

Principles of Hadith Sciences

Explanatory Notes on Ibn Hajar's *Nukhbat al-Fikar* Based on Lectures of
Sh. Yusuf ibn Sadiq al-Hanbali

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Table of Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Types of Reports	4
Ghareeb Reports	6
Sound Reports (Sahih)	6
Fair Reports (Hasan)	8
Additions From Trustworthy Narrators	8
Contradictory Accepted Reports	10
The Rejected Type of Reports and Their Divisions	10
To Whom the Report is Attributed	18
How the Report is Attributed	19
Forms of Conveyance	21
Names of Narrators	23
Conclusion	24
Other Topics to Know and Understand	25

Foreword

These are my complete notes on Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's famous book on principles of hadith sciences titled *Nukhbat al-Fikar*. The notes are based on [Sh. Yusuf ibn Sadiq al-Hanbali's](#) classes over a period of a few months. The classes were conducted in the English language. For the translation of the terms, I mainly relied on Sh. Musa Furber's [translation](#) of Ibn Hajar's book, however, there are instances where I substitute for a translation given by Sh. Yusuf ibn Sadiq.

The issue of hadith needs to be given extra attention in our times because those who reject the institution of hadith altogether are on the rise as well as the neo-Mu'tazilah, who accept/reject hadiths solely based on their intellect. Their arguments carry no merit whatsoever, however, due to the fact that there is mass ignorance over the sciences of hadith, the meticulous details, and rigorous research that is required before a hadith can be declared reliable or not, I hope these notes help bring to light some of those details. These notes are by no means an exhaustive representation of the subject, thus, further study is necessary to truly grasp the material for those wanting to delve deeper into this subject.

I ask Allah for sincerity in the publishing of these notes and that He reward me for trying to help bring dignity to the blessed words of the chosen one, Muhammad peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and honor to the tiresome efforts of hadith scholars by sharing my small contribution with the general public free of any cost.

Introduction

- I. Ibn Hajar in this book is trying to make a better version of Ibn Salah's book on hadith methodology
 - A. Ibn Salah's book is one of the most important books in the sciences of hadith and is of an advanced level
 1. His book influenced many later scholars on the subject. Many books were written after it to serve this book either through an explanation, summarization, or converting it into a poem to facilitate memorization
- II. *Nukhbat al-Fikar* was written at the request of Ibn Hajar's students who had asked him to write something on the topic focusing on the most important aspects of the subject
 - A. Later Ibn Hajar wrote an explanation of it as well called *Nuzhat al-Nazr*. However, this book is an independent text by itself and requires its own explanation
- III. There are many explanations written on *Nukhbat al-Fikar* including poems to facilitate memorization
 - A. Whenever a book has many explanations written about it, then this is an indication of its importance
 1. *Nukhbat al-Fikar* was the first relied upon book written on the topic that could be taught to students and teachers. The books before it explaining Ibn Salah's book did not suffice

Types of Reports

I. Reports¹ reach us in one of the following four ways:

A. Those that reach us without a specific number of paths

1. Meaning they come from so many different paths that it cannot be counted
2. This is called the *mutawaatir* report
 - a) It benefits us with knowledge that is certain to be true² provided it fulfills all of the conditions of *mutawaatir*
 - (1) Conditions for a report to be considered *mutawaatir* are as follows:
 - (a) A large number of people must have transmitted it in every level of the chain³
 - (i) There is no specific number
 - (a) Some scholars specify certain numbers but the strongest opinion is that there is no specific number
 - (b) That which has been narrated in the report can be accessed through one of the five senses
 - (i) The companion **must** say that he/she has seen/touched/smelled/tasted/heard something related to the Prophet (pbuh). It **cannot** be based on some reasoning or a rational inference
 - (c) Impossibility of all to either intentionally or accidentally agree on a lie
 - (i) It cannot be conceivable that all of the transmitters of the report throughout the centuries were intentionally in on a lie or collectively made the same mistake

3. Types

- a) *Mutawaatir* in wording
 - (1) This is of a higher level
 - (2) It means the wording itself is *mutawaatir*
- b) *Mutawaatir* in meaning
 - (1) It means the wording itself is not *mutawaatir* but the meaning of it is

B. Those that reach us through more than two paths

1. Meaning we know the exact number of paths and they are **more than two** but **less** than *mutawaatir*
 - a) It could be every level of the chain or the **least** number in any level of the chain
 - b) According to Ibn Salah, it must be **more than three** but less than *mutawaatir*
 - (1) This is an *ijtihaadi* issue so we can tolerate differences in definitions of terminologies

¹ By the word 'report' (*khobar*) here is meant *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). There are differences of opinion among the scholars whether the word *khobar* and *hadith* mean the same thing or not.

² Meaning it is definitive.

³ Every level of the chain entails that in every generation of the chain.

2. This is called the *mashhoor* report
 - a) It is also sometimes called *mustafeed* and is considered the same as *mashhoor* according to the majority
 - (1) According to Hanafis, the *mustafeed* is higher than *mashhoor* but lower than *mutawaatir*
 - (2) Some scholars said that *mustafeed* is when you have the same number of narrators in every level of the chain

C. Those that reach us through just two paths

1. Meaning the report has reached us through only two paths
 - a) It could be every level of the chain or the **least** number in any level of the chain
2. This is called the *aziz* report

D. Those that reach us through just one path

1. Meaning the report has reached us through only one path
 - a) It could be every level of the chain or the **least** number in any level of the chain
2. This is called the *ghareeb* report

II. What happens when different levels of the chain have different numbers of narrators from the categories above?

- A. Then we will judge the whole chain by the **lowest** number in the chain
1. Ex: A chain of hadith contains the following number of narrators in each generation: G1: 4 - G2: 1 - G3: 2 - G4: 8 - G5: 10 - G6: 50 - G7: 200
 - a) We will call this chain *ghareeb* because that is the lowest number in the chain

- III. All of the types mentioned above, other than *mutawaatir*, are called *ahaad*⁴ and can be accepted or rejected after investigation to determine whether they are reliable or not
- A. Some said that a *ghareeb* report can never be *sahih* or *hasan*, however, this is incorrect
 1. This was a view of the *Mu'tazilah*
 - B. The only one that guarantees authenticity on its own is a *mutawaatir* report and this is why it is not even investigated once it is established to be *mutawaatir*
 - C. The investigation of the *ahaad* reports involves looking into the narrators of the chains and determining whether they are acceptable or not
 - D. A *ahaad* report may be strengthened by external factors and elevated to a higher level of certainty known as *'ilm nazariyy* (inductive knowledge)
 1. By default, an acceptable *ahaad* report is considered *zann raajih*, which means that it is most likely to be certain
 2. The levels of certainty are as follows:
 - a) Complete certainty
 - (1) This is the highest level
 - (2) This is when something is considered to be 100% certain on its own, such as, a *mutawaatir* report or directly witnessing something
 - b) Inductive knowledge

⁴ Literally means a solitary report.

