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DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF HADITH METHODOLOGY IN THE HANAFI SCHOOL OF JURISPRUDENCE

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Abstract: This article highlights the central role of hadith methodology in the formation and development of the Hanafi school of Islamic law (fiqh). Within the Muslim intellectual tradition, the scholarly study of hadith—the second primary source of Islamic law after the Quran—has undergone significant historical evolution. The systematic examination of the methodological principles employed by Hanafi jurists reveals both the school's internal consistency and contemporary debates surrounding its interpretive approaches. In particular, some critics in Kazakh religious discourse argue that Hanafi scholars ignore certain authentic hadith and rely excessively on analogy (qiyas), allegedly due to an insufficient study of hadith literature. Such assumptions highlight the need for a rigorous reassessment of Hanafi hadith methodology. Therefore, this study analyzes the historical conditions and classificatory principles governing the treatment of hadith in the Hanafi tradition. The positions of early Hanafi mujtahids regarding the authority, authenticity, and application of prophetic messages are also examined. Based on a critical analysis of representative hadith, the study identifies the distinctive methodological features of the Hanafi madhhab. The results demonstrate that the methodology of Hanafi hadith interpretation is based on consistent theoretical and epistemological foundations and reflects a historically continuous scholarly tradition, rather than a deviation from hadith-based jurisprudence.

Keywords: Hanafi school of fiqh; methodology of hadiths; mutawatir; mashhur; ahad; Abu Yusuf; Imam Muhammad; Isa ibn Aban; Imam Tahawi.

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ХАНАФИ МАЗҒАБЫНДАҒЫ ХАДИС МЕТОДОЛОГИЯСЫНЫҢ ӨЗІНДІК ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

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УНИКАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ МЕТОДОЛОГИИ ХАДИСОВ

В ХАНАФИТСКОЙ ПРАВОВОЙ ШКОЛЕ

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Аңдатпа: Бұл мақалада хадис әдіснамасының ханафилік ислам құқығы мектебінің (фикһ) қалыптасуы мен дамуындағы орталық рөлі атап өтіледі. Мұсылман интеллектуалдық дәстүрінде хадисті ғылыми зерттеу - Құраннан кейінгі ислам құқығының екінші негізгі көзі - айтарлықтай тарихи эволюциядан өтті. Ханафи заңгерлері қолданған әдіснамалық қағидаларды жүйелі түрде зерттеу мектептің ішкі үйлесімділігін де, оның түсіндірмелік тәсілдеріне қатысты қазіргі заманғы пікірталастарды да көрсетеді. Атап айтқанда, қазақ діни дискурсындағы кейбір сыншылар ханафи ғалымдары белгілі бір сенімді хадистерді елемейді және қиясқа шамадан тыс сүйенеді деп тұжырымдайды, бұл хадис әдебиетін жеткіліксіз зерттеуге байланысты деп болжануда. Мұндай болжамдар ханафилік хадис әдіснамасын мұқият қайта бағалау қажеттілігін көрсетеді. Сондықтан, бұл зерттеуде ханафилік дәстүрдегі хадисті қарастыруды реттейтін тарихи жағдайлар мен жіктеу принциптері талданады. Ертедегі ханафи мұжтаһидтерінің пайғамбарлық хабарлардың беделіне, шынайылығына және қолданылуына қатысты ұстанымдары да қарастырылады. Өкілдік хадисті сыни талдау негізінде зерттеу ханафилік мазһабтың ерекше әдіснамалық ерекшеліктерін анықтайды. Нәтижелер ханафи хадистерін түсіндіру әдіснамасының тұрақты теориялық және эпистемологиялық негіздерге негізделгенін және хадиске негізделген юриспруденциядан ауытқуды емес, тарихи тұрғыдан үздіксіз ғылыми дәстүрді көрсететінін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: Ханафи фикһ-юриспруденциясы; хадис әдіснамасы; мутәуатир; мәшһүр; ахад; Әбу Юсуф; Имам Мұхаммед; Иса ибн Абан; Имам әт-Тахауи.

Аннотация: В статье подчеркивается центральная роль методологии хадисов в формировании и развитии ханафитской школы исламского права (фикха). В рамках мусульманской интеллектуальной традиции научное изучение хадисов — второго основного источника исламского права после Корана — претерпело значительную историческую эволюцию. Систематическое исследование методологических принципов, используемых ханафитскими юристами, выявляет как внутреннюю согласованность школы, так и современные дискуссии вокруг ее интерпретационных подходов. В частности, некоторые критики в казахском религиозном дискурсе утверждают, что ханафитские ученые игнорируют некоторые достоверные хадисы и чрезмерно полагаются на аналогию (кияс), якобы из-за недостаточного изучения литературы хадисов. Такие предположения подчеркивают необходимость строгой переоценки ханафитской методологии хадисов. Поэтому в данном исследовании анализируются исторические условия и классификационные принципы, регулирующие обращение с хадисами в ханафитской традиции. Также рассматриваются позиции ранних ханафитских муджтаһидов относительно авторитета, подлинности и применения пророческих сообщений. На основе критического анализа репрезентативных хадисов исследование выявляет отличительные методологические особенности ханафитского мазхаба. Результаты показывают, что методология ханафитского толкования хадисов основана на последовательных теоретических и эпистемологических основах и отражает исторически непрерывную научную традицию, а не отклонение от юриспруденции, основанной на хадисах.

Ключевые слова: ханафитское школа фикһае; методология хадисов; мутауатир; машһур; ахад; Абу Юсуф; Имам Мухаммад; Иса ибн Абан; Имам ат-Тахави.

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Introduction

In Islam, Quran and Hadith represent the primary sources of spiritual and moral values and the foundations of Islamic law. The Sunnah provides an authoritative and detailed interpretation of the Quran, explaining its principles and demonstrating their practical application. This connection is confirmed in the Quranic verse: “We have sent down to you the Reminder, so that you may explain to mankind what has been revealed.” In accordance with this divine instruction, the Prophet not only conveyed the revelation, but also explained, taught and demonstrated its principles (Kurmanbayev 2018, 108).

