

views existed about a happier hereafter, it lasted well into Byzantine times before the more joyful ideas about the Christian heaven started to prevail over the traditional, grimmer views of the ancient Hades.

SEE ALSO Afterlife, overview article, article on Greek and Roman Concepts; Death; Demeter and Persephone.

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HADĪTH. The Arabic word *ḥadīth* literally means *speech* and also *new*: because speech is created as it is uttered, it is always new. Following Prophet Muḥammad's death (632 CE), people engaged in speech about him so much that the word *ḥadīth* was eventually reserved for speech related to the Prophet, including his own speech; it then came to refer to the sayings of the Prophet and his companions, and finally only to the sayings of the Prophet himself.

Sunnah (lit., a beaten track) is a parallel word to *ḥadīth*, as both refer to the speech and conduct of the Prophet, yet the two usages initially signified different shades of meaning. *Ḥadīth* denoted speech or word whereas *sunnah* signified actual conduct, or the way of doing something. It was, however, difficult to draw a clear line between words and deeds, especially in light of the fact that the narrations of compan-

ions referred to both the sayings and the deeds of the Prophet. Hence the difference between *sunnah* and *ḥadīth* gradually faded and they became synonymous. This was further confirmed by Imām Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820), who maintained that no *sunnah* could be proven without a valid *ḥadīth*, and the view thus prevailed that *ḥadīth* signifies not only the speech but also the acts and conduct of the Prophet. A technical difference that still remains, however, is that *sunnah* refers to the law or value that is contained in a *ḥadīth*; hence, a *ḥadīth* does not necessarily contain a *sunnah*. *Sunnah* (or *ḥadīth*) is the most authoritative source of Islam next to the Qur'ān; it is both explanatory in relation to the Qur'ān and a source in its own right. The Qur'ān provides the affirmation that "he (the Prophet) speaks not of his desire and what he says is based on revelation And whatever the Messenger brings to you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it" (53:3). Elsewhere the Qur'ān also makes it a religious obligation of every Muslim to obey the Prophet (4:59; 59:7). To this al-Shāfi'ī (d.820) added the argument, which seems to have been current before this time, that when the Qur'ān spoke of "the Book and the Wisdom (*al-kitāb wa'l-hikah*)," which it does on seven occasions in this order, it meant Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. The *ḥadīth* thus represented divine guidance, and the conclusion was drawn that all authentic *ḥadīths* must be unquestioningly accepted and obeyed.

Khabar (lit., "news"; pl. *akhbār*) is also synonymous with *ḥadīth*, especially among the Shī'ī writers, as they include not only *ḥadīths* but also the sayings of their recognized *imāms* within the meaning of *khabar*. The Shī'ī *imām*, being a member of the Prophet's family (i.e., the *ahl al-bayt*) is deemed to have inherent knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ladunni*) of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, transmitted from father to son down the line of descent. There is, however, a tendency among Shī'ī writers, too, to reserve *Sunnah* for the *Sunnah* of the Prophet alone, whereas *khabar*, and *ḥadīth* can include both the *ḥadīth* proper as well as the sayings of the *imām*.

Lastly, *āthār* (lit., "vestige") refers to the sayings, opinion (*fatwa*), and precedent of the companions. The phrase '*ilm al-ḥadīth*' ("science of *ḥadīth*") refers to *ḥadīth* literature as well as to the methodology and critical standards used to authenticate the *ḥadīth*.

Ḥadīth qudsī ("sacred *ḥadīth*") is the name given to a unique variety of *ḥadīth* wherein the Prophet attributes what he says directly to God. In the eleventh century CE, the question arose whether the *ḥadīth qudsī* was to be regarded as part of the Qur'ān, which by definition consisted of the revealed speech of God, or was to be attributed to the Prophet. *Ḥadīth* scholars concluded that while the message of the *ḥadīth qudsī* comes from God, it is in the words of the Prophet—and thus cannot be considered part of the Qur'ān. For this reason only the Qur'ān, and not the *ḥadīth qudsī*, may be recited during ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*). Even so, *ḥadīth* scholars generally treat the *ḥadīth qudsī* as a superior class of *ḥadīth*. A total of about one hundred *ḥadīth qudsī* have

been recorded, and their authenticity is measured by the same criteria and standard as are applied to *ḥadīths* generally. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240) compiled a collection of 101 *qudsi ḥadīths* bearing the title *Mishkat al-Anwar*. Later Mulla ʿAlī al-Qārī (d. 1605) selected forty such *ḥadīths*, and this collection has become widely adopted by many subsequent authors.

