

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين



Intro to Usul Al Hadith Lesson 2 Overview

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Division of ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth According to Ibn al-Akfānī

- Ibn al-Akfānī divided the sciences of ḥadīth into **two categories**:

1. **Transmission (riwāyah)**
2. **Understanding/Analysis (dirāyah)**

I. Riwāyah: Transmission of Ḥadīth

1. Early Function of Riwāyah

- Concerned with **safeguarding the Sunnah** during the first few centuries.
- Process:
 - Each student heard the narration from his teacher.
 - The student then transmitted it to his own students.
- This **oral transmission with isnād** was essential for preservation and was the measuring stick for authenticity
 - In the early centuries, isnād was the criterion for distinguishing **authentic from weak**.
 - Early Muslims initially accepted narrations freely from anyone.
 - With the spread of *fasād* (corruption) in society, scholars became strict, accepting only narrations that could be traced and verified.
- Example:
 - Anyone after ~150 AH who claimed “The Prophet ﷺ said...” would be asked:
 - “*From whom did you receive this information?*”
 - “*Who informed you of this ḥadīth?*”

2. Compilation of the Sunnah

- A time came when **ḥadīth were compiled on a mass scale**:

Both **ṣaḥīḥ (authentic)** and **ḍaʿīf (weak)** narrations were recorded.

- Notable collections:

- *al-Muwaṭṭaʿ* of Imām Mālik
- *al-Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad
- *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām al-Bukhārī
- *al-Sunan* collections (e.g., Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʿī, Ibn Mājah)

- **Impact of Compilation:**

- After compilation, isnād between later generations and compilers (e.g., al-Bukhārī) was **no longer required** to authenticate the content of the ḥadīth itself.

- Example:

- Today, opening *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the isnād is already recorded by Imam al-Bukhārī himself.
- We do not need a direct isnād between us and Imam al-Bukhārī to confirm the book's authenticity.

3. Phases of Riwāyah

- **Phase 1 (First 2–3 centuries):**

- Isnād between teacher and student was essential for **authenticating individual ḥadīth**.

- **Phase 2 (After compilation):**

- Books were transmitted and spread widely.
- Isnād was no longer needed to authenticate individual ḥadīth.
- Instead, isnād became necessary for **verifying the transmission of the books themselves** (i.e., copies of collections).

4. Isnād for Books (5th–6th Century Onwards)

- Students sought teachers who possessed **asānīd for the books themselves**.
- Concept of **samāʿ (listening)**:
 - At the beginning of manuscripts, scholars documented:
 - The name of the teacher upon whom the book was read.
 - Place, date, and names of students present.
 - At the end, they recorded:
 - Completion details (date, place, teacher, students).
- Comparison Process:
 - Student's copy was compared word-for-word with the teacher's copy.
 - Marks were placed:
 - Symbols for uncertain/variant readings.
 - Clarifications for difficult words.
 - Only verified manuscripts held scholarly value.

5. Manuscripts and Mass Publication

- Before modern printing, **scribes manually copied texts**.
- Problem: A copy had no scholarly weight until verified against an authoritative copy.
- In the modern era (last 50–70 years):
 - With mass printing, concern arises over which manuscripts publishers relied upon.
 - Some manuscripts are “golden” because they include **documented samāʿ and comparison records**.
 - Others, despite clean fonts and readability, are unreliable if lacking evidence of verification.
- **Summary of Purpose of Isnād:**
 - **Early centuries:** For authenticating the Sunnah itself.

- **Post-compilation:** For authenticating transmission of the **books of Sunnah**.
- **Modern times:** Risk arises when manuscripts used in publications lack proper verification.

II. Dirāyah: Understanding and Analysis of Ḥadīth

Ībn al-Akfānī divided the science of hadith into two categories, the second of which is *dirayah al hadith*. Concerning the *‘ilm of dirayah al-ḥadīth* (the science of critical understanding of ḥadīth):

“It is a science by which one comes to know the types of narration (*riwāyah*) and its rulings, the conditions of the narrators, the categories of the narrations, the extraction of their meanings; and it requires what the science of tafsīr requires from knowledge of the language, grammar, morphology, semantics, *bayān*, *badī‘*, and *uṣūl*. It requires knowledge of the history of transmission (*tārīkh al-naqilah*) and discourse (*kalām*) concerning the need for its criteria, like the discourse that preceded it. And the books attributed to this science—such as *Taqrīb al-Taysīr* of an-Nawawī, or its basis such as *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* of al-Ḥākim, or its source such as *Al-Kifāyah* of al-Khaṭīb ibn Bakr ibn Thābit—are entry-points; they are not sufficient books in this science.”