In formulating legal rulings (ahkam), Muslim scholars have sought to base their rulings primarily on these two sources. The science of Hadith has developed as a rigorous discipline aimed at preserving the integrity of the Sharia and protecting it from distortion. Hadith experts (muhaddis) have carefully studied the chains of transmission (isnad) and textual content (matn) to distinguish reliable messages from weak or fabricated messages. In addition, jurists (fuqaha) studied hadith in order to issue rulings that were consistent with the principles and goals of Islamic law.

Abu Hanifa and his disciples developed legal concepts and interpretive methods based on the Quran and hadith. Through *usul al-fiqh*, Hanafi scholars formulated rules governing the use of hadith in legal reasoning, including methods for reconciling apparent contradictions, choosing between conflicting reports, and evaluating narrators. Although Abu Hanifa did not write a separate work dedicated exclusively to hadith methodology, his views are preserved in works on jurisprudence and legal theory, in which his methodological principles are consistently presented.

The increasing social significance of Islamic values in Kazakhstan makes the Hanafi intellectual heritage an important topic of academic research. Therefore, this study examines the principles and criteria developed by early mujtahid scholars within the framework of the Hanafi hadith evaluation methodology. The study of this methodology as an independent field emerged mainly in the twentieth century; Previously, it was usually discussed in the sections on the Sunnah in the works of *usul al-fiqh*.

Major authors of the Hanafi school made significant contributions to its systematization. Abu Bakr al-Jashash discussed the classification and legal authority of narrations in his work “*Zikr Ujuh al-Akhbar wa-Maratibiha wa-Ahkamiha*”, and Ali ibn Muhammad al-Bazdawi considered the division of the Sunnah in his work “*Bab Bayan Aqşam al-Sunnah*”. Nizam al-Din al-Shashi developed this topic in his work “*Aqşam Khabar ar-Rasul*”, and Mulla Jiwan added a chapter entitled “*Aqşam al-Sunnah*” in his work “*Nur al-Anwar*” (Mulla Jiwan 2018, 2). These works contributed to the detailed formation of the Hanafi methodology of hadith within the framework of *usul al-fiqh*.

The Hanafi school remains a major source of religious continuity and community unity in Kazakhstan. For more than a millennium, the cultural and spiritual heritage of the region has been closely linked to the Hanafi tradition. Therefore, a deeper study of its methods, especially the use of hadith in legal reasoning, is of academic and social importance. Identifying the distinctive features of this approach can clarify the intellectual foundations of the region’s Islamic heritage and contribute to the preservation of its religious and cultural identity.

Justification for choice of topic, goal and task

Domestic scholars made great efforts to fill this gap and offered a number of insightful interpretations. PhD K.M. Zholybayuly, for example, studied the impact of hukm hadiths on the categorization of hadiths in the Hanafi school and the formulation of legal issues in his dissertation entitled “*Criteria for Acceptance of Hadiths in the Hanafi School and Their Influence on Fiqh Issues*”. In addition, Abdulmajid al-Turkmani’s work, “*al-Madhal ila usuli al-hadith ala manhaj al-hanafi*”, which is part of Ph.D.O. Shamshiev’s translation, “*Introduction to Hanafi Hadith Methodology*”, details the specific conditions under which hukm hadiths can be classified. The book by Ismail Khakan Unal, “*Imam Ebu Hanife’nin Hadis Anlayışı ve Hanafi Mezhebinin Hadis Metodu*” (Abu Hanifa’s concept of hadith and hadith methodology of the Hanafi school), offers a summary of Abu Hanifa’s requirements and principles as to hadith methodology. Mujadid Sigit Aliah, “*Methodological Contributions to Hadith Criticism Studies at UIN Alauddin Makassar: An Initial Reading*, University Alauddin Makassar (Mujadid, 2024: 18). In his book, “*Abu Yusuf’un hadis indiş*” (Abu Yusuf’s understanding of hadith), Mehmet Özchenel gives Abu Yusuf’s view of hadith and challenges his critics. Besides, Kilani Muhammad Khalifa’s master thesis at Cairo University, “*Manhaju al-Hanafiyyah fi al-Kashay al-Hadith bayna an-nazariya wa al-tatbiq*”, studies the differences between the scholars of fiqh and muhaddith in analyzing hadith, assessing the criteria for both acceptance and rejection according to Abu Hanifa’s criteria. Yet, features and core elements of hadith methodology within Hanafi jurisprudence are still very scarcely discussed.

Scientific Novelty of the Research

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its systematic reconstruction of the Hanafi methodology of hadith evaluation. Rather than examining the positions of individual scholars or interpreting them solely in terms of the categories of classical hadith terminology, the study traces the development of a distinctive legal-hermeneutical approach, starting with Abu Hanifa and his direct disciples Abu Yusuf and Muhammad al-Shaybani, through Isa ibn Aban and the later Hanafi scholars of *usul al-fiqh*. Thus, their contributions are conceptualized as interrelated stages in the formation and systematization of a coherent legal methodology.

The study demonstrates that early Hanafi jurists did not evaluate hadith solely on the basis of the formal reliability of *isnad*. Instead, *isnad* criticism was combined with an examination of the *matn* of the narration, its normative implications, and its compatibility with established legal principles. Accordingly, conformity with the Qur'an, established *Sunnah*, widely accepted narrations, and general principles of Islamic law were important criteria for determining the acceptance and legal validity of a narration.

Another contribution of the study is to determine the relationship between the Hanafi classification of hadith and the legal validity of transmitted narrations. The analysis shows that a narration that is technically weak in terms of the chain of transmission can acquire legal authority through its acceptance and consistent application by qualified *mujtahid* jurists. Conversely, a narration with a reliable *isnad* may be rejected or limited in its application if its content contradicts the Qur'an, established *Sunnah*, or basic legal principles. Therefore, the categories of *mutawatir*, *mashhur*, and *ahad* in Hanafi legal theory represent not only different modes of transmission but also different levels of epistemic reliability and legal validity.