RECEPTION AND DOCUMENTATION. As a general rule, every *ḥadīth* must be supported by a reliable *isnād* (chain of transmission) consisting of the names and identity of its transmitters. The number of transmitters in the *isnād* tends to increase with every successive generation. Sometimes a *ḥadīth* that is transmitted by one companion is then transmitted by a number of persons in the next generation who may happen to be residing in different localities. This raises the question of how the particular transmitter obtained the information from his immediate source. Was it through direct hearing (*samāʿ*) and personal contact, or through other means of communication? Various methods of reception (*tahammul*) have thus been identified, which include, in addition to *samāʿ*, such methods as submission (*ʿard*) and recitation (*qirāʿat*) of a *ḥadīth* to the master for his approval, permission (*ijāza*) to transmit *ḥadīth*, handing over (*munawala*) of the master's materials to the student, correspondence (*mukataba*), declaration (*iʿlam*) by the master of his own source, bequest (*wasiyya*), and finding (*wijada*) by the student of *ḥadīth* in the master's handwriting. Following the large-scale documentation of *ḥadīths* in the ninth century, most *ḥadīth* scholars began to employ special terms in the *isnād* literature that indicate the method by which the *ḥadīth* had been transmitted; this has remained the most common method to this day. Most people nowadays find *ḥadīths* in one of the standard collections and when quoting them make reference to the latter.

Isnāds can consist of one or two links, or of as many as half a dozen or more; the smaller the number of links, the shorter the time lag between the demise of the Prophet and the transmission of the *ḥadīth*. Thus *isnāds* are divided into two types, namely *elevated* (*al-isnād al-ʿalī*), which consist of fewer links and transmitters, and *descended* (*al-isnād al-nāzil*), which may involve a large number of transmitters. Most *ḥadīths* were compiled long after the time of the Prophet, but some were compiled relatively early. Ḥammām ibn al-Manabbih (d. 722), for instance, recorded his collection (*sahīfa*) around 672. His *ḥadīths* consisted mainly of one link, namely a companion. Imām Mālik (d. 796) related *ḥadīths* in his *Muwatta* (Straightened path) that had been told to him by Nāfiʿ, who had heard them from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, who had heard them from the Prophet, thus making for two intervening links. Elevated *isnāds* of this kind are also frequent in the collection of *ḥadīths* compiled by the renowned Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742). Shorter *isnāds* are naturally preferable, which is why some of them have been variously labeled *silsilat al-dhahab* ("golden chain"), or *asahh al-asānīd* ("soundest of *isnāds*") and so forth. *Ḥadīth* scholars are of the view that because

isnād is the conveyor of the teachings of the Prophet, it is a part of the religion. Hence a diligent and conscientious rendering of *isnād* is believed to be an act of merit that gains the pleasure of God.

The Prophet is reported to have discouraged documentation of his own sayings in order to prevent confusion between the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. Many of his leading companions were consequently against documentation of *ḥadīth*; at the same time, however, many others among them considered it permissible and actually wrote *ḥadīths* for their own collections. There are also reports that during the latter part of his ministry, that is, when much of the Qurʾān had already been documented, the Prophet permitted some of his companions to write *ḥadīths*, and even instructed them "to preserve knowledge through writing." It seems, then, that after an initial period of hesitation, the basic permissibility of writing and documenting *ḥadīths* was accepted and this activity became, in due course, a major preoccupation of the *ʿulamāʾ* during the second and third centuries of Islam. But even in the early stages, renowned companions such as ʿAlī ibn Abī-Tālib (d. 661), ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar (d. 690), Saʿd ibn ʿUbada (d. 671), and Samura ibn Jundub (d. 681) are known to have documented *ḥadīths* in small booklets, or *sahīfas*. Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 699) compiled a larger *sahīfa*, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ (d. 681) compiled one that became known as *al-sahīfa al-sādiqa* ("the true collection"). One of the earliest documented *ḥadīths* of that period to have survived in its original form is the renowned *Constitution of Madina* (*Dustūr al-Madina*, c. 622).

Recent research by Muslim scholars concerning the early documentation of *ḥadīths* has suggested the need for a revision of some of the negative conclusions Western Islamologists have drawn regarding the time frame and authenticity of the early collections. Twentieth-century scholars including Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh, Subḥī al-Sālih, Abul Ḥasan al-Nadwī, and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Aʿzamī have questioned the conclusions of Ignác Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, G. H. A. Juynboll, and others who cast doubt on the authenticity of the bulk of *ḥadīths*. The most extreme position on the authenticity of the *ḥadīths* is that of Joseph Schacht, who took Goldziher's observations a step further to conclude that "every legal tradition from the Prophet, until the contrary is proved, must be taken, not as an authentic . . . statement . . . but as a fictitious expression of a legal doctrine formulated at a later stage" (*The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, 1950, p. 149). For their part, Muslim commentators have maintained that documentation of *ḥadīths* took place much earlier than suggested by Schacht and others. Two decades after the publication of *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Nabia Abbott tried to balance Schacht's somewhat sweeping conclusions. Based on a group of papyri dealing with *ḥadīths*, she concluded that several thousand authentic *ḥadīths* had been documented during the first century of Islam. Her study also emphasized the attentiveness and care of important *ḥadīth* scholars, such as

al-Zuhrī and others after him. A more direct rebuttal of Schacht's position can be found in Muḥammad Muṣṭafā A'zamī's *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (1985), which argues that many of Schacht's conclusions on the authenticity and documentation of *ḥadīths* are exaggerated and unreliable.

