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A-level New Curriculum IRE

SENIOR Five term 3

TOPIC 5/5: Classification of Hadith

Competency: The learner evaluates and explains the different classes of Hadith based on their authenticity and authority to discuss the implications of Hadith classification and explain how each classification affects the Hadith's role in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), theology, and practice.

Objective 1: Analyse the different classes of Hadith to understand their distinctions and significance in Islamic jurisprudence and theology.

The **classification of Hadith** is central to Islamic scholarship because it determines which reports can be used in **jurisprudence (fiqh)** and **theology ('aqidah)**. Scholars developed a meticulous system to distinguish authentic traditions from weak or fabricated ones as follows:

1. Ṣaḥīḥ (Authentic) Hadith

- **Criteria:**
 - Continuous chain (*isnād*) without breaks.
 - Narrators are trustworthy (*'adl*) and have strong memory (*dabt*).
 - Text (*matn*) is free from contradictions or hidden defects (*'illah*).
- **Significance:**
 - Considered the highest level of authenticity.
 - Used as primary evidence in Islamic law and theology.
 - Examples: Hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*.

2. Ḥasan (Good) Hadith

- **Criteria:**
 - Similar to *ṣaḥīḥ*, but narrators may have slightly weaker memory.
 - Still reliable and free from major defects.

- **Significance:**
 - Accepted in jurisprudence and moral teachings.
 - Often used when *ṣaḥīḥ* Hadith are not available.

3. **Ḍaʿīf (Weak) Hadith**

- **Criteria:**
 - Chain may be broken or contain unreliable narrators.
 - Text may have inconsistencies.
- **Significance:**
 - Generally not used in law or theology.
 - Sometimes cited for virtues (*faḍāʾil al-aʿmāl*) if not fabricated, but with caution.

4. **Mawḍūʿ (Fabricated) Hadith**

- **Criteria:**
 - Proven false, often invented for political, sectarian, or personal motives.
 - Contradicts Qurʾan, authentic Hadith, or historical reality.
- **Significance:**
 - Completely rejected.
 - Scholars worked tirelessly to expose fabrications to protect the Sunnah.

5. **Mutawātir vs. Āḥād**

- **Mutawātir (Mass-transmitted):**
 - Narrated by so many independent chains that fabrication is impossible.
 - Provides certainty (*yaqīn*).
 - Used in theology (e.g., belief in the Prophet’s miracles).
- **Āḥād (Single-chain reports):**
 - Narrated by fewer chains, not reaching mutawātir level.
 - Provides probable knowledge (*ẓann*).
 - Used in jurisprudence but debated in theology.

6. **Significance in Jurisprudence and Theology**

- **Jurisprudence (Fiqh):**
 - *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Ḥasan* Hadith form the backbone of Islamic law.
 - *Ḍaʿīf* Hadith are avoided in legal rulings.
- **Theology ('Aqīdah):**
 - Only *Mutawātir* Hadith are accepted for core beliefs (e.g., resurrection, attributes of God).
 - *Āḥād* Hadith may be used for supplementary matters but not fundamentals.
- **Ethics and Spirituality:**
 - Even weaker Hadith may be cautiously used to encourage good deeds, provided they don't contradict stronger evidence.

Summary

- **Ṣaḥīḥ:** Strongest, fully reliable.
- **Ḥasan:** Good, acceptable.
- **Ḍaʿīf:** Weak, limited use.
- **Mawḍūʿ:** Fabricated, rejected.
- **Mutawātir vs. Āḥād:** Distinguish certainty vs. probability in transmission.

Objective 2: Examine the unique attributes of Hadith Al-Qudsi and Hadith Nabawi, highlighting their significance in Islamic theology, morality, and practice.

1. Hadith al-Qudsi (Sacred Hadith)

Unique Attributes

- **Source:** The meaning comes directly from Allah, but the wording is from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- **Nature:** Not part of the Qur'an, yet carries divine inspiration.
- **Content:** Often deals with spiritual, moral, and ethical themes—such as mercy, forgiveness, and divine love.
- **Transmission:** Narrated by the Prophet as words revealed to him, but not recited in prayer like Qur'an.

Significance

- **Theology:** Offers insight into God’s attributes (mercy, justice, forgiveness) beyond what is explicitly in the Qur’an.
- **Morality:** Encourages believers to cultivate virtues like compassion, humility, and sincerity.
- **Practice:** Inspires spiritual devotion, especially in supplications and reflection.

Example: The Prophet ﷺ said that Allah said: *“My mercy prevails over My wrath.”* (Hadith Qudsi, Sahih al-Bukhari).

- **Lesson:** Emphasizes divine mercy as central to faith and ethical conduct.

2. Hadith Nabawi (Prophetic Hadith)

Unique Attributes

- **Source:** Both meaning and wording are from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- **Nature:** Reflects the Prophet’s teachings, actions, approvals, and daily guidance.
- **Content:** Covers law, worship, ethics, social relations, and practical aspects of life.
- **Transmission:** Recorded through isnād (chains of narrators), forming the Sunnah.

Significance

- **Theology:** Clarifies Qur’anic teachings and provides details on belief (e.g., articles of faith).
- **Morality:** Models ethical conduct—truthfulness, justice, kindness, patience.
- **Practice:** Provides practical instructions for prayer, fasting, zakat, and daily living.

Example: The Prophet ﷺ said: *“The best among you are those who have the best manners and character.”* (Sahih al-Bukhari).

- **Lesson:** Ethical refinement is a core part of faith.

3. Comparison of Attributes

Attribute	Hadith al-Qudsi	Hadith Nabawi
Source	Meaning from Allah, wording from Prophet	Meaning and wording from Prophet
Relation to Qur'an	Not part of Qur'an, but divine inspiration	Explains and complements Qur'an
Themes	Spiritual, moral, divine attributes	Law, worship, ethics, daily guidance
Usage	Reflection, supplication, spirituality	Jurisprudence, theology, daily practice

4. Integrated Significance

- **Theology:** Hadith al-Qudsi deepens understanding of God's mercy and justice; Hadith Nabawi clarifies beliefs and practices.
- **Morality:** Both guide ethical conduct—Qudsi through divine values, Nabawi through the Prophet's example.
- **Practice:** Nabawi Hadith shapes rituals and law, while Qudsi Hadith inspires spiritual devotion and inner reflection.

Summary:

- **Hadith al-Qudsi:** Divine meaning, Prophetic wording—emphasizes God's mercy, justice, and spirituality.
- **Hadith Nabawi:** Prophetic meaning and wording—provides detailed guidance on law, worship, and ethics. Together, they preserve the Prophet's ﷺ teachings, safeguard authentic faith, and inspire believers to live with righteousness, humility, and devotion.

Thank you

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