadith) is a term used to describe any hadith
the veracity of which is absolutely beyond question. hence, these ahadith are
classified as 'sound' and 'trustworthy', meaning that they are of the highest
level of authenticity and reliability. all of the core (basic and primary)
ahadith reported by imam al bukhari and imam muslim are universally accepted by
islam's orthodoxy as sahih. as mentioned before, the works of the other four
recognized compilers, abu dawud, al tirmidhi, al nasa'i and ibn majah have also
been accorded distinguished status behind the 'reliable two' by the `ulama'.

the 'good' hadith

>

al hasan al hadith (the 'good' hadith) is a term used to describe any hadith
whose text (matn) is absolutely true but whose narrators (isnad) do not pass the
test of complete reliability and accuracy based on the stringent criteria
established by the hadith compilers. the ahadith in this division are a degree
less in quality than that of the sahih class and are thus considered as 'good'
or 'fair' or 'moderate' in hadith literature.

the 'weak' hadith

>

al da`if al hadith (the 'weak' hadith) is a term used to describe any hadith
whose truthfulness in both text (matn) and transmission (isnad) is not
absolutely beyond question; that is, its authenticity is not proven, and hence,
it is considered 'weak.' however, it is important to note that not all ahadith
classified as 'weak' are rejected. as mentioned before, imam abu dawud (of the
'group
of six') included da`if traditions in his musnad when he could find nothing else
to explain questions relating to 'morals' or 'religious devotion'. many of the
musnad collections also contain 'weak' ahadith [muhammad `ali].

>

there are as many varieties of weakk (da`if) ahadith as there are kinds of vitiiating characteristics affecting them. some hadith writers have classified 'weak'
hadith in multiple subgroups, from as little as twenty-five, to as many as seventy five. [al faruqi]

>

a hadith could be weak for many reaasons, one of which is attributable to the character of its narrators. a hadith could also be weak because one of its narrators is mastur; that is, he is not so well-known for his piety and reliability, but nothing is known to the compiler that would impugn the narrator's

character. or, a narrator may have less than perfect memory, but his veracity was never questioned, or his sympathy with or orientation toward heretical and sectarian beliefs was never clearly established [`abdul-rauf].

>

the weakness in a hadith could alsoo be due to the interruption in the isnad; that is, a break (missing narratorr) in the chain of transmission. since there was nothing to suggest that a missing narrator was less than truthful or reliable, such weak hadiths were included in musnad collections for reasons other than for legal necessity; that is, for their value in areas of moral guidance and religious liturgy. for example, those ahadith which exhort people to good, or illustrate principles of religious devotion, or answer moral questions are examples of da`if traditions which were included in some collections [muhammad `ali].

>

the 'sacred' hadith (al hadith al qudsi)

>

a unique category of discourses andd statements of allah's messenger (s) outside the scope of the qur'anic revelation includes the phrase 'almighty allah says so and so . . .' these traditions are called al hadith al qudsi, meaning, 'sacred' or 'divine' hadiths. in this special group of traditions, authority (in the chain of transmission) is ascribed directly to allah (swt) and not to the messenger (s) as is the case in the majority of the 'regular' hadiths. in al hadith al qudsi, the meaning (of the hadith) is from allah (swt) but the wording is that of the messenger (s). in qur'anic revelations, both the meaning and wording are from allah (swt) [ibrahim and johnson-davies].

>

islamic theologians unanimously agrree that all utterances and actions of the rasul allah are 'divinely inspired'. al hadith al qudsi is thus a special case of divinely-inspired traditions which ranks next to the qur'anic revelation.

