

A survey on the prohibition of publication of Hadith based on the most important justifications of contemporary Sunnis in Abahyh and Prohibition Hadith

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ABSTRACT: Sunnis and the contemporary scholars in particular, have admitted that publication as a general term is a symbol of human civilization and as a specific term has caused the durability and flourishing of religious courses. There has been a serious ignorance on prophetic hadith which are rich in Islamic thoughts and rules and that is the prohibition of publishing the hadith from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The contemporary scholars and hadith writers believe that hadith had not been written until the end of first Hegira century. Therefore, there have been efforts to justify this prohibition of publication of hadith by using legal and rational evidences. Nonetheless, there exist some drawbacks in them and according to what was mentioned, this cultural error may not be connived.

Keywords: Hadith, Hadith Publication, Prohibition of Publication, Hadith Prohibition.

INTRODUCTION

An appropriate analysis on history can be one of the ways to discover the past events and facts. Undisputedly, it is not possible to approve of all written historical publication with no doubt as throughout history there have been many shams and praises of kings along with the criticism and disapproval of opposes and alike. Therefore, the absolute credibility of history is not approved of. On the other hand, we are not able to question all historical matters. Although there are many efforts to falsify the facts in history, some facts and truths may exist within the historical texts. Therefore, analytical history is the best method to attain the truth.

Jorge Clark states:

“Although it is not possible to approve of all the historical narratives completely, history has some facts which seem to be like maxims in other sciences and can be analyzed. In addition, a researcher is able to criticize the credibility of the narratives through some particular Ijtihad.”¹

In regards with hadith publication, is has to be analyzed and it is not appropriate to attempt to resolve the historical problems of a belief after believing in it. Therefore, the history of that belief or event ought to be analyzed and approve of in case of maximum adaptation of rational analytical history of that belief. Some Sunnis, regardless of the reasons of prohibition of publication of hadith and the purposes of those who prohibited the publication, have connived the facts of history optimistically and have refused to accept the fact of publication prohibition, or in the case of approval, have justified this uncultured action naively and non- academically. In any case, it is not possible to justify the period of cultural error (disagreement with culture and its durability) which is rooted in Quran and Islamic teachings. However, in Shiism, there has not been any problem in publication of hadith and they do not have any issues in justification of their Imam`s deed.

¹ Hassani, Ali Akbar; Essay, Is the history credible assuming all the factors and motivations of falsification? Lessons in school of Islam, No. 435, page 40.

The history of prohibition of Hadith and its publication

It is not possible to consider an exact date when the prohibition of The Prophet's hadith publication started. Briefly, there are many records in Islamic history which prove the prohibition of publication has been an arranged plan and performed step by step. According to the historical narratives at hand, the best notion is that the prohibition idea started at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by some Quarish. The history of prohibition is as follows;

1. The first phase of prohibition of publication of The Prophet's hadith happened in his time. This is obvious in the idea of Abdullah ibn Umar, son of second caliph. He states: "I used to write down everything I heard from The Prophet (peace be upon him) and I wanted to keep them. However, Quarish blamed me and told me not to do so as He was a Human kind as we are. They influenced me and I stopped writing. His Holiness asked me why I had stopped writing. I told Him the reason. His Holiness pointed at His blessed mouth with his finger and said: I swear to God who gave me life, nothing come out of My mouth but the truth.² Like this speech from Abdullah, there is another narrative form Amrouaas's son in Shies' hadith books.³
2. In the second phase, they went beyond the limits and decided to prevent His Holiness from speaking directly. They did not do it explicitly and rather prevented His Holiness from conveying His real objectives to people directly. We may see the most obvious example in Arafa desert and Mashar al Haram. The Prophet (peace be upon Him) wanted to speak but some people interrupted him by clamor and Takbir deliberately. This event is written in Tabari history and other historical books.⁴ «فكبر الناس و لقط الناس و ضج الناس».

Although the reasons of these events are vague, we believe that they had known His Holiness wanted to talk about issues which were not to their interest. Therefore, they prevented His Holiness from speaking.

These tricks were not useful as when the pilgrims were coming back from Mecca they arrived at Ghadir.

The holy verse (مائدة 67) "يا ايها الرسول بلغ ما انزل اليك من ربك ... و الله يعصمك من الناس" was revealed and His Holiness (peace be upon Him) performed His duty at the refuge of God and introduced Imam Ali as his successor and got their allegiance.