- (1) This is close to complete certainty and is arrived at after reflection, deduction, investigation, analysis, and taking into consideration the elevating external factors. It is a form of *ijtihad*
- c) *Zann raajih*
 - (1) This is the lowest level and is also known as *ghalabat zann*
 - (2) This is when something is most likely to be certain after reflection, deduction, and investigation but is absent of the elevating external factors
- 3. Some examples of external factors that elevate a *ahaad* report from *zann raajih* to inductive knowledge:
 - a) It being reported in Bukhari and Muslim or just one of them
 - (1) This is because the *Ummah* has accepted both of these books
 - (2) There were some reported by Bukhari and Muslim that no scholar objected to and there were some that were objected to
 - (a) The former are better than the latter
 - b) When a report is *mashhoor* and is supported by multiple sound chains
 - c) When a *aziz* or *mashhoor* report has a giant scholar in every generation of the chain narrating from each other
 - (1) Ex: Ahmad -> Shafi' -> Malik -> Nafi' -> Ibn Umar

Ghareeb Reports

- I. This is when there is only a single narrator in a particular level of the chain as discussed above
 - A. The hadith, however, can still be sound (*sahih*) even if it is *ghareeb*. Those who say that it is automatically weak are incorrect. This is why Imam al-Tirmidhi says in his book after various *ghareeb* hadiths that it is a "*sahih ghareeb*" report
- II. The single narrator could be either:
 - A. In the beginning of the chain (i.e. generation of the companions)
 - 1. This is known as *fard mutlaq* (absolutely unique)
 - B. Anywhere else in the chain
 - 1. Multiple companions narrate a report, however, after them it is transmitted from only one person in **any** level of the chain
 - a) Ex: Generation of companions (5) -> generation of their students (6) -> generation of the students' students (1)
 - 2. This is known as *fard nisbi* (relatively unique)
 - a) Some scholars disagree and say *fard nisbi* is actually when a report is transmitted only from a particular narrator, city, country, tribe, etc. (i.e. it is unique relative to the narrator, place, tribe, etc.)
 - 3. The word *ghareeb* is used more often for this type than the word *fard*

Sound Reports (*Sahih*)

- I. These are *ahaad* (*mashhoor*, *aziz*, *ghareeb*) reports that fulfill the following five criterias:
 - A. All of the narrators in the chain are **upright** in their religion

1. This means those who have the following traits:
 - a) They avoid major sins
 - b) They abstain from persisting in minor sins
 - c) They do what the people accept and require in their custom
 - d) They avoid what the people hate and despise in their custom
 - B. All of the narrators are **precise (dhabt)** in their memorization
 1. Meaning they do not make any effective changes to the hadith
 - a) They transmit it precisely through either meaning or wording
 2. They can be considered precise due to their memorization or because they write it down. It is best to have both
 - C. The chain of narrators is **continuously connected** without interruption
 1. It must be logically possible for the narrators in the chain to have met, for example, if a narrator was born years after the death of the one from whom he is transmitting the hadith, then this would not be accepted
 - D. The report must be free of any **hidden defects**
 1. This is when a report appears to be fine and reliable to an untrained eye, however, it contains weaknesses. The weakness in the report can be seen through investigating it
 2. This is a separate subject studied by itself under sciences of hadith and requires its own specialization
 3. Ex: there is a report that has two chains with the exact same narrators, however, one is disconnected while the other is connected. A novice may look at this and just blindly accept the connected chain and ignore the disconnected one, however, after closer investigation it would have been clear that someone made a mistake in the connected chain. Therefore, the report does not have a connected chain
 - E. It is not an **anomalous (shaadh)** report
 1. According to Ibn Hajar, this is when a reliable narrator transmits a report which contradicts one transmitted by someone more trusted than him
 - a) Ex: when an average acceptable narrator contradicts one of the giants in hadith scholarship
 2. Some scholars differ and define this as when a **weak** narrator transmits a report which contradicts one transmitted by a reliable one
- II. When a report meets all of the above five conditions, then it is considered **sahih by itself**
- III. The degree of *sahih* in a report varies according to the variations in the above five conditions. The following order is generally accepted by the vast majority as the degree of *sahih* from the most sound to the least:
- A. Those reports mentioned in Bukhari and Muslim both
 - B. Those reports mentioned in Bukhari alone
 - C. Those reports mentioned in Muslim alone
 - D. Those reports that meet the criteria of Bukhari and Muslim both but are not mentioned by them in their books
 - E. Those reports that meet the criteria of Bukhari alone but was not mentioned by him in his book

- F. Those reports that meet the criteria of Muslim alone but was not mentioned by him in his book
- G. Those reports authenticated but do not meet the requirements of Bukhari or Muslim

Fair Reports (*Hasan*)

- I. These are *ahaad* (*mashhoor*, *aziz*, *ghareeb*) reports that fulfill the above five criterias for a sound report **except** that the **precision** (*dhabt*) of a narrator(s) in the chain is not of the best quality but is still good
 - A. This type of report is called ***hasan by itself***
 - B. If the precision of a narrator in the chain is of a bad quality, then the report is likely weak
- II. When the number of *hasan* reports in wording or meaning pile up, they can together elevate the report to *sahih*. This type of *hasan* report is called ***sahih li ghayrihi***, which means it is *sahih* due to external factors and **not** by itself
 - A. We just need two *hasan* reports to consider it *sahih li ghayrihi*
 - B. Similarly, if a ***hasan*** report **matches** a ***sahih by itself*** report in meaning/wording, then the former too is elevated to ***sahih li ghayrihi*** because it has support from an original *sahih* report
- III. According to Imam al-Tirmidhi, whenever he labels a report *hasan* in his book, then he means three things by it:
 - 1. The narrators are not accused of lying
 - 2. The narration was transmitted through two or more chains
 - 3. The report is not anomalous (*shaadh*)
 - B. However, this methodology of al-Tirmidhi does **not** guarantee that a report is authentic
 - C. When he says in his book that a report is ***hasan-sahih***, then this is him authenticating it
- IV. According to Ibn Hajar's opinion, when a report is said to be ***hasan-sahih***, then it could have one of two meanings:
 - A. There is disagreement about a narrator in the chain whether he is of a *hasan* or *sahih* level
 - B. One chain of the report is *hasan* while another is *sahih*
 - 1. This would basically make it *sahih li ghayrihi*