>

this position can be supported fromm the following verses of the sacred qur'an:

>

 nor does he speak of his own desire; it is naught but revelation that is

revealed. [najm/53:3-4]

>

◊ and we sent down unto thee the message that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them. [al nahl/16:44]

>

◊ allah did confer a great favor on the believers when he sent among them a messenger from among themselves rehearsing unto them signs of allah, purifying them, and instructing them in scripture and wisdom while, before that, they had been in manifest error. [al `imran/3:164]

>

◊ and allah has revealed to thee the book and the wisdom and taught thee what thou knewest not. [al nisa'/4:113]

>

at the same time, it should be noteed that al hadith al qudsi must also meet the same critical tests, as is the case with 'regular' hadiths. this means that the quality and authenticity of the text (matn) and reliability and veracity of the narrators (isnad) must be attested to for them to be acceptable. hence, al hadith al qudsi are also be classified as 'sound', 'good' or 'weak'.

part vi: relevance and indispensability of hadith

>

it is unanimously agreed that the pprophetic tradition complements the sacred qur'an in all matters (secular and spiritual) as the secondary source of islamic law and jurisprudence, as explained before. the prophetic tradition serves as the prescribed model and standard to be followed by the muslim community for all time. without for the authorized sunnah, muslims have no other legitimate source to provide them with the specific procedures for ritual worship and religious services and a framework to build institutions of faith and to establish civilizational values; morever, the sunnah serves as a valid source to legislate in matters on which the qur'an is silent.

>

thus, the value of the sunnah is to help all muslims fulfill the requirements of their faith in liturgical, legal, ethical, social, economic, political and international affairs. for, without it, muslims would not have been able to carry out the primary obligations imposed by islam (`ibadah), such as, ritual prayer (salah), payment of the welfare tax (zakah), fasting during ramadan (siyam)

and performance of the sacred pilgrimage (hajj), among other required acts of devotion. finally, the sunnah leads devoted muslims to the sourcce of the divine revelation and provide them access to the inner, spiritual dimension of the qur'anic
message.

>

hadith and sunnah: basis in the qur'an

>

that the hadith and sunnah is indispensable in islam cannot be overstated simply because the prophetic tradition has its basis in the qur'an itself. allah's messenger (s) was not only charged with conveying the divine message; he had to act upon it himself and then explain it to the people who were to follow his example as commanded by allah (swt).

>

as mentioned before, the glorious qqur'an contains dozens of verses explaining the symbiotic position of the messenger (s) in relation to the last revealed scripture, some of which are:

� you have indeed in the messenger of allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in allah and the final day and remember allah much. [al ahzab/33:21]

>

� you who believe, obey allah and his rasul and turn not away from him when you hear (him speak). [al anfal/8:20]

>

� you who believe, respond to allah and his rasul when he calls you to that which gives you life. [al anfal/8:24]

>

� if anyone contends with the messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, we shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in hell - what an evil refuge! [al nisa'/4:115]

various capacities of the messenger (s)

>

the sacred qur'an is also very cleaar on the position of the messenger (s) and in the various capacities in which he must be obeyed. he is the one who explains the book; he is a law-giver; he is a judge; and he is a ruler; as explained in the following verses:

>

the messenger (s) as explainer of the book:

>

� allah did confer a great favor on the believers when he sent among them a messenger from among themselves rehearsing unto them signs of allah, purifying them, and instructing them in scripture and wisdom while, before that, they had been in manifest error. [al `imran/3:164]

>

� and we sent down unto thee the message that thou mayest explain clearly to men

what is sent for them. [al nahl/16:44]

>

the messenger (s) as judge:

>

❂ but no, by thy lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make thee judge
in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against thy
decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. [al nisa'/4:65]

>

❂ it is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided
by allah and his messenger to have any option about their decision. if any one
disobeys allah and his messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path. [al
ahzab/33:36]

>

the messenger (s) as lawgiver:

>

❂ for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows
them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and
impure). he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are
upon them. [al a`raf/7:157]

>

❂ so take what the messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you.
[al hashr/59:7]

the messenger (s) as ruler:

>

❂ ye who believe! obey allah and obey the messenger, and those charged with
authority among you. if ye differ in anything among yourselves refer it to allah
and his messenger, if you believe in allah and the last day. [al nisa'/4:59]

>

❂ he who obeys the messenger obeys allah. [al nisa'/4:80]

