- Title: *Uṣool al-Ḥadeeth*
- Author: Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips
- English Edition 1 (2003)
- Revised New English Edition 2 (2007)
- Layout: IIPH, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Filming & Cover Designing: Samo Press Group

Uṣool al-Ḥadeeth

The Methodology of Hadith Evaluation

أصول الحديث

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE

© International Islamic Publishing House, 2007
King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Philips, Bilal
Uṣool al-Ḥadeeth, the methodology of hadith evaluation. / Bilal Philips - 1. - Riyadh, 2007

...p ; 21 cm

ISBN Hard cover: 9960-9871-4-0
ISBN Soft cover: 9960-9871-5-9

1- Al-Ḥadeeth I-Title

237.7 dc 1428/1260
1428/1277

ISBN Hard cover: **9960-9871-4-0** **Legal Deposit no. 1428/1260**
ISBN Soft cover: **9960-9871-5-9** **Legal Deposit no. 1428/1277**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

International Islamic Publishing House (IIPH)
P.O.Box 55195 Riyadh 11534, Saudi Arabia
Tel: 966 1 4650818 - 4647213 - Fax: 4633489
E-Mail: iiph@iiph.com.sa - www.iiph.com.sa

LIST OF CONTENTS

Symbols used in this Book....07
Transliteration Chart....08
Foreword....11
Section One
DEFINITIONS....13
Section Two
COMPILATION....21
Section Three
TRANSMISSION....37
Section Four
CLASSIFICATION....51
Section Five
CONFLICT....111
Section Six
CRITICISM....117
Section Seven
GRADING....131
Section Eight
LITERATURE....157
Section Nine
BIOGRAPHIES....201

Section Ten
WOMEN SCHOLARS.....219

Section Eleven
APPENDIX ONE.....231

Section Twelve
APPENDIX TWO.....239

Section Thirteen
Bibliography.....243

SYMBOLS USED IN THIS BOOK

(ﷻ): *Subḥânahu wa Ta'âla* — 'The Exalted'

(ﷺ): *Ṣallâ-Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* — 'Blessings and peace be upon him'

(عليه السلام): *'Alayhis-Salâm* — 'May peace be upon him'

(رضي الله عنه): *Raḍia Allâhu 'Anhu* — 'May Allah be pleased with him'

(رضي الله عنها): *Raḍia Allâhu 'Anha* — 'May Allah be pleased with her'

Section One

DEFINITIONS

The Arabic word *ḥadeeth* basically means 'an item of news, conversation, a tale, a story or a report,' whether historical or legendary, true or false, relating to the present or the past. Its secondary meaning as an adjective is 'new' as opposed to *qadeem*, 'old'. However, like other Arabic words (e.g. *ṣalâh*, zakah), its meaning changed in Islam. From the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), his stories and communications dominated all other forms of communication. Consequently, the term *ḥadeeth* began to be used almost exclusively for reports that spoke of his actions and sayings.[1]

Usage of the Word *ḥadeeth*

The term hadith has been used in both the Qur'an[2] and the prophetic traditions according to all of its linguistic meanings. The following three categories are the most notable usages. It has been used to mean:

---

[1] *Hadith Literature,* p. 1 and *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, Pp. 1-3.

[2] The term hadith is mentioned 23 times in the Qur'an.

1. The Qur'an itself, and hadith

﴿فَذَرْنِي وَمَن يُكَذِّبُ بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ ... ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة القلم: ٤٤)

﴿Then leave Me alone [O' Muhammad] with those who reject this communication...﴾ *(Qur'an 68: 44)*

(إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ)

«Indeed, the best form of communication is the Book of Allah...»[3]

2. A historical story

﴿وَهَلْ أَتَىٰكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَىٰ ﴿٩﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٩)

﴿Has the story of Moses reached you?﴾ *(Qur'an 20: 9)*

(حَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلاَ حَرَجَ)

«You may speak about the Children of Israel without...»[4]

3. A general conversation

﴿وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا ... ﴿٣﴾﴾ (سورة التحريم: ٣)

﴿When the Prophet confided in one of his wives...﴾ *(Qur'an 66: 3)*

[3] The full text of the hadith is as follows:

(عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقُولُ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ بَعْدَ التَّشَهُّدِ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ)

Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim, and *Musnad Aḥmad*, hadith no. 13,909 CD and the wording is that of Aḥmad.

