

# SCIENTIFIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE 9TH CENTURY, AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HADITH SCIENCE

Usmanov Muhammadsiddiq Abdumannonovich  
International Islamic Studies Academy of Uzbekistan  
Director of the Treasure House of the Manuscripts  
[mahammadsidiquzman@gmail.com](mailto:mahammadsidiquzman@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

This article discusses the scientific environment of the ninth century in the history of Islam and its development processes. At the same time, the acceleration of the science of hadith, which is the second main source of religion, and the period when the authentic and reliable ones were separated from the weak, fabricated hadiths, that is, the golden age of the science of hadith, are discussed.

**Keywords:** “Bayt al-Hikma”, “Ulum al-Hadith”, “Mu'tazila”, “Mihna”, Shihab az-Zuhri, Abu Abdurahman an-Nasai, “Sunan”, hadiths, muhaddiths, isnad, Muhammad Ibn Isma'il, "Muttafaqun alaihi", "Al-Jarh wat-Taadil", "Iyqan ilmi", "Rijal", "Sahih", "Ad-Du'afaa wa'l-Matrukin".

## Introduction

An important aspect that distinguishes the Abbasids from the Ummayyis is that they were patrons of science. During the time of the Abbasid caliphs, Ja'far al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid and Ma'mun, special attention was paid to bringing ancient manuscripts and great scholars to Baghdad, the center of the caliphate, and unprecedented zeal was shown in this regard.

Although the practice of keeping manuscripts in the palace existed during the Ummavi dynasty, this practice became a permanent process during the reign of the Abbasid caliphs, Ja'far al-Mansur (754-775). It has changed radically in terms of quality and quantity. Al-Mansur began to attract scholars from other countries to his court in addition to collecting rare manuscripts. Scientists, physicians, chemists, geographers and engineers who were invited from the Gundishapur school in India served in his court<sup>1</sup>.

After the accession to the throne of the most famous of the Abbasid caliphs, Harun al-Rashid (786-809), major changes occurred in all aspects of social and cultural life. This, of course, led to the foundation of a large scientific center, the "House of Wisdom". During the reign of Harun al-Rashid, the palace library became cramped for books brought from other countries. Therefore, the caliph allocated a separate place for storing books and called it "House of Wisdom".

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Nadim. *Kitab al-fihrist lin-Nadim* / researcher: Riza bin Zayn al-Abidin al-Khairi al-Mozandarani. – Beirut. 1988. P. 333.

During the reign of Harun al-Rashid, "House of Wisdom" turned from a place where various literature was stored into a center for translation and research. Famous scholars and researchers who came here had the opportunity to get acquainted with books on various subjects and read them. During this period, special attention was paid to translation work, and the number of works in "House of Wisdom" increased even more<sup>2</sup>.

During the reign of al-Ma'mun (813-833), another of the Abbasid caliphs who patronized science, the scientific environment at the "House of Wisdom" developed to an unprecedented extent. In addition to translating and commenting on rare books in Greek, Persian, and Indian languages into Arabic, independent scientific activity was also carried out there, and new works were written<sup>3</sup>. Al-Ma'mun was interested in religious sciences, philosophy, and exact sciences, and he himself regularly studied them. He also awarded translators and scholars a reward for each book they wrote or translated; through such measures, he attracted them to Baghdad and created conditions for their scientific activities. Under the patronage of Al-Ma'mun, a large number of books from Greece, India, Rome, Iran, and Merv arrived at the "Bayt al-Hikma"<sup>4</sup>.

During the Abbasid period, great attention was paid to the development of science. This especially reached its peak in the 3rd century AH, 9th century AD, that is, during the Caliphate of Ma'mun. During this period, along with astronomy, medicine, and geometry, positive results were achieved in the study of Islamic sciences such as tafsir, hadith, kalam, and jurisprudence. The movement to write down hadiths, which are considered the main source of Islam after the Holy Quran, began in the first quarter of the 8th century during the reign of Umar ibn Abdulaziz (717-719), and this movement culminated in the work of Abu Abdurrahman an-Nasa'i (829-915) "Sunan". Umar ibn Abdulaziz's grandfather carried out the work that Umar ibn Khattab had ordered. Umar ibn Khattab was afraid that hadiths would be mixed with the verses of the Quran. In addition, during the reign of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), many companions were alive and well, and they were well versed in hadiths. During the time of Umar bin Abdulaziz, there were almost no people left who saw Rasulullah (s.a.w.). Therefore, he was afraid that people would forget the hadiths, and he ordered Abu Bakr ibn Hazm, one of the famous scholars of his time, to do this<sup>5</sup>.