TYPES OF HADĪTH. The pious Umayyad Caliph 'Umar II (d. 711) asked the leading scholars of Mādina, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm (d. 715), al-Qasim Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr (d. 728), and al-Zuhrī to collect and document *ḥadīths*, while taking care to "accept nothing other than the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet." But the caliph died soon afterwards and it was al-Zuhrī, the teacher of Imām Mālik, who persisted and attempted what proved to be the first major documented collection of *ḥadīths*. Al-Zuhrī's work marked the beginning of a movement that was to be continued by many others in the eighth and ninth centuries. Yet al-Zuhrī's own collection was subject-oriented and consisted of separate booklets for individual subjects that were neither well consolidated nor classified. He documented all the information that he had received from the companions and followers (*tābi'ūn*) concerning *ḥadīths*, and often integrated the companion's own statement into the prophetic *ḥadīths*. This manner of treatment can also be seen in Imām Mālik's *Muwatta*, one of the earliest collections of *ḥadīths* after al-Zuhrī's, which would probably have been the most authoritative, even among the standard collections, had it not been for its tendency to confound the *ḥadīth* with the *āthār* of companions. To distinguish these two and separate them from one another became one of the principal preoccupations of collections from later periods. The major ninth-century collections, discussed below, employed new methodology and critical standards. They attempted to more carefully verify the reliability of the *isnāds* and began to classify and distinguish the *sahīh* ("sound," "reliable") *ḥadīth* from the *da'if* ("weak") *ḥadīth*.

Ḥadīth literature has developed in several stages, each marking some new development in the writing methods and classification of *ḥadīths*. The *sahīfa* collections, to which reference has already been made, contained the earliest documented *ḥadīths* on record, but were not classified; they consisted simply of written records of *ḥadīths* on a variety of subjects, and were mainly written for the personal use of their authors. Many companions recorded *ḥadīths* in this form, which naturally come first in order of reliability and closeness to the source. Next came the *musannaf* ("classified") collections, which collated *ḥadīths* on separate themes, organizing them under headings and into chapters. Famous in the *musannaf* category were the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik, the *Musannaf* of Ma'mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770), and the *Musannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Humam al-San'ani (d. 827).

Then followed the *musnad* (lit., "supported") collections, which favored *isnāds* that linked a *ḥadīth* to the Prophet through the reports of companions. All *ḥadīths* that were

narrated by one companion, regardless of subject matter, were put under his or her name, the main purpose being to preserve the largest possible number of *ḥadīths*. Famous in this category was the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), which contains about 40,000 *ḥadīths*, including 10,000 repetitions, reported by about seven hundred companions. Other works in this category include the *Musnad* of Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān al Ṭayālīsī (d. 819), and the *Musnad* of ibn Najjār (d. 876), among many others. Some of the *musnad* works are arranged alphabetically and some according to region and tribe. Although considered to be richest of all in scope and content, the *musnad* collections are not easy to use because they are not classified by subject.

The *sahīh* ("sound," "reliable") collections marked the fourth and basically the last stage in the development of *ḥadīth* literature. The six standard Sunnī collections of *ḥadīths*, known as *al-sihāh al-sitta*, were all compiled around the mid-ninth century and have remained the most authoritative to this day. *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sahīh Muslim* are often referred to collectively as *sahīhayn* ("the two sound collections"), but even so, they do not include all the *sahīh ḥadīths* on record, as some have appeared in other collections. Because their compilers, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī (d. 870) and Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj (d. 875), did not set out to include every *sahīh ḥadīth* in their collections, it follows that a *ḥadīth* may not be labeled unsound or unreliable simply because it did not appear in either of these two collections.

Before discussing the six standard *ḥadīth* collections in some detail, it is necessary to introduce the three-fold classification of *ḥadīths* into the *sahīh*, *ḥasan*, and *da'if* categories.

The *sahīh ḥadīth* is defined as one with an unbroken chain of transmission, consisting of upright persons who also possessed retentive memory, going all the way back to the Prophet or a companion; its content is not outlandish (*shādh*)—in the sense that it does not contradict another reliable *ḥadīth*—and it is free of both obvious and subtle defects. It is, in other words, a *ḥadīth* that is free of defects in respect both to its *isnād* and its content (*matn*). *Sahīh ḥadīth* are also subdivided into those on which there is general agreement, and those on which the 'ulamā' have disagreed. Furthermore a *ḥadīth* may be *sahīh* in its own right (*sahīh li-dhātih*), in that it fulfills all the requirements of *sahīh*, or it may be *sahīh* due to an extraneous factor (*sahīh li-ghayrih*), as in cases where doubts about the memory of a *ḥadīth*'s narrator have been removed due to confirmation from another source.

Ḥadīth transmitters have been classified into a number of categories, with respect to their uprightness, reliability, and retentiveness. Without entering into technical details, it can be said that a *sahīh ḥadīth* is one for which the transmitters belong to the first three most reliable classes of narrators: the companions, the renowned *imāms*, and scholars of *ḥadīths*. As opposed to this, a *ḥasan* ("fair") *ḥadīth* is one for which the transmitters belong to the next three categories, consisting of those who are not among the most prominent

and about whom some doubt persists concerning the retentiveness of their memory and the accuracy (*dabt*) of their reports. A *daʿif* (weak) *ḥadīth* is defined as one that fails to meet the requirements of the *ṣahīh* and *ḥasan* classifications, and its transmitters include one or more persons of questionable reliability. The weakness in a *daʿif ḥadīth* may be in the *isnād* or in the text. There are many subvarieties of the *daʿif* category. The term *mursal* (lit., “sent free”), for example, refers to a *ḥadīth* with an *isnād* that is missing a link at the level of a companion—in other words, a follower (*tābiʿī*) has directly relayed it from the Prophet. But even the *mursal* is sometimes accepted if it is reported by a highly reliable person, such as the *imāms* al-Shāfiʿī or Mālik.

