

Objections of the Rejecters of Hadith and a response to them

1. The rejecters of Hadith say that Hadith cannot be accorded legal status since Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam prohibited the recording of Hadith.

The answer to this objection has been dealt with already. We have established that Hadith was recorded in the era of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, even though it was restricted to a few individuals only. The prohibition of writing either referred to writing it with Qur'anic text, or it was directed to the common people who were unskilled in writing whilst special individuals were excluded from this prohibition. Similarly, it could be said that the prohibition was abrogated. Similarly, the nature of the Hadith prohibiting Hadith transcription is disputable; it is either marfu' or mawquf. With all the possible responses to it, as well as the difference of opinion regarding *rafa'* and *waqf*, it cannot be used to oppose authentic marfu' Ahadith.

2. The rejecters of Hadith say that the Qur'an Majid was revealed in the Arabic language as stated in the verse: '*We have revealed an Arabic Qur'an*,'⁵⁹ and the Qur'an also says: '*In clear Arabic language*.'⁶⁰ Therefore, if the Qur'an has been revealed in clear Arabic language, knowledge of Arabic is sufficient to understand its contents and there is no need for Hadith.

The answer to this objection is that the Sahabah Radiallahu Anhum were masters of the Arabic language, but they were in need of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam's clarification. This point is illustrated with the following examples:

When the verse [إن الله وملئكته يصلون على النبي يأبها الذين آمنوا صلوا عليه وسلموا تسليما] was revealed, the Sahabah Radiallahu Anhum told Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam that they were aware of the manner of *Salaam*, but they were unaware of the method of *Salat*. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam then taught them how to convey *Salat* upon him after reciting the Tash-ahhud.⁶¹

Similarly, when the following verse was revealed:

الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أولئك لهم الأمن وهم مهتدون

The Sahabah Radiallahu Anhum said, 'Who among us has not oppressed himself?' Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam told them that a specific type of oppression was referred to, which is polytheism and not sins in general.⁶²

Similarly, Sayyidah Aayesha Radiallahu Anha had a misunderstanding about the following verse:

وأما من أوتي كتابه بيمينه فسوف يحاسب حسابا يسيرا

She told Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam that according to what she heard from him, anyone who is called to give an account of their deeds will ultimately be punished. However, this verse speaks about giving an account but it is silent about chastisement. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam resolved her misunderstanding by telling her that only those who will be instructed to give a detailed account of

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their deeds [المناقشة] will be punished. The *Hisaab* in the above verse refers to one's deeds merely being presented without being compelled to account for it.⁶³

Similarly, a Sahabi by the name of 'Adi Ibn Hatim Radiallahu Anhu had a misunderstanding regarding the following verse:

وكلوا واشربوا حتى يتبين لكم الخيط الأبيض من الخيط الأسود

He understood the verse in its literal sense, thereby implying a white thread and a black thread. Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam informed him that the white thread was a reference to day and the black thread, to night. Therefore, one intending to fast could continue eating as long as the night remains. With the crack of dawn, *Suhur* should be terminated.⁶⁴

It is evident from these few examples that mastery over the Arabic language is insufficient to understand the Qur'an Majid and grasp its contents.

3. The rejecters of Hadith state that the Qur'an Majid is comprehensive and clear. This implies that it is not in need of clarification from Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, for if it is, how can it remain comprehensive and clear?

The answer is that there is no contradiction between the comprehensiveness of the Qur'an Majid and the necessity for Hadith because the Qur'an is comprehensive as far as principles and fundamental issues are concerned. The Hadith expounds these principles and fundamentals. It is commonly said that '*the speech of kings is the king of all speech.*' Since Allah Ta'ala is the King of kings, would it be possible for just anyone to grasp the essence of His speech? When just anyone cannot understand a philosophic text, then how can everyone independently understand the Qur'an Majid, which is the speech of the King of all kings? Can it really be said that there is no need for elucidation and clarification?

4. The rejecters of Hadith state that Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam is like an ambassador; he was only entrusted with the task of conveying Allah's message to humanity. Since he has accomplished the task of conveying the message, it is not necessary to obey him or follow his Ahadith.