Note: This statement of Ībn al-Akfānī carries weight and consideration, and furthermore, this division of the science of ḥadīth into *riwāyah* and *dirayah* was adopted by two imāms of the genre: Al-Burhān al-Biq‘ā‘ī in *Al-Nukat al-Wāfīyah* (vol. 1, p. 63), and the commentator al-Jalāl al-Suyūṭī in *Al-Tadrīb* and in *Al-Baḥr alladhī Zakhar Zakhar* (vol. 1, p. 229).

Al-Biq‘ā‘ī says in *Al-Nukat al-Wāfīyah*, *Sharḥ al-Alfīyah* (1/62):

“Then I saw the imām Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘īd al-Anṣārī, known as Ibn al-Akfānī, the Shāfi‘ī, say in his book

Irshād al-Qāṣid, in which he discussed the types of sciences and their definitions, and the good qualities of books among them:

“**‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth al-khāṣṣ bi-riwāyah**: a science which includes the transmission of the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, his actions, and their narration, preserving their exact wording.

“**‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth al-khāṣṣ bi-dirāyah**: a science by which one comes to know the reality of the *riwāyah*, their conditions, their types, their rulings, the states of narrators, the conditions required of them in the transmission, the categories of what is narrated, and what is related to them.”

Al-Suyūṭī, explaining this in *Al-Tadrib*, says:

“The reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of *riwāyah*: transmitting the Sunnah and its like, and attributing that to whom it is attributed by *taḥdīth*, or *ikhbār*, or something else;

Conditions (*shurūṭ*) of it: the narrator’s *taḥammul* of what he narrates by one of the types of *taḥammul*, such as hearing (*samā’*) or *ardh* or permission (*ijāzah*) or similar;

Its types: *ittiṣāl* (continuous) and *inqiṭā’* (disconnected), etc.;

Its rulings: acceptance (*qabūl*) and rejection (*radd*);

The states of narrators: justice (*‘adālah*) and criticism (*jarḥ*), the conditions in their obtaining the transmission and in narrating;

The categories of what is narrated: the types of works, from *masānīd* and *ma‘ajim* and *ajzaa’*, etc., and *aḥādīth* and *āthār*, etc.; what is related thereunto: knowing the terminology (*istilāḥ*) of its people.”

Note: Al-Buq‘ā’ī does not mention “extraction of meanings” as does Ibn al-Akfānī, because extracting meanings is for the purpose of *‘ilm al-fiqh* (jurisprudence).

Note: Some have held that *‘ilm riwāyah al-ḥadīth* is identical with *‘ilm uṣūl al-ḥadīth* (the principles of ḥadīth), as for example in the *Muqaddimah* of *Fath al-Mulhim* by Shaykh Shabīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī, in the *Muqaddimah of Awjjaz al-Masālik* of Shaykh Zakariyyā, and Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī (in a juz he named “Tawjīh al-‘ināyah li-ta’rīf ‘ilm al-ḥadīth riwāyah wa dirāyah”). In their view it is divided into “dirāyah,” meaning the *fiqh* of ḥadīth, and “riwāyah,” meaning everything pertaining to the sciences of ḥadīth.

Nomenclature of ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth

The name *‘ulūm al-ḥadīth* (sciences of ḥadīth) arose at an early period. The Imām al-Ḥākim called his book *Ma‘rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. After him, Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ named his work *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. It is well known as the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Salah. This naming is appropriate, for the sciences connected with ḥadīth are many and abundant.

It has been said about Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: “There was scarcely a single genre (*fan*) of the sciences of ḥadīth in which he did not compose a separate book.” Thus he authored in many of the detailed sciences of ḥadīth.

Summary

The science of ḥadīth divides into two: *riwāyah* and *dirāyah*. *Dirāyah* itself divides into:

1. *Fiqh al-ḥadīth* (jurisprudence of ḥadīth)
2. *Uṣūl al-ḥadīth* (principles, or *mustalah*)

Definition of Ilm al-Mustalah

Shaykh ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn Jama‘ah defined *‘ilm al-ḥadīth* as **a science of rules by which one knows the states of the *isnād* (chain of narrators) and the *matn* (text).**

Ibn Ḥajar said: “*The first of definitions of the science of ḥadīth is: knowledge of the rules by which one arrives to know the state of the narrator and the narrated (marwī).*” (This is the definition of *dirāyah*). The *matn* and *marwī* are general: inclusive of *marfū‘*, *mawqūf*, and *maqṭū‘*.

