



THE TYPES OF HADITH IN THE VIEW OF THE HADITH SCHOLARS AND OF THE SCHOLARS OF THE LEGAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract. *The article discusses how the scholars of the legal schools and the Hadith scholars divided Hadith into types, and the methodologies peculiar to each in making use of Hadith. It sets out the division of Hadith into categories, the criteria for accepting and rejecting them, and the methodology of the Hadith scholars and of the jurists in employing Hadith as evidence. In particular, the types of ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan and ḍaʿīf Hadith are analysed, together with their degrees and with such criteria as the uprightness and the precision of the narrators and the continuity of the chain of transmission. The article further sets out how a weak Hadith may be strengthened through other lines of transmission, the conditions under which it may be acted upon, and the question of the use of weak Hadith as evidence in the Ḥanafī school.*

Keywords: *jurist, Companion, Successor, Successor of the Successors, narrator, mutawātir, āḥād, legal school, maqbūl, mardūd, ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, muttaṣil, shādhidh, ḍaʿīf.*

INTRODUCTION

The Hadith scholars divide reports into two kinds according to whether they are accepted or rejected: maqbūl (accepted) and mardūd (rejected) (Abduqodirov, 2021:68). The accepted is itself of two kinds, namely ṣaḥīḥ (sound) and ḥasan (good), and each of these occurs in the form of ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihi or ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi, and of ḥasan li-dhātihi or ḥasan li-ghayrihi; these are treated in detail below. The rejected is the weak (ḍaʿīf) Hadith; the types of weak Hadith are numerous, some of them bearing a particular name and others not (Abduqodirov, 2021:59).

The purpose of the present article is to set out this classification as it was elaborated by the Hadith scholars, to establish the criteria of acceptance and rejection upon which it rests, and to clarify the sense in which the Ḥanafī jurists employ the weak Hadith as evidence - a question that has lately become the subject of unfounded objections (Juzajoniy, 2021:64-66).



MAIN PART

The scholars have defined the sound Hadith as follows. In the lexicon the word *ṣaḥīḥ* conveys the senses «healthy» and «trustworthy»; in the technical usage it is «a narration with a continuous (*muttaṣil*) chain, transmitted by a person of perfect precision (*ḍabt*, the capacity to retain what has been memorised) and of uprightness (that is, of religious integrity), free from hidden defect (*‘illa*) and from irregularity (*shudhūdh*)» (Abduqodirov, 2021:68). What is meant here by irregularity is a narration made by an acceptable narrator in a manner contradicting a narrator stronger than himself.

The sound Hadith is likewise of two kinds: *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihi* and *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi*. The *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihi* is the Hadith in which the conditions set out in the technical definition above are found. In the *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi*, by contrast, the precision of the narrator transmitting it - that is, his capacity to retain what he has memorised - is not perfect; but Hadiths coming from other lines of transmission, whether higher than his own, or similar to it, or lower than it in degree, strengthen it. For such corroboration at least two lines of transmission are required. As a result, a Hadith that stands at the level of *ḥasan li-dhātihi* because of the deficiency in the original narrator is raised to the level of *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi* (Abduqodirov, 2021:68).

An example of this type is the narration that Abū ‘Isā al-Tirmidhī transmits from Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, from Abū Salama, from Abū Hurayra (may God be pleased with him), in which the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said (al-Tirmidhī, 2021:I/205):

لولا أن أشق على أمتي لأمرتهم بالسواك عند كل صلاة

«Were it not that I should impose hardship upon my community, I would have commanded them to use the tooth-stick before every prayer»

Muḥammad b. ‘Amr is reckoned among the narrators famous for their trustworthiness; he was not, however, of perfect retention, and some Hadith scholars even counted him weak on account of the poorness of his memory. The Hadith cited above accordingly stands at the degree of *ḥasan li-dhātihi*. Yet the narration made by another group - from al-A‘raj, from Abū Hurayra (may God be pleased with him) - and the narration that is *ḥasan li-dhātihi* strengthen one another, and thereby raise the above Hadith to the degree of *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi* (al-Tirmidhī, 2021:I/205).



The scholars define the good Hadith as follows. In the lexicon the word ḥasan is the opposite of qabīḥ (ugly) and is used of those things to which hearts incline and which they desire (Abduqodirov, 2021:59). In the technical usage, the ḥasan is a Hadith transmitted in a continuous manner, free from irregularity and from hidden defect, by an upright narrator whose precision - his capacity to retain what he has memorised - is somewhat lower. As to its ruling, the good Hadith is below the sound in strength, yet like the sound it serves as evidence.

An example of the good Hadith is the narration transmitted from Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī: Bundār related to us from Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, from Bahz b. Ḥakīm; Bahz b. Ḥakīm said: my father related to me from my grandfather, who said: «I said: 'O Messenger of God, to whom shall I do good?' He said: 'To your mother.' I said: 'And after her?' He said: 'To your mother.' I said: 'And after her?' He said: 'To your mother.' I asked: 'And after that?' He said: 'Then to your father and to your near relatives'» (al-Tirmidhī, 2021:I/201).

Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī said: «This Hadith is ḥasan because Shu'ba spoke concerning the narrator Bahz b. Ḥakīm who occurs in this narration. In the estimation of the Hadith scholars, however, he is thiqa, that is, among the trustworthy narrators» (al-Tirmidhī, 2021:I/201). The expression rendered here as «spoke» occurs in the text in the form ملكت. In this one may observe a degree of scholarly refinement among the scholars of Islam that it would be difficult to encounter elsewhere: when the scholars of jarḥ and ta'dīl and of the science of the narrators found a slight weakness in a narrator of Hadith, they ordinarily did not state his weakness openly but described him by saying that «there is some talk concerning this narrator». Bahz b. Ḥakīm, mentioned above, was likewise a trustworthy narrator, although there was a slight weakness in his precision.

The good Hadith is divided into two kinds: ḥasan li-dhātihi and ḥasan li-ghayrihi. The ḥasan li-dhātihi is the Hadith whose definition has been given above. The ḥasan li-ghayrihi is a Hadith that was weak on account of a weakness in the transmission reaching the original narrator, or of concealment (tadlīs), or of some slight problem in the retention of a trustworthy and upright narrator, and that is then raised from weak to good as a result of the same narration coming through other lines that corroborate it. It is for this reason called ḥasan li-ghayrihi, that is, good on account of something other than itself (Abduqodirov, 2021:59).



As for the definition of the weak Hadith, in the lexicon *ḍaʿīf* is the opposite of strength and conveys the sense of feebleness. In the technical usage it is a Hadith with many lines of transmission whose weakness arises not from the mendacity or the moral corruption of the narrator but from such factors as the feebleness of his retention or his frequent error in the course of narration (Abduqodirov, 2021:71).

The weak is divided into three degrees. The first degree is the «slightly weak». Into this class of weak Hadith fall all weak Hadiths other than the fabricated (*mawḍūʿ*) and the severely weak. The Hadiths of this class can be strengthened with the help of other elements (Abduqodirov, 2021:71).

An example is the Hadith that al-Tirmidhī transmitted and pronounced *ḥasan*. Al-Tirmidhī narrated this Hadith by way of Shuʿba, who narrated it from ʿĀṣim b. ʿUbayd Allāh, from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr b. Rabīʿa, from his father: «A woman of the Banū Fazāra married for the price of two sandals, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Have you consented to two sandals?’ The woman said: ‘Yes.’ Then he permitted it» (Abduqodirov, 2021:71). Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī stated that in this chapter Hadiths have been narrated from ʿUmar, Sahl b. Saʿd, Anas, Abū Hurayra, Abū Saʿīd, ʿĀʾisha, Jābir and Abū Ḥadrad al-Aslamī (may God be pleased with them). In the chain cited above ʿĀṣim b. ʿUbayd Allāh is reckoned weak on account of the pooriness of his memory; since this Hadith has come through other lines as well, however, Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī counted it *ḥasan*.

The second degree is the «severely weak Hadith». Into this class fall Hadiths in whose chain there is a narrator of very poor memory, or one who is abandoned (*matrūk*), or one accused of falsehood, together with the irregular (*shādh*) and the denounced (*munkar*) Hadith. The irregular Hadith is one narrated by a narrator whose narration is accepted in a manner contradicting a narrator stronger than himself; the denounced is one narrated by a weak narrator in a manner contradicting the narrators whose narration is accepted (Juzajoniy, 2021:64).

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says, for example: «In this connection one may adduce as an example the Hadith ‘Whoever memorises forty Hadiths for my community...’» (Juzajoniy, 2021:64). Although this Hadith has many lines of transmission, Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Nawawī reported that the *ḥāfiẓ* scholars are agreed upon its weakness.



The third degree is the «fabricated (mawḍūʿ) Hadith». A fabricated Hadith is a report in which, together with the unfamiliarity of the text, there is among the narrators of the chain a mendacious narrator, or in which the invented character of the report is evident. An example is the report «The stomach is the nest of diseases, and abstinence is the chief of remedies». It is altogether impossible to ascribe this saying to the Prophet (peace be upon him); it is rather reckoned the saying of Ibn Kalada, an Arab physician (Juzajoniyy, 2021:64).

As to the conditions for acting upon a weak Hadith, Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī says: «I heard our master Ibn Ḥajar (may God have mercy upon him) say on several occasions that the conditions for acting upon a weak Hadith are three, and he himself wrote them out for me.» They are, first, that the weakness should not be severe; second, that the Hadith should fall under some general rule (that is, a rule of the sharīʿa regarded as necessary in religion); and third, that at the time of acting upon it one should not believe that it is firmly established from the Prophet (peace be upon him) (Juzajoniyy, 2021:65). Muḥammad Amīn Ibn ʿĀbidīn says: «The condition for acting upon a weak Hadith is that the Hadith should not be weak to an extreme degree» (Juzajoniyy, 2021:65).