The answer to this objection is provided in the following verse of the Qur'an Majid. Allah Ta'ala says:

هو الذي بعث في الأميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة وإن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين

This verse states that Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam was sent to impart the knowledge of the book and to impart wisdom. How then can his status be likened to that of an ambassador? Similarly, Allah Ta'ala says:

وأنزلنا إليك الذكر لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم ولعلهم يتفكرون

It is evident from this verse that the task of expounding the contents of the Qur'an Majid was assigned to Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. Allah Ta'ala also states the following:

لا تحرك به لسانك لتعجل به إن علينا جمعه وقرآنه فإذا قرأه فاتبع قرآنه ثم إن علينا بيانه

The word 'Bayaan' above, refers to the same thing denoted by the phrase, [ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة] and the words, [لتبين للناس]. The Qur'an Majid also states the following:

إنا أنزلنا إليك الكتاب بالحق لتحكم بين الناس بما أراك الله ولا تكن للخائنين خصيما

In the light of the above verses of the Qur'an Majid, how can it be said that Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam held the position of an ambassador, sent to deliver a message only.

Similarly, the Qur'an Majid ordains salah, zakah, fasting and pilgrimage but the details of each one of these cannot be found in the Qur'an Majid. It is the Ahadith, which shed adequate light on the method of discharging these obligations. If Hadith is ignored how would one be able to establish salah and discharge zakah?

Similarly, the vastness of the Arabic language adds another dimension to the need for elucidation. Many words in the Qur'an Majid convey dual meanings. If the Ahadith of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam are ignored, the doors of irreligiousness would be flung open. Every person will have a licence to interpret the Qur'an Majid freely, thereby causing unprecedented dissension and strife.

5. The rejecters of Hadith attempt to create a misunderstanding that since the Qur'an proclaims that 'authority is only for Allah', [why should one subscribe to the Hadith, thereby] endorsing obedience to the messenger of Allah [and granting him authority].

The following verses of the Qur'an Majid would adequately refute the above claim:

وما آتاكم الرسول فخذوه وما نهاكم عنه فانتهوا واتقوا الله إن الله شديد العقاب

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة حسنة لمن كان يرجو الله واليوم الآخر وذكر الله كثيرا

وما كان لمؤمن ولا مؤمنة إذا قضى الله ورسوله أمرا أن يكون لهم الخيرة من أمرهم ومن يعص الله ورسوله فقد ضل ضلالا مبينا

يأيها الذين آمنوا أطيعوا الله وأطيعوا الرسول وأولى الأمر منكم فإن تنازعتم في شئ فردوه إلى الله والرسول

فلا وربك لا يؤمنون حتى يحكمونك فيما شجر بينهم ثم لا يجدوا في أنفسهم حرجا مما قضيت ويسلموا تسليما

يأيها الذين آمنوا استجبوا لله وللرسول إذا دعاكم لما يحييكم

Every one of the above verses commands us to obey the messenger and to follow him; hence they cannot be cast aside. The apparent contradiction arising from the verse, 'authority is only for Allah', is eradicated by the following verse:

من يطع الرسول فقد أطاع الله

It is clear from the above that obedience to the Rasul is actually obedience to Allah. Similarly, Allah Ta'ala states the following:

Since the speech of the Rasul stems from revelation, the instructions that he gives are actually given by Allah.

6. The rejecters of Hadith also say that if it is incumbent to follow the Ahadith of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, it would be impossible to carry out this injunction because the collections of Hadith available to us is a conspiracy of the non-Arabs. Many wrong things have been attributed to Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam in the process of collecting Hadith, hence the object of obeying the Rasul would be defeated by following such Ahadith.

The answer to this is that with the exception of the Qur'an Majid, there is no collection on earth which can match the authenticity and genuineness of the Hadith collections. The Muhaddithiin invented the science of *Asma' ar-Rijal* and stipulated the laws of *Jarh* and *Ta'diil*. They scrutinised every Hadith thoroughly, in a manner that has no precedence. They distinguished fabricated Ahadith from authentic one's and even compiled fabricated Hadith in separate books. They made lists of fabricators and pinpointed all those narrators who are considered unreliable. Orientalists have applauded this science known as *Asma' ar-Rijal*; they attest that no nation has ever been able to document and preserve the teachings of its religion as the Muslims have and no nation will ever be able to do so ever again.⁶⁵

The orientalist, Jews and Christians testify that the Muslims have preserved the teachings of Islam in a most remarkable and phenomenal manner. They are able to trace every sanad back to Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, linking every fact to its original source. Historical reports generally contain unsubstantiated facts and there is no system in place to detect true reports from false reports. This misguided group regard historical reports credible but fail to acknowledge the authenticity of Hadith.