Although the work of collecting hadiths was initiated by Rabi' ibn Subaih, Sa'id ibn Abi Aruba and Salih ibn Kaysan, one of the scholars who made a great contribution to this work is Muhammad ibn Shihab az-Zuhri (671-741). The remarkable thing is that he did not write any hadiths by hand, but only dictated them to his students. His students wrote down tens of thousands of hadiths from him.

After Muhammad ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, Ibn Jurayj (d. 767), Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), Sufyan Thawri (d. 778), Abdullah ibn Mubarak (d. 797) and other hadith scholars collected

<sup>2</sup> Bahrom Abduhalimov. "Bayt al-hikma" and the scientific activities of Central Asian scholars in Baghdad. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2004. P-32.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Kifti. Akhbar al-Ulama bi akhbar al-hukama. – al-Qahirah, 1908. P. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Bahrom Abduhalimov. "Bayt al-hikma" and the scientific activities of Central Asian scholars in Baghdad. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2004. P-33.

<sup>5</sup> دكتور محمد المختار ولد اباة. تاريخ علوم الحديث الشريف في المشرق والمغرب. منشورات المنظمة الإسلامية للتربية والعلوم والثقافة. إيسيسكو. 1431 هـ / 2010 م ص. 16.

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hadiths<sup>6</sup>. The collection of hadiths during this period laid the foundation for the development of the science of hadith in subsequent centuries.

In the 9th century, the science of hadith emerged as a separate science from the science of jurisprudence. This was due to several factors. First, in many regions, there was a need to study the Quran and hadith, which are considered the main sources of the Islamic religion. As a result, a class of scholars, namely muhaddiths, who were exclusively engaged in the science of hadith, was formed. Over time, due to the large number of people who narrated hadith, a scientific field called "ulum al-hadith" or "sciences of hadith" emerged, which studied issues such as identifying who they were, checking from whom and when they heard the hadith, identifying the different aspects of the narrations and being sure which one is correct<sup>7</sup>.

At the same time, the new Muslims who accepted Islam were composed of different peoples and nationalities, and their level of knowledge of the Arabic language, beliefs, and ability to memorize made it difficult to understand the religion. Also, as a result of political sedition, various sects and movements emerged. They misinterpreted the verses of the Quran and fabricated false hadiths in order to attract the majority and justify their ideas<sup>8</sup>. During this period, the movement of intellectuals became more active. They engaged in debates with religious and oral knowledge, attempting to rationally interpret Sharia, Quranic interpretation, hadiths, and the rules of ruling. One of these schools was the Mu'tazilites<sup>9</sup>. They also influenced the policies of the Caliphate. The struggles in this regard even rose to the level of political movements.

One of the conflicts that caused many problems in the scientific field in the 9th century was the "Mikhna"<sup>10</sup> was the event. This problem that arose during the time of Caliph Ma'mun was the result of the struggle between the Mu'tazilites and the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'a factions. Abul-Huzayl Allof (752-840), one of the leaders of the Mu'tazilites at that time, was the teacher of Caliph Ma'mun. Therefore, during his caliphate, he appointed representatives of the Mu'tazili sect to public positions. Their representative Ahmad ibn Abu Dawood (776-854) also held the position of minister. When Caliph Ma'mun organized discussions and debates, the Mu'tazilites always gained an advantage over the enemies, so Ma'mun agreed with them on any issue. The extent to which the Caliph was influenced by the Mu'tazilites and their minister can be seen from the fact that he ordered his brother Mu'tasim to attend their meetings<sup>11</sup>.

The Mu'tazilites, who felt their position in front of the Caliph, could express their religious views to him. They rely on reason in any matter and call the holy book of Islam, the Holy Qur'an, a "creature"<sup>12</sup> that is, they believed that it was created by God. The Mu'tazilites encouraged the Caliph al-Ma'mun to publish his views on the Quran. In 827, the Caliph

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<sup>6</sup> Hadith Studies: a textbook / authors: D. Rakhimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. B-67.

<sup>7</sup> Hadith: textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. B-78.

<sup>8</sup> Hadith: textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. B-79.

<sup>9</sup> Mu'taziliyya is a religious and doctrinal movement founded in Basra in the 2nd century AH/8th century AD. It was founded by Amr ibn Ubayd (699-761) and Wasil ibn Ata (699-748). The Mu'taziliyya movement occupied an important political and religious position during the Abbasid era.