[4] The full text of the hadith is as follows:

(عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنْ النَّارِ)

Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari.

(مَنِ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى حَدِيثِ قَوْمٍ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ أَوْ يَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ، صُبَّ فِي أُذُنِهِ الآنُكُ)

«Molten copper will be poured in the ear of whoever eavesdrops on the conversation of people who dislike him doing so or flee from him.»[5]

Among the hadith scholars the term hadith means 'whatever is transmitted from the Prophet of his actions, sayings, tacit approvals, or physical characteristics'. Scholars of Islamic Law do not include the physical appearance of the Prophet in their definition.

Importance of Hadith

1. Revelation

The Prophet's sayings and actions were primarily based on revelation from Allah (ﷻ) and, as such, must be considered a fundamental source of guidance second only to the Qur'an. Allah in the Qur'an said concerning the Prophet (ﷺ):

﴿وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾﴾ (سورة النجم: ٣-٤)

[5] The full text of the hadith is as follows:

(عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ تَحَلَّمَ بِحُلْمٍ لَمْ يَرَهُ كُلِّفَ أَنْ يَعْقِدَ بَيْنَ شَعِيرَتَيْنِ وَلَنْ يَفْعَلَ وَمَنْ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى حَدِيثِ قَوْمٍ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ أَوْ يَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ صُبَّ فِي أُذُنِهِ الْآنُكُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ صَوَّرَ صُورَةً عُذِّبَ وَكُلِّفَ أَنْ يَنْفُخَ فِيهَا وَلَيْسَ بِنَافِخٍ)

Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari.

﴿[Muhammad] does not speak from his desires; indeed, what he says is revelation.﴾ *(Qur'an 53: 3-4)*

Therefore, the hadith represents a personal source of divine guidance which Allah granted His Prophet (ﷺ) which was similar in its nature to the Qur'an itself. The Prophet (ﷺ) reiterated this point in one of his recorded statements, «Indeed, I was given the Qur'an and something similar to it along with it.»[6]

2. *Tafseer*

The preservation of the Qur'an was not restricted to protecting its wording from change. Were that the case, its meanings could be manipulated according to human desires, while maintaining its wording. However, Allah also protected its essential meanings from change by entrusting the explanation of the meanings of Qur'an to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. Allah (ﷻ) states the following in the Qur'an regarding its interpretation:

﴿... وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ... ﴿٤٤﴾﴾

(سورة النّحل: ٤٤)

﴿... And I revealed to you the Reminder [Qur'an] in order that you explain to the people what was revealed to them...﴾ *(Qur'an 16: 44)*

Therefore, if one is to understand the meanings of Qur'an, he or she must consider what the Prophet (ﷺ) said or did regarding it. E.g. In the Qur'an, Allah instructs the believers to offer *ṣalâh* (formal prayers) and pay zakah (obligatory charity) in *Soorah al-Baqarah,* (2: 43). However, in order to obey these instructions correctly, one must study the methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ) in this regard. Among his many clarifications concerning *Ṣalâh* and zakah, he instructed his followers saying «Pray as you saw me pray»[7], and he specified that 2.5% of surplus wealth, unused for a year,[8] should be given as zakah.

[6] The full text of the hadith is as follows:

(عَنْ الْمِقْدَامِ بْنِ مَعْدِي كَرِبَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ أَلَا إِنِّي أُوتِيتُ الْكِتَابَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ أَلَا يُوشِكُ رَجُلٌ شَبْعَانُ عَلَى أَرِيكَتِهِ يَقُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ فَمَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ حَلَالٍ فَأَحِلُّوهُ وَمَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ حَرَامٍ فَحَرِّمُوهُ أَلَا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ لَحْمُ الْحِمَارِ الْأَهْلِيِّ وَلَا كُلُّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنْ السَّبُعِ وَلَا لُقَطَةُ مُعَاهِدٍ إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْتَغْنِيَ عَنْهَا صَاحِبُهَا وَمَنْ نَزَلَ بِقَوْمٍ فَعَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَقْرُوهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَقْرُوهُ فَلَهُ أَنْ يُعْقِبَهُمْ بِمِثْلِ قِرَاهُ)

Sunan Abi Dawood.