7. The rejecters of Hadith claim that many Ahadith deal with matters which are in conflict with logic and reason. How could such matters be promoted and promulgated?

The answer to this is that do they prefer to follow their defective, puny intelligence in contrast to the teachings of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam? Do they not know that the human intellect is inadequate to guide human beings to eternal bliss without the assistance of divine revelation? The intellect can only function efficiently when it is enlightened with the light of revelation. Those who ignore revelation end up subscribing to weird and bizarre beliefs.

Consequently, philosophers initially claimed that it is impossible to capture and retain abstract things or to measure them. This fact has been proven wrong because voices can now be recorded and the heat of a fever, which is abstract is measured with a thermometer. Similarly, x-ray machines capture light and convey correct information about the internal parts of the human body.

The same people once claimed that the sky is in motion and the earth is still and they were eventually forced to amend this theory. Similarly, they say that the skies do not exist; it is in reality the limit of one's vision. However, this perception has also been refuted. They initially considered it impossible to travel to the moon but man has walked on the moon. Can this defective intellect ever be trusted when it is so prone to error?

They claim that the Ahadith of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam contradict human intellect. Can

they prove any single matter which is contrary to intelligence?

If the human intellect should pass judgement upon the Ahadith of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam, then which intellect should be considered as the yardstick, since human beings differ tremendously in intellectual capacity. If everyone's intellect is adequate, this would lead to utter chaos and confusion; it would cause differences that would never be resolved.

If the intellect of specific individuals should be used as the yardstick then what criteria would determine who qualifies and who does not? Similarly, if these special people differ, then would this dispute be resolved through 'Aql or Naql? If the dispute should be resolved through intellect, the differences will never be resolved as no one would be prepared to accept that his thinking is flawed. If the difference should be resolved through Naql then this is what we have been promoting all along; there is no solution other than trusting that which has been conveyed to us through divine revelation.

It should also be noted that those individuals are generally selected to serve as ambassadors who are highly intelligent, sensible, dignified and prudent. Would Allah Ta'ala not select people who possess these characteristics in greater intensity for the exalted post of prophethood? The reality of the matter is that the Ambiya Alayhimus Salam were indeed the finest specimens of human perfection, who were extremely intelligent, wise and prudent. Normal human beings could never compare with them. Therefore Allah Ta'ala says:

الله أعلم حيث يجعل رسالته

Hence, Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam - being the final messenger of Allah - was the most intelligent and most knowledgeable of all human beings. The Qur'an Majid states the following about his knowledge:

وعلمك ما لم تكن تعلم وكان فضل الله عليك عظيما

The rejecters of Hadith have erred in declaring matters which people are not familiar with as matters which are in conflict with human intelligence; nothing contained in the Hadith can ever be in conflict with sound reason and intelligence. Matters in conflict with intelligence are those, which when accepted, result in accepting the impossible whereas none of the teachings of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam pertains to the impossible. Have they not considered that rejection of Hadith would cast the life of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam into obscurity and that the essence of his prophethood, which is the final guidance for humanity, would fade into oblivion leaving humanity to grope about in the darkness of deviation?

The Qur'an Majid in stating [فقد لبثت فيكم عمرا من قبله] declares the character, demeanour and blessed life of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam a proof of his claim to prophethood. In his forty-year life amidst them, he neither opened a book, held a pen to write, attended a class for formal instruction, nor did he compose poetry and attend such gatherings. Despite this, his trustworthiness and honesty was accepted by one and all. He was known for his lofty character and absolute innocence. When he claimed prophethood, he uttered speech which was miraculously eloquent, extremely noble and sensible and its effects were such that it breathed life into lifeless souls, such that can never find any parallel. He educated human beings who were in the abyss of ignorance and foolishness and adorned them with noble conduct so that they became the beacons of guidance for generations to come. These people then became the educators of humanity and although they were initially in the abyss of disbelief, they ultimately recognised Allah. A poet expressed this in the following couplet:

جو نہ ترے خود راہ پر اوروں کے ہادی بن گئے
اللہ اللہ کیا نظر تھی جس نے مردوں کو مسیحا کر دیا