3. The third phase was the direct opposition with publication of The Prophet's hadith. While His Holiness was about to pass away, He said: "Bring a pen and a piece of paper so that I can write something that you would not go astray after I have passed away". After His Holiness said this, the second Caliph looked in His eyes and said: "the sickness and pain has dominated him, and God's book is enough for us". The others approved of him and avoided writing. Some of His followers objected to these ideas and started protesting. His Holiness said: "Stand up and leave this room". His Holiness never wrote anything.⁵
4. After the first Caliph took the throne, he eliminated about 500 hadith in his first period of government. His daughter Aisha – wife of The Prophet (peace be upon him) – said: "My father was sleeping some night and was not feeling well. This worried me. The day after, he asked me to bring the hadith which he had given to me. As I gave him the book, he set fire to it.⁶ Some other references are considered for the evolution of Hadith prohibition (refer to the essay of Professor Birjandi).

The eminent jurisconsult if Shiism, Late Sheikh Mohammad Bagher states:

"Disapproval of Abu Bakr by burning what he had written and prohibition of publication along with order of eliminating of Hadith by Omar is the reason of incredibility of narratives of prohibition."⁷

In fact, investigating the purposes of those who prohibited the publication of hadith requires needs another research. Therefore, the most important justifications of contemporary Sunnis will be discussed further.

1. Termination of prohibition: Muhammad Muhammad Abu Zahv – after narrating the event of The Prophets sickness period – states: "the tone of publication in the time of the departure of His Holiness is the former termination of prohibition of The Prophet which Abu Saied Khedri narrates".⁸

قال ابن عمر: كنت اكتب كليشى اسمعه من رسول الله اريد حفظه فنهتني قريش و قالوا تكتب كليشى سمعته من رسول الله و رسول الله بشر يتكلم في الغضب و الرضا فامسكت عن الكتابه و ذكرت ذلك لرسول الله فاواماً باصبعه الى فيه و قال اكتب فوالذي نفسي بيده ما خرج منه الا حق (سنن ابو داوود، ج 3، ص 170).
حَمَادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَكْتُبُ كُلَّ مَا أَسْمَعُ مِنْكَ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ فِي الرَّضَا وَ الْغَضَبِ قَالَ نَعَمْ فَإِنِّي لَا أَقُولُ فِي ذَلِكَ كَلِمَةً إِلَّا الْحَقَّ (بحار الانوار، ج 2، ص 147)

⁴ Sonan Abu Davood, Vol. 4, page 150.

⁵ Mosnad Ahmad, Vol. 5, page 135; Sahih Bokhari, Vol. 6, page 9.

⁶ Ijtihad in opposition to text, Vol. 2, page 157.

⁷ Ayat al Ahkam Astar Abadi, Vol. 1, footnote of page 13.

⁸ Al hadith va Al mohadethun, page 124.

2. Abolishment of prohibition: Ahmad Muhammad Shaaker believes that the prohibition hadith of Abu Saied is abolished by Abahyh hadith. The performance of most of the followers and then the unity of nation in permit of publication implies the abolishment of prohibition.⁹

This narrative of Mr. Shaaker seems like Ibn Aldiba's who relies on the unity of nation on the permit. Owing to the fact that when the whole nation agree on something unanimously, that thing is necessarily true, he has approved of this idea.¹⁰ This notion has an error. Although unity proves the Abahyh, it is an independent reason and the truthful narratives of permit should not be taken from unanimity in an abstract way as they are obvious in their implication. If the prohibition of publication had been abolished, why we would notice refusal of in among the followers of The Prophet? And this argument still remains among those who were keen on publication of hadith that why they had not acted on the abolishment?

3. The prohibition is general and the permission is specific: this means that some very few followers were granted the permission by The Prophet and the rest had been prohibited. This view is believed by Sobhi Saleh.¹¹ Dr. Atr also states that the scriptures of hadith were not common among the followers and these scriptures were just used as reminders. After the science of Quran was released, the nation turned to write hadith and then the written hadith got popularity among them. This was caused owing to the order of Umar bin Abdul Aziz.¹² This notion is based on the fact that the basic rule in publication is prohibition. If this notion were complete, it should have been known among the Muslims or at least among the scholars and there should not have been any disagreements in publication. However, the principle is Abahyh and if it were reverence, one of the oppositions should have cited that. Then, if we are committed to this justification, publication would be Haram in any time. Therefore, the nation's act to start publication – even after a while – had been and illegal action. Furthermore, not only did the Islamic nation start publishing without any concerns, but also they considered their unanimity as a legal proof of publication permission.¹³ The permission of publication to some followers does not prove the dedication of publication just to them. As the publication of revelation to some followers does not mean it was specified to them. However, we may claim that The Prophet's permit was to public and the prohibition was specified to someone which proves the fact that not assigning the publication to specific people was that the principle of Abahyh was to publish.