<sup>10</sup> Mihna is an Arabic word meaning calamity, disaster, and test.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra. Ibn Hanbal's life and history. Cairo: Darul-fikr al-arabi. B. 266.

<sup>12</sup> Makhluq is an Arabic word meaning created.

announced the view that the Quran was created. However, he did not require representatives of other schools of thought and scholars to agree with this view until 833. In that year, Caliph al-Ma'mun wrote to his deputy in Baghdad, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, asking him to test the hadith scholars and jurists for their claim that the Quran was created<sup>13</sup>. After that, the "Mihna" incident began, which caused many scientists to suffer.

Using the authority given to him, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim gathered muhaddis, faqih and mufti scholars. Ahmad ibn Hanbal was among them. The viceroy of Baghdad told them to recite the Qur'anic phrase, otherwise they would be tormented. The scientists obeyed his command and said the required word. Four of them refused to obey Ishaq ibn Ibrahim and recite the Qur'anic expression of creation. They were Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Muhammad ibn Nuh, Qawori and Sajjada. Amir ordered to chain them. They stood in chains for a day. The next day, Sajjada declared that he would obey the emir's order. The soldiers of Ishaq ibn Ibrahim let him go, and those who remained were required to recite the Qur'anic phrase Makhluq. After another day, Qavoriri also surrendered. After that they released him too. Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Muhammad ibn Nuh remained in captivity<sup>14</sup>.

While the examination was in progress in Baghdad, Caliph Ma'mun was in Tarsus. Although prominent scholars of hadith and jurisprudence in the Caliphate obeyed Ma'mun's orders and confirmed the Mu'tazilites' view of the Quran, the Caliph did not stop there. He asked the scholars to come to Tarsus and deliver the required speech before the Caliph. The Caliph's soldiers decided to take Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Muhammad ibn Nuh to the Caliph. Muhammad ibn Nuh died on the way. Caliph Ma'mun also died soon after. After that, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other scholars returned to Baghdad. They decided to keep Ahmad ibn Hanbal in custody until a new Caliph was elected<sup>15</sup>.

The "mikhna" incident did not end with the death of Ma'mun. Because he had bequeathed to his brother, the future caliph, Mu'tasim, to remain steadfast in his views on the Quran and to forcefully propagate this idea among the people. Since Caliph Mu'tasim (833-842) was a man far from knowledge, he entrusted the implementation of his brother's will to the leader of the Mu'tazilites, Ahmad ibn Abu Dawud. He had the right to forcefully implement the idea of "the Quran is a creature" in society and punish those who did not obey it. The Mu'tazilites tried to persuade Ahmad ibn Hanbal to follow their ideas by various means, but this did not yield any results. The soldiers of the Caliphate demanded that the great hadith scholar recite the phrase "the Quran is a creature" every day, and when they failed to achieve any results, they beat him. This process lasted more than two years. After that, he was allowed to return home. The imam's body was severely injured as a result of brutal blows. Although Ahmad ibn Hanbal returned home, he could not recite the hadith and could not attend meetings of knowledge. He only went to the mosque. After a while, when the injuries on his body were over, he started teaching in the mosque. This situation continued until Mu'tasim's death<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra. Ibn Hanbal's life and history. Cairo: Darul-fikr al-arabi. B. 48

<sup>14</sup> Mustafa Shaka. Al-aimma al-arba'a (the four imams). Researcher: Abul-mushrif Ali al-Risala. Cairo: Darul-Qutub al-Misri. 1991. B-123.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra. Ibn Hanbal's life and history. Cairo: Darul-fikr al-arabi. B. 50.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra. Ibn Hanbal's life and history. Cairo: Darul-fikr al-arabi. B. 72.

Caliph al-Wasiq (842-847) continued the policy of mihna, like his father and uncle. The measures of coercion and beating against Ahmad ibn Hanbal were stopped. Because this factor was causing discontent among the people. Therefore, Caliph al-Wasiq applied another punishment to him, namely, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was not supposed to attend scientific meetings, go to the mosque, and narrate hadiths.

The “mihna” incident did not only have a negative impact on Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Rather, it also affected scholars living outside the center of the caliphate. They were brought to Baghdad from various cities and tested. One of such scholars was Imam Shafi'i's friend, Yusuf ibn Yahya al-Misri, who was forced to recite the phrase “created” in the Quran while chained and died in this state.