Besides living an ideal life, Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam left behind a large group of individuals adorned with faith, conviction and noble character, as an example for human beings till the end of time. The Qur'an testifies to the Imaan of these individuals in the following verses:

اولئك هم المؤمنون حقا
الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أولئك لهم الأمن وهم مهتدون

Many other verses of the Qur'an Majid speak of their lofty status in the sight of Allah. The Ahadith also extol their great position, an example of which is the following:

اصحابي كالنجوم بأيهم اقتديتم إهتديتم ، مشكوة المصابيح -
باب مناقب الصحابة

Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam presented a perfect system for regulating all facets of human activity through the Qur'an Majid and by adopting these teachings, life on earth becomes absolute bliss. Nevertheless, rejection of Hadith would cast his blessed life into obscurity and it would create doubts about his prophethood.

8. The rejecters of Hadith say that it is claimed that Imam Abu Zur'ah Razi Rahimahullah knew 700 000 Ahadith.⁶⁶ Similarly, Imam Ahmad Rahimahullah compiled his Musnad from a selection of 750 000 Ahadith,⁶⁷ Imam Bukhari Rahimahullah compiled his Sahih from 600 000 Ahadith⁶⁸ and Imam Muslim Rahimahullah compiled his book from a selection of 300 000 Ahadith.⁶⁹ However it is commonly said the actual number of Sahih Ahadith amount to 50 000 only.⁷⁰ Where have these exorbitant figures come from and how can it be possible for anyone to retain such a large number of Ahadith?

The first part of this objection - the contradiction between 50 000 and other figures - stems from ignorance about the terminology of the Muhaddithiin. A Hadith essentially comprises of a sanad and a matn. A single matn is sometimes transmitted via numerous Turuq and Asaniid. A common person would regard this as one Hadith, but the Muhaddithiin consider it multiple Ahadith as the sanad differs. The Hadith, 'Actions are according to their intentions' is one Hadith but it may be transmitted through 200, 250 or 700 different chains of transmission. The Muhaddithiin therefore regard it as 200, 250 or 700 Ahadith. Therefore Imam Haakim Rahimahullah has recorded the number of mutun [as 50 000] and the reports about Imam Bukhari, Imam Ahmad and Imam Muslim Rahimahumullah reveal the number of turuq and Asaniid [which they gathered].

A second answer to the disparity between 50 000 and other figures is that the Ahadith of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam total to fifty thousand, but the Aathar of the Sahabah and Tabi'iin Rahimahumullah inflate this figure to hundreds of thousands of reports, which is not far-fetched.

Phenomenal memory of the Muhaddithiin

There are many factors to consider about the memory of the Muhaddithiin. Firstly, the phenomenal mental capacity of the Arabs is proverbial and when Allah Ta'ala wishes to take a task from someone, he endows them with the capacity to see it through. Consequently, Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, the governor of Madinah Munawwarah, heard about the phenomenal memory of Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah Radiallahu Anhu and decided to test him. He once sent for him and after an initial conversation, began questioning him about Hadith. He placed a scribe behind a curtain to secretly record all the Ahadith which he requested Abu Hurairah Radiallahu Anhu to narrate. The scribe narrates that in this manner, he kept on writing until he had recorded a substantial amount of Hadith. The scribe narrates that Marwan terminated that gathering and did nothing about it for a year. After one year, he summoned Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah Radiallahu Anhu again and made the scribe assume his covert position. When he questioned Abu Hurairah Radiallahu Anhu, he recited every one of those Ahadith without adding or deleting a single letter from any Hadith.⁷¹

Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik requested Imam Zuhri Rahimahullah to record a few Ahadith for his daughter to memorise. In compliance, he recorded 400 Ahadith. After some time lapsed, he requested him to re-record those Ahadith. When the second script was compared to the first, there were no discrepancies.⁷²

Hafiz Abu Zur'ah Rahimahullah said the following about himself:⁷³

إن في بيتي ما كتبت منذ خمسين سنة ولم أطلعه منذ كتبتة وإني أعلم في أي كتاب هو في أي ورقة هو في أي صفحة
هو في أي سطر هو

It is commonly known about Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas Radiallahu Anhuma that 'Umar Ibn Abi Rabi'ah, the famous poet once read a lengthy poem comprising seventy couplets to him. When the poet left, he was deliberating on one of the couplets and there was a difference of opinion about it between him and another person in that gathering. Sayyiduna Abdullah Radiallahu Anhu recited the couplet correctly. The other person asked in astonishment, 'Have you memorised the couplet after listening to it just once?' He told the person that he had retained the entire poem by hearing it just once.⁷⁴ These are a few examples of their phenomenal retention capacity.