Ḥadīths have also been classified into three types based on the number of their narrators. The first of these is the *mutawatir* (“continuously recurrent”) type, those that have been reported by a large enough number of people to preclude the possibility of collusion or fabrication. A *ḥadīth* that is reported by only a small group of individuals is known as an *aḥad*, or solitary *ḥadīth*, and, finally, a *ḥadīth* that is called *mashhūr* (“well-known”) is one that became widespread during the first three generations following the demise of the Prophet.

THE SIX STANDARD COLLECTIONS. The compiler of the *Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī*, al-Bukhārī, came from Bukhara in Asia Minor. He traveled widely and devoted some sixteen years to the compilation of his *Ṣahīh*. He interviewed over a thousand *ḥadīth* transmitters in the Hijāz, Egypt, Iraq, and Persia and collected as vast number of about 600,000 *ḥadīths*, from which he selected 9,082 *ḥadīths*. Discounting all the repetitions, *Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī* contains 2,602 *ḥadīths*, divided into 106 chapters and under numerous subheadings. The repetitions here, as in other collections of *ḥadīths*, occur on account of the presence of more than one chain of *isnād* for one and the same *ḥadīth*. They are all listed on the assumption that multiple *isnāds* add to the reliability of a *ḥadīth*. It was al-Bukhārī’s declared purpose to include in his collection only *ṣahīh ḥadīths* narrated by upright and retentive individuals who had met with one another within the same generation or within two adjoining generations. Al-Bukhārī followed al-Zuhrī’s methodology and criteria in the selection of *ḥadīths*. The first link in al-Bukhārī’s *isnād* is usually a verified companion. This is followed, in turn, by two upright followers, or by one follower who is verified by at least two other narrators. The third link in al-Bukhārī’s chain of *isnād* usually consists of an upright and retentive successor (*tābiʿī tābiʿī*) from whom other narrators have also reported. The fifth link in al-Bukhārī’s *isnād* is likely to be his own teacher, or *shaykh*. It was important for al-Bukhārī to ensure that at any stage of the *isnād* a *ḥadīth* had been narrated by at least two people, be it a companion, follower, or successor. This is only a general characterization of al-Bukhārī’s *isnād*, as exceptions are found—for example, in the case of a companion, Midras al-Aslamī, whose *ḥadīths* al-Bukhārī included, even though only one person, Qays ibn Hazim, has reported *ḥadīths* from him.

Al-Bukhārī himself entitled his work *al-Jamīʿ al-Ṣahīh al-Musnad al-Mukhtasr min Ḥadīth Rasūl Allāh wa Sunanih wa Ayyamih*. This name is indicative of al-Bukhārī’s methodology and approach: the word *al-Jamīʿ* (lit., “comprehensive”) signifies that the work’s coverage extends to eight areas. These are dogmatics (*ʿaqāʿid*), legal rules (*ahkām*), moral teachings (*al-riqāq*), the etiquette of eating and drinking (*adab al-taʿām waʿl-sharāb*), Qurʾanic commentary, the history and biography of the Prophet (*al-tafsīr, waʿl-tārīkh waʿl-siyar*), travel and movement (*al-ṣafar waʿl-qiyām waʿl-quʿud*), turmoil and tumults (*al-fitān*), and the virtues of the Prophet and his companions (*al-manāqib*). The word *al-Ṣahīh* in al-Bukhārī’s title signifies that he did not knowingly include a weak (*daʿif*) *ḥadīth* in his collection, whereas the word *al-Musnad* implies that all the *ḥadīths* he compiled were supported by verified *isnāds* going all the way back to the Prophet. Al-Bukhārī was the first to compile a comprehensive collection of this kind, and his methodology was generally followed by Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj.

Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj’s *Ṣahīh Muslim* is the next most authoritative of the six collections of *ḥadīths* that are currently in use, except in North Africa and the Maghreb, where *Ṣahīh Muslim* is ranked first. This reverse order of ranking is basically due to *Ṣahīh Muslim*’s superior classification system, which makes it easier to use than *al-Bukhārī*. *Ṣahīh Muslim* consists of 10,000 *ḥadīths* that can be reduced to just over 3,000 without the repetitions. Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj also traveled extensively in search of *ḥadīths* and interviewed a large number of transmitters over a period of fifteen years. Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj went on record to say, in the introduction to his *Ṣahīh Muslim*, that he showed his work to Abū Zaurʿa al-Rāzī, the renowned scholar and teacher of *ḥadīth* of his time and that al-Rāzī had criticized some *ḥadīth* transmitters that Muslim had included in his chains of *isnād* as being unreliable and that al-Rāzī had found a hidden defect (*ʿillah*) in others. Muslim then added that he removed what al-Rāzī had criticized and doubted and included everything he had approved as *ṣahīh* (sound) *ḥadīths*. He also wrote that he intended to purify the *ḥadīths* of the accretions of storytellers, the input of those who were moved by ignorance and prejudice, and the influence of heretics.