Finally, the article integrates these historical and methodological dimensions into a single analytical framework. This establishes a continuity between the practical legal reasoning of Hanafi jurists and its theoretical systematization in the later Hanafi tradition, *usul al-fiqh*. Thus, the study presents Hanafi hadith evaluation not as a secondary application of classical hadith criticism, but as a unique and internally coherent methodology shaped by the epistemological and normative requirements of legal reasoning.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

The purpose of this article is to reorganize the main criteria that early Hanafi jurists used in evaluating, classifying, and using hadith as legal evidence. It also clarifies the relationship between hadith, the Quran, established *Sunnah*, and analogical reasoning in Hanafi legal theory.

To achieve this aim, the study pursues the following objectives:

- Study principles of ablution and application of hadiths characteristic of Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf, and Muhammad al-Shaybani;
- Study development of the system of classification of *mutawatir*, *mashhur* and *ahad* categories in the Hanafi tradition based on the works of Isa ibn Aban, al-Jassas and at-Tahawi;
- Compare certain aspects of the Hanafi position with the Shafi'i tradition of hadith and its legal-theoretical position;
- Analyze criteria used by Hanafi jurists to reconcile external contradictions between hadith, the Quran, established *sunnah* and *qiyas*;

Methodology of scientific research

This study uses a qualitative historical and textual research model. The main sources of the study include selected works from the formative and classical periods of the Hanafi school, in particular, Muhammad al-Shaybani's "*al-Hujja ala ahl al-Madinah*", Abu Yusuf's "*ar-Radd ala siyar al-Awza'i*", al-Jassas's "*al-Fusul fi al-Usul*", and at-Tahawi's works on narrations. These sources are reviewed together with contemporary scholarly research on the topic in Arabic, Turkish, Kazakh, and English.

1. The Historical-Analytical Method. Through this, the authors successively traced the chronological development of Hanafi hadith methodology from Imam Abu Hanifa down to later scholars such as Isa ibn Aban, al-Zhassas, and at-Taxaui, thus revealing the progress and changes of principles over centuries.

2. The comparative method is applied to specific issues on which Hanafi and Shafi'i legal theorists have adopted different positions. These include the relationship between narrations, classification, *isnad* criticism, and legal practice. Other issues include the consideration of *ahadah* narrations that appear to contradict the Quran or established

Sunnah, and the relationship between hadith and analogy. The comparison is limited to these methodological issues and does not aim to provide a comprehensive description of Shafi'i hadith theory.

3. Textual and Content Analysis: The authors focused on extracting significant terminologies (*mutawatir*, *ahad*, *mashhur*) from classical texts in Arabic, Turkish, and Kazakh. This data has been cross-checked with contemporary scholarly literature to ensure contextual accuracy.

Using this multi-level methodology, the article demonstrates that the Hanafi hadith methodology is not a rejection of hadith, but rather a structured system based on textual integrity, legal justification, and conformity with the Qur'anic message.

Results and Discussion

Below are the reasons why Hanafi scholars do not separate hadith methodology from the study of *usul al-fiqh*. The first argument is that hadith methodology is a component of *usul al-fiqh*, so there is no need to consider it a separate discipline. Consequently, Hanafi scholars decided that it is better to leave it as a chapter in *usul al-fiqh*. The Shafi'i school is represented by the majority of scholars, including Abu Muhammad al-Ramahurmuzi, Hakim Abu Abdullah an-Nisaburi, Khatib Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Ibn Salah al-Shahrazuri, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, as-Sakhawi, and as-Suyuti. Most of the works on *usul al-hadith* written by the aforementioned scholars represent the views of the Shafi'i school.

Literature regarding to hadith terminology serves as the primary source for confirming the authenticity of hadith. Those with a limited understanding of *usul al-fiqh* in the Hanafi tradition have no role in this area of scholarship. Moreover, although the Hanafi approach considers the existing literature on hadith terminology to be widespread, this view is not entirely correct (Abdulmajid, 2021: 29). Currently, hadith methodology in the Hanafi school represents an important area that requires comprehensive research to establish it as an independent discipline. It is also crucial to study hadith methodology independently of *usul al-fiqh* and to examine the criteria for accepting hadith and the methodology applied by Hanafi scholars, guided by consistent evidence.

Foundations of Abu Hanifa's Approach to Hadith

Abu Hanifa and his disciples, leading the world's madhab, delineated *fiqh* notions and operations strictly from the Quran and the hadith. The fundamental concepts of *usul al-fiqh* included the norms of hadith methodology that were based on the principles and methods of Abu Hanifa. They played a significant role in the establishment of hadith methodology, essentially the use of hadith to make legal decisions, the process of making *tarjih* (giving priority) between hadiths and narrators, the identification of contradictions between hadiths. Abu Hanifa's rules and stances regarding hadith methodology were not set aside in a separate volume; only *fiqh*, *usul*, etc. books offer a thorough explanation.

Imam Abu Hanifa's point of view regarding the inconsistency of isolated *ahadith* with the Quran is very clear. He claimed that he would follow *ahad* hadith as long as it does not contradict the Quran. Rather than being at variance with the Quran, the hadith actually explain its verses. Abu Hanifa's reasoning is based on the principles of *usul al-fiqh*. If a hadith is at variance with the Quran, that is a sign of its unreliability, the forgetfulness of the narrator, or even a change in the hadith (Abdulmajid, 2018: 49-50). Nizamuddin ash-Shashi speaks in his "*Usul al-Shashi*" of: "If a hadith is at variance with a ruling of the Quran, if we can harmonize the two without changing the meaning, we will act on both; otherwise, we disregard the hadith and follow only the Quran" (ash-Shashi, 2003: 5-6). These principles of Abu Hanifa form the basis of this approach to hadith. In the Shafi'i school, the Sunnah transmitted through reliable chains of transmission is considered a binding source of law that explains, clarifies, and supplements the rulings of the Qur'an (al-Shafi'i, *ar-Risala*, 239-40). Therefore, when a clear contradiction arises between a private report (*khabar al-Ahad*) and a Qur'anic verse, al-Shafi'i does not immediately reject the reliable hadith. Instead, he attempts to reconcile the two texts by applying the principles of the Arabic language, the distinctions between general and specific meanings, and the distinctions between absolute and qualified rulings, as well as the principles of abrogation (*naskh*). Within his methodology, the reliable Sunnah may either indicate a general Qur'anic ruling or limit its scope. Thus, the Shafi'i methodology clearly establishes the reliable Sunnah as an independent source of law that authoritatively interprets the meaning of the Qur'an.