Additions From Trustworthy Narrators

- I. In general, any addition in a report from a narrator who is considered *sahih* or *hasan* is accepted, however, this is not always the case
 - A. As long as that narrator is capable of being alone in narrating such a report
 - 1. Ex: if a *hasan* narrator reported that there is a sixth obligatory *salah* that must be done, then how could he alone be narrating it? This is something we all need so more would have reported it. We can reject such an addition
 - B. According to Ibn Hajar, the addition should also **not** negate the report of someone who is more reliable
- II. When narrators' additions contradict each other

- A. The report that is more reliable is called ***mahfoodh (preserved)*** and the less reliable one is called ***shaadh (anomalous)***
 - B. When a **weak** report contradicts a **reliable** one, the former is called ***munkar (rejected)*** and the latter is called ***ma'roof (known)***
 - 1. *Munkar* is a narration that has one or more weak narrators or it has a defect, likely an obvious one, which contradicts reports from reliable narrators
 - a) Just because a report is weak, it does not mean that it should be rejected completely because it can still be used for support, righteous actions, *fiqh*, or be elevated to a level of *hasan* if enough of them are combined
- III. When we investigate hadith books and the paths of transmission in order to look for something that can support a given hadith, it is called *i'tibaar* (evaluation). It is of different types:
- A. Corroborative chain (*mutaabi'*)
 - 1. When another hadith is found that resembles the same meaning or is of the same wording as in the given hadith but both hadiths are reported from a different companion
 - a) It “resembles” which means it may have completely different wording
 - b) Some call this *shaahid* as well
 - 2. Also this term is used to indicate when another hadith is found that agrees in meaning/wording with a **relatively-unique report (*fard nisbi*)**
 - a) A *fard nisbi* occurs in a report that is not *ghareeb* but it is relatively-unique from a particular perspective (i.e. it is reported only from a particular teacher, city, etc.)
 - (1) Ex: From the students of Malik only Shafi' reports a particular hadith, however, none of Malik's other students do so. In this case, we go to Malik's teacher to see if anyone other than Malik reported the same hadith from the same teacher. If found, then this will support Shafi's report and is called **incomplete *mutaabi'*** because the support found was through a different teacher (i.e. Malik's contemporary)
 - (a) Ex:
 - (i) Relatively-unique report (*fard nisbi*)
 - (a) Shafi -> Malik -> Nafi' -> Ibn Umar
 - (ii) Incomplete *mutaabi'* report
 - (a) 'Amr -> Sufyaan -> Nafi' -> Ibn Umar
 - (b) If we had found another student reporting the same hadith through Malik, then this would be considered **complete *mutaabi'***
 - B. Witness-report (*shaahid*)

1. When another hadith is found that resembles the same meaning or is of the same wording as in the given hadith and both hadiths are reported from the same companion
 - a) It “resembles” which means it may have completely different wording
 - b) Some call this *mutaabi*’ as well

Contradictory Accepted Reports

- I. The only types of reports that are accepted as reliable are: *sahih* and *hasan*
- II. If an accepted report is free of any contradiction to it from other accepted reports, then it is considered decisive (*muhkam*), which means clear
- III. If an acceptable report is contradicted by something equal to it in soundness, then the following steps are taken in sequence to resolve it. We do these because it is impossible to assume that something authentic from the Prophet (pbuh) could contradict:
 - A. Reconcile the apparently contradicting reports if possible
 1. These are called reconcilable reports (*mukhtalif al-hadith*)
 - B. If we can positively establish that one of them came before the other in chronology, then the earlier one is considered abrogated (*mansukh*) and the later one as abrogating (*naasikh*), meaning we will act according to the later report
 - C. If the above two are not possible, then we give superiority to one over the other based on various factors
 1. There are over a hundred ways to do this and this is studied in Usool al-Fiqh
 - a) Ex: The one reported in Bukhari would be preferred over one reported in Muslim, the companion who was directly a witness to the report would be preferred over the one who was not⁵, etc.
 2. The superior one would be considered *raajih* (preferred) and the other as *marjooh* (non-preferred)
 - D. If none of the above are possible, then neither one is confirmed or denied and we remain silent about it (*tawaqquf*)
 1. This is very rare
 2. This type of report is called *Mudhtarib* (مضطرب)

The Rejected Type of Reports and Their Divisions

The reports are rejected for either one of two reasons:

- I. Lacuna (*saqt*)
 - A. Def: when there is a disconnection in the chain somewhere (i.e. someone is missing)
 1. The missing narrator could be in the:
 - a) Beginning of the chain
 - (1) This is when the compiler of the hadith text skips the narrator above him

⁵ For example, if a companion was directly involved in the incident mentioned in the hadith as opposed to another who was not.

- (a) Ex: when Imam Bukhari narrates a hadith but skips the narrator above him
- (2) This is called a suspended report (*mu'allaq*)
- b) End of the chain
 - (1) This is when a successor (*tabi'e*) skips a companion and narrates directly from the Prophet (pbuh)
 - (2) This is called an expedient report (*mursal*)
 - (a) The early scholars of hadith used to call **any** type of disconnect in the chain as a *mursal* report. However, later it become more specific
- c) Anywhere else in the chain
 - (1) This can be subdivided into two types:
 - (a) A problematic report (*mu'dal*)
 - (i) Def: when two or more narrators are missing from the chain consecutively
 - (a) Ex: Prophet -> Companion -> Successor -> Missing -> Missing -> Narrator -> Compiler
 - (b) A broken-chained report (*munqati'*)
 - (i) Def: whatever does not fall under a problematic report (*mu'dal*). This means either:
 - (a) Only one narrator is missing from the chain
 - (i) Ex: Prophet -> Companion -> Successor -> Missing -> Narrator -> Compiler
 - (b) Two or more narrators are missing from the chain but not consecutively
 - (i) Ex: Prophet -> Companion -> Successor -> Missing -> Narrator -> Missing -> Narrator -> Compiler

B. The *saqt* report can be further subdivided into either one of two:

1. Obvious

- a) This is when the disconnect is clear and obvious due to the **impossibility** of a meeting between two narrators
 - (1) Ex: If Imam Malik directly narrates from a companion. This is impossible because he was not part of the successor (*tabi'e*) generation
- b) In order to obtain this knowledge, we need to study the biographical accounts of narrators
 - (1) There are specific books written on this subject which provide the following details for each narrator in a chain of hadith:
 - (a) Birth date
 - (b) Death date
 - (c) Teachers
 - (d) Students
 - (e) Scholars' praise or critique about the narrator

