ALI 475: AN OVERVIEW OF SHI'I HADITH LITERATURE
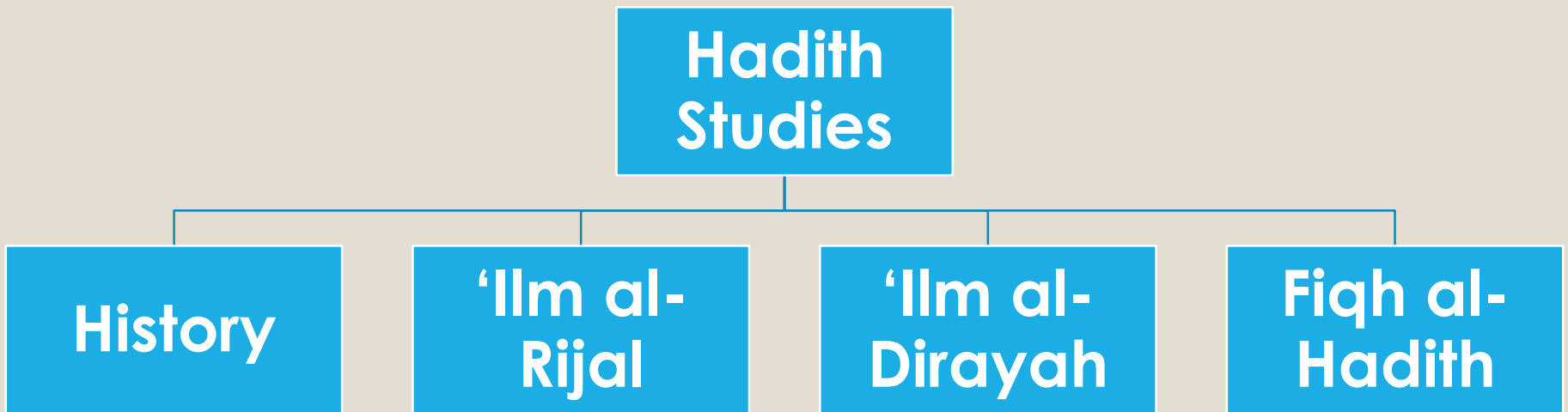
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Definition

◦ The term ḥadīth in Arabic has a wide range of meanings

◦ Within Islamic discourse it refers to one of the main sources of Islamic knowledge, namely a "Prophetic tradition" or a "narration relating the actions and sayings of the Prophet."

◦ Within Shi'i literature, a ḥadīth has come to be known as any report transmitted on the authority of an infallible

Branches

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          │   Hadith    │
          │   Studies   │
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│ History ││ 'Ilm al-││ 'Ilm al-││ Fiqh al-│
│         ││  Rijal  ││ Dirayah ││ Hadith  │
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History

◦ **Predominant opinion:** Writing down ḥadīth was banned during the time of the caliphs until 'Umar b. 'Abdul Aziz lifted the ban in 99 hijri

◦ **Justification of the Ahl al-Sunnah:**
  ◦ Fear of giving ḥadīth priority over the Qur'an or mixing the Qur'an with ḥadīth
    ◦ Did not want to busy themselves with writing ḥadīth over the Quran
  ◦ Companions didn't know how to write
  ◦ Promotion of memory over writing
  ◦ Waging war and expanding the Islamic territories was more important
  ◦ The Prophet (p) was deemed a human and could say things that would be out of emotions

History

- **Reasoning of Shi'i scholars**
  - To suppress the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt (a)
  - To close the door to objections and embarrassment
  - Caliphs enforced themselves to be sources of religious legislation and emulation

- <u>**Effects of Prohibition of Hadith**</u>
  - Further disputes and turmoil
  - Different ideological views
  - Heavy focus on *ijtihad* and *qiyas* from the beginning
  - Vague standards for measuring the truth with the Prophet's (p) words
  - Too much legal authority for the caliphs
  - The variety of reports recorded in Sunni books is not as extensive as Shi'i books
  - Opened the door to easily fabricating ḥadīth
  - Orientalists have attacked the ḥadīth for this very reason
- **See: The Prohibition of Recording the Hadith, Causes and Effects by Sayyid Shahristani**