Since the subject of the present article is the sound Hadith, it is appropriate to adduce here several observations concerning the weak Hadith, which is its opposite. At the present time we witness how the holders of various opinions cast reproaches at the Hadiths upon which the Ḥanafī school turns, calling them weak, and how they draw the general public after their own views. A natural question arises at this point: are the Hadiths of which they make this claim indeed weak? And even if we were to suppose them weak, why then did the Ḥanafīs, who have the greatest number of followers among the juristic schools, accept these Hadiths and employ them as evidence (Avvoma, 2022:36; Fozilov, 2017:92)?

Ẓafar Aḥmad al-ʿUthmānī al-Thānawī set out the solution of this question in a most elegant manner in his work «Iʿlāʾ al-sunan» (al-Thānawī, 2022:I/48). The substance of the matter is that when any of the scholars of the legal schools employs a weak Hadith as evidence, what he intends is not the weak that comes after the ḥasan in degree, but the Hadith that comes after the degree of the sound - and this corresponds to the ḥasan Hadith in the technical usage. He further stated that he too had long wondered how such eminent men could adduce a weak Hadith as evidence, and that he afterwards arrived at



the solution set out above (al-Thānawī, n.d.:I/112). The detailed exposition is given in the book «Tuḥfat al-marḍiyya» of the scholar, Hadith expert and judge Shaykh Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin al-Anṣārī al-Yamanī, as follows (Juzajoniy, 2021:66).

«The shaykh of our masters, the scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān, says in ‘al-Manhaj al-sawī’: it has been transmitted from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that ‘acting upon a weak Hadith is permissible absolutely, so long as there is nothing other than it’ - that is, nothing sound - ‘for a weak Hadith is better than reason and opinion’. Ibn ‘Allān (may God have mercy upon him) says: ‘What is meant here by the weak is the weak that stands over against the sound in the estimation of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and of the scholars of kalām. For in their estimation Hadiths were divided into sound and weak, and when the weak that stands over against the sound is spoken of, the ḥasan Hadith is included within it. The weak that is well known in the technical usage - that is, the Hadith in which the conditions of acceptance are not found - is not intended.’ Ibn al-A‘rābī too transmitted the same from his shaykh. Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī says: ‘The following statement of Ibn Khuzayma is close to this as well: the Ḥanafīs are agreed that in the school of Abū Ḥanīfa a weak Hadith is preferable to the exercise of opinion.’ Here too what is meant by the weak is the weak mentioned above» (Juzajoniy, 2021:66).

This position is consistent with the methodology of the early Ḥanafī authorities as it appears in their own works, where Hadiths are employed in the derivation of rulings according to criteria formulated before the later technical classification was fixed (al-Taḥāwī, 2018:I/14; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 1996:II/23). The same methodological principle is set out in the modern literature of the discipline, both in the general introductions to the science of Hadith and in the works devoted specifically to the Ḥanafī approach (Turkmoniy, 2021:31; al-Thānawī, n.d.:I/112). The question has also been treated in the materials published on the religious-enlightenment portals of Uzbekistan, which present it in a form accessible to the general reader (Islom.uz; Muslim.uz; Moturidiy.uz; Fiqh.uz).

CONCLUSION

The analysis set out above permits the following conclusions. First, the Hadith scholars divide reports into accepted and rejected, the accepted comprising the sound and the good, each of which occurs both li-dhātihi and li-ghayrihi, while the rejected is the weak (Abduqodirov, 2021:68). Second, the criteria of this division are the uprightness



and the precision of the narrator, the continuity of the chain, and freedom from hidden defect and from irregularity; a deficiency in the precision of a narrator does not of itself render a Hadith unusable, since corroborating lines of transmission may raise it by a degree (al-Tirmidhī, 2021:I/205).

Third, the weak Hadith is itself of three degrees - the slightly weak, the severely weak and the fabricated - and only the first of these admits of being strengthened; the conditions for acting upon it were formulated by Ibn Ḥajar and confirmed by Ibn ‘Ābidīn (Juzajoni, 2021:64-65). Fourth, the objection that the Ḥanafī school rests upon weak Hadiths proceeds from a confusion of terminologies: in the usage of the early authorities the weak that stands over against the sound includes what the later technical usage calls ḥasan, so that the Hadiths in question are evidence by the criteria of both usages (al-Thānawī, 2022:I/48; Juzajoni, 2021:66). An accurate understanding of these terminological differences is therefore a necessary condition of any sound judgement concerning the Hadith material employed by the legal schools (Avvoma, 2022:36).

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