2. Hidden

- a) This is when the chain seems connected but it's really not when you look into it deeper. This is known as a camouflage report (*mudallas*)
 - (1) Ex: when a narrator uses a phrase which makes it seem like he heard the hadith from the narrator above him but actually did not. For example, if he uses the phrase, "From so-and-so" or "He said..." instead of the more clear phrase, "I heard from so-and-so"
 - (2) It is possible that a narrator has met the narrator above him but not necessarily heard hadiths from him
- b) Sometimes it is also referred to as a hidden expedient report (*mursal khafiyy*) specifically in reference to a type of case where the narrator definitely did **not** meet the narrator above him even though he was a contemporary
 - (1) This also includes a contemporary that the narrator did not meet in the capacity of a narrator
 - (a) Ex: a narrator only met the narrator above him as a baby
- c) It is important to note that most scholars refer to both cases above as *mudallas* and only some differentiate between the two

II. Aspersion (*ta'n*)

- A. Def: when a narrator is rejected for some reason and not considered reliable
 1. This is something that is studied under the science of *Jarh wa Ta'deel* (Dispraise and Praise of Narrators)
- B. A narrator could be discredited for any of the following reasons:
 1. Narrator is a liar
 - a) This is when a narrator is **known** to lie about a hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) or lies about whom he heard it from even if he did it only once
 - b) A report with this type of narrator in it is called a discarded report (*mawdu'*)
 2. Narrator is accused of lying
 - a) This is when a narrator is caught lying in his daily affairs even if not issues related to hadith. This suffices as a justification for not trusting him
 - b) A report with this type of narrator in it is called a discarded report (*matruk*)
 - (1) The early scholars of hadith did not use the word *matruk* to describe this type of report, rather, they used *matruk* **only** to describe the narrator accused of lying and **not** the narration itself
 - (a) They would label such reports as *munkar* (rejected report)
 - (b) This is important to mention so there is no confusion when reading the works of early scholars of hadith
 3. Narrator makes enormous mistakes
 - a) Meaning either the quantity of his mistakes is too large or the magnitude of his error is too serious to ignore
 - (1) The latter is a worse case scenario
 - (a) Ex: If a narrator misquoted the following hadith as, "Whoever says *La ilaha illa Allah* is in the Fire"
 - (i) This is a **serious** mistake in the wording of the hadith

- b) A report with this type of narrator in it is called a rejected report (*munkar*) according to one opinion
 - (1) Others preferred to call it *baatil* (invalid) and there are other opinions as well
- 4. Narrator is heedless (*ghaflah*)
 - a) Ex: the narrator cannot recall the wording of hadith(s) due to lack of memorization, the narrator did not safeguard his written hadith(s) from change, etc.
 - b) A report with this type of narrator in it is called a rejected report (*munkar*)
- 5. Narrator is morally corrupt (*fasiq*)
 - a) Meaning the narrator either:
 - (1) Engages in major sins
 - (2) Insists on minor sins
 - (3) He does not follow approved customs of his area
 - b) A report with this type of narrator in it is called a rejected report (*munkar*)
- 6. Narrator is delusionary (*wahm*)
 - a) Meaning the narrator occasionally makes mistakes. It is less severe than heedlessness (*ghaflah*) mentioned above
 - (1) Ex: when narrating 100 hadiths, he makes 10 mistakes
 - (2) Mistakes are things like: changing a word in the hadith, changing a narrator in the hadith, misunderstanding the meaning of a hadith and narrating it with words which indicate that wrong meaning, etc.
 - b) If it only happened once or twice, then it's not a problem. However, if it continues to happen occasionally, then it is only then that the narrator is considered delusionary
 - c) It is important to note that the imams of *hadith* like Bukhari and Ahmad ibn Hanbal never made mistakes in the narration of hadiths. They may have done some *ijtihad* in which they were mistaken but they did not make mistakes in narrating the hadiths
 - d) A report with this type of narrator in it is of two types:
 - (1) The delusion is discovered through **external** indications and after gathering the paths of transmission and comparing them to this narrator's version of the hadith. This would be called a defective report (*mu'allal*)
 - (a) Some scholars use the word *ma'lool*
 - (b) The science of finding hidden defects requires a high level of skill. This is when the chain and text of a hadith seem authentic but there is a hidden defect. The way to find it is by comparing it to other versions from different narrators
 - (2) The delusion is already **known** due to our knowledge that the narrator is well-known to make mistakes, hence, there is no need to further investigate his report. We would label such a report as *da'eef* (weak)

- e) The way to strengthen the hadith of this type of narrator in it is to find another hadith without him in the chain that supports the chain and/or the text of the hadith
7. Narrator contradicts others more reliable than him
- a) Meaning the narrator contradicts in some way other narrators more reliable than him. The contradiction could be in the text or the chain of the hadith
 - (1) We can determine this by comparing his narrations to others who narrated the same hadith but are also known to be reliable
 - b) A report with this type of narrator in it is of several types:
 - (1) Ex: Changing the order of the chain, adding a narrator in the chain that does not belong there, or replacing it with a different list of narrators that do not belong to the text of a particular hadith. This is called a chain-interpolated report (*mudraj al-isnad*)
 - (a) These errors usually occur out of mistake
 - (2) Mixing a *mawquf* report with a *marfu'* report and vice versa. This is called a content-interpolated report (*mudraj al-matn*)
 - (a) Ex: a hadith is narrated from a companion and at the end he adds something to clarify a word or meaning but the text of the hadith does not show that. This addition mistakenly also seems to be part of the Prophetic hadith
 - (i) We figure it out by comparing it to other versions of the hadith
 - (b) *Mawquf* is a statement, action, or the like, narrated from a companion, thus, it is not attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 - (c) *Marfu'* is a report attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) specifically
 - (3) Changing the order of the sentences in the text of the hadith, changing the order of the narrators in the chain, attaching the whole chain of narrators to the wrong hadith, reversing the name of a narrator in the chain, etc. This is called a topsy-turvy report (*maqlub*)
 - (4) Adding a narrator in the chain that was not originally mentioned in it. This is called an already-connected-chain report (*mazid fi muttasil al-asaneed*)
 - (5) Substituting one narrator for another in the chain or substituting a word in the text of the hadith with another. This is called the inconsistent report (*mudhtarib*)
 - (a) They are all equal in strength and it is impossible to give preference to one over another or reconcile between them
 - (i) If this was not the case, then it would never reach the status of *mudhtarib* because we would be able to resolve the contradiction