- **Other opinions:**
  - *Studies In Early Hadith Literature* - By Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa Al-Azami

Role of the Shī'a in Ḥadīth Development

○ The Shi'a had at least 400 works up until the Minor Occultation, where each work was called an "Asl"

○ The four main Shi'a works were predominantly taken from these Usul

○ Shi'a hadith heritage developed extensively from 3rd century onward

○ Two major schools of ḥadīth developed by 4th and 5th century: Qom and Baghdad

○ During the 10th century hijri – with the rise of the Akhbaris – a new wave of large ḥadīth collections were written

Genre of Ḥadīth Compilations

○ The compilations of ḥadīth under specific genres and different jurisprudential subjects began during the time of Imam Ridha (a)

○ Types of ḥadīth books that would be written were as follow:

1. **Comprehensive:** The 4 main books of the Shi'as are a final result of the works written by earlier companions and include different topics and narrations

2. **Thematic Works:** ḥadīth books on any given topic - Shaykh al-Saduq is most notable for these works

3. **Dictations:** ḥadīth works where the scholar would dictate the narrations to his students, and the date and place would also be recorded

4. **Musnad:** books where narrations are recorded from someone specific. These types of books were more common amongst the Sunnis

5. **Creative:** These were books compiled with creative and unique methodologies

6. **Tafsir Works:** Books of Tafsir that were written in a narrative format

7. **Theology Works:** As the Shi'i theology differed from most of the other sects, many scholars wrote books with narrations that pertained to defending the Shi'i theological views

Genre of Ḥadīth Compilations

8. Books of Merits: These books were generally written for polemical purposes, but also for informational purposes

9. History: Most Shi'i history books were to do with the lives of the Imams (a) or specific events that took place in their lives.

10. Ziyarat and Du'a: Works that compiled supplications and visitations.

11. Fiqh al-Hadith: Books compiling traditions that discuss and explain other traditions or language used in traditions

12. Rijal: Many works of Rijal were initially compiled in ḥadīth format

13. Ethics: Compilations of ethical traditions

Major Books of Hadith - Shi'a

Book Title	Author	Number of Hadith	Explanation
Al-Mahasin	Ahmad al-Barqi (d. 276)	Approx. 2604	Ethics & Law
Al-Kafi	Muhammad al-Kulayni (d. 329)	Approx. 16000	Theology, Ethics, Law, History
Al-Faqih	Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381)	Approx. 6000	Law
Tahdhib al-Ahkam	Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 460)	Approx. 13600	Law
Al-Istibsar	Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 460)	Approx. 5500	Law
Al-Wafi	Faydh Kashani (d. 1091)	Approx. 50000	Collection of Four Primary Books
Wasail al-Shi'a	Hurr al-Amili (d. 1104)	Approx. 35850	Four Books + 70 Other Books

Major Books of Hadith - Shi'a

Book Title	Author	Number of Hadith	Explanation
Bihar al-Anwar	Allamah Majlisi (d. 1110)	Approx. 85000	Uses hundreds of different works
Mustadrak al-Wasail	Muhaddith Nuri (d. 1320)	Approx. 23514	Theology, Ethics, Law, History
Jami' al-Ahadith	Ayatullah Borojerdi (d. 1380)	Approx. 48342	Law
Mizan al-Hikmah	Ayatullah Reyshehri	Approx. 23030	Collection

Major Books of Hadith - Sunni

Al-Kutub Al-Sittah
1. Sahih Bukhari of Muhammad al-Bukhari (810 – 870 / 256) - 7,275 ahadith
2. Sahih Muslim of Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (815 – 875 / 261) - 9,200 ahadith
3. Sunan Abu Dawud of Abu Dawood (d. 889 / 275)- 4,800 ahadith
4. Sunan al-Tirmidhi of Al-Tirmidhi (824 – 892 / 279) - 3,956 ahadith
5. Sunan al-Sughra of Al-Nasa'i (829 - 915 / 303) - 5,270 ahadith

