



HADITH II. IN SHI'ISM

HADITH

ii. HADITH IN SHI'ISM

The Twelver Shi'ite conception of Hadith is generally in line with that of the Sunnites as discussed in Section i above. In Shi'ism, however, in addition to Hadith about the Prophet those about the Imams are authoritative as well. To a certain extent this is comparable with the fact that Companion Hadith have been considered authoritative in Sunnism, since the Imams, as members of the Prophet's house, are considered as representing the Prophet's knowledge. However, most Shi'ite sources assert unambiguously that the Imams could also speak directly for God: "The Imam speaks for God concerning the Book" (*yanṭequ'l-emāmu 'an Allāhi fi'l-ketāb*; Kolayni, I, p. 14). The Imam whose utterances constitute the bulk of Shi'ite Hadith literature is the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Ṣādeq (d. 148/765). While some of his companions, such as Nawfali and Sokuni, transmitted from him only *aḥādīṭ* on the authority of the Prophet and Imam 'Ali (see Kolayni, I, pp. 134, 200; Aḥmadi Faqih, p. 65), there is evidence that others among them also "believed that the Imams, just like the jurists of those times, practiced independent judgment (*ra'y*) or analogical reasoning (*qiās*)" (Modarressi, p. 28). The majority of Shi'ite scholars have treated the utterances and conduct of the Imams in the same way as those of the Prophet.

Shi'ite authors generally acknowledge the authenticity of most of the traditions presented in the "Six Sound Collections" (*al-ṣehāḥ al-setta*) of Sunnism, but



these are mainly used in historical and polemical contexts rather than as proof texts in legal discussions, as long as alternative Shi'ite traditions are available. The eminent Shi'ite scholar 'Allāma Ḥelli (q.v.; d. 726/1327) wrote that “all our *aḥādīṭ*, except for a few, lead back to the Twelve Imams, from whom in turn they lead back to the Prophet. Their knowledge is acquired from that niche. The Hadith of the Imams which are included in the [Shi'ite] books add much to what is in the [Sunnite] “Six Sound Collections,” as is manifest to one who studies the books of both sects” (Ḥorr 'Āmeli, XX, p. 66).

Shi'ites began to circulate their own Hadith literature at about the time of Ja'far al-Ṣādeq. At this stage, it is not known whether the classification *ḥadīṭ* was applied to the Imams' own utterances or only to their narrations about the Prophet. During this period the term *aṣl* (pl. *oṣul*) was applied to the Imams' written traditions, to indicate that they represent the original documentation of their words (Kohlberg, p. 128). However, none of such writings now exist in any form, apart from about a dozen which have come down to us through the works of 4th/10th century Shi'ite authors. Among the earliest extant Shi'ite Hadith writings are Abu Ja'far Ṣaffār Qommi's (d. 290/902) *Baṣā'er al-darajāt* and Aḥmad b. Moḥammad Barqī's (d. 274/887) *Ketāb al-maḥāsen*. However, such works are far from comprehensive, since they often focused exclusively on legitimizing the status of the Imams and the rituals of Shi'ism.

The oldest of the four canonical collections of Shi'ite Hadith, which have a similar status to the “Sound Six” in Sunnism, is Moḥammad b. Ya'qub Kolayni's (d. 329/941) *al-Kāfi fī 'elm al-dīn*. He combined an interest in elements of the Shi'ite extremism of the time (*ḡoluw*; see GĀLĀT) with his talents in research and eloquent expression. It is divided into sections dealing with Shi'ite theology (*oṣul*) and applied law (*foru*), followed by a final appendix called *Ketāb al-Rawza'*, which contains miscellaneous *aḥādīṭ* (based mainly on the authority of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādeq through five or six generations of transmitters).

The relatively conservative traditionist, Ebn Bābawayh, Shaikh Ṣaduq (q.v.), compiled *Man lā yaḥzoroho'l-faqih*, the second of the four canonical Shi'ite Hadith collections. Its title, “The One Who has no Jurist Present,” suggests that it can enable the reader to practice Shi'ism in the absence of a juriconsult. This work places more emphasis on *aḥādīṭ* that are relevant to Shi'ite jurisprudence. It is noteworthy that all the above-mentioned Imami authors were born and educated in the two isolated traditionist centers of Ray and Qom, in western Iran. Most had traveled to Iraq and Arabia; however, as in the



cases of Bokāri and Moslem, their inclination towards research and literary compilation seem to have provided the main impetus behind their works.