[7] The complete text of the hadith is as follows:

(مَالِكُ بْنُ الْحُوَيْرِثِ قَالَ أَتَيْنَا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَنَحْنُ شَبَبَةٌ مُتَقَارِبُونَ فَأَقَمْنَا عِنْدَهُ عِشْرِينَ لَيْلَةً وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَفِيقًا فَلَمَّا ظَنَّ أَنَّا قَدْ اشْتَهَيْنَا أَهْلَنَا أَوْ قَدْ اشْتَقْنَا سَأَلَنَا عَمَّنْ تَرَكْنَا بَعْدَنَا فَأَخْبَرْنَاهُ قَالَ ارْجِعُوا إِلَى أَهْلِيكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا فِيهِمْ وَعَلِّمُوهُمْ وَمُرُوهُمْ وَذَكَرَ أَشْيَاءَ أَحْفَظُهَا أَوْ لَا أَحْفَظُهَا وَصَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي فَإِذَا حَضَرَتْ الصَّلَاةُ فَلْيُؤَذِّنْ لَكُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ وَلْيَؤُمَّكُمْ أَكْبَرُكُمْ)

Ṣaheeḥ al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 345, hadith no. 604.

[8] There are a number of authentic hadiths in which the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him) gave specific instructions concerning the items and quantities on which zakah was due, as well as the time it is due. Among them is the following narration from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (may Allah be pleased with him):

(عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ (ﷺ) قَالَ: فَإِذَا كَانَتْ لَكَ مِائَتَا دِرْهَمٍ وَحَالَ عَلَيْهَا الْحَوْلُ فَفِيهَا خَمْسَةُ دَرَاهِمَ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ شَيْءٌ يَعْنِي فِي الذَّهَبِ حَتَّى يَكُونَ لَكَ عِشْرُونَ دِينَارًا فَإِذَا كَانَ لَكَ عِشْرُونَ دِينَارًا وَحَالَ عَلَيْهَا الْحَوْلُ فَفِيهَا نِصْفُ دِينَارٍ فَمَا زَادَ فَبِحِسَابِ ذَلِكَ قَالَ فَلَا أَدْرِي أَعَلِيٌّ يَقُولُ فَبِحِسَابِ ذَلِكَ أَوْ رَفَعَهُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَلَيْسَ فِي مَالٍ زَكَاةٌ حَتَّى يَحُولَ عَلَيْهِ الْحَوْلُ إِلَّا أَنَّ جَرِيرًا قَالَ ابْنُ وَهْبٍ يَزِيدُ فِي الْحَدِيثِ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ فِي مَالٍ زَكَاةٌ حَتَّى يَحُولَ عَلَيْهِ الْحَوْلُ.)

'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib quoted Allah's Messenger as saying: "Whenever you possess 200 dirhams and a year passes on it, 5 dirhams is to be paid on it.=

Hadith and the Sunnah

The term hadith has become a synonym for the term Sunnah, though there is some difference in their meanings. Sunnah, according to Arabic lexicographers, means 'a way; course; rule; manner of acting or conduct of life'.[10] Sunnah, as a technical term in the Science of Hadith, refers to whatever statements, acts, approvals, physical or character descriptions that are attributable to the Prophet (ﷺ) along with his biography before or after the beginning of his prophethood. It is thus synonymous with the term hadith.

However, according to *Uṣool al-Fiqh* science (legal methodology), Sunnah refers to only the statements, acts and approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ). It also refers to whatever is supported by evidence from the Shari'ah; the opposite of *bid'ah*. And in the Legalistic science of Fiqh the term Sunnah refers to recommended acts authentically attributable to the Prophet (ﷺ); the does of which is rewarded and the non-doer is not punished. It is also used to refer to the opposite of *bid'ah* as in the statement: Sunnah divorce and *Bid'ah* divorce.

According to its general definition, the Qur'an is the most important part of the Sunnah conveyed by the Prophet (ﷺ).[11] It may also be said that the hadiths were the containers in which the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) was conveyed during his life time and after his death.

[10] Lanes's Lexicon, vol. 1, p. 1438.

[11] *Al-Bid'ah*, p. 67.