- (a) Some scholars differ on some hadiths where one considers it *mudhtarib* while another is able to reconcile it or give preference to one over the other
- (b) The text one is common when there are multiple versions of the hadith
- (c) This may be done intentionally for the sake of testing a scholar to see if he is competent in the craft of hadith sciences as was done with Imam Bukhari
- (6) Alternating dots or vowels while the orthography remains the same
 - (a) If the mistake is in the dots, it is called a dot-distorted report (*musahhaf*)
 - (i) Ex: turning a *Qaf* into a *Fa* by only putting one dot on top of it
 - (b) If the mistake is in the vowels, it is called a vowel-distorted report (*muharraf*)
 - (c) The majority of scholars did **not** differentiate between the two above. This is just Ibn Hajar's preference
- (7) It is **not** permitted to **intentionally** alter the text of the hadith by omitting something or using synonyms unless the person is knowledgeable about the meanings of the words that he is using
 - (a) Meaning the person must be sure that he/she is accurately conveying the meaning of the hadith. This goes for translations as well
 - (b) If the meaning is obscure, then explaining the odd words and clarifying the obscure words is needed
 - (i) There are specific books written on this subject which explain the odd/obscure words mentioned in the hadiths literature, therefore, the person must engage with such resources if unclear about some words

8. Narrator is unknown

- a) Hadiths safeguard the religion of Allah so we must be sure that the narrator is reliable even if he is only 'apparently righteous'⁶ according to Hanbalis. This can only be determined if the narrator is known
 - (1) Some scholars of hadith do not accept narrations of the 'apparently righteous'
- b) There are several reasons for which a narrator in the chain may be unknown:
 - (1) The narrator may have many names and he is mentioned with one that is not well-known for a purpose or he is mentioned by just a popular first name, like Muhammad, but without specifying which Muhammad

⁶ This is when there is nothing bad mentioned about a particular narrator, thus, he is assumed to be righteous.

- (a) Scholars wrote specific books to clarify such names called the clarifier (*al-mudih*)
- (2) The narrator has very few narrations and is not frequently taken from
 - (a) This may happen if the narrator had other responsibilities and only dedicated his time to this knowledge on a part-time basis. It could also happen if the narrator had very few students
 - (b) Scholars wrote specific books to identify such narrators called single-report narrators (*al-wuhdan*)
- (3) The narrator may be left unnamed in order to keep it brief
 - (a) Scholars wrote specific books to identify such narrators called anonymous mentions (*mubhamat*)
 - (i) These books may also mention the names of anonymous individuals mentioned in the text of the hadiths themselves as well
 - (a) Ex: a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said such and such. Who is this man? The *mubhamat* may be one place to go find out
- c) The anonymous narrator is not accepted even if he is mentioned with a grading of commendation (*ta'deel*) according to Ibn Hajar's opinion
 - (1) Ex: a narrator in the chain says, "I heard from a reliable narrator who heard it from So-and-so..., however, he does not provide the name of this reliable narrator
 - (2) Not all scholars agree with this rule
- d) If the narrator is named but still unknown, then it is one of two cases:
 - (1) If only one person related from him, then he is an unidentifiable reporter (*majhul al-'ayn*)
 - (a) Meaning we do not know anything about him. He's like a stranger
 - (2) If two or more relate from him and he is not explicitly declared reliable, then he is a reporter of unknown status (*majhul al-hal*). This type is also known as the veiled reporter (*mastur*) and is not accepted according to Ibn Hajar
 - (a) Meaning we know who he is but we do not know if he is trustworthy or not because he has not been ranked at all by the scholars of *jarh wa ta'deel*
 - (b) The only two things we need to know for someone to be considered trustworthy is that he is:
 - (i) Righteous
 - (a) There is a difference of opinion on how to determine this:
 - (i) Some said as long as nothing bad has been transmitted about him, we should

consider him as such. This is what is meant by 'apparently righteous'

(ii) Some, like Ibn Hajar, said we do not consider him righteous until we have evidence about his righteousness

(ii) Accurate in conveying the chain and text of the hadith

(a) This is determined by comparing his narrations with others who are known to be reliable

(b) This is more important in considering him reliable than the attribute of righteousness

9. Narrator is an innovator

a) Meaning **some** innovators will not be accepted due to their innovation. It does **not** mean that every innovator will not be accepted

b) Innovation is of two types

(1) A type of innovation that causes the person to become a disbeliever (*kafir*)

(a) According to majority, the narration of such an individual is not accepted

(i) The minority that hesitated did so because a person may do an act of *kufr* but that doesn't necessarily make him a disbeliever due to the fact that there may be some excuse for his action. Whether someone is a disbeliever or not requires *ijtihad* and is a case by case basis. Thus, some of these scholars would not reject such a narrator under such circumstances

(2) A type of innovation that causes the person to be just morally corrupt (*fasiq*) but still a believer

(a) There are no specific rules regarding this type of narrator. Historically, they were accepted. Some scholars placed the following conditions on this type of narrator but others did **not** agree:

(i) If he narrates something that supports his innovation, then he is to be rejected

(ii) If he invites others to his innovation, then he is to be rejected

10. Narrator is weak in his memorization

a) The word 'memorization' here could refer to either memory or through writing it down and keeping it safe from alteration. Both of these methods are considered a form of memorization

b) This could be due to various factors such as:

(1) Narrator does not revise enough

(2) Narrator has reached old age so his memorization is not as strong as it used to be

- (a) We would need to differentiate between his narrations before and after his memory became weak. The former would be accepted while the latter rejected
- (3) Narrator is only reliable when he narrates from his books but not from his memory. Now, he has lost his books
- (4) Narrator was a reliable transmitter himself through his books but his books ended up in the hands of other untrustworthy transmitters who added to them
- c) This is usually an *ijtihadi* issue where the scholar of hadith will determine whether someone is weak in his memorization or not by comparing his narrations to others, thus, whether someone is weak or not in memorization is a relative thing
- d) Ibn Hajar differed with majority of the scholars of hadith and categorized 'weakness in memorization' into two types:
 - (1) Permanent
 - (a) Ibn Hajar would call a report with this type of narrator in it an anomalous report (*shaadh*)
 - (2) Temporary
 - (a) Meaning he was fine but then something changed about his memorization
 - (b) Ibn Hajar would call a report with this type of narrator in it a jumbled report (*mukhtalit*)
 - (c) The majority would not consider this type a weakness in memory, rather, they would call it a mental problem
- e) Whenever a report with this type of narrator is corroborated by a reporter worthy of consideration, the report becomes fair (*hasan*) not in itself but due to corroborating evidence
 - (1) This means not all type of narrators in a chain are worthy of consideration
 - (a) Ex: if multiple hadiths are brought together and the chain of each of those hadiths contains a liar, then this could **never** raise the status of that hadith. It would remain labeled as fabricated (*mawdhu'*)
 - (2) In general, if the weakness of a narrator is not severe, then he can act as corroborating evidence for other weak narrators, thereby, elevating the status of a hadith from weak to fair (*hasan*)
 - (a) Ex: narrators like *mastur*, *mursil*, or *mudallis* can elevate a weak hadith due to a narrator with weak memory in the chain. These narrators can also strengthen each other's reports as corroborating evidence