>

a careful reading of these verses lleaves no doubt about the importance and
indispensability of the prophetic tradition as a source of law and authentic
guidance to the islamic ummah. having said this, however, it is important to
distinguish between the qur'anic text and the contents of the prophetic hadith.
they are not equal, for they are not one and the same.

vii qur'an and hadith are not equal

today, many muslims of the wahhabi, salafi and deobandi orientation have been

preaching a message that the glorious qur'an and the prophetic hadith are
comparable and of equal status. some have even gone so far as to advance the
notion that the qur'an and hadith are indivisible and that allah promised to
protect both equally. of course, such a proposition is wholly erroneous and
factually unacceptable, on the basis of clear evidence, that is, the method of
transmission, the recording, and compilation of these two texts.

>

it is generally agreed that the qurr'an (speech of allah) was transmitted from
allah to the messenger via archangel gabriel. this is the solid, unbroken chain
in the transmission of the qur'anic messages. allah imprinted the revealed
verses in the prophet's memory; the prophet then taught the verses to his
companions, who also memorized the verses. shortly thereafter the prophet's
noted scribes/secretaries recorded the revealed verses on a variety of written
materials. this was the standardized procedure of the revealed qur'an throughout
the 23 year-period of its revelation. there was no deviation or aberration to
this standard. thus, there was almost a simultaneous record of the qur'anic
message: by memory and in writing; from allah to the prophet; from the prophet
to his companions; and finally, from the prophet to his scribes.

>

the transmission, collection and coompilation of the prophetic hadith did not
follow this divine methodology; rather, it was more a "search and find" approach,
as explained earlier. pious and dedicated men of letters visited the lands of
islam, searching for people with prophetic reports, attributed to the prophet.
these reports were then scrutinized, evaluated and graded for validity and
authenticity into various categories, in order to weed out forgeries, fraudulent
and questionable traditions, as described herein. the contents of the qur'an
were never graded, assessed, or evaluated by man or jinn, since it is the speech
of allah. this fact alone repudiates the notion of divine protection of the
prophetic/sacred hadith.

>

the actual arrangement (order of suurahs and verses) of the qur'an took place
during the prophet's life time, as instructed by him through divine inspiration;
moreover, the entire qur'anic text was memorized by him and many of his close
companions; in addition, the qur'an, though not collected under two covers,
existed in written form at the time of prophet's death. this was not the case
with the hadith. the earliest accepted hadith manual (al muwatta` of imam malik)
came 150 years after the prophet's death, and the most recognized hadith
collection, al sahih al bukhari, emerged some 250 years after the prophet's
demise.

>

hence, there can be no issue of equuality or comparability between the text of
the noble qur'an and the contents of hadith books. the qur'an is the divine
speech of allah, and the hadith represents statements and reports attributed to
the prophet hundreds of years after his death, in most instances.

>

in summary, the qur'an came about bby direct revelation from allah to prophet,
while the hadith evolved and emerged several hundred years after the prophet's
death.

>

conclusion

>

finally, i conclude this presentatiion with an excellent synopsis, which clearly articulates the messenger's (s) noble status in islam and the universal impact his traditions have towards the true understanding of the last revealed message and the overall muslim way of life:

>

the importance of hadith is increassed for the muslims by the fact that the prophet muhammad not only taught, but also took the opportunity of putting his teachings into practice in all the important affairs of life. he lived for twenty-three years after his appointment as the messenger of god. he endowed his community with a religion, which he scrupulously practiced himself. he founded a state, which he administered as supreme head, maintaining internal peace and order, heading armies for external defense, judging and deciding the litigations of his subjects, punishing the criminals, and legislating in all walks of life. he married and left a model of family life. another important fact is that he did not declare himself to be above the ordinary law, which he imposed on others. his practice was therefore not mere private conduct, but a detailed interpretation and application of his teachings. [introduction to islam, hamidullah, paragraph 70, page 23]