Section Two

COMPILATION

1. Era of the Prophet (ﷺ)

During the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) there was no pressing need to write down all of his various statements or record his actions because he was present and could be consulted at any time. As a matter of fact, the Prophet (ﷺ) himself made a general prohibition against writing down his statements which were other than the Qur'an itself.[1] This was to prevent the possibility of mixing up the Qur'an with his own words during the era of revelation. Consequently, the greatest stress regarding writing was placed on recording the Qur'anic verses. However, there are many authentic narrations collected by the Scholars of Hadith, that prove that Hadith were recorded in writing even during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ). For example, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr

[1] *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, *Kitâb az-Zuhd*, p. 72. This is the only authentic hadith on the topic and Bukhari and others considered it to be a statement of Abu Sa'eed himself that was erroneously attributed to the Prophet. See *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature,* p. 28.

(ﷺ) said: «I used to write everything which I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with the intention of memorizing it. However, some Qurayshites forbade me from doing so saying, "Do you write everything that you hear from him, while the Messenger of Allah is a human being who speaks in anger and pleasure?" So I stopped writing, and mentioned it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He pointed with his finger to his mouth and said, 'Write! By Him in whose hand is my soul, only truth comes out from it.' "»[2]

Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) said: «When Makkah was conquered, the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up and gave a sermon (Abu Hurayrah then mentioned the sermon). A man from Yemen, called Abu Shâh got up and said, "O' Messenger of Allah! Write it down for me." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied, "Write it for Abu Shâh."»[3] Al-Waleed asked Abu 'Amr, «"What are they writing?" He replied, "The sermon which he heard that day."»[4]

Abu Qâbeel said: «We were with 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ and he was asked which city will be conquered first Constantinople or Rome? So 'Abdullâh called for a sealed trunk and he said, "Take out the book from it." Then 'Abdullâh said, "While we were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) writing, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked, 'Which city will be conquered first, Constantinople or Rome?' So Allah's Messenger

[2] *Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, p. 1035, hadith no. 3639 and authenticated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan Abi Dawood*, hadith no. 3099. The collection of hadith of 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr is known as *aṣ-Ṣaḥeefah aṣ-Ṣâdiqah*.

[3] *Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, hadith no. 3641 and authenticated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan Abi Dawood*, hadith no. 3100.

[4] Ibid, vol. 3 hadith no. 3642 and authenticated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan Abi Dawood*, hadith no. 3101.

(ﷺ) said, 'The city of Heracilius will be conquered first,' meaning Constantinople."»[5]

2. Era of the *Ṣaḥâbah*[6]

After the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) his saying and action took of a new importance because he was no longer there to consult when problems arose. The practise of narration on a large scale started during this period. For example, when the Prophet (ﷺ) died, the *Ṣaḥâbah* debated about where to bury him. This debate ended when Abu Bakr (ﷺ) told them, «I heard the Messenger say, "No prophet dies but he is buried where he died."»[7] Thus a grave was dug immediately below the bed on which he died in the house of 'Â'ishah. In this period a number of the leading *Ṣaḥâbah* wrote down hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The following are just a few of the leading narrators of the Prophet's traditions who were known to have recorded them in writing.

Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) to whom 5374 channels of hadith narrations are attributed, actually narrated 1236 hadith. Ḥasan in 'Amr ad-Damari saw many books in his possession.[8]

'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) to whom 1660 channels of narrations are attributed used to write whatever he heard[9] and even employed

[5] *Ṣaḥeeḥ*: *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 2, p. 176; *Sunan ad-Dârimi*, vol. 1, p. 126 and *Mustadrak al-Ḥâkim*, vol. 3, p. 422.

[6] The disciples or the Companions of the Prophet, *aṣ-Ṣaḥâbah*, are sometimes referred to as the first generation of Islam. Any person who had the privilege of meeting the Prophet and died believing in him is classified as a *Ṣaḥâbi*.

[7] The Life of Muhammad, p. 688.

[8] *Fatḥ al-Bâri*, vol. 1, p. 217.

[9] *Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd*, vol. 2, p. 123.

taken to task by 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar for relating a particular hadith, he took him to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) who bore witness to the truth of what he had related. His knowledge and memory were also tested by Marwân, who, having written down some traditions related by him, wanted him to relate the same after a year. He found them to be exactly identical to his earlier narration.

Bearing in mind Abu Hurayrah's intense dedication to learning hadith, his devotion to the Prophet (ﷺ), and the various tests which were applied to his memory and scholarship by his contemporaries during his life, it appears very unlikely that he himself fabricated any hadith. This does not mean, however, that material was not falsely imputed to him at a later date. The fact that he narrated a uniquely large number of traditions itself did make inventing hadiths in his name an attractive proposition.