According to Abu Hanifa, a hadith narrator should memorize the hadith first before passing it on to another person

(Khafifatul, 2023: 27-39). He supports this argument by saying, “the hadith narrator can remember a hadith from the day he hears it until the moment he talks about it to someone” (Abdulmajid, 2021: 50). Nisaburi says that Abu Hanifa’s standards define that “a narrator must get a hadith from another narrator, memorize and then narrate it”. Moreover, Muhammad al-Awfi speaks of Abu Hanifa’s trustworthiness when he cites Yahya ibn Magin: “Abu Hanifa was a man of trust. He only gave narration of hadiths which he had memorized and never shared those that he was not fully familiar with” (Abdulmajid, 2021: 434). This condition is extremely hard to meet and may be the reason why Imam Abu Hanifa left very few hadiths. In al-Shafi’i methodology, personal narration (khabar al-Ahad) is also accepted as a source of legal authority. However, its acceptance depends primarily on the reliability and continuity of its chain of transmission. According to al-Shafi’i, the chain must extend uninterruptedly back to the Prophet, and the narration must not contradict more reliable narrations (al-Shafi’i, al-Risala, 239–40). Therefore, both the Hanafi and Shafi’i methodologies recognize personal narrations as valid legal evidence. However, in the Shafi’i approach, their evidentiary authority is based primarily on the formal reliability and continuity of the chain of transmission.

Ibn Magin outlines Abu Hanifa’s position on the Quran and Sunnah as the primary foundations for Shariah judgments: “My first source is the Quran, and if I do not find an answer there, I turn to the teachings of the Prophet. If I find no answer in either the Quran or the Sunnah, I consider the opinions of the Companions. However, I selectively support the views of some Companions while rejecting others. I will only accept the *ijtihad* of others if it is consistent with the Companions’ statements. If a decision on a particular issue eludes the Quran, Sunnah, and Companions, I will perform *ijtihad* similar to that of prominent mujtahids such as Ibrahim, ash-Shaqbi, Ibn Sirin, Hasan, Ataw, and Saqid ibn Musayyap” (Abdulmajid, 2021: 51). In other words, “What comes from the Messenger of God must be guarded and strictly observed. When considering the Companions, we choose the most accurate position among them, ignoring the opinions of the *Tabi’een*” (as-Suyuti, 117). These statements lead to the development of a guiding principle.

According to the Hanafi school, the Quran is regarded as the highest authority, followed by the sunnah; then the sunnah is considered higher than the companions’ words; and the companions’ words are thought to be higher than *qiyas*.

Abu Hanifah holds that the companions’ words are part of Shariah evidence.

Imam Aghzam is one of the *tabi’ins*, so naturally, the comments of naturalists cannot be accepted as Shariah evidence. This is explained in Zahir ar-Riuayad. Another reason is that the period of the companions saw the spreading of fatwas by the *tabi’ins*. The companions gave them the go-ahead to perform *ijtihad*. Abu Hanifa attempted to be like *Tabi’in*.

Ahad is considered superior to *qiyas* in the Abu Hanifa system of thought. Indeed, in his most cited statements, he first of all forbids putting any limits on the juristic status of a narrator. Hence, an *ahad* hadith stands higher than a *qiyas*, irrespective of whether the narrator of the hadith is a *faqih*. Abu Hanifa, as his student Imam Muhammad ash-Shaibani narrated, said: “If it were not for the hadith I have received stating that a person who forgets to eat or drink during Ramadan does not invalidate their fasting, I would have ordered that the lost fast be made up”. Besides that, Al-Andalusi also recounted Abu Hanifa’s statement: “Mursal and weak hadiths from the prophet outweigh *qiyas*, and it is not right to use *qiyas* when there are such hadiths” (Abdulmajid, 2021: 303). Imam Agzam insisted on the primacy of *ahad* over *qiyas*, which clearly marks Abu Hanifa’s dedication to the sunnah and his sincere attempts to preserve it. His disciples, by conforming to the hadith verdicts, were of one mind in this preference. The Hanafi hadith methodology became the way to ensure the transmission of the sunnah is accurate, which, besides being a commentary on the Quran, is also the very practical guide within Islam.

In al-Shafi’i methodology, personal narration (khabar al-Ahad) is also accepted as a source of legal authority. However, its acceptance depends primarily on the reliability and continuity of its chain of transmission. According to al-Shafi’i, the chain must extend uninterruptedly back to the Prophet, and the narration must not contradict more reliable narrations (al-Shafi’i, al-Risala, 239–40). Therefore, both the Hanafi and Shafi’i methodologies recognize personal narrations as valid legal evidence. However, in the Shafi’i approach, their evidentiary authority is based primarily on the formal reliability and continuity of the chain of transmission.

Abu Yusuf and the Evaluation of Conflicting Reports

Imam Abu Hanifa was succeeded by his student Abu Yusuf Yaqub ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari (113-182 AH). By studying the works of Abu Yusuf, who made significant contributions to Islamic science and culture, we can discern his

own concepts for classifying hadith. This means that his judgments are based on the fundamental ideas of Islam that set standards for hadith.