4. Proliferation and expansion of religious orders and prohibitions: Aburieh, considers the reason of The Prophet's prohibition of publication of Hadith as to avoid the increase of rules and prohibitions of Holy Law and orders. His Holiness always avoided this as multiplicity of questions was not desirable for Him. Due to the fact that numerous questions about the rules of religion caused the expansion of tasks and rules, people would have had more troubles and difficulties.¹⁴ This justification seems to be among the weakest ones. How is it possible to accept this idea, whereas God introduced the Holy Prophet as the interpreter and explainer of Quran and the leader of the nation in Quran and also leads people to turn to Him in different situations and orders them to obey Him. "مَّا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا" (Hashr, 59). Most of the Farighins believe that there are no rules except the ones which have come in God's book or The Prophet's tradition. Ibn Mas'ud stated:

"Every science and every subject is explained in Quran".¹⁵

Imamiye also bring a hadith from their Imams which prove the comprehensiveness of Quran.¹⁶

It is a book which is stable and permanent until the Judgment Day and has to explain different issues and lead the mankind in every aspect. In regards with the prohibition of asking numerous questions, we have to state that this means useless and senseless questions. Those are the questions which are not valuable enough to be known and may lead in worrying the mankind. God has determined the limit of obligations and taboos. The rest of the rules which have not been mentioned are left to the Humans to manage and explain based on the talents and God-given gifts

⁹ Al Baeth Al hathith, page 127; Tadvin alsonnat al sharifa, page 293.

¹⁰ تيسير الوصول الى جامع الاصول، page 177، تدوين السنة الشريفة، pages 309 – 310.

¹¹ علوم الحديث و مصطلحه، pages 21 -23

¹² منهج النقد في علوم الحديث، pages 40 - 45

¹³ Diari Bidgoli, Muhammad Taghi; Essay of surveying the reasons and motifs of prohibition of publication of Hadith, philosophical research magazine, Vol. 1, page 42.

¹⁴ اضواء على السنة المحمدية، page 54.

¹⁵ (تفسير القرآن العظيم) قال ابن مسعود: قد بين لنا في هذا القرآن كل علم و كل شيء

¹⁶ «مَحَمَّدٌ بِنُ بَحْيِي عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنِ عِيْسَى عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ حَبِيْبٍ عَنْ مُرَازِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى أَنْزَلَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ نَبِيَّانَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى وَ اللَّهُ مَا تَرَكَ اللَّهُ شَيْئاً يَحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِ الْعِبَادُ حَتَّى لَا يَسْتَطِيعَ عَبْدٌ يَقُولُ لَوْ كَانَ هَذَا أَنْزَلَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ- إِلَّا وَ قَدْ أَنْزَلَهُ اللَّهُ فِيهِ».

with more freedom and based on the guidelines given by divine revelation. In the holy verse “... لا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِنْ تُبَيَّنَّاكُمْ ...” (Maedeh: 101) in the interpretation of Imami Majma Al Bayan Tabarsi¹⁷ one hadith of Imam Ali is mentioned which is:

«رَأَى اللَّهُ افْتِرَاضَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَرَائِضَ فَلَا تُضَيِّعُوهَا وَ حُدُودَ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَ نَهَى عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ فَلَا تَنْتَهِكُوهَا وَ سَكَتَ لَكُمْ عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ وَ لَمْ يَدْعَهَا نَسِيَانًا فَلَا تَنْكَلِمُوهَا»

“God has given you some tasks and obligations. Do not violate them. He has put some limits for you, do not transgress them. He has prohibited you from doing some things, do not outrage (respect them) and he has left some issues unexplained to your advantage. He has not forgotten them. Therefore, do not trouble yourself”. These sentences have been quoted by Ibn Abi al-Hadid Motazali too.¹⁸

Conclusion

To sum up, all the mentioned justifications are considerable provided that the prohibition Hadiths are considered correct and truthful and are appropriate enough to be opposed to permission hadiths. The right quotation is that there has not been a single day on which there was a prohibition of publication of hadith. Even if the prohibition is approved of, considering all its conflicts, except the prohibition for some specific people or prohibition of publication of Hadith and Quran in one single page together¹⁹, there would have been another way of gathering.

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¹⁷ مجمع البيان في تفسير القرآن، vol. 3,4, page 387.

¹⁸ شرح نهج البلاغة ابن أبي الحديد، vol. 18, page 267.

¹⁹ The mentioned justification is in fact useless today owing to the glamorous publications of Mosahaf along with the software and internet. They do not take the concerns of blending of Quran and Hadith written together into consideration.