Some added after that: from the standpoint of acceptance (*qabūl*) and rejection (*radd*). Then this science splits into specialized sciences, and each of those sub-sciences has its own types.

Purpose of Studying *‘Ilm al-Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth*

Since this is among the *‘ulūm al-ālah* (instrumental sciences), that is, it is among the tools that serve this great science (ḥadīth), the objective of *‘ilm al-muṣṭalah al-ḥadīth* is to know what is acceptable (*maqḥūl*) and what is rejectable (*mardūd*) from the Sunnah, and a means to knowing what of the Sunān is accepted or rejected.

History of the Science of Ḥadīth

The Prophetic Era (*Asr al-Nabī* ﷺ)

The narration of ḥadīth began in the Prophetic period. The Companions used to transmit what they heard from the Prophet ﷺ to others.

- It is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (ḥadīth no. 89), on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, from ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him), who said: "I and a neighbor of mine from among the Anṣār lived in the area of Banū Umayyah ibn Zayd, which is located in the highlands of al-Madīnah. We used to take turns visiting the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him): he would go one day, and I would go the next. When I went, I would bring him the news of that day, whether it pertained to revelation or otherwise; and when he went, he would do the same."
- Also recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (ḥadīth no. 41), on the authority of al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib (may Allāh be pleased with him): "When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) first arrived in al-Madīnah, he stayed with his maternal uncles from the Anṣār, or he said: with his forefathers. He initially prayed facing Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) for sixteen or seventeen months, though he preferred for his qiblah (prayer direction) to be towards the Ka‘bah. The first prayer he offered after the qiblah change was the ‘Aṣr prayer. A group of people prayed with him, and one of those who had prayed went out and passed by another mosque while its congregation was in rukū‘ (bowing). He said to them: 'By Allāh, I bear witness that I have just prayed with the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him) facing towards Makkah.' So they turned as they were, to face the Ka‘bah. The Jews—and the People of the Book more broadly—had previously been pleased when he (peace be upon him) prayed towards Bayt al-Maqdis, but when he turned his face towards the Ka‘bah, they disapproved of this."

This occurred with the Prophet’s (peace and blessings be upon him) approval and command.

- In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (ḥadīth no. 67), it is narrated from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakrah, from his father, who said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once mentioned something while he was seated on his camel, and a man was holding its halter or rein.

He said: 'What day is this?' We remained silent, thinking he might give it a different name. Then he said: 'Is it not the Day of Sacrifice (Yawm al-Nahr)?' We replied: 'Indeed, it is.' He then asked: 'And what month is this?' Again, we remained silent, thinking he might call it by another name. Then he said: 'Is it not Dhū al-Ḥijjah?' We replied: 'Indeed, it is.' He said: 'Indeed, your blood, your wealth, and your honor are sacred to you—just as the sanctity of this day, in this month, in this land. **Let those who are present convey this to those who are absent. For it may be that one who hears it will understand it better than one who directly heard it.**'"

Criticism and Verification (al-naqd and al-tathabbut)

The lexical definition of *naqd*: the distinguishing, separating the false from the true in coins.

In ḥadīth sciences: to distinguish correct ḥadīth from weak, and to judge narrators, both affirmatively (tawthīq) and negatively (jarḥ).

The Prophet ﷺ urged the Companions to transmit ḥadīth but also to verify the reports. For example:

“Whoever attributes to me what I did not say, let him take his seat in the Fire.”
(Bukhārī)

This cautiousness led some of the Companions to refrain from narrating extensively from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (ḥadīth no. 107), it is reported from ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, from his father, who said:

"I said to al-Zubayr: ‘I do not hear you relating as many narrations from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as so-and-so does.’ He replied: ‘Indeed, I did not part from him (i.e., the Prophet ﷺ), but I heard

him say: *Whoever lies about me intentionally, let him take his seat in the Fire.*"

Thus, although the Companions did transmit narrations, they exercised great caution and verification in doing so. If they encountered ambiguity or uncertainty, they would refer back to the Prophet ﷺ while he was still present among them.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (ḥadīth no. 2419), it is narrated from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd al-Qārī, who said:

"I heard ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) say: I heard Hishām ibn Ḥakīm ibn Hizām reciting Sūrat al-Furqān **in a manner different from the way I had been taught it.** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had taught me that sūrah, and I was on the verge of interrupting him during the prayer. But I held back until he finished. I then seized him by his cloak and brought him to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I heard this man reciting Sūrat al-Furqān differently from how you taught it to me.’ He said: *Release him.* Then he asked Hishām: *Recite,* and he recited. The Prophet ﷺ said: *Thus it was revealed.* Then he said to me: *Recite,* and I recited. He said: *Thus it was revealed. Indeed, the Qur'an was revealed in seven aḥruf (modes of recitation), so recite from it whatever is easy for you.*"

Likewise, in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (ḥadīth no. 12), it is reported from Anas ibn Mālīk (may Allah be pleased with him):

"We were forbidden from questioning the Messenger of Allah ﷺ too frequently. Hence, we would be pleased when a discerning man from the desert came and asked him questions while we listened. One day, a Bedouin came and said: ‘O Muḥammad, **your messenger came to us and claimed that you say Allah has sent you.**’ The Prophet ﷺ replied: ***He has spoken the truth.*** The man then asked: ‘Who created the heavens?’ The Prophet ﷺ said: *Allah.* He asked: ‘Who created the earth?’ He said: *Allah.* He asked: ‘And who raised these mountains and

placed therein what He placed?’ He replied: *Allah*. Then he said: ‘By the One who created the heavens, the earth, and raised these mountains—did Allah truly send you?’ The Prophet ﷺ said: *Yes*. The man then asked about the five daily prayers, the obligation of zakāh on wealth, fasting in Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to the House for those able to undertake the journey, repeating each time: *By the One who sent you, did Allah command you with this?* And the Prophet ﷺ affirmed each one. The man then turned away, saying: ‘By the One who sent you with the truth, I will neither add to this nor diminish from it.’ The Prophet ﷺ then said: *If he is truthful, he will enter Paradise.*"

In *Sunan al-Nasāʿī*, it is narrated that:

"‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) arrived from Yemen bringing sacrificial animals, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had also sent animals from Madinah. Fāṭimah appeared dressed in dyed garments and had applied kohl. **So I went, incited, to seek a legal verdict from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ** and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, Fāṭimah has adorned herself and applied kohl, and she claims that her father ﷺ has permitted her to do so.’ He said: *She has spoken the truth, she has spoken the truth, she has spoken the truth—I am the one who instructed her to do so.*"

In *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, it is reported:

"Ubayy ibn Kaʿb (may Allah be pleased with him) recited *Sūrat al-Mulk* ('Tabārak') while standing during Friday prayer, reminding us of the Days of Allah. Abū al-Dardāʾ or Abū Dharr nudged me and said: ‘When was this sūrah revealed? I’ve never heard it until now.’ I motioned for him to remain silent. When the prayer ended, he said: ‘I asked you when this sūrah was revealed and you did not tell me.’ Ubayy replied: ‘You have no reward for today’s prayer except what you were distracted by.’ So he went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and told him what Ubayy had said. The Prophet ﷺ replied: *Ubayy has spoken the truth.*"

For further reference on the history and methodology of ḥadīth criticism, see:

- The introduction of Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī to his critical edition of *al-Tamyīz* by Imām Muslim.
- *Manhaj al-Muḥaddithīn fī al-Naqd* by Dr. Ḥāfiẓ ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥakamī.

Compilation of the Sunnah (*Tadwīn al-sunnah*)

Tadwīn in the lexical definition: restraining that which is scattered; collecting what is dispersed into a register; gathering detached pages into a book. Technically, it means compiling and authoring.

When the Prophet ﷺ was sent to this nation, it was predominantly an unlettered nation that neither read nor wrote. Allah, Exalted is He, affirmed this reality in the Qur’an, saying:

"He is the One who sent among the unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom—although they had been, before that, in manifest error" [Qur’an 62:2].

The Prophet ﷺ also clarified this illiteracy in his statement:

"We are an unlettered nation; we neither write nor calculate".

This condition of illiteracy among the early Muslim community was predominant, though not absolute; a few among the Companions did possess reading and writing skills, albeit they were a minority. The reasons for this are threefold:

1. **The simplicity of life** at the time, which did not necessitate reading or writing in daily affairs.