To Whom the Report is Attributed

The chain's ascription explicitly or implicitly can go back to either:

- I. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 - A. Meaning it is a direct statement, action, or tacit approval of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 - B. This type of report is called a raised-chain report (*marfu'*)
 - C. The word *khobar* is also used to describe such reports
- II. Companion
 - A. Meaning the statement or action is that of a companion and not the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 - B. This type of report is called the halted-chain report (*mawquf*)
 1. The word *aathar* (non-prophetic reports) is also used to describe such reports
 - C. Who qualifies as a companion?
 1. He is whoever encountered the Prophet (pbuh) believing in him and died as a Muslim even if he apostated for a while but later came back to Islam
 - a) Some scholars disagree and do not consider the person who apostated for a while afterwards to be a companion
 - b) Ex: someone who met the Prophet (pbuh) and converted to Islam. Then apostated during the *Riddah* wars at the time of Abu Bakr but later repented and came back to Islam
- III. Successor
 - A. Meaning the statement or action is that of a successor and not the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 - B. Who qualifies as a successor?
 1. He is whoever encountered a companion while believing in the Prophet (pbuh) and died as a Muslim even if he apostated for a while but later came back to Islam
 - C. This type of report is called severed-chain report (*maqtu'*)
 1. This same word is also used to describe **any** statement or action that goes back to someone in any of the generations below that of the successor
 - a) Ex: Statement or action attributed to Ibn Hajar
 2. The word *aathar* (non-prophetic reports) is also used to describe such reports

How the Report is Attributed

- I. Any report that is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) with a connected chain back to him is considered a grounded report (*musnad*) by **default** before we even examine it
 - A. This is the case even if it has hidden defects and the chain is not truly connected but just outwardly appears that way
- II. If the number of narrators in the chain are a few, it is called an absolute elevation (*'uluw mutlaq*)
 - A. It should be noted that the scholars of hadith used to prefer and strive to get *'uluw* reports because the number of people between them and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were small

1. Imam Bukhari has 22-23 hadiths in his *saheeh* in which there are only three narrators between him and the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and Imam Ahmad has over 320 such hadiths in his *Musnad Imam Ahmad*
 - B. The opposite of this is called descent (*nuzul*), which means that the number of narrators between the two are a lot
 1. Whatever has the higher number of narrators would be considered *nuzul* comparative to a chain with a lower number
- III. If the number of narrators in the chain going back to a distinguished personality are few, then this is called relative elevation (*uluw nisbi*)
- A. Ex: a person has a hadith with a chain going back to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The number of narrators all the way to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are a lot, however, there are only a few people in his chain going back to Shu'ba, who was a popular and distinguished personality
 - B. These fall into various types
 1. Concurrent chain (*muwafaqa*) - this is the chain which arrives at the Shaykh of one of the compilers without using the compiler's path
 - a) Ex: There is a hadith mentioned in Bukhari. A person has the same hadith with a chain going back to the Shaykh of Imam Bukhari but without going through Bukhari in the chain
 - b) It is usually used as a form of corroborative evidence to support different reports
 - c) There are books written on this topic called *mustakhrjaat*, which show chains of hadiths that do not go through the compilers
 2. Convergent chain (*badal*) - this is the same as *muwafaqa* above, however, it arrives at the Shaykh's Shaykh
 - a) Ex: A person is unable to find a chain going back to Imam Bukhari's Shaykh, however, he found one that goes back to Imam Bukhari's Shaykh's Shaykh
 3. Parity (*musaawaat*) - this is the chain in which the number of narrators are exactly the same as the chains of one of the compilers
 - a) Ex: Imam An-Nasa'i has a hadith in his book with nine narrators between him and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Ibn Hajar, who came much later than An-Nasa'i, has the exact same hadith through a different path and there are also only nine narrators between him and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
 4. Handshaking (*musaafahah*) - this is the chain in which the number of narrators are equal to the compiler's student and not the compiler himself
 - a) Ex: a person has a hadith in which the number of narrators between him and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are exactly the same as those of one of Abu Dawud's students
- IV. If the narrator is the same age as someone who narrates from him and they met, then it is referred to as a peer narration (*aqraan*)
- A. It is usually based on age, however, it can also be determined by other factors, such as, if the two met the same teachers despite their age differences

- B. If each of them related from each other then it is called a reciprocal narration (*mudabbaj*)
- V. If a narrator relates a report from someone inferior in age, teachers, or knowledge than him, then it is called a seniors-from-juniors narration (*akaabir 'an asaaghir*)
 - A. Ex: when 'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), narrates a hadith from his own son Abdullah ibn 'Abbas or when Abu Hanifa narrates from Malik
 - B. The opposite, however, is far more frequent
 - 1. Especially in the case where a son narrates from his father who narrates from his father. This causes confusion sometimes in the chain because a chain will say:
 - a) Narrator -> His Father -> His Grandfather
 - (1) Who's grandfather? The narrator's or the narrator's father's?
- VI. If two share the same Shaykh and one's death precedes, then it is referred to as predecessor-successor narration (*saabiq wa laahiq*)
 - A. Ex: Two students met and took from Imam Bukhari. One of the students died shortly after Imam Bukhari, however, the other lived a long life and died much later
 - 1. This is important to note because sometimes it might cause confusion as to how this student could be Bukhari's student when the other student died earlier. It requires investigation, thus, just because we see a long gap between death dates does not necessitate that they never met
- VII. If a narrator relates from two Shaykhs whose names match and cannot be differentiated as to which one he means, then this is called a neglected narration (*muhmal*)
 - A. In this case, the scholars of hadith will research to find out which one is meant
 - 1. Ex: if the narrator specializes in narrations from one of them, then this would be a sign that the other one is irrelevant
- VIII. If a Shaykh denies that he narrated a particular report to a person, then that report will be rejected
 - A. The Shaykh must be **certain** about it, for example, he swears by Allah that he did not narrate the report to the person
 - 1. However, this will not necessarily hurt that narrator's reputation, rather, he will just be considered to not have heard the narration in this particular case
- IX. If a Shaykh does not particularly recall whether he did or not so there is a possibility, then we will accept the narration
- X. If a Shaykh narrates a report and then forgets it, this is known as those-who-narrated-and-forgot (*man haddatha wa nasiya*)
 - A. Ex: A Shakyh narrates a report to a group of students. Then after 20 years one of them returns and asks him about it but he does not remember narrating such a report
- XI. If all the narrators in the chain conform in the phrasing used to convey a report or in some other manner, then this is called a pattern-chained narration (*musalsal*)
 - A. Ex: They all use the word *haddathana* (he narrated to us), they all narrated it on the day of Eid, they all are Hanbalis, they all made a particular gesture when narrating it, etc.