#6 Either: Sunan Ibn Majah of Ibn Majah (d. 887/273 or 889/275) - 4,000 ahadith

or

#6 Imam Malik bin Anas (711 – 795 / 93 - 179) – **al-Muwatta -** took 40 years – 1,720 ahadith

Also: Ahmad bin Hanbal (780 - 855 / 164 - 241) - Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal

Al-Kafi

Author: Shaykh Kulayni (d. 329 AH / 940 CE)

- From the village of Kulayn (or Kuleen)
- Took 20 years to compile this book – visited Rey, Qom, Baghdad, Kufa, possibly Nishabour
- Had over 35 teachers, although mostly quotes from 8 main teachers in his book
- Selected 16,000 from roughly 40,000 traditions that were circulating during his period
- In the year 327 Shaykh Kulayni left Rey and head towards Baghdad – under the deteriorating government of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir

- Why didn't Shaykh Kulayni get his book confirmed from one of the 4 specific representatives of Imam al-Mahdi (a)?

Al-Kafi

The Book Itself:
- Divided into three major segments: 1) Usul al-Kafi, 2) Furu' al-Kafi, 3) Rawdha al-Kafi
  - The first segment contains theological and ethical traditions
  - The second segment contains jurisprudential traditions
  - The third segment usually contains letters, sermons etc.

- Al-Kafi is a an "Identity Document" for the Shi'a

Major Sections from Usul al-Kafi

- Book of Intellect and Ignorance
- Book of Merits of Knowledge
- Book of Tawhid
- Book of Divine Authority
- Book of Belief and Disbelief
- Book of Supplications
- Book of Merits of Quran
- Book of Social Affairs

Man La Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih

Author: Shaykh Saduq (d. 381 AH / 991 AD)

- From the city of Qom – was born through the Du'a of Imam al-Mahdi (a)
- He studied under various teachers in Qom, including his father, and eventually moved to the city of Rey and is buried there today
- He had travelled to around 20 cities such as: Astarabad, Jurjan, Nishabour, Mashhad, Samarqand, Balkh, Baghdad, Kufa, Makkah and Medina
- His teachers number more than 260, although like most scholars, for most traditions he relies heavily on a select few authoritative teachers
- We have the names of at least 28 of his students
- Had written approximately 300 books

- The book *Man La Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih* was written with the intent of being a book that Shi'as could use and imitate
- Its focus is on legal traditions and it only contains traditions which Shaykh Saduq considered to be reliable to act upon

Man La Yahdhuru-hu al-Faqih

Shaykh Saduq writes in his introduction:

He has asked me to author a book for him in Fiqh, and Halal, and Haram, and the Laws and Regulations comprising of all of that which I have written in similar works. I have hence called it a Book for One Who Does Not Have a Jurist – so that it is a Marja' for him, and he can rely upon it and he can take from it.

I wrote this book for him with the omission of the chains of tradition, so that they are not overstated – even though they have a lot of benefit – but I did not intend that what authors generally intend when writing down everything when narrating traditions. Rather I intended on presenting that which I give my Fatwa off of and I judge its correctness, and I believe they are Hujjah upon me between me and my Lord. All of what is in it is taken from famous books which are relied upon and they are referred to (by scholars).

Al-Tahdhib & Al-Istibsar

Author: Shaykh Tusi (d. 460 AH / 1068 CE)

- Born in Tus in 385 AH and moved to Baghdad in the year 408 AH.
- He became a close student of Shaykh Mufid (d. 413 AH) for 5 years, amongst other teachers (up to 37 have been mentioned).
- Shaykh Tusi trained and taught more than 300 students, both Shi'a and Sunni
- In 449 AH he moved to Najaf after violence broke out between the Sunnis and Shias, burning Shaykh Tusi's library and vandalized his house.
- He is considered an end and a beginning of an era in Shi'i scholarship. A previous phase ended with him and he initiated a new phase with his scholarly works.
- He has works on every topic: theology, jurisprudence, exegesis, Rijal, legal theory, hadith, supplications and visitations etc.