According to Kamaluddin Damiri in his book "Hayatu Haywan", Caliph al-Wasiq understood the ineffectiveness of the mihna at the end of his life and stopped forcing the people of knowledge to take exams<sup>17</sup>. The Mihna incident lasted for fourteen years. During this time, many scholars were persecuted.

The Mihna movement was completely stopped by Caliph Mutawakkil (847-861). After that, the hadith scholars began to be given due attention. There is information that the hadith scholars from Transoxiana were also summoned to Baghdad and examined<sup>18</sup>.

Also, during this period, the activity of storytellers, who were experts in narrating hadith but were unaware of the rulings of the Sharia, developed. They would tell stories to attract the attention of the masses and to make people follow them. Jalaluddin Suyuti (d. 911 AH/1505 AD) stated in his book “Tahzir al-Khas min Akazib al-Qussas” (“Beware of the Lies of Storytellers”) that the activity of storytellers began during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644). In later periods, their movement became popular among the people, and the Companions tried to keep them away from mosques and other public places<sup>19</sup>.

After the end of the Rashid caliphate period (632-661), the activities of the storytellers became more popular after the representatives of the individual dynasties took over the caliphate. They fabricated several false hadiths attributed to the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, in order to praise the representatives of a particular dynasty and to vilify another. Israelite narratives also had an important place in the activities of storytellers<sup>20</sup>. Sources refer to them as "Donkeys loaded with firewood". Some of the opinions expressed about the storytellers sometimes touched upon the Muhaddis. But the Muhaddis followed the path of the Sahabah and Tabiyy. They were extremely careful when narrating hadith. Those who are afraid that the meaning of hadiths will change<sup>21</sup>.

In conclusion, the development of the science of hadith in the 9th century was due to factors such as the need to study the Quran and hadith, teaching the religion to new Muslims, political intrigues, and the fabrication of false hadiths by storytellers, which encouraged scholars of hadith to work more extensively. They collected reliable and fair narrations in order to convey

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahra. *Ibn Hanbal Hayatuhu wa Asruh*. Cairo: Darul-fiqr al-A'rabiyy. P. 73.

<sup>18</sup> Hadith: textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. P-79.

<sup>19</sup> Jalaluddin Suyuti. *Tahzir al-Khos min Akazib al-Qussos* (“Beware of the lies of the narrators”). Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami. 1984. P. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Narrations that came from Christianity and Judaism.

<sup>21</sup> Hadith: textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. P-80.

the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in its original form to future generations, and collected them in a pure and free from forgeries. Therefore, the 3rd century AH, the 9th century AD is considered a golden age in the history of hadith science. During this period, the hadiths narrated by narrators were systematically organized based on certain rules and regulations from a scientific point of view<sup>22</sup>.

Hadith scholars studied hadiths in terms of chain of transmission and text. In the dictionary, chain of transmission means “support,” and in the dictionary, “the path leading to the text of the hadith” or “chain of narrators.” The hadith scholar who narrated a hadith studied the lives and activities of the narrators, their lineage, faith, intelligence, and lack of accusations of lying, and other qualities of the narrators, from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to the companions who heard the hadith.

The text of the hadith, on the other hand, examined its wording and meaning, its non-contradiction with the verses of the Holy Quran, its consistency when compared with other similar narrations (if it did not, a hadith from another strong narrator was taken), and the muhaddith accepted it after being convinced of the authenticity of the text.

In the 9th century, the science of hadith developed in the following directions:

1. The science of selecting hadith narrators in terms of fairness and accuracy (ilm al-jarh wa-tadil). In this science, the narrator mentions the defect (jarh) that causes the rejection of the hadith he narrated or the factor that causes its acceptance (tadil)<sup>23</sup>.

In this regard, the great hadith scholar Imam Nasa'i, the author of the famous work "Sunan", has done fruitful work and made a great contribution to the qualitative development of the science of hadith. According to scholars, Imam Nasa'i's work "Ad-Du'afaa" belongs to the field of jarh and ta'dil science. In this work, he sets serious conditions for the selection of narrators so that they deserve a reliable status and the hadiths they narrate reach the level of sahih, which is in line with the two great imams in this field of science, Yahya ibn Ma'in<sup>24</sup> and Ahmad ibn Hanbal<sup>25</sup>. At the same time, the Imams in the chapters "Ilal" and "Jarh wa Taddil" ranked Nasa'i above the great Imams Imam Muslim, Abu Dawud and Imam Tirmidhi in this regard. Imam Dhahabi said: "At the beginning of the third century, there was no one more knowledgeable than Imam Nasa'i, he was more skilled than Imam Muslim, Abu Dawud and Abu Isa in distinguishing the defective hadiths and selecting their narrators, and he was on the same level with Imam Bukhari and Abu Zur'ah in this regard"<sup>26</sup>.