In Hanafi literature on Islamic law, it is generally accepted that following weak (shadh) hadiths is inappropriate. This principle is illustrated by Hanafi scholars in Abu Yusuf's work, *Ar-Raddu 'ala siyari al-Awzagi*. Abu Yusuf explicitly states his rejection of weak hadiths, approving only those that are consistent with the Quran and Sunnah, as recognized by qualified fuqaha. In his book, *al-Awzagi* relates: "The Prophet allocated a share of the spoils of war to some of the martyrs from the campaign of Khaybar." Scholars citing this hadith have collectively confirmed the distribution of shares to the martyrs of that campaign. Abu Yusuf also cites another hadith: "The Prophet did not reward the martyrs of the campaign with any share of the spoils of war. Ubaydah ibn al-Harith, who died during the campaign of Badr, did not receive any share." It is crucial to adhere to the recognized hadiths while avoiding sha'dh, as the Prophet did not distribute spoils to the martyrs of war (Abu Yusuf, 1973: 24). Moreover, upon hearing al-Awzaqi's hadith about marrying more than four wives, Abu Yusuf objected that this was sha'dh and unacceptable, as Allah only permitted four wives, and anything beyond that was unlawful (Abu Yusuf, 1973: 105). He emphasizes the need to rely on the Quran and Sunnah as guidelines, advising comparison with these texts when clarity is lacking (Abu Yusuf, 1973: 32). According to the Muhaddith, sha'dh refers to a hadith from a reliable narrator that contradicts another reliable narration (Ibn Hajar, 2000: 59). Although later Hanafi scholars use this terminology, in the Hanafi system it means contradiction to the Quran and authentic hadiths, which prompts the fuqaha to ignore such narrations. (Abdulmajid, 2021: 67).

Abu Yusuf allows the nasykh of the Quranic verse with the mutawatir hadith.

Abu Hasan al-Karhi narrated from Abu Yusuf that he said: "Indeed, the reciting of the Quran is a sunnah, and it has to be a hadith that has been attained in a mutawatir manner, & it is necessary to act upon it, e.g., the hadith which pardons a person (Abu Bakr al-Zhassas, 2010: 1-t, 467).

Muhammad ash-Shaibani on Hadith and Qiyas

Muhammad ibn Hasan ash-Shaibani, Abu Hanifa's second student, handed down to the next generation classical works on Hanafi jurisprudence rules and ahkam hadiths. One of his books, "Al-Asar", contains more than 1,000 ahkam hadiths. In addition, he studied hadith and in his four-volume work "al-Hujjatu ala ahl al-Madina" applied the hadith methodological principles. "Al-Muatta" is a major work of the Hanafi school on hadith science. It is evident from the above-mentioned works that the intended content had been filtered out behind the ahkam hadiths.

In his book "al-Hujjatu ala ahl al-Madina", Imam Muhammad presents his point of view that the two, nas and hadith, are incomparable. "People of Medina, even when there is a hadith, would carry out a qiyas; but there is no qiyas from a hadith; it is fair that qiyas should give way to hadith" (Muhammad ash-Shaibani, vol. 1, p. 204). The instance below reveals that while going through his texts, Imam Muhammad stubbornly followed the hadiths and the writings, and did not heed his teachers' words, who taught him all his life.

Regarding istisqa (request for rain), it is noted that, according to Abu Hanifa, in a hadith narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab, Umar ascended the pulpit and asked for rain without praying. This is why we didn't pray for istisqa. From this narration, we see that the imam simply prayed. Ibrahim an-Naqqi also states that we don't pray for this.

According to one Medinan faqih, the Istiqa prayer consists of two rakats, after which the imam delivers a sermon, similar to the Eid prayer. According to religious scholars, the Istiqa prayer, similar to the Friday prayer, is preceded by a khutbah, after which the prayer itself is performed.

Imam Muhammad expresses that the second statement of the Madinah faqihs is more accurate than their first, and even the sayings of Ibrahim an-Naqqi and Abu Hanifa are like that. The reason is that there is a problem with this matter. We can see in this prayer of Asar (Muhammad ash-Shaibani, vol. 1, 332-336) that Abu Hanifa may not have performed Istisqa prayer according to Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's narrative. Imam Muhammad has said: There are many such works, and the collegiality of the faqihs in this respect has left no room for a person to introduce his own opinion (Abdulmajid, 2021: 73). Based on Imam Muhammad's viewpoint, the following Hanafi scholars issued a fatwa stating that the Istisq hutbas should be recited after prayer. These instances reflect Imam Muhammad's firm commitment to the hadith and his sincere ambition in learning.

The works of Imam Muhammad contain key principles of hadith methodology. One such principle emphasizes that when there are discrepancies between hadiths on a specific issue and differences in the opinions of fuqaha, it

is advisable to adhere to the most reliable position. For example, there is disagreement among fuqaha regarding the performance of the dawn prayer (uthir) while traveling. Abu Hanifa states: "A traveler may perform the voluntary prayer (nafl) while riding a camel, simply by gesturing with the head, but it is obligatory to perform the fard and dawn prayer (uthir) on solid ground." In contrast, the fuqaha of Medina state: "They follow Abu Hanifa's method in everything except the dawn prayer (uthir), arguing that there is no valid reason to perform it without riding a camel." Imam Muhammad noted the extensive debate surrounding the dawn prayer (uthir) and stated that we should be guided by the most reliable views. The generally accepted view is to perform the dawn prayer on the ground, as Ibn Umar did during his travels—a practice reported by the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If several fuqaha hold different views on the same issue, it is preferable to follow the most reliable one as an *iqtiyat* (religious principle).

As a result, we selected the most reliable viewpoint, prioritizing work on *usul al-Hasan* (Muhammed ash-Shaibani 1:183-186). This complexity led to the following principle: when the evidence is in dispute, it is imperative to use the most reliable opinion as a source. Imam Sarakhsi noted in *al-Mabsut* (volume 1:69-70) that Abu Hanifa favored the most reliable opinions as a guide. Similarly, Imam al-Zhassas emphasized in *al-Fusul fi al-usul* that choosing the most reliable position is a fundamental principle in the study of *usul al-fiqh*, the method unanimously accepted by the fuqaha. For a more detailed examination of these principles, please refer to Dr. Lawi al-Khalili al-Hanafi's work on Hanafi jurisprudence.