'ABDULLÂH IBN 'UMAR

The second most prolific narrator of hadith, he (ﷺ) was the son of the second Caliph. He had accepted Islam simultaneously with his father, and emigrated to Madeenah with him. He took part in many battles during the Prophet's lifetime, and in the wars in Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt, but maintained strict neutrality in the conflicts that erupted among the Muslims following the assassination of 'Uthmân. Despite the immense esteem and honour in which he was held by all Muslims, who repeatedly asked him to become caliph (an offer which he refused), he kept himself aloof from factional strife, and throughout those years led an unselfish, pious life, setting an example of an ideal citizen just as his father had set an example of an ideal ruler. He died in Makkah in the year 74/692 at the age of 87.

'Abdullâh's long association with the Prophet (ﷺ), his kinship with Ḥafṣa, *Umm al-Mu'mineen* (ﷺ), and with certain other Companions, offered him a superb opportunity to learn hadith; and his long peaceful life gave him time and leisure enough to teach and spread hadiths among the Muslims who assiduously sought them.

He was renowned for the extreme scrupulousness with which he related hadiths. Ash-Sha'bi remarks that he did not hear a single hadith from him for a whole year. When he related hadiths, his eyes filled with tears. His activities in the service of Islam, his austere life, his straightforward and honest character, and his careful treatment of the hadiths, render the material we have from him of the highest value.

ANAS IBN MÂLIK

At the age of ten, Anas (ﷺ) was presented by his mother, Umm Sulaym, to the Prophet (ﷺ), following his migration to Madeenah. From that time until the Prophet's death, he was his favourite attendant, and afterwards he was appointed by Abu Bakr (ﷺ) as a tax-collector at Bahrayn. Towards the end of his life he settled at Basrah, where he died in the year 711, at the age of over a hundred.

During the ten years he spent in the Prophet's service, he was able to memorise a large number of his words, of which he later also learnt a good deal from Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and many other Companions. His knowledge of hadith was so copious that his death was regarded as a death-blow to half of the entire mass of traditions.

The traditionists accept him as one of the most reliable narrators of hadith.

Talmudic literature there is no idea of chronological method, and the oldest extant work attempting such an arrangement was composed after 885 A.D. — more than a century later than the earliest Islamic work on isnad-critique." From this fact, he goes on to say, "And from the fact that the important Jewish works (of this period) had been composed in the Islamic dominions, it may be inferred that this historical interest was due to the Islamic influence."[16]

The practice of specifying the isnad, not only of the hadiths but also the books in which they were collected, was of immense value in preserving the integrity of books in an age in which printing was unknown, and the creation of spurious and distorted works was a relatively easy task. The scholarly practice of certification seems to be unique in the world's literary history, just as hadith literature is unique in employing a thorough and systematic method of source identification. Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Syriac manuscripts rarely, if ever, supply us with such a wealth of information about a book's origin and use.

The isnad system, while originating in connection with the hadith literature, was in due course extended by Arab authors to many other genres, including geography, history, and prose fiction.[17]

[16] *Alter und Ursprund des Isnad*, 47. Quoted in *Hadith Literature*, p. 81.

[17] *Hadith Literature*, p. 82-83.

Section Four

CLASSIFICATION

Due to a variety of factors, the narration of hadiths came under careful scrutiny beginning with the generation of the Companions and their students. The statement of the *Tâbi'ee*, Ibn Sireen (d. 110), in the previous chapter identifies the approximate time period in which verification began.

He said: "(In the beginning) they would not ask about the isnad. But when the *fitnah* (civil war) happened, they demanded, 'Name your men to us.' The narrations of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* would be accepted, while those of *Ahl al-Bid'ah* would be rejected."[1]

Once the name of the narrator was known, it was possible to investigate whether he was trustworthy or not and whether he actually heard the person from whom he was reporting. Criticism of this nature later came to be known as *'Ilm al-Jarḥ wa at-Ta'deel* (The Science of Validation).

The earliest recorded comments made for this purpose were reported by Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjâj (701-776 C.E.). Ibn 'Adi

[1] *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ an-Nawawi* (Introduction) Chapter: The Isnad is from the *Deen*, p. 257 [Maktabah Nazâr Mustafa al-Bâz - Riyadh (1st edition)].