A point of difference between al-Bukhārī and Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj can be noted with regard to their respective treatment of the *isnād*. Al-Bukhārī not only verified that contiguous links in the *isnād* were contemporaries, he also made sure that they had actually met. For Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj it was sufficient if the two were contemporaries, even if he could not prove they had not actually met. Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj was content, in other words, with the possibility of an actual encounter between teacher and disciple.

Commentators have noted that more of al-Bukhārī’s narrators meet the requirements of just character (*ʿadala*) and retentiveness (*dabt*) than do those of Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj. Of the total of 430 or so of al-Bukhārī’s narrators, the critics have identified 80 as being of questionable stand-

ing or weak, whereas 160 of the total of 620 of Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj's narrators are said to be weak. About 89 of al-Bukhārī's *ḥadīths* have been identified as having some defect, whereas for Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj the figure stands at one hundred.

The *Sunan* (pl. of *sunnah*, lit., "beaten track") collections specialize in legal *ḥadīths*, known as *ahādīth al-ahkām*. The various chapters of *sunan* works are thus devoted to topics such as rules pertaining to cleanliness, prayers, fasting, and the *hajj* pilgrimage, as well as marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance, and so forth. The *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* of Sulaymān ibn Ash'ath al-Sijistānī (d. 888), which consists of 4,800 *ḥadīths*, stands out for its comprehensive treatment of legal *ḥadīths*. Abū Dāwūd did not confine his *Sunan* to the compilation of *sahīh ḥadīths*, but also included *ḥadīths* in the *ḥasan* ("fair") category. Abū Dāwūd claimed, however, that whenever a *ḥadīth* seemed weak to him, he identified it as such and specified its point of weakness. This would imply that when he did not specify any weakness in a *ḥadīth*, it was deemed to be *sahīh*. *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* has been ranked third in order of reliability after *al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. Abū Dāwūd also traveled widely in his quest to collect and verify *ḥadīths* and acquired such a reputation as a teacher of *ḥadīths* that students came to him from wide and far.

The *Sunan al-Nasā'ī* of Ḥāfiz Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shay'ayb al-Nasā'ī (d. 915) stands next in order of ranking to after the *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, and consists of 5,000 legal *ḥadīths*, of which a great deal had already appeared in previous collections. Nasā'ī wrote his *Sunan* in two stages. His initial collection, entitled *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (the greater *sunan*), contained *ḥadīths* in the three categories of Sound, Fair, and Weak, and was presented to the Abbasid ruler of Ramla in Palestine. Nasā'ī was then asked to compile a work that only contained *sahīh ḥadīths*, and so he winnowed the *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* down to a smaller collection named *Al-Muṭtaba min al-Sunan* (The select from the *sunan*). This version is the one currently in use and is said to contain very few defective or weak *ḥadīths*. *Al-Nasā'ī* is ranked equally with the *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, yet the latter is preferred as it provides additional insights of interest to jurists.

Next in the *sunan* category is *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* by Abū 'Isā Muḥammad al-Tirmidhī (d. 915), which is also included among the six standard collections. *Ḥadīth* scholars have placed this work in the *sunan* category due to its arrangement and the style of its chapters, which are both in line with works of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Some have also placed *al-Tirmidhī* in the *jamī'* ("comprehensive") category, as it is not strictly confined to legal *ḥadīths*. One of the distinctive features of this work is that it first gives the principle *isnād* of a *ḥadīth*, and then gives other alternative *isnāds*. It focuses on *ḥadīths* that were practiced and generally accepted by Muslim jurists, and is thus thought to be free of spurious *ḥadīths*, even though it is not totally devoid of ones that are weak or defective.

The last of the *sunan* among the six standard collections is *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, by Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, better known as ibn Mājah (d. 886). The book contains 4,341 *ḥadīths*, of which 3,002 had been recorded by previous authors, leaving 1,339 *ḥadīths* recorded by ibn Mājah alone. *Sunan Ibn Mājah* contains *ḥadīths* in all three categories of Sound, Fair, and Weak, which is why it was not included among the six standard collections until the early twelfth century, when Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqīsi (d. 1227) included it among a list of reliable works—after which other writers followed suit. Until that time, the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik had been ranked as the sixth of the leading *ḥadīth* collections, but the *Muwatta* contained very little that was not already known, and thus came to be considered less important than the *Ibn Mājah*.