Al-Tahdhib & Al-Istibsar

Tahdhib al-Ahkam
- In the introduction, Shaykh Tusi mentions that one of his friends was concerned regarding the many apparently contradicting traditions and that our opponents have used this against us in debates. Some Shi'as had even left the religion due to this.
- In this work Shaykh Tusi uses the work called al-Muqni'a of Shaykh Mufid as a base and begins to cite the various traditions on a subject matter.
- In few places where there are contradicting traditions on the subject, he will bring those to light and address them.
- This was one of the earliest books written by Shaykh Tusi and was most likely written during the lifetime of Shaykh Mufid.

Al-Istibsar
- This work is shorter than Tahdhib al-Ahkam, but expands on the topic of reconciliation between contradicting traditions
- The book does not contain traditions on every topic, but rather only on those topics for which there are contradictory reports

Bihar al-Anwar

Author: Allamah Majlisi (d. 1110 AH / 1699 CE)

- He was born in Isfahan in 1037 AH and belonged to the famous Majlisi family. His father himself was a famous scholar.
- The names of 17 of his teachers have been mentioned in sources. Over the span of his lifetime, he had taught and trained near a thousand students.
- Some have calculated, that on average Allamah Majlisi would have written 67 lines in a day, with each line containing 50 words.
- He lived at a time where there was a strong influence of Akhbaris in Iran and Allamah Majlisi himself believed that the hadith sciences held more value than every other science, even the intellectual sciences.
- His main interest was in hadith and hence many of his works are compilations of hadith, often times with his commentary and explanation.

Bihar al-Anwar

Bihar al-Anwar
- In his introduction, he says that the most importance source of knowledge are Revelation and the teachings of the infallibles.
- Many books were close to being forgotten, some had been forgotten, many works were getting lost. He decided to gather them all in on encyclopedic work.
- The book took 36 years to compile, and he prays that this book remains an important source of reference till the reappearance of the Imam (a).
- Allamah Majlisi took the help of many of his students in compiling the work. He sent many of his students to different cities and countries to gather manuscripts and books. In total, over 400 different books and treatises were used to compile Bihar al-Anwar.
- The final editing of the work was done after the demise of Allamah Majlisi by his students.

<u>Reliability of Bihar al-Anwar</u>
- Like the traditions in other books, the traditions in Bihar al-Anwar are looked at independently by scholars and their authenticity is established on a case by case basis

Translated Works

1. **Al-Kafi** by Shaykh Kulayni
2. **Nahj al-Balagha** by Sayyid Radhi (al-islam.org)
3. **Tuhaf al-Uqul** by Ibn Shubha al-Harrani
4. **Mizan al-Hikmah (Scales of Wisdom)** by Ayatullah Reyshehri (al-islam.org)
5. **Al-Khisal** by Shaykh Saduq (al-islam.org)
6. **Ghurar al-Hikam** by Al-Amudi (al-islam.org)
7. **Al-Amali** by Shaykh Mufid (al-islam.org)
8. **Kitab al-Ghaybah** by Shaykh Nu'mani (al-islam.org)
9. **Kitab al-Irshad** by Shaykh Mufid (al-islam.org)
10. **'Uyun al-Akhbar** al-Ridha by Shaykh Saduq (al-islam.org)
11. **Mishkat al-Anwar fi Ghurar al-Akhbar** by Allamah Tabrisi (al-islam.org)
12. **Kamil al-Ziyarat** by Ibn Quluwayh
13. **Fadhail al-Shia** by Shaykh Saduq
14. **Kamal al-Deen** by Shaykh Saduq
15. **Haqq ul-Yaqeen** by Allamah Majlisi
16. **Hayat al-Qulub** by Allamah Majlisi (al-islam.org)
17. **Kitab Sulaym b. Qays**
18. **Kitab al-Ghaybah** (Volume 13 of Bihar al-Anwar)
19. **Sunan al-Nabi** by Allamah Tabatabai (al-islam.org)

Translated Works

20. Desire of the Aspirant: On the Etiquette of the Teacher and the Student by Shahid Thani (ICAS Publications)
21. Heart Comforter by Shahid Thani (al-islam.org)
22. Combat with the Self by Shaykh Hurr al-Amili (ICAS Publications)
23. Nahj al-Fasaha by Abul Qasim Payande (al-islam.org)