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appendix i: imam al bukhari: author of the famous sahih

leader of the al jami` hadith

>

birth and early years of this celebrated scholar: imam al bukhari was born
muhammad ibn isma`il ibn ibrahim ibn al mughirah al ja`fai, of persian parentage,
on the 13th shawwal, 194 a.h. in bukhara (now part of the republic of uzbekistan
in the former soviet central asia). his father isma`il was himself a hadith
scholar who studied under the renowned masters of that time (including malik bin
anas). al bukhari began studying hadith when he was less than ten years of age,

and by the time he was sixteen he had memorized many books by noted hadith scholars. he was thus widely celebrated for his accurate and formidable memory [azami].

>

he first visited the hijaz on pilgrrimage with his mother and brother when he was sixteen. after performing hajj, he remained in the hijaz for six years to continue his studies under the learned and reputed scholars of makka and madina. within two years he recorded legal judgments and statements traceable to companions and successors. he was also deeply interested in the biographies of the men who narrated hadith. and so, he began a massive undertaking by compiling an encyclopedic biographical collection known as al tarikh al kabir, the large history work, devoted to the noted men of hadith. this book was a highly regarded collection, and it was emulated by many later hadith scholars. [abdul-rauf]

the most famous hadith compilation: not long afterwards, imam al bukhari started working on his magnus opus, the famous sahih compilation. he traveled widely in the region, many times to the leading centers of islamic learning including basrah, kufah, baghdad, syria, egypt, and various persian cities investigating hadith sources, researching evidence and confirming reports. in compiling his sahih, imam al bukhari adopted stringent rules in appraising hadith reports in terms of both hadith text and transmission. he followed a scrupulous, rigorous and systematic procedure before he eventually accepted a hadith in his manuscript.

he did not accept a hadith unless aall its narrators were deemed reliable and truthful. he had to be presented with 'evidence' that 'a disciple' had actually met and studied under 'the teacher' (on whose authority the hadith was narrated) before he included such hadiths in his manuscript. the mere fact that two narrators were contemporaries did not satisfy imam al bukhari. note: a less stringent test was adopted my imam muslim for accepting hadith reports in his sahih [muhammad `ali].

>

al bukhari examined and appraised oover 300,000 ahadith before accepting 7,397 as 'sound' reports (2,762 without repetition) in his sahih compilation. these ahadith form the core of the al bukari's book. the narrators (isnad) in this collection are men of integrity, reliability and strong memories; and the contents of the reports conform to the qur'an and with the text of other ahadith, which have already been accepted.

>

as a researcher, imam al bukhari waas most critical and meticulous. as a hadith scholar, he towers over all others through his acumen and his depth of critical analysis. he heads the more important chapters of his sahih with a statement from qur'an showing that the prophetic tradition is only a supplement and explanation of the qur'anic revelation, and as such, secondary, in the canonical ordinances of islam.

>

after the hadith manuscript was finnally completed (having been revised three times), imam bukhari submitted the sahih to three of his teachers who were themselves formidable authorities in hadith literature. they are: `ali ibn

madini (d. 234), yahya ibn ma`in (d. 233) and imam ahmad ibn hanbal (d. 241 a.h.).

these mighty scholars admired and approved the sahih manuscript with four
exceptions. these four hadiths were later confirmed as 'satisfactory' by later
hadith scholars. the important point to note here is that imam al bukhari's
classic work, al sahih, was completed, reviewed, and apprroved by renowned
contemporary jurists before his death in 256 a.h. [`abdul-rauf].

complete title of the sahih:

>

al jami` al musnad al sahih al mukhtasar min hadith rasul allah, salla allahu
`alayhi
wa sallam, wa sunanihi wa ayyamih, which translates as:

the authentic comprehensive and abridged records of the words, practices and
biography of the messenger of allah, peace and blessings be upon him, which are
traced or attributed to the prophet himself. the meanings of some of these terms
are:

al jami`: the comprehensive one

>

al musnad: includes only hadith traced to the prophet himself

al sahih: the reliable sound book

>

al mukhtasar: the abridged because ahadith were selected from a larger
collection of some 600,000 ahadith.