Another factor contributing to their remarkable memory is that they had intense love for Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. One in love remembers every word and gesture of his beloved, even after seeing or hearing it once only.

It is also a reality that specialising in Hadith was a source of great honour and pride in that era. Hence, the Muhaddithiin dedicated their existence to the service of Hadith and sacrificed for it. If anyone reads their biographies, they will see how they undertook difficult journeys and how many Shuyukh they acquired Hadith from. Considering all these factors, it is not far-fetched to understand how they memorised so many Ahadith.

9. The rejecters of Hadith say that Hadith cannot be accorded legal status considering the issue of *Riwayah bil-ma'na*. One cannot be sure about the changes that each Hadith was subjected to.

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The answer to this is that Hadith constitutes reports of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam's words, deeds, characteristics and tacit approval. The objection against *Riwayah bil-ma'na* can only be considered as far as reporting the words of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam are concerned. However, it does not apply to reports of his deeds, characteristics and tacit approval. Secondly, the stringent conditions for *Riwayah bil-ma'na* cannot affect the authenticity of the Hadith. Consequently, Hafiz Ibn as-Salaah states the following:

فإن لم يكن عالما عارفا بالأفاظ ومقاصدها خبيراً بما يحيل معانيها بصيراً بمقادير التفاوت بينهما فلا خلاف أنه لا يجوز له ذلك إهـ

Similarly, one would often find a narrator saying,

أو قال كذا أو كذا

It is evident from this expression that they primarily attempted to narrate the exact words of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam.

10. The rejecters of Hadith say that most Ahadith are categorised as *Khabar Wahid* and such narrations provide information which is classified as *Zhanni*. The Qur'an Majid says the following about *Zhann*:

إن الظن لا يغني من الحق شيئاً

How can Ahadith then be accorded legal status?

The answer to this objection is that the above word often denotes conviction or *Yaqin*, as is evident from the following verses:

الذين يظنون أنهم ملقوا ربهم
وظن داود أنما فتناه فاستغفر ربه

Similarly, the word *Zhann* also denotes a compelling inclination, therefore when a very credible narrator transmits something, one is compellingly inclined to accept it as truth and even though there is a possibility of its falsity, this possibility is overlooked. This system of accepting information is commonly used in the world we live in. If we do away with it, there will be a breakdown in many spheres of human activity and engagement.

The word *Zhann* also denotes an unsubstantiated assumption. This particularly applies to the manner in which the polytheists assumed that their objects of worship have the status of a God. There is no justification for such an assumption. This is the connotation of *Zhann* which is condemned in the Qur'an Majid and it has no relevance to Hadith for the word *Zhann* applies in the first and second sense with respect to Hadith [i.e. conviction and a compelling inclination].

11. The rejecters of Hadith say that one often notices contradiction in Hadith. How can it then have legal status?

The answer to this is that contradiction cannot be found in Ahadith pertaining to Aqa'id, the being and attributes of Allah, resurrection, life after death, Ahadith pertaining to encouragement and warnings

and those dealing with conduct and character. However, certain Ahadith pertaining to *Abkaam* [i.e. laws] do have apparent contradiction, which is resolved through, Naskh, Tarjih, Tatbiq and Tawaqquf. Therefore, it is incorrect to refute Hadith on this flimsy premise.

Similarly, such apparent contradiction can be found even in the Qur'an Majid. At one juncture it states that the disbelievers will not ask one another and at another juncture it affirms that they will indeed ask one another.⁷⁵ The Qur'an also states that Allah will not speak to the disbelievers on that day and it also says that they will certainly be questioned.⁷⁶ These apparent contradictions are resolved in the Qur'an and can also be resolved in Hadith text. The Qur'an nonetheless retains its legal status and so too would Hadith retain its legitimacy. Apparent contradictions such as these cannot undermine its legal status.

75 Reference to Verse # 27 of Surah Saffaat and Verse # 101 of Surah Mu'mininun

76 See Verse # 174 of Surah Baqarah or Verse 77 of Surah Aal 'Imran and compare it to Verse # 24 of Surah Saffaat.