In reaction to the type of traditionism represented by these authors, the “rationalist” Oṣuli Shi‘ism of the time, under Shaikh Moḥammad Mofid (d. 413/1022), presented another approach to Hadith literature. Mofid proposed that “it is the task of the discriminating, intelligent person to accept what is agreed upon and to hesitate about that wherein they [the traditionists] differ” with respect to Hadith (McDermott, pp. 306-7). He criticized all traditionists, and especially his own teacher Ebn Bābawayh, for their “unintelligent” approaches (Modarressi, p. 41). In writing his main legal book, *al-Moqne‘a*, he based Shi‘ite jurisprudence for the first time on his personal opinion, supported by Hadith, rather than by citing directly the text of individual *aḥādīṭ* (Mofid, 1990; Kazemi Moussavi, p. 23).

Mofid’s rationalist method was maintained for a generation, but one of his own pupils, Shaikh al-Ṭā’efa Moḥammad b. Ḥasan Ṭusi (d. 460/1067) proposed a greater commitment to Hadith, which has remained as the main tendency in Twelver Shi‘ism ever since. Shaikh Ṭusi is responsible for introducing the new conformity between traditionism and rationalism. He first wrote *Tahdīb al-aḥkām*, a commentary on *al-Moqne‘a* which provided references, based on Hadith, for Mofid’s juristic verdicts, before compiling a further collection of traditions, *al-Estebṣār*, in order to supplement the first book with new cases which Mofid had not dealt with (Ṭusi, 1956, I, p. 2). Through these two Hadithworks, Ṭusi not only doubled the number of what were to be considered the canonical Shi‘ite collections from two to four, but at the same time he effectively endorsed the methodologies and compilations of his precursors Kolayni and Ebn Bābawayh.

In addition to the above legal and Hadith works, Ṭusi also wrote *‘Oddat al-oṣul*, dealing with the methodology of acquiring certainty, or a degree of authority, in religious knowledge. He discussed the problem of the validity of the Hadith of the so-called deviant traditionist groups, whom he alternatively called “imitators” and “generalists” (i.e. who do not engage in reasoning). He accepted their Hadith on the principle that “it is not impossible that they were generalists who had acquired knowledge, but just had difficulty in establishing their knowledge on the basis of reasoning” (Ṭusi, 1983, p. 349). Most of these *aḥādīṭ*, however, were isolated traditions (*akbār āḥād*), lacking the standard of validity of a sound *ḥadīṭ*. In order to give a degree of efficacy to them, Ṭusi based his argument on the precedent of the eminent Shi‘ites, namely, the



“practice of the righteous sect” (*ʿamal al-ṭāʿifa*), a notion which had never before been employed in such a manner in Shiʿism. Ṭusi admitted that most of the Hadith were isolated reports, but argued that they were practiced by the Shiʿites of past generations, and particularly by the contemporaries of the Imams (Ṭusi, 1983, pp. 236, 350), and should therefore be considered authoritative. A parallel can be witnessed between Ṭusi’s way of taking into consideration the practice of the community for the validation of Hadith and that of Moḥammad b. Edris Šāfeʿī (e.g. compare Šāfeʿī, p. 545, with Ṭusi, 1983, p. 236).