>

the sahih is universally recognized as the most authoritative publication of all
the works in hadith literature. islam's orthodoxy regards it as the most sacred
book after the glorious qur'an itself. finallly, imam al bukhari also holds the
pre-eminent honor as the leader having the unquestioned distinction of being
first in the al jami` compilation, followed by his disciple, imam muslim.

>

>

appendix ii: the second most authentic book

al sahih of imam al bukhari

>

general comments: imam al bukhari and his method

>

imam al bukhari was born muhammad iibn isma`il ibn ibrahim ibn al mughirah of
persian parentage (13th shawwal, 194 a.h.) in bukhara (now part of the republic

of uzbekistan in soviet central asia). he first visited the hijaz on pilgrimage with his mother and brother when he was sixteen. after performing hajj, he remained behind in the hijaz for six years to study under the learned and reputed scholars of makka and madina. within two years he recorded legal judgments and statements traceable to companions and successors.

>

beginning of his scholarly undertaking:

>

not long afterwards, this young schholar started the massive undertaking of compiling an encyclopedic biography known as al tarikh al kabir, the large history work, devoted to men of hadith. this book was a highly regarded collection, which was emulated by many later scholars. after this, he started work on his magnus opus, the famous sahih compilation. in collecting his sahih, imam al bukhari established stringent rules for accepting hadith reports for both text and transmission. he was also scrupulously rigorous and systematic in his compilation as noted earlier. he traveled widely in the region, many times to the leading centers of islamic learning including basrah, kufah, baghdad, syria, egypt, and various persian cities to trace hadith sources and confirm reports.

>

imam al bukhari as researcher:

>

after he completed his renowned sahih, he submitted it to three of his tteachers who were themselves formidable authorities in hadith literature. they are: `ali ibn madini (d. 234), yahya ibn ma`in (d. 233) and imam ahmad ibn hanbal (d. 241 a.h.). these mighty scholars admired and approved the sahih manuscript with four exceptions. tthese four hadiths were later confirmed as 'satisfactory' by later hadith scholars. the important point to note here is that imam al bukhari's classic work, al sahih, was completed, reviewed, and approved by renowned contemporary jurists before his death in 256 a.h. [`abdul-rauf].

imam al bukhari also holds the pre--eminent honor as the leader having the unquestioned distinction of being first in the al jami` compilation, followed by his disciiple, imam muslim. he heads the more important chapters with a statement from qur'an showing that prophetic tradition is only a supplement and explanation of the qur'anic revelation, and as such, secondary, in the canonical ordinances of islam.

>

imam al bukhari was most critical aas a compiler and a researcher. as a hadith scholar, he towers over all others through his acumen and his depth of critical analysis. he did not accept any report unless all its narrators were scrupulously reliable and until there was 'evidence' that 'a disciple' had actually met and studied under 'the teacher' on whose authority he related the hadith. (a less stringent test was adopted my imam muslim.) the mere fact that two narrators were contemporaries did not satisfy imam al bukhari.

>

for example, some compilers used thhe term mu`an`an referring to an isnad in which the preposition `an, "on the authority of" is used to denote a transmission from one narrator to another. because this term is not explicit in describing the method in which the hadith was received, imam al bukhari stipulated that there must be evidence that the two contemporaries must have actually met and known each other well enough in order to accept the isnad as reliable.

>

finally, the sahih of imam al bukhari is universally recognized as the most authoritative of all the works in hadith literature. islam's orthodoxy regards it as the most sacred book after the glorious qur'an itself. the core ahadith in this compilation are exclusively 'sound' the isnad of which are continuous, and as suuch, do not suffer from any defects common to the weak (da`if) category. the sahih consists of 7,397 ahadith, an amount that is reduced to 2,762 (by almost two-thirds) when discounted for repetitions. the narrators of these hadiths are men of integrity, reliability and strong memories; and the content conforms to the qur'an and with the text of other ahadith, which have already been accepted.

