



EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

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Abstract:

The science of Hadith is of fundamental importance in Islam, as it is a means of interpreting the Holy Quran and preserving the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In the Quran, Allah Almighty has linked obedience to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with obedience to Himself, which makes the Shariah status of Hadith clear. Similarly, several Quranic verses have commanded following the commands and actions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). To verify the authenticity of Hadith, the science of Hadith has developed principles such as jarh and tadil, the study of isnads, and the analysis of the text of narrations, which made it possible to distinguish between authentic and unauthentic narrations of Hadith. Thus, the science of Hadith not only protects the religion but also ensures the correct understanding of Sharia.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

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Introduction

Allah Almighty established the system of divine revelation for the guidance of humanity. In this regard, He chose certain sacred individuals, known as Prophets and Messengers. These individuals were granted the guarantee of infallibility by Allah, meaning their every word and action was free from the influence of Satan or base desires. Allah states:

وما ينطق عن الهوى ان هو الا وحى يوحى

"And he does not speak from his own inclination. It is nothing but a revelation revealed." ¹

Their truthfulness and authenticity are established through definitive evidence and testimony, so that creation may affirm the truth with full conviction and faith. As a result of their infallibility and divine guarantee, it becomes obligatory for all human beings to obey them, as stated in the Qur'an:

وما ارسلنا من رسول الا ليطيع باذن الله-

"And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's permission."²

It is a well-established fact that the divine messages revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) include both the Qur'an and other revelations. These additional teachings were conveyed to the Ummah (Muslim community). In the terminology of the Qur'an, these teachings are referred to as "Al-Hikmah" (wisdom).

These points clarify that the foundation of the religion rests on the person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the ultimate source of guidance is the teachings and instructions of prophethood—whether they are mentioned in the Qur'an or not.

Many foundational and significant rulings of Islamic law were communicated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through divine inspiration (non-Qur'anic revelation) before they were later affirmed by Qur'anic verses. These verses validated and supported the rulings given by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some examples of this process are provided below.

1. After the affirmation of monotheism and prophethood, the most significant pillar of Islam is Salah (prayer). Before the event of Mi'raj (ascension), two prayers were obligatory—one in the morning and one in the evening. After the event of Isra (night journey), the five daily prayers were made obligatory. However, at that time, the Qur'an did not provide detailed timings for these prayers. The Ummah learned about this obligation from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and acted upon it. The structure of Salah, as demonstrated by the Prophet through his words and actions, begins with "Allahu Akbar" and ends with "Assalamu Alaikum", including standing, recitation, bowing (ruku), prostration (sujood), sitting (jalsa), and standing up again (qiyam). Sometimes the number of units (rak'ahs) is two, three, or four, depending on the time and prayer. While the Qur'an contains references to these details, the comprehensive structure was learned from the sayings and actions of the Prophet, not directly from the Qur'an or by awaiting its mention.
2. Regarding purification (taharah) and ablution (wudu), the Prophet himself provided guidance, and the Ummah acted on it. Approximately 18 years later, the verse of wudu was revealed in Surah Al-Ma'idah. Until then, the Ummah had been practicing purification as instructed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
3. When the order for Jihad against the Banu Nadir was given, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructed the cutting down of some of their palm trees as a strategic measure for war. The Jews objected to this act, prompting the revelation of a Qur'anic verse confirming the permissibility of this action by Allah's command:

ما قطعتم من لينة أو تركتموها قائمة على أصولها فبإذن الله-

"Whatever you cut down of the palm trees, or left standing on their trunks, it was by the permission of Allah³."

These examples make it evident that the guidance for the Ummah comes from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the ultimate source of instruction. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), who were the first and direct addressees of the Qur'an, recognized the dual role of the Prophet as both an infallible Messenger and an authoritative guide in all matters. Thus, they considered the commands of both the Qur'an and the Hadith equally binding and followed them without distinction.

By reflecting on the Prophetic traditions (Ahadith), one realizes that a significant portion elaborates and clarifies Qur'anic commandments. For instance, the Qur'an commands "Establish prayer" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:43), and the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated its practical method through his words and actions, saying: "Pray as you have seen me praying." (Bukhari). The extensive system of Islamic law,

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

encompassing beliefs, worship, ethics, social conduct, traditions, etiquette, warfare, peace, politics, and economics, contains many rulings not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught these rulings to the Ummah. It is clear, therefore, that the detailed framework of Islam emerges from the combination of the Qur'an and the noble sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet

It is impossible to separate the Qur'an and Hadith from one another, nor is it conceivable to have faith in the Qur'an while rejecting the Hadith. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes that salvation lies in following the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), while disobedience to him leads to destruction and ruin. The Qur'an warns of severe consequences for opposing the Prophet (peace be upon him), presenting his life as a model and example for the Ummah. It considers the explanation, elaboration, and clarification of the Qur'an as a responsibility assigned to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ultimately, the well-being and success of both this world and the Hereafter depend on adherence to the Prophet's guidance. Moreover, Allah's love and acceptance hinge on following the Prophet, as stated:

قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحببكم الله ويغفر لكم ذنوبكم

"Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, so that Allah will love you and forgive your sins."⁴

The Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not merely an explanation and interpretation of the Qur'an or its elaboration; it also holds a significant role in forming Islamic law. It establishes ethical and legal rulings, defines boundaries, and sets the standards for permissible (halal) and forbidden (haram) actions. Just like the Qur'an, it serves as a definitive source of Islamic law. A core belief in Islam is that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not merely a messenger or intermediary but also a guide, teacher, mentor, leader, lawgiver, and spiritual authority. The same applies to the Hadith; without acknowledging its authority, claims of faith and Islam lack credibility. Denying the Hadith renders one ineligible for Allah's rewards. This status has been granted to the Prophet by Allah Himself. Therefore, the Qur'an addresses the Muslims, saying:

مَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

"Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, refrain from it."⁵

In numerous matters of explanation, social and economic issues, and moral and ethical affairs, the Qur'an provides principles and guidelines without detailing them. It states commands but does not specify restrictions or conditions. It explains the spirit of rulings but does not delve into structural details. These aspects are left to the understanding of the Prophet, who is divinely guided. Whatever rulings the Prophet clarifies, decides, or completes in this regard are as binding as the definitive laws of the Qur'an. Thus, Allah commands:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not invalidate your deeds."⁶

During the Prophet's lifetime, his commands were obligatory, and after his passing, his Sunnah (tradition) continues to be obligatory. Miqdad ibn Ma'dikarib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

The Qur'an and Prophetic Hadith

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned of a time when people might attempt to separate the Qur'an from the Hadith. He said:

"أَلَا هَلْ عَسَى رَجُلٌ يَبْلُغُهُ الْحَدِيثُ عَنِّي وَهُوَ مُتَكَيِّ عَلَى أَرِيكَتِهِ، فَيَقُولُ: بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهِ حَلَالًا اسْتَخْلَلْنَاهُ. وَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهِ حَرَامًا حَرَّمْنَاهُ، وَإِنَّ مَا حَرَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ كَمَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ -"

"Beware! A man will soon receive a report of my sayings while reclining on his couch, and he will say: 'Between us and you is the Book of Allah. Whatever we find in it that is lawful, we will consider lawful, and whatever we find in it that is unlawful, we will consider unlawful.' Beware! Whatever the Messenger of Allah has forbidden is like what Allah has forbidden."⁷

In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized the dual sources of guidance, stating:

تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ، لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُم بِهِمَا: كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ -

"I have left among you two matters; you will never go astray as long as you hold fast to them: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet." (Muwatta Malik, narrated by Imam Malik as "Balaghani" and Ibn Abd al-Barr through other chains)

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

The Importance of Hadith in Islam

Allah declares:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.⁸"

Thus, no religion other than Islam is acceptable for salvation. Allah commands:

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ

"Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and do not follow other protectors besides Him⁹."

And He further warns:

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ -

"Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers¹⁰."

The Role of the Prophet in Explaining the Qur'an

Allah entrusted the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the responsibility of delivering the Qur'an and clarifying its meanings. The Qur'an states:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

"And We revealed to you [O Muhammad] the message so that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them.¹¹"

This verse includes two key aspects:

1. Transmission of the Qur'an: Conveying the exact text of the Qur'an, with its wording and arrangement, to the Ummah as revealed by Allah.

2. Explanation of the Qur'an: Providing the meanings and interpretations of its verses so that Muslims can understand and act upon the divine guidance.

The Hadith complements the Qur'an by detailing its rulings, clarifying its ambiguities, and addressing situations not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. Together, the Qur'an and Hadith form the comprehensive framework of Islamic teachings, ensuring that Muslims have a complete and clear path to follow.

The Explanation of the Qur'an by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)

In religious matters, the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are always in accordance with divine guidance, as Allah confirms:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ . إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ-

"And he (the Prophet) does not speak from [his own] inclination. It is nothing but a revelation revealed¹²."

Thus, Allah also declares:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

"Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah." ¹³

This establishes the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in religious rulings. When disputes arise, Muslims are commanded to refer to Allah and His Messenger:

فَإِنْ تَرَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

"If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day."¹⁴

This makes it clear that Islam is the submission to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him).