Imam Muhammad maintains that recognized hadiths must not contradict the Quran when it comes to legal rulings. Abu Naghim al-Asbahani, in his work *Hilyat al-Awliya' wa Taqa'tu al-Asfiya*, recalls a debate between Imam Muhammad al-Hasan ash-Shaibani and Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i as follows: "Imam Muhammad al-Hasan complained about the people of Medina. Imam ash-Shafi'i then asked, 'What is he complaining about: the city or its people?' Imam Muhammad replied, 'May Allah protect me from complaining about any of them or this city. I only complained about one of their rulings.' Ash-Shafi'i asked, 'What is that?' Imam Muhammad replied, 'An oath in testimony.'" Ash-Shafi'i said: "Why are you complaining?" Imam Muhammad replied: "This ruling is contrary to the Book of Allah."

Meanwhile, Imam Muhammad (al-Asbahani, vol. 7: 353) argues that the saying "There is no will for an heir" is in direct opposition to the Quran. He attributes this to his scholars Abu Hanifa and Abu Yusuf, who, according to him, had indicated that the acceptance of *ahad* hadith should not breach the Quranic text.

Isa ibn Aban and the Classification of Reports

In the Hanafi school, the fundamental principles of *usul* and *fiqh* are traced back to the works of Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf, and Muhammad. Isa ibn Aban, a student of Imam Muhammad, deeply understood these principles and was the first to write a separate work on the methodology of receiving hadith from the Messenger of Allah (Abdulmajid, 2021: 77-79). Some of the *mashhur* works of Isa ibn Aban include *Kitab al-Hujjaji al-Saghir*, *al-Hujjaji al-Kabir*, *al-Mujmal wa al-Mufassar*, *Khabar al-Wahid*, *Isbatu al-Qiyas*, *ar-Raddu ala Bishr al-Marisi*, *al-Jamigh fi'l-Fiqh*, *Kitab al-Shahadat*, *ash-Shafi'i fi al-Akhbar*, *Kitab al-Gilal fi'l-Fiqh*, *Kitab al-Hajj*, and *al-Hujjatu al-Saghira fis-salawat wa al-mu'aqat* (Mehmet Ali, 2023: 8). Although these texts are referenced in many scholarly works, none of them have survived to this day, and their existence remains unverified. Ultimately, the study of *usul al-fiqh* and its section, *Babu al-Sunna*, is based on the contributions of Isa ibn Aban. Abu Bakr al-Zhassas's work, *Al-Fusul fi al-usul*, serves as the foundation of the Hanafi school and draws heavily on Isa ibn Aban's works, *Al-Hujjaji al-Saghir*, *Al-Hujjaji al-Kabir*, and *Ar-Raddu la Bishr al-Marisi* (Abdulmajid, 2021: 80-81), *Al-Mujmal wa al-Mufassar* (Yunus Yazici, 2018: 85), and *Ash-Shafi'i fi al-Akhbar* (Zhassas, 2010: vol. 1. 25).

The chapter "Hadith Methodology" (*Babu as-Sunna*) in al-Zhassas's book *al-Fusul fi al-Usul* is the most important source for conveying Isa ibn Aban's norms and rulings regarding hadith. Al-Zhassas clarified Isa ibn Aban's beliefs and rulings regarding the concept of hadith, including some conditions and additional examples (Abdulmajid, 2021: 80-81). Isa ibn Aban discussed the terms *mutawatir*, *mashur*, and *ahad* in hadith methodology, as well as rulings on whether they should be accepted. He was also the first to clarify the prerequisites for applying *ahad* hadith to rulings. The evidence of Abu Hanifa and his students for each article was illustrated with examples. They also explained the verdict of *mursal* hadith and developed a methodology for hadith that should be followed when hadiths contradict each other. Thus, it is believed that one of the key themes of Isa ibn Aban's methodology, *usul al-fiqh*, influenced the

development of hadith theory among all scholars who followed him.

In his work “al-Fusul fi al-usul,” al-Zhassas wrote: “Isa ibn Aban, in his book “Ar-Raddu ‘ala Bishr al-Marisi,” correctly defined the order of the epistles and judgments. And I have summarized them in accordance with the wisdom of the madhhab.”

Isa ibn Aban divides messages into three types:

It is common knowledge that narrators who were incapable of lying together transmitted mutawatir messages. These mutawatir messages contain essential information. As already mentioned, this method led to the establishment of numerous Sharia rules. Refusal to accept this is tantamount to rejecting the Messenger of Allah. It is like hearing the Prophet but not recognizing him. As a result of such an act, one becomes an apostate. This is because this is a daruri (obligatory) teaching. It is as if the senses observe and the eyes see (al-Zhassas 2010: 1-t, 504).

The message conveyed that the merchant was dishonest. False prophets, for instance Musailama, made predictions of future events. The words of those who refused to admit that they were given prophethood and did not bring any evidence, revealed their trickery.

Messages that may be both accurate and false. Ahad hadiths were taken from a group of persons who may have lied. Their narrations include both truth and falsehood. Such legal notices are accepted under the conditions. If we have evidence that the messenger is not one of the truthful, if the chain is impure, and he is called a liar, his word will not be accepted.

In his work Ar-Raddu ‘ala Bishr al-Marisi, Isa ibn Aban divided the hadiths that are not mutawatir (unacceptable) into three groups based on the method of analysis: a) one who ignores the hadith is mistaken; b) one who becomes a sinner and is declared a heretic; c) one who makes a mistake.

Consider the following scenario: a community might challenge a claim of adultery, citing the verse, “Strike the adulterer and the adulteress with a hundred lashes.” If they claim there is no mutawatir on this matter, arguing that such mutawatir only applies to practices such as prayer and fasting, we counter by arguing that their disbelief stems not from a rejection of the words of Allah or His Messenger, but from their inability to accept the teachings of the Messengers. We argue that there is potential for error and misconception in the Tawilah, as it contradicts the apparent judgment of the Book.

Let’s consider the second case: it illuminates the debate surrounding sarf and mash. Mutawatir is not criticized for refuting a hadith due to the risk of sin and labeling someone as misguided. We cannot consider Ibn Abbas misguided simply because he disagrees with Usama ibn Zayd’s hadith about sarf, which states, “Riba is only interest” (أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الْإِبْرَةِ). As for the hadith about washing mash, this narration was transmitted by many of the Prophet’s companions. However, regarding this particular narration, Ibn Abbas, along with our mother Aisha and Abu Huraira, claimed that “mash existed before the revelation of Surah Mayda.” Their interpretations are incorrect, which creates the risk of falling into error, but they are not called heretics.