>

the renowned sahih compilation

>

title of book:

>

the complete title of the sahih as recorded by imam al bukhari is:

>

al jami` al musnad al sahih al mukhtasar min hadith rasul allah, salla allahu `alayhi
wa sallam, wa sunanihi wa ayyamih which translates as:

the authentic comprehensive and abridged records of the words, practices and biography of the messenger of allah, peace and blessings be upon him, which are traced or attributed to the prophet himself.

>

some of these terms can be explaineed as follows:

>

al jami`: the comprehensive one

>

al musnad: only hadiths traced to the prophet himself are included

al sahih: the reliable sound book

>

al mukhtasar: the abridged because ahadith were selected from a larger
collection of some 600,000 ahadith.

features of the text:

imam al bukhari divided his sahih into chapters known as kitab, "book." each
chapter was in turn divided into sub-chapters, each called bab. there are 97
kitabs (books) and 4,908 babs in the sahih. the total number of ahadith is 7,397,
almost two-thirds of which are repetitions.

>

each sub-chapter introduces a long introductory discussion or a short title. in
most cases, a sub-chapter has expanded titles denoted by al bukhari as al
tarajim (plural of tarjamah, 'a long title.'). there are also titles of some sub-
chapters,
bab, without a hadith under the title. at times, one may find a simple title,
(bab)
separating ahadith of the same theme.

>

a layman may sometimes have difficuulty in fully understanding imam al bukhari's
arrangement. for example, one may encounter some ahadith in a chapter that
appear to be irrelevant to its title. in fact, many of al bukhari's titles are
so elaborate and expanded that a reader could possibly get confused.

>

the problem of apparent irrelevancee of some hadiths to the title of a chapter
or sub-chapter in which they are cited is based on the fact that imam al bukhari
adopted the procedure of repeating a hadith for having the slightest
relationship between its contents or even its isnad to the theme of the title as
a wayy of providing varieties of isnads for the same hadith.

categories of hadith in the sahih

>

imam al bukhari's al sahih comprises four categories of ahadith outlined as
follows:

first category:

>

the first category comprises the primary and basic ahadith found in this
compilation, and it meets all the critical tests and stringent standards for
acceptability imposed by the imam for authenticity of text and reliability of
transmission. these ahadith are introduced by the full isnads, each beginning
with such terms as haddathana ('told us'), haddathani ('told me'), akhbarana
('informed
us'), and akhbarani ('informed me'). this first group forms the core of the book
and, as stated before, consists of 7,397 ahadith, an amount that is reduced to
2,762
(by almost two-thirds) when discounted for repetitions.

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second category:

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the second category of ahadith founnd in the sahih is those comprising the "titlles
of chapters" or "subchapters." these ahadith are presented to substantiate a
moral judgment, theological position or legal interpretation. some ahadith in
this group may or may not be introduced by isnads. some in this group may even
be as 'authentic' as those in the first category, while others may be of a lower
grade. this group is called ta`aliq (plural of ta`liq) and comprises 1,685
ahadith.

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third category:

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the third category of ahadith foundd in the sahih are those which are presented
afteer the "primary" or "original" hadith is given. this group of ahadith has
been added to support the reliability of the "original" hadith. they often
contain 'similar' or 'identical' words as found in the "original" hadith. as
noted before, hadith scholars (muhaddithin) are agreed that the more "common"
the text of a hadith the more reliable the hadith. this third group is called
shawahid (plural of shahid, 'witness').

last category:

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the last category of ahadith found in the sahih is almost the same as the third.
bboth of the final two groups are not introduced by isnads. this last subsidiary
group of ahadith, however, was included by imam al bukhari to further
corroborate the soundness and reliability of the "original" hadith. this last
category does not contain 'similar' words as the "original" hadith though they
agree in meaning of the "original." the ahadith in this group are called mutaba`at

(plural of mutabi`, 'a follower' or supporter').

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