



## The science of the invalidation (*jarḥ*) and authentication (*ta<sup>c</sup>dīl*) of ḥadīth and its role in their protection and preservation

In the name of Allah All-Merciful, Most Merciful

### **The obligation to obey the Sunnah and the obligation to propagate it**

Know that after the Book (of Allah) the prophetic Sunnah is second in rank as a proof and as an obligation which must be acted upon and followed. He, may praise of Him be clearly manifest and may His name be exalted, has said: “And We have sent down the Reminder to you so that you can make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them” (the Bee: 44). The protection of the Sunnah is thus also a protecting of the Book - (that is,) a protection of its laws. Allah has taken upon Himself to protect His Book saying: “It is We Who have sent down the Reminder and We Who will preserve it” (Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 9); and given that (Allah’s) promise to preserve the Book (necessarily) includes protection of the Sunnah, so Allah has created men to protect the Sunnah from the machinations of the schemers, the intrigues of the liars and the distortions of the deviators. And He, may he be praised and exalted, commanded the mu’minūn to follow the Messenger, on whom be peace, and to keep firmly to the upright guidance saying: “Whatever the Messenger gives you, you should accept and whatever he forbids you, you should forego” (Sūrat al-Ḥashr - the Gathering: 7).

The Messenger ﷺ conveyed the message, ensured that people listened to it, commanded that it be conveyed to others and that others listen to it saying: “Convey (the Message) from me even it is a (single) āyah”; and “Allah helps the man who has heard something from us and who then conveys it as he had heard it. And it may well be that the transmitter is more attentive and retains it better than the one who listens” (at-Tirmidhī transmitted it); and “Whoever passes on a ḥadīth from me believing it to be false, then he will (be reckoned) among the liars”. However what (had been commanded)

would never have come to be had not the Islamic sharī'ah - and all that it contains with respect to (Allah's) promise and threat, His warning and giving of good news, the commanding to the good and the forbidding of evil - been protected; and had not the biographies of the men who committed (all) this to memory and the status and circumstances of the imāms who transmitted these (biographies) been preserved – lest the sharī'ah be adulterated by other (laws), as happened to that of the jews and christians through the addition of the sayings of their rabbis and priests. Thus no excuse can ever be accepted after this from anyone who rejects any part of the firmly established Sunnah. For this reason, the Muslims attached (such) importance to the transmission of the Sunnah and travelled (so widely) in order to obtain this (Sunnah) during the time of the companions and during the time after it up to the last period of narration at the end of the third century.

#### **The necessity of (the science of) verification (*naqd*)**

As it is impossible for every person to be present at all events it is inconceivable that those absent from these events may gain knowledge of these events except by way of oral or written transmission. Likewise, it is not possible for those born after these events to have knowledge of them except by way of narration from those before them. Moreover, given that the ḥadīth are reports, we are under an obligation to examine the status of the narrator from whom we heard the narration – (that is) as to whether his narration may be relied upon or not - and then to examine the status of the person from whom this man had narrated, and so on until (an examination of all) the intermediary (narrators in the chain of narration) is complete; we must ascertain whether the first narrator was actually present at the event or not and whether he was capable of understanding it and remembering it by heart; and then we must examine the subject-matter which has been narrated to see whether it accords with the rank and circumstances of the man to whom it is ascribed and to see whether what happened could have happened at that time.

#### **The existence of (the science of) verification (*naqd*) and meticulous scrutiny (*tadqīq*) at time of the Messenger ﷺ**

The Companions were endowed by Allah with the capacity to take upon themselves the burden of trust and to transmit the sharī'ah to the people; and their integrity (*ʿadālah*) is well established by virtue of the integrity accorded to them by Allah, by His declaration of their purity and by His

selecting them (above others). The integrity of none of them need be affirmed by any human being after Allah's affirmation of their integrity. (On the other hand) if no mention had been made by Allah and His Messenger about them, then it would have been necessary to establish absolute certainty as to their integrity with respect to the status and circumstances associated with them - that is, regarding the hijrah, jihād, their championing of Islam, their striving and expending of their wealth, their (extended) family of (fore)fathers and sons, their giving mutual advice and admonishment regarding the dīn, the strength of their imān and their degree of certainty.

The Companions ؓ did not lie (to others) and did not lie to each other. It is related from Ḥumayd who said: "We were with Anas ibn Mālik ؓ when he said: "By Allah, not everything which we relate to you from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ we have heard from him (directly) - but (there was no danger because) we did not lie to each other" (related from aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*, and his narrators are (ranked as) absolutely correct (ṣaḥīḥ)).

Thus on account of the general (level of) truthfulness and the widespread (degree of) trustworthiness among them they hardly needed to mention the chain of narration (isnād) and they did not (need to) scrutinise meticulously (what was narrated). Indeed, the matter was left up to the narrator himself - if he wanted to have the chain of transmission [isnād] attributed to himself he attributed it (to himself) and if he wanted to leave it out then he left it out.

However, making mistakes is part of the natural disposition of man (fitrah). A person may make a mistake through forgetfulness or he may make a deliberate mistake. But the result in both cases is the same with regard to the veracity or falsehood of the ḥadīth. For this reason, research and scrutiny into the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began while he was alive, albeit on a very restricted scale. There are many examples which prove this, one of which (being the occasion when) ʿAlī ؓ came with the animals to be sacrificed in Makkah (*budun*) of the Prophet ﷺ and he found Fāṭimah with those who had (left their special state of iḥrām and who had) returned to the normal, everyday state (after completing the rites of Ḥajj) wearing a coloured dress and kohl (on her eyes). When he censured her for this she replied: 'My father commanded me to (do) this!' (The narrator) said: 'and Ali ؓ used to say in ʿIrāq: "So I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to object to Fatimah's behaviour and to seek a formal legal judgement (*fatwā*) from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ regarding what she had transmitted from him. So