CRITICISM. The main purpose of *ḥadīth* criticism is to verify the authenticity of a *ḥadīth* through methods of enquiry that roughly resemble double-checking and cross-examination. The Prophet is reported to have said in a *ḥadīth*, "One who intentionally tells a lie about me, let him be sure of his place in Fire (of Hell)." This and other similar prophetic warnings led to a cautious approach on the part of the companions and other *ḥadīth* transmitters, who were mostly careful not to narrate *ḥadīths* about which they had doubts. The four early Islamic caliphs (*khulafā' rāshidūn*) made a point of criticizing some of their fellow companions who narrated *ḥadīths* that were not directly known to them, or that they had doubts about. Some of the less reliable seeming were asked to produce evidence of the veracity of their reports. The subsequent spread of *ḥadīths* to remote parts of the Islamic domain also gave rise to apprehensions about the presence of error and distortion in *ḥadīths*. A separate branch of *ḥadīth* studies, known as *al-jarḥ wa'l-ta'dīl* ("impugnment and validation," also known as *naqd al-ḥadīth*, or *ḥadīth* criticism), was developed as a result, and numerous writers in almost every period contributed to its growth. Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn (d. 847), 'Alī al-Madīnī (d. 848), and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal were the early pioneers, after which almost every leading scholars of *ḥadīths*, including al-Bukhārī, Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī, and others wrote one or more books on the biographies of *ḥadīth* transmitters, their strengths and weaknesses, and factors that influenced the reliability of their reports. A vast body of biographical literature, known as *asmā' al-rijāl* (lit., "names of authorities") and *tabaqāt* ("generations of *ḥadīth* transmitters"), developed as a result.

Whenever the reliability of a *ḥadīth* transmitter is questioned, two approaches are possible: one is to attempt a validation (*al-ta'dīl*) of the transmitter's reliability and uprightness, the other is to enter into a process of disqualification known as *al-jarḥ* (lit., "wounding," "impugnment"). The methods by which impugnment is attempted are, on the whole, more rigorous than what is usually required for validation. *Ḥadīth* scholars have employed special terms that indicate grades of reliability, and also ones that suggest degrees of weakness. Terms such as *thabṭun* ("proof"), *hujjatun* ("strong," "firm"), *ḥāfiz* ("retentive"), and *dabīṭ* ("accurate"),

in reference to transmitters, indicate the first degree of *taʿdīl*, whereas expressions such as *ṣadūq* (“truthful”), *sāliḥ al-ḥadīth* (“fit to narrate ḥadīth”), and *la bāʿa bihi* (“no objection”) tend to come next in ranking. Impugnment is established through the use of terms such as *majhūl* (“obscure”), *dāʿif* (“weak”), *matruk* (“abandoned”), *mut-taham biʾl-kidhb* (“accused of lying”), and *kadhhdhāb/waddāʿ* (“liar,” “forger”). Broadly speaking, specifying the grounds for one’s assessment is necessary for impugnment, but not for validation. *Ḥadīth* scholars thus tend to validate transmitters in a few words without elaborating on their good qualities, whereas brevity of this kind is not enough for purposes of impugnment.

Comparison of sources and checking on dates and localities are among the most commonly employed methods of *ḥadīth* criticism. To verify the accuracy of a doubtful *ḥadīth*, comparison is attempted between the various versions of the *ḥadīth* reported by different students of one scholar, or between statements made by the same scholar at different times, or between the *ḥadīth* and the relevant text of the Qurʾān, and so forth. In some cases where a disciple claims to have received a *ḥadīth* directly from a teacher, further examination of their respective localities and dates proves that the two could not have met. Some other grounds of impugnment that *ḥadīth* scholars have listed include:

1. Attribution of lies and falsehood to the Prophet.
2. A reputation for telling lies, even if no specific charge is proven.
3. A reputation for negligence and mistakes.
4. Sinful conduct, whether consisting of words or acts.
5. A reputation for making improbable statements and indulgence of the imagination (*wahm*).
6. Disagreement with reliable authorities and narrators.
7. Obscurity and lack of clear personal identification.
8. Advocacy of pernicious innovation (*bidʿah*).
9. Bad memory.

Validation and impugnment are only acceptable from qualified and impartial persons. Although backbiting (*ghība*) is normally forbidden, *ḥadīth* scholars have generally held it to be permissible to the extent that it is necessary in the context of impugnment.

AUTHENTICITY. The prerequisites that every *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* must fulfill to be considered authentic may be summarized as follows:

1. The *ḥadīth* must be supported by a sound and verified *isnād*.
2. It is required that every link in the *isnād* was known as an upright and respected person (*ʿadl*) at the time they reported the *ḥadīth*, even if they did not yet have that reputation when they received it. The minimum requirement of uprightness (*ʿadala*) is that the person be

free of grave sins (*kabāʾir*) and not have persisted in committing minor sins (*saghāʾir*) or degrading or profane acts, such as associating with persons of ill-repute, making silly jokes, or exhibiting antisocial behavior. The fundamental positive behaviors that *ʿadala* is associated with are observance of religious duties and personal decorum (*murūʾa*). The different schools of law tend to differ on such issues as whether or not the holding of views that amount to pernicious innovation (*bidʿah*) or caprice (*hawāʾ*) is grounds for disqualification—though generally such views are permitted in a narrator, unless the person is actively engaged in inviting others to embrace them. Various methods have been identified by which to verify the probity of person, including, for example, *tazkiya* (lit., “purging”), which may consist of testimony from witnesses, character references from colleagues, or consideration of general local reputation.