Ṭusi’s method of reproduction and validation of Shiʿite Hadith was theoretically criticized by subsequent generations of Imami authors, especially by scholars from the Shiʿite center of Ḥella in Iraq, but it was effectively adopted by most of them. Moḥaqeq Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan Ḥelli (d. 676/1277) refashioned Ṭusi’s thesis, and acknowledged the efficacy of the isolated traditions by the mediation (*tawassuṭ*) of the fact that they are either accepted by Imami jurists or confirmed by other indicators (Calder, 1989, p. 66). Moḥaqeq’s pupil, ʿAllāma Ḥasan b. Yusof Ḥelli (d. 726/1325), wrote an independent treatise on the science of Hadith in which (according to ʿĀmeli), by adopting Sunni categories, he disregarded certain parts of the corpus of Imami traditions as obscure and confused (Ḥorr ʿĀmeli, XX, pp. 66-69). The next major Shiʿite work to be written on the science of Hadith was that of Zayn-al-Din b. ʿAli ʿĀmeli al-Šahid al-Ṭāni (d. 966/1559) from the school of Jabal ʿĀmel in Lebanon, who in his *al-Reʿāya fī ʿelm al-derāya* established categories for the recognition of Imami Hadith according to the existing terminology of the Sunnite and Shiʿite ulema.

The reign of the Safavids in Persia, and the Qezelbāš movement in particular, encouraged a trend of devotional attachment to the figures of the Imams which paved the way for the revival of traditionism in the form of the Aḵbāri school (see AḴBĀRĪYA). The founder of this school, Moḥammad-Amin Astarābādi (q.v.), developed the notion of “customary certainty” (*yaqin ʿādi*) as a theoretical basis for the legitimation of all Shiʿite Hadith (Astarābādi, pp. 19, 129). According to this approach, outright acceptance of them is better, for it brings about more uniformity than the application of preponderant probability, because the latter generates diverse opinions (Astarābādi, pp. 7, 41, 45). Within a century after the spread of Astarābādi’s ideas, the Twelver Shiʿite world witnessed another wave of the (re-)collection of the Hadith of the Imams. This included a combination of the four early collections (see above) in



the form of *al-Wāfi*, compiled by a Sufi-oriented traditionist called Moḥsen Fayḏ Kāšāni (d. 1091/1680), the most voluminous Shi'ite Hadith work, the *Behār al-anwār* by the pioneer of post-Safavid popular Shi'ism, Moḥammad-Bāqer Majlesi (d. 1111/1699), and the most practical Shi'ite Hadithwork, *Wasā'el al-Ši'a*, compiled by the moderate 11th/17th century Aḳbāri author Ḥorr 'Āmeli. This last author tried to classify and moderate Shi'ite Hadith, whereas both Majlesi and Kāšāni aimed at a more indiscriminate inclusion of the entire corpus of Hadith that was attributed to the Imams.

The impact of these new Hadith collections on the Shi'ite community can be witnessed in the rise of a new type of popular Shi'ism based on mourning rites and pilgrimage, which has prevailed for the last two centuries. Although the later Oṣuli revival put an end to the Aḳbāri domination since the late 12th/18th century, more recent Hadithcollections, especially the *Wasā'el al-Ši'a*, have continued to emphasize the importance of Shi'ite traditions. The Oṣuli authors of the 19th and 20th centuries generally used Hadiths from these collections to support their juridical opinions based on their rational interpretation, but reorientation of the tradition-reports nevertheless continued through different means. The last well-known traditionist, Mirzā Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad-Taqi Nuri (d. 1320/1902), compiled a supplementary collection of Hadiths, the *Mostadrak*, based on the *Wasā'el al-Ši'a* (but rearranged and with additional subject-headings).

Fifty years after Nuri, Ayatollah Ḥosayn b. 'Ali Boru-jerdi (q.v.; d. 1962), the supreme "model for emulation" (*marja'-e taqlid*) of the Shi'ite world, produced a different version of Imami Hadith, the *Jāme' aḥādīṭ al-Ši'a*. This version takes into consideration the proto-Sunni circumstances surrounding the utterances of the Imams (see Ostādi). As a result, Borujerdi made a new Oṣuli rendering of Shi'ite Hadith. His reorientation of Imami Hadith may not have changed the content of materials used in Shi'ite law, but it contributed to a degree to the supra-sectarian spirit among Shi'ites that led to the Sunni-Shi'ite rapprochement during his leadership in Qom. More recently, the late Ayatollah Ḳo'i (d. 1992) also set forth new approaches to classifying the transmitters of the Hadith of the Imams in his *Mo'jam rejāl al-ḥadīṭ* (1970).