Forms of Conveyance

- I. When a hadith is conveyed, the narrators use one of the following forms to indicate to us 'how' it was conveyed to them:
 - A. *Sami'tu* (I heard)
 1. This form is only used by one who heard the Shaykh verbatim one-on-one
 2. It could also be used with the plural form to indicate that 'we heard'
 - a) This would mean the narrator heard it with others in the room
 - (1) Imam Ahmad was very strict about this differentiation because the plural form is weaker than the singular. This is because it opens up possibilities for weaknesses
 3. This form is the most explicit and is the highest-ranked in dictation
 4. In modern times, we cannot use this concept when hearing it through a recording, rather, it must be live even if it is via a platform like Zoom
 - B. *Haddathani* (he narrated to me)
 1. This form is only used by one who heard the Shaykh verbatim one-on-one
 2. It could also be used with the plural form to indicate that 'he narrated to us'
 - a) This would mean the narrator heard it with others in the room
 - (1) This is a weaker form than the singular
 3. In modern times, we cannot use this concept when hearing it through a recording, rather, it must be live even if it is via a platform like Zoom
 - C. *Akhbarani* (he reported to me)
 1. It is used for someone who read to the Shaykh while alone
 - a) If the Shaykh does not interrupt or correct the narrator, then it is a form of approval
 - b) Malikis prefer this method and believe it is better
 2. If the narrator uses other words with it, then it could mean something else as well
 - a) Ex: The narrator says, "The Shaykh reported to me through *permission*"
 3. If the plural is used, then it is like E
 - D. *Qara'tu 'alayhi* (I read to him)
 1. It is used for someone who read to the Shaykh while alone
 2. If the plural is used, then it is like E
 - E. *Quri'a 'alayhi wa-ana asma'u* (it was read to him while I heard)
 1. This is when the narrator was present while someone else was reading to the Shaykh
 2. It is lower than the previous two
 3. If the narrator uses just the words 'it was read to him' without adding the words 'while I heard,' then this is even weaker because it opens the possibility that he wasn't even present when it happened
 - F. *Anba'ani* (he informed me)
 1. This is synonymous to C, however, in the custom of the later generations it is used for authorization (*ijazah*), like J
 - a) 'Later generations' means those who came after Ibn Salah

(1) In Sh. Yusuf's opinion, it may even include those who are a generation or two before Ibn Salah

b) Being informed alone does not necessitate authorization to narrate on the Shaykh's behalf. The Shaykh must permit the student

G. *Naawalani* (he put into my hands)

1. This is when a Shaykh hands the student, for example, a book of hadiths from him
 - a) However, handing it to him alone will not suffice in narrating the reports on his behalf, rather, the Shaykh must accompany it by permission to relate
2. It is the highest type of authorization (*ijazah*)

H. *Shaafahani* (he told me verbally)

1. This is a form of verbal authorization (*ijazah*) from the Shaykh to narrate the report from him

I. *Kataba ilayya* (he wrote to me)

1. This is a form of written authorization (*ijazah*) from the Shaykh to narrate the report from him, such as, in the form of a letter

J. 'An (from) and its like

1. This is when a narrator does not use any of the previous phrases, rather, he just uses indecisive-transmission terminology, such as, "from so-and-so"
 - a) This does not tell us whether he actually heard it or not. It's vague
2. The ruling on this is that as long as the two are contemporaries and there is a possibility of them meeting, then it is accepted and considered direct audition. However, if the narrator is a *mudallis*, then it is not accepted
 - a) This also assumes that the narrator is generally accepted and is not considered a liar
 - b) The concept of *mudallas* was discussed earlier in the book
 - c) Ibn Hajar prefers the condition that the meeting of the two contemporaries must be positively proven, even if only once, and not just a possibility
 - (1) This is similar to Imam Bukhari's condition for his *saheeh*

II. The concept of *wijaada* (something found in a book)

A. This is when someone finds a hadith written by a in his notes, book(s), papers, etc.

1. Ex: If Imam Ahmad's son says that he found a paper with a number of hadiths written in the handwriting of his father
2. It also includes when a Shaykh bequeathed a book to a student or he makes a public announcement that he narrates something

B. All of the above require authorization from the Shaykh and merely finding something does not mean that the student is allowed to relate

1. If not, then they are not counted and considered invalid
 - a) The same goes for giving:
 - (1) Universal authorizations
 - (2) To someone non-existent
 - (3) To someone unknown
 - b) There are some other opinions on this issue as well

Names of Narrators

- I. If the names of the narrators and the names of their fathers and on up match although they are different individuals, then it is referred to as same-name different-identity narrator (*muttafiq wa-muftariq*)
- II. If the names match in writing but differ in pronunciation, then it is referred to as homographic-heterophonic (*mu'talif wa-mukhtalif*)
- III. If the names match but differ in their fathers, or the opposite, it is referred to as same-name different-father-or-son narrators (*mutashabih*)
 - A. Similarly, if the similarity occurred in the name and the name of the father while there is a difference in affiliation (*nisbah*)
 1. Meaning they differ in their tribe, city, legal school, etc.
- IV. The above three can form various combinations which may cause confusion such as:
 - A. Similarity or difference occurring in one or two letters only
 1. Ex: Confusing Ahmal for Ajmal
 - B. Transposition
 1. Ex: Confusing Abdullah ibn Umar for Umar ibn Abdullah
 - C. There are other forms as well