3. None of the transmitters in an *isnād* can be implicated in forgery, or in sectarian, political, or theological disputes, especially in cases where such disputes are actually related to the theme of the *ḥadīth*.
4. The transmitter must be a contemporary of the teacher on whose authority he related the *ḥadīth*. As mentioned above, al-Bukhārī further stipulated that the two must have actually met. Some have also specified that it is necessary for the narrator to have been certain of the reliability of his teacher.
5. The transmitter must qualify as *dabt*—that is, they must possess a retentive memory and be capable of accurate renderings of *ḥadīths*.
6. The transmitter must not be obscure or unknown (*majhūl*): at least two upright persons must have narrated a *ḥadīth* from them. Only the companions are exempt from this requirement.
7. The text (*matn*) of a *ḥadīth* must be in the dignified style of the prophetic language. The presence, therefore, of obscene, ridiculous, or objectionable elements is taken as a sign of forgery.
8. The text and message of a *ḥadīth* must be consistent with the Qurʾān. A clear and irreconcilable conflict with the Qurʾān would thus render the *ḥadīth* unacceptable.
9. A *ḥadīth* is also rejected if it fails the test of historical evidence. A *ḥadīth*—for example, that the Prophet said such and such in a public bath in Medina—is rejected simply because no public bath existed in Medina at the time.
10. The text of a *ḥadīth* must not be contrary to reason. For instance, a *ḥadīth* claiming that the parents of the prophet Muḥammad rose from the dead to embrace Islam would be rejected.

MODERN ATTITUDES. Modern Islamic scholars and the majority of Muslims continue to consider *ḥadīths* a part of es-

tablished dogma, and authoritative proof of the tenets, laws, and values of Islam, next only to the Qurʾān in importance. The spread of a modern scientific mindset has, however, led to much discussion of the authenticity of individual *ḥadīths*. The presence of forgery in the larger mass of *ḥadīths* is not denied, and many *ḥadīth* scholars have been involved in painstaking efforts to identify and isolate unreliable *ḥadīths*, which have been gathered together in collections under the general heading *mawduʿat* (“forgeries”). Despite this meticulous work, however, doubts remain.

While acknowledging that most of the forged *ḥadīths* had been isolated in the *mawduʿat* literature, Muḥammad Zubayr Siddīqī, writing in 1962, argued that there were still “some weak or forged” *ḥadīths* in the standard collections, which he identified with certain topics, such as the antichrist (*dajjāl*) and the last guide (*mahdī*). Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1993) drew attention to *ḥadīths* in the standard collections that are at odds with the Qurʾān. He then categorized a number of such *ḥadīths* as “rejected” or “discarded” (*al-aḥadīth al-marduda*).

The late Shaykh of al-Azhar, Maḥmūd Shaltūt, criticized (c. 1965) the “strange phenomenon” of *ḥadīths* being labeled *mutawattir* (“continuously recurrent”) even though they do not meet the requirements of that category, simply because of their diffusion and frequent occurrence in scholarly works. This tendency can even be observed in some of the Qurʾān commentaries, in which weak *ḥadīths* are sometimes labeled *mutawattir*.

The contemporary scholar Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī has drawn attention to *ḥadīths* in the category of *al-targhīb waʾl-tarhīb* (“encouragement and warning”), which *ḥadīth* scholars have often uncritically accepted, thus undermining the reliability of *ḥadīths* generally. This is because scholars have often neglected to apply the conditions of admissibility to this category of *ḥadīth*—on the assumption that they consist of moral advice and are in any case optional. Works of Qurʾān exegesis are also not free of weak and even forged *ḥadīths* on such topics as the relative superiority and virtues of the various chapters and verses of the Qurʾān. Even prominent Qurʾān commentators “such as al-Zamakhsharī, al-Thaʿālibī, al-Bayḍawī and others have persisted in quoting fabricated statements in the name of *ḥadīth*” (al-Qaradāwī, *Kayfa Nataʿamalu maʿ al-Sunna al-Nabawiyah*, p. 36).

Writing in 1961, the Shīʿī author Muḥammad Najmī Zanjānī offered an evaluation representative of both Shīʿī and Sunnī opinion when he claimed that *ḥadīth* scholars have generally placed much emphasis on *isnāds* and the reliability of *ḥadīth* transmitters, but not enough on the text and message of *ḥadīths*. The Egyptian scholar Fahmī Huwaydī, while acknowledging (1989) this weakness of the *ḥadīth* collections, pointed out that many unqualified people with little insight into *ḥadīth* methodology have lightly dismissed *ḥadīths* and advanced ill-considered views in the name of reform and *ijtihād* (“independent reasoning”). Huwaydī ex-

tended this critique to the work of scholars at some Egyptian universities, including the renowned al-Azhar.

Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī has stressed the need for compilation of no less than three comprehensive encyclopedias on *ḥadīths*, one on *ḥadīth* narrators and their biographies, another containing the text (*matn*) of *ḥadīths*, and a third one to be drawn from the first two and devoted exclusively to *ḥadīths* in the *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* categories. Selection of material should be made strictly according to the scientific criteria that leading *ḥadīth* scholars have developed, and modern research tools, such as computers and comprehensive indices, should be employed.