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

Divine Revelation Beyond the Qur'an

Prophets receive revelation not only in the form of scriptures but also through other forms of divine communication. For instance, dreams are considered a form of revelation for prophets. A notable example is the vision of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him):

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُا إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَآبَتِ أَفْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ .
فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ . وَنَدَيْنَاهُ أَنِ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ . قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"When he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, 'O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think.' He said, 'O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.' And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead, We called to him, 'O Abraham, you have fulfilled the vision.' Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good.¹⁵"

Dreams as Revelation for the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also received revelation through dreams. For example, he once dreamt of entering the Sacred Mosque (Kaaba) and performing tawaf (circumambulation). This dream, being a form of revelation, brought great joy to the Companions. Based on this, 1,400 of them set out with the Prophet (peace be upon him) for pilgrimage. However, they were stopped at Hudaibiyyah, where a treaty was concluded, delaying their entry into Makkah until the following year. Concerning this, Allah revealed:

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ ؕ آمِنِينَ

"Allah has made the vision [He showed] to His Messenger a reality in truth: You will surely enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, in security.¹⁶"

This incident confirms that the Prophet (peace be upon him) also received revelation through dreams.

Commands Beyond the Qur'an

In addition to the Qur'an, divine instructions were communicated to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through non-Qur'anic revelation, known as "wahy khafi" (hidden revelation). An example of

this is the initial Qibla (direction of prayer), which was towards Jerusalem. For 14 years, Muslims prayed in this direction, though this command is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. Allah refers to this in the Qur'an:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلِيًّا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعَ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ

"We did not make the Qibla which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels.¹⁷"

This highlights that the command to face Jerusalem was given through divine but non-scriptural revelation. Such non-Qur'anic revelations form part of the Sunnah and are essential for understanding and practicing Islam.

The combination of the Qur'an and Sunnah ensures a complete and practical framework for Islamic guidance, emphasizing the need to follow both for spiritual success.

Can the Qur'an Be Understood Without the Sunnah?

It is not possible to fully comprehend the Qur'an without the Sunnah. Allah has repeatedly emphasized the establishment of prayer (Salah) after faith, yet without the Sunnah, even fulfilling this command is not feasible. Consider the following verses:

حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى

"Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer.¹⁸"

What is meant by the "middle prayer"? Without knowing the number of daily prayers, it is impossible to identify the middle one. The number of prayers is not explicitly stated in the Qur'an; this information was conveyed through non-Qur'anic revelation (Sunnah). Similarly, Allah commands:

وَإِذَا ضَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ

"And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer.¹⁹"

The verse does not specify how much the prayer should be shortened. Understanding this is only possible if the original length of the prayer is known, which is clarified through the Sunnah. Another example is:

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمْنْتُمْ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

"If you fear [an enemy], pray on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not [previously] know." ²⁰This verse suggests a specific method of prayer that may be modified in times of danger. However, the exact method and prescribed timings are not detailed in the Qur'an but were taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Importance of Friday Prayer

Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ

"O you who have believed, when [the call to] prayer is made on the day of Jumu'ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade²¹."

This highlights the special status of Friday prayer compared to other daily prayers. Yet, the Qur'an does not specify its timing, the method of calling to prayer, or the number of its units (rak'ahs). Such details are found in the Sunnah, demonstrating that understanding prayer comprehensively is impossible without referring to the Prophetic traditions.

Could the Companions Misinterpret the Qur'an Without the Sunnah?

Even the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) required the Hadith to understand certain Qur'anic verses. For example, the verse:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

"Those who have believed and not mixed their belief with injustice – it is they who will have security, and they are [rightly] guided."²²

Many Companions understood "injustice" to include all sins, which caused them concern, prompting them to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Who among us has not committed sins alongside faith?" The Prophet clarified, "The 'injustice' mentioned here does not refer to general sins but to shirk (associating partners with Allah)." He further cited the verse:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Indeed, shirk (association) is a great injustice."²³

Can the Sunnah Specify General Rulings in the Qur'an?

Yes, the Sunnah can provide specificity to general rulings in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an states:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا

"As to the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands"²⁴.

This verse mentions theft without qualification, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) specified, "A thief's hand is to be cut off for stealing a quarter of a dinar or more." (Sahih Bukhari)

The Qur'an and Sunnah are inseparable. The Qur'an provides general principles, while the Sunnah explains, details, and contextualizes them. Together, they form the complete guidance necessary for understanding and practicing Islam.

What Is the Status of the Methodology of the Sahabah?

The Sahabah (companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him) were directly taught Islam by the Prophet himself. They received a direct and unmediated education in the principles and teachings of Islam, making them exemplary and ideal Muslims. The Sahabah transmitted the sayings and actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the Tabi'un (the next generation), and the Muhaddithun (hadith scholars) compiled them into collections. These early generations lived in the golden age of Islam, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to as the best of times.

Rejecting the methodology of the Sahabah, Tabi'un, and early scholars (Salaf al-Salih) is characteristic of those who wish to interpret the Qur'an subjectively. Allah warns against such deviation:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to what he has chosen and burn him in Hell. And what an evil destination²⁵!"