Regarding the third case, there are conflicting reports, but it is still unclear which of them is nasih, leading to different scholarly interpretations. For example, the issue of menstruation raises different points of view. Similarly, regarding inheritance, scholars hold different opinions regarding the term “ihuatun” (brothers) in the verse “إِنَاف” (ثِيَابُ الْمَيِّتِ). Some argue that “ihuatun” means at least three, considering it a plural form, while others maintain that it can only refer to two siblings, adhering to a binary understanding. Given that these important issues are subject to ijtihad, a mujtahid is not considered sinful or misguided, but merely incorrect (Abu Bakr al-Zhassas 2010: vol. 1, 519-520).

Isa ibn Aban considered these classifications to be well-known narrations rather than mutawatir. This distinction arises because the status of mashhur is lower than mutawatir but higher than ahad, placing it in an intermediate category. A well-known narration, or mashhur, possesses a level of authenticity that, while allowing for minor doubts regarding the chain of transmission, ensures clarity and certainty. In the Hanafi tradition, this is called “ma’a’ibn al-’a’ibn.” Consequently, those who reject well-known hadith risk going astray, committing errors, and engaging in sinful behavior. Moreover, rejecting mutawatir narrations is considered an act of kufr. Isa ibn Aban emphasized that mutawatir narrations are obligatory for practice, while those that do not meet this standard are excluded from the mutawatir classification.

In al-Shafi’i legal theory, khabar mashhur was not systematically established from the beginning as a stable and independent epistemological category between mutawatir and ahad, as was the case in Hanafi legal theory. Although

al-Shafi'i used the term *mashur* in his *ar-Risalah*, he generally considered it to be a type of *ahad* news, distinguished by the number of transmitters and the extent of its distribution. For this reason, the distinctive feature of Hanafi methodology lies in considering *khavar mashur* as a separate category between *mutawatir* and *ahad* and in giving such news more legal authority than ordinary *ahad* narrations.

Abu Bakr al-Zhassas thoroughly articulated the ideas of the technique of Isa ibn Aban mentioned above, and the *mutawatir* separated the report into two parts.

Isa ibn Aban's definition of *mutawatir* is comparable to other hadiths. These hadiths, transmitted from the Prophet, contain no doubt, as if they were perceived directly through sight and hearing, and require unwavering faith, requiring no further investigation. Anyone who rejects such messages is considered an apostate.

A report is considered popular if it is supported by additional evidence and research. In his work, *Ar-Raddu' ala Bishr al-Marisi*, Abu Bakr al-Zhassas, citing Isa ibn Aban, classified hadiths that do not attain the status of *mutawatir* (authentic) based on their analytical connections and called this category the second type of *mutawatir*. Thus, if a report is accepted without question after further study, it is classified as *mutawatir*. For example, the well-known hadiths of the Hanafi school are considered *mutawatir*. It is noteworthy that Abu Bakr al-Zhassas shares Isa ibn Aban's view, arguing that those who do not accept these well-known reports are not apostates, but rather misguided. Isa ibn Aban *Ahad* identifies the following reasons for the rejection of reports.

Ahad hadiths must not contradict the Quran and its contents. The hadith that states, "Indeed, the deceased is tormented because his family mourns him," is not accepted, as it contradicts the Quranic verse, "No soul burdened with sin will bear the burden of another."

Moreover, the *Ahad* narration is not accepted because it violates the authentic *Sunnah* (*sunnatu al-thabitah*). This is because the authentic *Sunnah* (*sunnatu al-thabitah*) is based on the method of *mutawatir*, and its ruling is analogous to the verse of the Qur'an. That is, any *Ahad* narration is invalid if it contradicts the hadiths of *mutawatir* and *mashhur* (Abu Bakr al-Zhassas 2:6). Also, in Abu Yusuf's book, Isa ibn Aban, the words "*sunnatu al-magruf*" (*ar-raddu 'ala syari al-Awzagi* 31-32) and "*sunnatu al-thabitah*" include *mutawatir* and notable hadiths. He used the term "*sunnatu al-thabitah*," which refers to both independently.

Abu Bakr al-Zhassas clearly developed Isa ibn Aban's line of argument regarding *ahad* hadiths in his writing "*al-Fusul fi al-usul*," thus showing that the very basics of hadith methodology can be found with Isa ibn Aban.

At-Tahawi and the Reconciliation of Conflicting Hadith

After him, Abu Ja'far at-Tahawi emerged as a distinguished figure, skillfully combining narration, understanding, hadith, and jurisprudence. He was both a respected muhaddith in the retelling of hadith and a knowledgeable mujtahid-faqih, deeply understanding their meaning. In his works entitled "*Sharh Mushahu al-Athar*" and "*Sharh Manay al-Athar al-Mukhtalifat al-Maruyyatu ar-Rasulullah fi al-Ahkam*," he outlined the Hanafi methodology and key principles that guided his transmission of texts.

Imam at-Tahawi's position on *ahad* hadiths was clear: if *ahad* hadiths contradict *mutawatir* hadiths, then the *ahad* hadiths are not recognized. For example, an *ahad* hadith from Ubayy ibn Ghimara contradicted a *mutawatir* report regarding the time required to wash *mah mash*. At-Tahawi emphasized that the authentic narration from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) indicates that it is three days for a traveler and one day for a resident, deeming it inappropriate to ignore the *mutawatir* in favor of the *ahad* hadith from Ubayy ibn Ghimara (Tahawi *Sharh Manay al-Athar* 1:83). This principle serves as a clarification of the previously established rule of Isa ibn Aban.