See also SHI'ISM.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources: Abu 'Abd-Allāh b. al-Bayyē', *Ketāb ma'refat 'olum al-ḥadīṭ*, ed. Mo'azzāam Ḥosayn, Medina, 1977.

Zayn-al-Din b. 'Ali 'Āmeli al-Šahid al-t-āni, *al-Re'āya fi 'elm al-derāya*, Qom, 1988.

Moḥammad Amin Astarābādi, *al-Fawā'ed al-mada-niya*, Tabriz, 1321/1904.

Aḥmad b. Moḥammad Barqi, *Ketāb al-maḥāsen*, ed. Jalāl-al-Din Ḥosayni, Tehran, 1330 Š./1951.

Ḥosayn b. 'Ali Ṭabāṭabā'i Borujerdi, *Jāme' aḥādīṭ al-Ši'a*, Qom, 1989-90.

Ebn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥzoroho'l-faqih*, Tehran, 1988.

Ebn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni, *Nozhat al-naẓar*, Mecca, 1989.

Ebn Tay-miya, *Elm al-ḥadīṭ*, Beirut, 1985.

Moḥammad b. Ḥasan Ḥorr 'Āmeli, *Wasā'el al-Ši'a 'alā taḥṣil ma-sā'el al-šari'a*, Tehran, 1969.

Moḥsen Fayz Kāšāni, *al-Wāfi*, Isfahan, 1985.

Abu'l-Qāsem Kō'i, *Mo'jam rejāl al-ḥadīṭ*, Najaf, 1970.

Moḥammad b. Ya'qub Kolayni, *al-Kāfi*, Tehran, 1991.

Moḥammad-Bāqer Majlesi, *Behār al-anwār*, Beirut, 1983.

Moḥammad b. Moḥammad Mofid, *al-Moqne'a*, Qom, 1990.

Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad-Taqi Nuri Ṭabarsi, *Mostadrak Wasā'el al-Ši'a*, 18 vols., Qom, 1987.

Moḥammad b. Ḥasan Šaffār Qomi, *Bašā'er al-darajāt*, Tehran, 1984.



‘Obayd-Allāh Sendi, *al-Tamhid li-ta’rif a’emmat al-tajdid*, Jamshura, Pakistan, 1976.

Moḥammad b. Edris Šāfe’i, *al-Resāla*, ed. Aḥmad M. Šāker, Beirut, 1939.

Abu ‘Isā Moḥammad Ḥakim Termeḍi, *al-Jāme’ al-ṣaḥihā*, Medina, 1967.

Moḥammad b. Ḥasan Ṭusi, *Tahḍib al-aḥkām*, Najaf, 1959-62.

Idem, *al-Estebṣār fi mā eḳtalafa men al-akbār*, 2nd ed., Najaf, 1956.

Idem, *‘Oddat al-oṣul*, Najaf, 1983.

Secondary sources: Moḥammad-Ḥasan Aḥmadi Faqih, “Fawā’ed-e rejāli dar āṭār-e Emām Ḳomeyni,” *Keyhān-e andiša* 29, April 1980.

Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, “Remarques sur les critères d’authenticité du hadīth et l’autorité du juriste dans le shī’isme imāmīte,” *Studia Islamica* 85, 1997, pp. 5-39.

Norman Calder, “Doubt and Prerogative: The Emergence of an Imāmī Shī’i Theory of Ijtihād,” *Stud. Isl.* 70, 1989, pp. 57-78.

Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shi’ite Islam*, Kuala Lumpur, 1996.

Etan Kohlberg, “Al-Uṣūl al-Arba’umi’a,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10, 1987, pp. 128-65.

Martin J. McDermott, *The Theology of Al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, Beirut, 1986.

Ḥosayn Modarressi Tabātabā’i, *An Introduction to Shī’i Law*, London, 1984.

Rezā Ostādi, “Āṭār o ta’lifāt-e Āyat-Allāh Borujerdi,” *Ḥawza* 43-44, March-July 1991, pp. 287-304.

Maḥmud Šehābi, *Adwār-e feqh*, Teh-ran, 1340 Š./1961.

Maḥmud Ṭaḥḥān, *Taysir moṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīṭ*, Riyadh, 1983. (A. Kazemi-Moussavi)