The "way of the believers" here refers to the collective understanding of Islam by the first generations. This methodology did not include practices such as seeking intercession from deceased saints, retreating at graves, or prioritizing personal opinions over the commands of the Prophet.

The Sahabah's View of the Sunnah

The Sahabah regarded the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as divinely inspired and binding. A well-known example illustrates this:

A woman approached Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked, "Have you declared that Allah curses women who practice tattooing or get tattoos?" He replied, "Yes." She objected, saying she had read the Qur'an from beginning to end and found no such statement. Ibn Mas'ud responded, "If you had truly read it, you would have found it. Have you not read the verse:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

'And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it.'²⁶

The woman admitted she had read it, and Ibn Mas'ud explained, "I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) pronounce this curse."

Importance of Following the Qur'an and Sunnah

Muslims are obligated to follow both the Qur'an and the Sunnah without making distinctions between the two. The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized this in his farewell sermon:

" يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي قَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ مَا إِنِ اخَذْتُمْ بِهِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي "

"I am leaving you two things; as long as you hold firmly to them, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah²⁷."

The Prophet took special care to ensure the preservation of his Sunnah. When teaching a ruling, he would often repeat it three times to ensure clarity. He also encouraged companions to pass on his teachings to subsequent generations. For example, when a delegation from Abdul Qais visited him, he instructed them to “memorize what I have taught you and convey it to those who are not present.”

Preservation of the Sunnah

The Sunnah has been meticulously preserved through writing and memorization. Some examples include:

1. The Book of Charity: Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet dictated a document on charity laws, which was preserved by the family of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).
2. The Written Record of Abu Bakr: When Abu Bakr sent Anas ibn Malik to Yemen, he provided him with a written document outlining the laws of Zakat.
3. Records of Abdullah ibn Amr: Abdullah ibn Amr documented numerous sayings of the Prophet in a collection called "Al-Sahifah al-Sadiqah."

Many such writings were later compiled by scholars like Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim, who employed strict criteria to distinguish authentic traditions from fabricated ones.

Addressing Allegations About Hadith Compilation

Some critics question why Imam Bukhari selected only 7,275 hadith from an estimated 600,000. This large number represents chains of narration (isnad) rather than individual hadith. For example, if a single hadith is transmitted by five companions and each companion narrates it to five students, this creates multiple chains. In the terminology of the Muhaddithun, each chain is counted as a separate hadith.

Imam Bukhari carefully chose authentic chains and included them in his collection. His efforts, along with those of other scholars, ensured that fabricated narrations could not infiltrate the corpus of Islamic knowledge.

Conclusion

The methodology of the Sahabah and the early generations is an indispensable part of Islam. Their understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah forms the foundation of Islamic jurisprudence. Rejecting their

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HADITH: QURANIC INJUNCTIONS, PROPHETIC AUTHORITY, AND THE SCIENCE OF VALIDATION

approach or separating the Qur'an from the Sunnah leads to misguidance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized:

فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ عَصُوا عَلَيَّ بِالْأَوَاجِدِ

“Hold firmly to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs after me. Bite onto it with your molars.”²⁸

This legacy underscores the importance of adhering to the teachings of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the methodology of the Sahabah for the preservation of true Islamic knowledge.

References

- ¹ (Surah An-Najm, 53:3-4)
- ² (Surah An-Nisa, 4:64)
- ³ (Surah Al-Hashr, 59:5)
- ⁴ (Surah Al-Imran, 3:31)
- ⁵ (Surah Al-Hashr, 59:7)
- ⁶ (Surah Muhammad, 47:33)
- ⁷ (Sunan Abi Dawood) 4604
- ⁸ (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:19)
- ⁹ (Surah Al-A'raf, 7:3)
- ¹⁰ (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:85)
- ¹¹ (Surah An-Nahl, 16:44)
- ¹² (Surah An-Najm, 53:3-4)
- ¹³ (Surah An-Nisa, 4:80)
- ¹⁴ (Surah An-Nisa, 4:59)
- ¹⁵ (Surah As-Saffat, 37:102-105)
- ¹⁶ (Surah Al-Fath, 48:27)
- ¹⁷ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:143)
- ¹⁸ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:238)
- ¹⁹ (Surah An-Nisa, 4:101)
- ²⁰ (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:239)
- ²¹ (Surah Al-Jumu'ah, 62:9)
- ²² (Surah Al-An'am, 6:82)
- ²³ (Surah Luqman, 31:13)
- ²⁴ (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:38)
- ²⁵ (Surah An-Nisa, 4:115)
- ²⁶ (Surah Al-Hashr, 59:7)
- ²⁷ (Muwatta Malik)
- ²⁸ Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, 43