Conclusion

- I. It is important to know the following about the narrators:
 - A. Synchronous layers (*tabaqaat*) of narrators
 1. Meaning which narrators belong to the same generation
 - B. Dates of their birth and death
 - C. Their lands and regions
 - D. Their conditions and whether they are commended (*ta'dil*), discredited (*jarh*), or being unknown (*jahaalah*)
- II. The categories of discreditation (*jarh*) from worst to slight of narrators are as follows:
 - A. To be described using the superlative (*af'al*)
 1. Ex: So-and-so is the greatest of all liars
 - B. To be labeled as one of the following:
 1. Arch-imposter (*dajjal*)
 2. Arch-fabricator (*wadhaa'*)
 3. Arch-liar (*kadhaab*)
 - C. To be labeled as one of the following:
 1. Malleable (*layyin*)
 2. He has bad memorization (*sayyi' al-hifz*)
 3. There were things said about him (*fih maqaal*)
- III. The categories of commendation (*ta'deel*) from the highest to lowest of narrators are as follows:
 - A. To be described using the superlative (*af'al*)
 1. Ex: So-and-so is the most trustworthy of people
 - B. When the quality is emphasized with one attribute or two
 1. Ex 1: So-and-so is trustworthy-trustworthy (*thiqah thiqah*)

2. Ex 2: So-and-so is trustworthy-memorizer (*thiqah hafiz*)
- C. Something that suggests proximity to the slightest levels of discreditation (*jarh*)
 1. Ex: So-and-so is honest layman (*shaykh*)
- IV. If a person attests to someone's good record (*tazkiya*) and the former is knowledgeable about the criteria of such things, then it will be accepted even if it is from a single person
 - A. Meaning the person must be knowledgeable about the causes, reasons, and qualifications that make narrators trustworthy
 1. The person must also himself be considered reliable
 2. There are some other requirements as well that are beyond the scope of this basic level study
 - B. Some scholars require at least two such people to attest to that individual's *tazkiya*
- V. What is to be done if there is commendation (*ta'deel*) and discreditation (*jarh*) for a narrator among the scholars?
 - A. There is a difference of opinion:
 1. Ibn Hajar's chosen positions
 - a) The *jarh* takes precedence if it is explained by someone knowledgeable in its criteria
 - (1) Ex: A scholar of hadith says that so-and-so is not trustworthy because of such-and-such reason
 - b) If there is no *ta'deel* for the narrator but only *jarh* without explanation, the latter is accepted
 - (1) Ex: We cannot find any praise for a narrator but find a discreditation, however, it is not explained why he is not to be trusted. In this case, we will accept it even without explanation as long as the scholar is knowledgeable about the science of *jarh* and *ta'deel*
 2. There are other opinions as well and there are a lot of details involved
 - a) For example, if there is a reason to suggest that a contemporary criticized a fellow narrator due to envy, then it will not be accepted
 - b) There are a lot more nuance and details involved to this particular science and require a separate study of the subject by itself

Other Topics to Know and Understand

- I. It is very important to know the following about narrators so that there is no confusion when you come across that information in the chains:
 - A. The *kunya* of those known by name
 1. Ex: The *kunya* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal is Abu Abdullah
 - B. The names of those known by their *kunya*
 1. Ex: Abu Hurairah is a *kunya* for Abdur Rahman ibn Sakhr according to most scholars
 - C. Those whose names and their *kunya* are exactly the same
 - D. Those with multiple *kunya* or titles
 1. Ex: Ali has multiple *kunyas*

- a) Some scholars consider Abu Turab a title for him and not a *kunya*
- E. Those whose *kunya* we are uncertain about
 - 1. Meaning there is a difference over it
- F. Those who are known by an attribute(s)
 - 1. Ex: “The tall one”, “The red one”, etc.
 - 2. The ‘attributes’ also includes titles like Noor-ud-Deen, Shams-ud-Deen, etc.
- G. Those whose *kunya* matches their fathers’ names or vice-versa
 - 1. Ex: a narrator’s *kunya* is Abu Bakr and his father’s name is also Abu Bakr
- H. Those whose *kunya* matches their wives’ *kunyas*
- I. Those who are affiliated to someone other than their fathers or is affiliated to his mother
 - 1. Ex 1: A narrator is known mainly by the name of Abdullah ibn Sadiq, however, Sadiq is his grandfather’s name and not his father’s
 - 2. Ex 2: A narrator is known by the name Ismaeel ibn ‘Ulay, however, ‘Ulay is his mother’s name and not his father’s name
- J. Those mentioned by names that may not immediately come to mind or cause confusion
 - 1. Ex: A narrator being mentioned by the name Khalid Al-Hadhaa’
 - a) Al-Hadhaa’ is a shoemaker
- K. Those whose names match the names of their fathers and grandfathers
- L. Those whose names match the names of their Shaykh’s and their Shaykh’s Shaykh and on up
- M. Those whose Shaykh’s name matches the name of their student
 - 1. This is important so there is no confusion as to whom the narrator took the report from. We should be clear on which one is being referred to in the chain
- N. The basic names of narrators
 - 1. Meaning they are not known by any special name, *kunya*, attribute, or title
 - a) This is the case with majority of the narrators
- O. Those narrators whose names are unique
 - 1. It could be exclusive to one person or just not very common among the narrators
- II. The following about the narrators is also important to know because the narrators might be mentioned by one of these in the chains:
 - A. Affiliations and the reasons behind them
 - 1. Ex: their tribes, homelands, countries, localities, roads, allies, proximity, crafts, professions, etc.
 - 2. We need to know the reasons because it may be contrary to the obvious
 - a) Ex: A narrator may be known as ‘Badri’, however, he never fought in Badr and is only known by that name because he lived close to it
 - B. The *mawaali*
 - 1. These are narrators who are either:
 - a) Freed slaves or their descendents
 - b) Those whose families had an agreement with a particular tribe/family for mutual protection
 - C. Those who were male and female siblings
- III. The following are also important to learn:
 - A. The etiquette of the Shaykh and the student

1. These are important to learn because you are either a student or a teacher and should know how to behave and act like one
 - B. Age of receiving and narrating hadiths
 1. Scholars differ over this
 - a) Some said you can only narrate at 40+
 - (1) Majority said whenever you are needed
 - (2) Today we say permission is important and recommended
 - C. Manner of writing hadiths
 - D. How to read back to a Shaykh
 - E. How to hear the hadiths
 - F. How to convey a hadith to others
 - G. How to travel for hadith
 1. You always start with the Shaykhs of your city, then to the surrounding cities, then the country, and then the surrounding countries, and so on
 - H. How to author a book if you want to do so
 1. Ex: It could be according to the chains of narrators, subject matter, defects, keywords, etc.
 - a) 'Keywords' means to gather all the hadiths that start with the same word in one place
 - I. The historical context for the hadith
 1. Meaning knowing why a certain hadith was said and the context behind it
- IV. All of these previous things mentioned are discussed in specialized longer books