In *Ḥadīth Methodology* (2002) the present writer observed that the existing methodology and criteria of *ḥadīth* criticism were basically adequate and that *ḥadīth* scholars were also reasonably successful in their efforts to isolate the fabricated matter in their *mawduʿat* collections. However, much of the *mawduʿat* literature was written long after the standard collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj. In addition, some of the more refined methods of *ḥadīth* criticism were developed after the time of al-Bukhārī and Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj. There is good reason, therefore, to undertake an extensive review and consolidation of *ḥadīths* with the aid both of the existing *ḥadīth* methodologies and of more modern means and methods of research.

SHĪʿĪ HADĪTH. The Shīʿah Ithna Ashariyah (or the Twelver Shīʿah), who represent the largest group of Shīʿah and mainly reside in Iran and Iraq, rely on their own collections of *ḥadīths*. Of the four most authoritative Shīʿī collections, *Al-Kāfi fī ʿIlm al-Dīn* (What is sufficient for knowledge of religion) by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Kulaynī (d. 939) is rated first, followed, in order of priority, by the *Man lā Yahduruhu al-Faqīh* (One who is not visited by a jurist) of Ibn Bābawayhi (al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq ibn Bābūyah al-Qummī; d. 991), and by the two works of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 1067), namely *Al-Isṭibṣār fīmā Ukhṭulifa min al-Akhbār* (Examination of what is in dispute among the reports) and *Tahdhīb al-Ahkām* (Verified rulings). *Al-Kāfi* has 326 chapters and 16,199 *ḥadīths* from the Prophet and the *imāms*. It deals with three basic themes, namely, theology and the imamate, which are the basics of religion (*uṣūl*); the *furūʿ*, or details of positive law; and *al-rawḍa min al-Kāfi* (“flowers from *al-Kāfi*”), which include miscellaneous topics related to *fiqh*. Ibn Bābawayhi’s collection, which records 5,963 *ḥadīths*, was compiled with the goal, as the title suggests, of diminishing the reader’s need to consult a jurist. Al-Ṭūsī’s *Tahdhīb* is the next largest of the four collections, containing 13,590 *ḥadīths*, while *Al-Isṭibṣār* contains 5,511 *ḥadīths*. The former lays greater emphasis on methodology in its verification of the rulings of *ḥadīths*, whereas the latter was basically intended to be a supplement to *Tahdhīb*. Whereas the leading Sunnī scholars, such as al-Shāfiʿī, emphasized accuracy in the *isnād* and text of *ḥadīths*, al-Ṭūsī was largely concerned with the practicableness of the *ḥadīths*’ contents. All four collections rely on *isnāds* reaching

back only to the recognized Shī'ī *imāms*. Two of the *imāms* who feature most prominently in these works are the fifth and sixth *imāms*, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 735) and Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765), esteemed members of the Prophet's household who are credited with having changed Shiism from a primarily political movement into something with a juridical and scholastic focus.

Unlike their Sunnī counterparts, Shī'ī scholars were not preoccupied with the search for sound *isnāds* reaching back to the Prophet, because the infallibility (*ʿiṣmah*) of the *imāms* precluded the need for such verification. Shī'ī *ḥadīths* were mainly collected in the tenth through eleventh centuries, in part because of the "occultation" of the Shī'ah's living *imām* in 873, and also because the Buyid rulers who were friendly to the Shī'ah only came to power in 945. Although a great deal of the Sunnī and Shī'ī *ḥadīths* are similar in content and message, Sunnī and Shī'ī scholars tend to differ widely in their respective approaches to authenticity and *isnād*. A four-fold classification of *ḥadīths* is employed in Shī'ī collections:

1. The *sahīh* or sound *ḥadīth* is one with an *isnād* that connects it without a break to one of the *imāms*.
2. The *mūwaththaq*, or reliable, *ḥadīth* is one supported by an *isnād* in which the companion of an *imām* unequivocally declares it acceptable.
3. The *ḥasan*, or Fair, *ḥadīth* is one with an *isnād* including a transmitter (from the *imām*) whose uprightness (*ʿadala*) is not unequivocally established.
4. The *da'if*, or weak, *ḥadīth* is one that does not fall within the first three categories.

Like their Sunnī counterparts, Shī'ī scholars have expressed reservations about the reliability of some material in their *ḥadīth* collections. They have also questioned the reliability of using *aḥad* (solitary) *ḥadīths* to establish a decisive legal or religious ruling. Like most Sunnī scholars, the Shī'ah maintain that all the obligatory rulings of *ḥadīths* must be proven as a matter of certainty. Because *aḥad ḥadīths*, those reported by a small number of unconnected individuals, do not qualify as *mutawatir*, they are not enough to establish a decisive *sharī'ah* ruling.

SEE ALSO Islamic Law, article on Sharī'ah; Sunnah; Tafsīr.

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MOHAMMAD HASHIM KAMALI (2005)

ḤAFETS ḤAYYIM SEE KAGAN, YISRA'EL ME'IR

ḤĀFİZ SHĪRĀZĪ (AH c. 726–792/c. 1326–1390 CE), in fuller form Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfīz-i Shīrāzī,