2. The science of knowing the narrators of hadith (ilm rijal al-hadith);

3. The science of studying the contradictory aspects of hadith (ilm muhduf al-hadith);

4. The science of knowing the hadiths with illa (ilm ilal al-hadith);

5. The science of knowing the hadiths whose narration is isolated from one narrator (ilm gharib al-hadith);

<sup>22</sup> Hadith studies: a textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. P-78.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Atif Ahmad Amon. *Ilm al-jarh wa-tadil*. Doha: Markazu buhus as-Sunna wa-s-siyra. 1987. P. 420.

<sup>24</sup> Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Ma'in Baghdadi (774-847 Medina)

<sup>25</sup> Abu Abdullah Ahmad ibn Muhammad Shaybani (780-855 Baghdad)

<sup>26</sup> *Siyar 'alam an-nubala*. 14 vol. 133 p.

6. The science of studying the fact that a hadith that has been narrated by one shariah ruling is canceled by another (ilm nasih al-hadith wa mansuhuh);

7. The science of knowing the reasons for the narration of hadiths (ilm asbab wahdat al-hadith)<sup>27</sup>.

In the 9th century, the field of “ilm ar-rijal al-hadith” (the science of knowing the narrators of hadith) was widely developed in the science of hadith. This field required the hadith scholars to study each of the narrators who narrated the hadith very precisely and thoroughly. In this context, the life of each narrator was carefully studied and information was collected. Depending on who the narrator of the hadith was, the hadith was accepted or not. The hadith scholar was required to know names, kunyas, nicknames, lineages, dates of birth and death very well.

In this century and in subsequent periods, a number of works on “ilm ar-rijal” were written. Imam Bukhari’s (810-870) “at-Tarikh al-Kabir” (“The Great History”)<sup>28</sup>, “at-Tarikh al-Awsat” (“Middle History”)<sup>29</sup>, “at-Tarikh al-Saghir” (“small history”)<sup>30</sup>, The works of Imam Tirmidhi (824-892) “At-Tarih” (“History”), “Kitab ul-Asma wal-Kuna” (“Book of Names and Kunyas”), Ibn Abi Hatam’s (854-938) “Al-Jarh wa At-Tadhil”, Muhammad ibn Hibban’s (884-965) “Kitab as-Siqa” (“The Trustworthy Book”), and Hafiz Abdulghani al-Muqaddasi’s (1146-1204) “Al-Kamal fi Asma ar-Rijal” (“The Complete Book on the Names of Narrators”) are among the important sources written on the life of narrators. Although a group of hadith scholars do not write works on the subject of “ilm ar-Rijal”, they express their views on this field in their collections of hadith. For example, Imam Darimi, in his work "Sunan", gave the name of the narrator in the chain of hadith either in full or in the form of additional information about him<sup>31</sup>.

Imam Muslim considered it sufficient to accept a hadith if the individuals in the chain of narrators lived in the same period and could meet. The method of critical study of isnad is similar to statistical research, in which the hadith scholar collected all the popular versions of a hadith and then compared their isnads to arrive at a definite conclusion. In the 9th century, hadith scholars began to write collections of hadith in various styles. One of such styles was the musnad style, in which hadiths narrated from one or more companions were presented. Hadiths were arranged according to the rank of the narrator companions. First, as many hadiths as one companion had narrated were presented one by one. Then, the next companion was presented, and the hadiths narrated from him were presented. The order of hadiths was according to the times when the narrators embraced Islam or in alphabetical order. When the companions were arranged in order, the first ten were those who were predicted to be in Paradise

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<sup>27</sup> Hadith studies: textbook / compilers: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. B-81.

<sup>28</sup> This book is also called “Tarih al-Bukhari” in some sources. For example, Haji Khalifa called it so in his famous book “Kashfuzzunun”. The manuscript of the book is kept in the “Darul Kutub al-Misriyya” library in Egypt under the number 10340. The work was published in India in 1942.

<sup>29</sup> The manuscript of this book is in Hyderabad, India.

<sup>30</sup> The work was published in India in 1907.

<sup>31</sup> Hadith studies: a textbook / authors: D. Rahimjonov, D. Muratov, R. Obidov, M. Alimova. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2013. B-82.