2. **The reliance on memorization**, as knowledge was predominantly preserved orally and retained in memory.
3. **The limited availability of writing materials and tools**; writing was done using rudimentary surfaces such as stone tablets, shoulder bones, palm fronds, and leather scraps.

When Islam was revealed, it actively encouraged the pursuit of knowledge and the use of writing. The very first revelation to the Prophet ﷺ consisted of the divine command:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous—who taught by the pen—taught man what he did not know" [Qur'an 96:1–5].

Among the strongest indications that Islam sought to promote literacy is the well-known incident narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him), in which he stated:

"Some of the captives taken at the Battle of Badr did not have the means to pay their ransom, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made their ransom the teaching of writing to the children of the Anṣār."

The Prophet's ﷺ position on the writing of ḥadīth can be divided into two categories:

1. The Prohibition

There are a few narrations cited in this regard, but the only reliably authentic one is the following:

From Hammām ibn Munabbih, from Zayd ibn Aslam, from 'Aṭā' ibn Yasār, from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Do not write from me. Whoever has written anything from me other than the Qur'an, let him erase it. But narrate from me, for there is no harm in doing so. And whoever deliberately lies about me—Hammām said: I believe he said 'intentionally'—let him take his seat in the Fire."

Scholarly Positions Regarding This Ḥadīth

Scholars have held various views regarding the interpretation and application of such narrations:

a. Preference (Tarjīḥ):

Some scholars prefer the aḥādīth that permit writing over those that prohibit it, since the prohibitive narrations are either weak or incorrectly attributed as Prophetic sayings.

- *Supporting scholars:* Imām al-Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd.
Reason: The ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd was raised to the Prophet ﷺ by Hammām, but the correct view is that it is mawqūf (a Companion's statement).

b. Abrogation (Naskh):

Other scholars consider that the permission to write abrogated the initial prohibition, which applied only in the early stages of Islam.

- *Supporting scholars:* Ibn Qutaybah, al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Taymiyyah.

c. Reconciliation (Jamʿ):

A third group reconciles the apparent contradiction by interpreting each ḥadīth as applying to specific contexts or individuals.

- *Supporting scholars:* al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Qayyim, and others.

Modes of Reconciliation

- **Contextual to the time of revelation:**

- *Prohibition:* Applied to those writing the Qur'an and Sunnah on the same page, to prevent confusion.
- *Permission:* Applied to writing Sunnah independently from the Qur'an.
- **Contextual to the individual's memory capacity:**
 - *Prohibition:* Applied to those with strong memorization, so they would not rely solely on written texts.
 - *Permission:* Applied to those with weaker memory who needed to write.
- **Contextual to writing proficiency:**
 - *Prohibition:* Applied to those who were not proficient and may have introduced errors.
 - *Permission:* Given to those who could write accurately.

2. The Permission

There are numerous authentic ḥadīths that indicate the Prophet ﷺ allowed—and even encouraged—the writing of his sayings. Among them:

- From Abū Hurayrah, who said:

 "When Allah granted His Messenger ﷺ victory over Makkah, he stood among the people, praised Allah and glorified Him, and then said... At that moment, a man from Yemen named Abū Shāh stood and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, write it down for me.' The Prophet ﷺ responded: *Write it down for Abū Shāh.*"
 (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 2434)

- Abū Hurayrah also stated:

"None among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ narrates more ḥadīth than I do, except 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr—because he used to write, while I did not."

(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 113)

- From 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr, who said:

"I used to write everything I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in order to memorize it. But Quraysh forbade me, saying: 'Do you write down everything while the Messenger of Allah speaks in times of anger and pleasure?' So I stopped writing and mentioned this to the Prophet ﷺ. He said: Write, for by the One in whose hand is my soul, nothing comes from this mouth except the truth."

(Sunan Abū Dāwūd, 3643)

- And the famous statement of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb:

"Bind knowledge by writing it down."

Scholarly Conclusion on the Writing of Sunnah

The consensus among the scholars of ḥadīth eventually settled on the permissibility—and even encouragement—of writing the Sunnah.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar stated in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (1/204):

*"The early generations differed over the practice of writing ḥadīth—some engaged in it, while others abstained. **However, the matter later reached a consensus among scholars on the permissibility of writing knowledge—indeed, on its recommendation—and even its obligation upon those who fear forgetting and are responsible for conveying knowledge to others.**"*