The narrator states that the hadith he narrates must be consistent with practice. Essentially, the narrator is expected to apply his hadith in practice; otherwise, it loses its validity. If the narrator does not follow the hadith he narrates, this indicates that the hadith is *mansukh* (abrogated), or that following it is considered *mandub* (recommended). In the chapter on "dog saliva" in *Sharh Manay al-Athar*, a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah in five separate chains indicates that a plate licked by a dog must be thoroughly washed. Furthermore, a report from Ismail ibn Ishaq quotes Abu Hurairah as stating that such a plate should be washed three times. Abu Hurairah's account suggests that the hadith requiring seven ablutions was either *mansukh* (at-Tahawi, *Sharh manay al-athar* 1:23), or he interpreted the Prophet's words as a *mandub* (*Sharh mahdat at-Tahawi* 1:280). We maintain trust in the Companions by avoiding the suggestion that they ignored the Prophet's teachings, as this would undermine their authority.

Abdullah ibn al-Mughaffal narrates: "If a dog licks your dish, wash it seven times and the last time clean it with dirt." This hadith is from Abu Hurairah, who says "wash enough" with the phrase "wipe with dirt eight times," and it is believed that purification is performed in this manner. What is bigger wins out over what is smaller (at-Tahawi Sharh manai al-asar 1-t, 23). Besides, Abdullah ibn Umar first raised his hands in prayer, but then nowhere except the takbeer of iftitah. Ibn Umar saw that the Messenger of God raised his hands, but Abdullah Ibn Umar did not, signifying that he denounced the hadith that the Prophet raised his hands (at-Tahawi Sharh Mushkilu al-Asar 15-t, 50). Tradition from the Messenger can be divided mainly into two classes: those that are not definitively established in Shariah and those that, while confirmed, are recognized as mansuh. Therefore, it is wrong to believe that the companions opposed the Prophet in their narrations, as they knew what nash and mansuh mean.

The comparison demonstrates that the Hanafi and Shafi'i schools share two basic principles: authentic hadith constitutes binding legal evidence, and accepted hadith has precedence over analogical reasoning (qiyas). The difference between the schools therefore arises not from their general recognition of the authority of hadith, but from the criteria used to determine the legal probative value of individual narrations. The Hanafi methodology combines the assessment of isnad with the assessment of whether it is consistent with the Qur'an, established Sunnah, and general legal principles. In contrast, al-Shafi'i methodology more explicitly establishes the independent probative authority of a reliable and continuously transmitted narration. It also considers the Sunnah as an authoritative source that explains the general and concise rulings of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the special position of the mashhur narration in Hanafi usul between mutawatir and ahad represents one of the most important differences between the two schools' epistemological classifications of transmitted narrations.

Conclusion

In our article, we examined the systematic principles Abu Hanifa used to verify hadith, summarized in his works on fiqh. He prioritized the Quran as the primary source, followed by the Sunnah, then the sayings of the Companions, and placed qiyas (analogical reasoning) last. Whenever the sayings of the Companions were used as proof, he ignored the words of the Tabi'een. Moreover, he did not prioritize qiyas over ahadith. Later, scholars following in Abu Hanifa's footsteps expanded these rules into key concepts in their works on usul fiqh, which have survived to this day.

Although Abu Yusuf, a student of Abu Hanifa, wrote a treatise on the methodology of Hanafi hadith, this work has not survived. However, he outlined his views on hadith in responses to modern scholars. Today, there are numerous traditions that actually contradict the Quran and Sunnah, a fact that many fiqh scholars reject. He cautioned against relying on such dubious hadith, arguing that if a hadith is unreliable, one should not adhere to dubious hadiths. Clearly, any tradition that contradicts the Quran and reliable hadiths cannot be sincerely attributed to the Prophet. Moreover, he asserted that it is permissible to recite a verse from the Quran along with a hadith.

Numerous texts on the Zahir Riwayi, Nawadir, and the hadiths of Imam Muhammad have survived to this day. These respected works clearly outline Imam Muhammad's views on hadith methodology. Imam Muhammad maintained that when a hadith states a clear position, there is no basis for comparison with qiyas. In situations where a hadith and qiyas contradict each other on a point, he gave precedence to the hadith and rejected the qiyas. This practice reflects the influence of his teachers. Established criteria for accepting or rejecting ahad hadiths were used as fundamental principles. According to ahad hadith methodology, any report must not contradict the Quran or the reliable sunnah (mutawatir and mashhur) and must not conflict with widely accepted hadiths in society. Furthermore, when there are different hadiths on the same topic and different legal opinions, it is advisable to refer to the most reliable hadith. During our discussion, we emphasized the significant attention Imam Muhammad paid to the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad and emphasized his careful consideration of his opinions.

Isa ibn Aban understood the methodology and principles used by mujtahid scholars in relation to hadith. The Hanafi school produced several important texts on hadith methodology, but unfortunately, these works have not survived to this day. It was primarily through al-Zhassas's work, al-Fusul fi al-usul, that Isa ibn Aban's approach to classifying hadith, in particular mutawatir, mashhur, and ahad, was shaped. He is known for creating a systematic category of hadith. Isa ibn Aban identified three main categories of hadith: the first includes mutawatir hadiths, whose narrators cannot fabricate lies; the second includes narrations from individuals who are genuinely dishonest; and the third concerns reports, including ahad and reports from groups potentially involved in deception. We have described in detail how Isa formulated the criteria and principles for accepting such narrations.

The results of the study show that the evaluation of hadiths in the Hanafi methodology cannot be explained only by the criticism of isnads or by giving priority to legal reasoning over narrative evidence. The peculiarity of this methodology is that it evaluates matn, its correspondence with the Quran and the established Sunnah, and its legal applicability in a continuous manner. Therefore, if the content of a narration with a formally reliable isnad contradicts stronger evidence, its scope of application may be limited. On the other hand, a narration with a weaker chain of transmission may gain legal authority if it is used in the established legal practice of jurists.

The study examines the practical legal reasoning of the Hanafi Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf, and Muhammad al-Shaybani. It also reveals that there is a historical continuity between the theoretical classifications developed by Isa ibn Aban, al-Jasas, and at-Tahawi. This continuity constitutes the main scientific contribution. The Hanafi hadith methodology is reorganized not as a refutation of reliable hadiths, but as a continuously evolving legal-epistemological system.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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