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Did The Quran Come to Us in the Same Way as Hadith?

(i.e. same people and method)

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1. ****The Quran Was Recited and Memorized VERBATIM, Unlike Hadith****

The Quran was transmitted word-for-word (verbatim) by its reciters and memorizers. In contrast, almost all hadith are transmitted "riwayah bil ma'ana" (with meaning or gist), meaning they are passed on in paraphrased form, not verbatim.

2. ****Direct Supervision of the Prophet in the Compilation of the Quran****

The Quran was recorded during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad under his direct supervision, either through memorization or by writing. While some argue not all parts were recorded during his lifetime, it is widely accepted that most of the Quran was compiled in his presence or immediately thereafter.

3. ****The Quran is the Word of God, While Hadith Are Human Words****

The Quran is universally considered the direct, unaltered word of God. In contrast, hadith are the alleged words of the Prophet Muhammad, recorded and narrated by human beings, subject to human error and interpretation.

4. ****Public Recitation of the Quran Facilitated Mass Memorization and Transmission****

The Quran was recited publicly on a daily basis, creating a widespread environment conducive to memorization and transmission. It is said to be the most recited and memorized book in the world. Public recitations of hadith, on the other hand, did not exist at the time.

5. ****The Quran Was Compiled Before the Civil Wars That Disrupted Islamic Unity****

The compilation of the Quran into its final form took place before the turbulent period of civil wars, which led to political and sectarian rivalries. This period is known to have introduced challenges to the authenticity of hadith transmission. In contrast, the Quran's compilation occurred in a relatively stable context, minimizing risks of later alterations. In fact it is famously said the "isnad" (chain of narration) was only needed after this due to mass fabrication.

6. ****Massive Fabrication of Hadith vs. Minimal Fabrication of the Quran****

It is widely accepted that there was significant fabrication in the transmission of hadith. By contrast, there are very few, if any, documented cases of Quranic fabrication.

7. ****The Need for Authentication in Hadith Transmission****

The methods used to filter and authenticate hadith—such as the isnad (chain of narration) and narrator criticism—emerged because hadith were not transmitted with the same communal consensus as the Quran. There is no comparable "science of Quran" to authenticate its verses. It wasn't needed!

8. ****The Quran Was Memorized by Hundreds or Thousands; Hadith, Not So Much****

During the early period of Islam, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of Quran memorizers. No such equivalent exists for hadith. For example, during the battle of Yamama, hundreds of Quran memorizers are reported to have died, but there are no reports that mention casualties among hadith memorizers – it wasn't a thing to be mentioned!

9. ****Memorizing the Quran Is Different from Memorizing Hadith****

Memorizing the Quran, a fixed and structured text, is categorically different from memorizing the fluid, diverse, and lengthy

hadith reports. The Quran also benefits from rhythmic prose and other mnemonic devices that aid memorization—tools that are absent from hadith. Quran explicitly states it was made easy to remember, [e.g. 54:17].

10. **The Quran is Universally the Same Across Sects**

Despite differences in sectarian beliefs, all major Islamic sects (Sunni, Shia, etc.) have the same Quran. In contrast, each sect has its own collection of hadith, reflecting the varied interpretations and transmissions.

11. **Early Muslims Exercised Caution in Transmitting Hadith**

While Quranic recitation and transmission were actively encouraged, there was significant caution regarding the transmission of hadith during the early years of Islam. Bans on hadith transmission were imposed across the Muslim world for decades after the Prophet's death [\[source\]](#).

12. **Hadith and the Quran Are Not on the Same Epistemic Level**

Even with rigorous methods for authenticating hadith, no human-authenticated text, no matter how meticulously verified, can be placed on the same epistemic level as the Quran. For example, there is much dispute today over which hadith are truly "sahih" (authentic), with scholars disagreeing on the reliability of narrators and reports, e.g. Imam Malik, Daraqutni, Albani.

13. **The First Four Caliphs Took Formal Steps to Preserve the Quran, But Not Hadith**

The first four caliphs made significant efforts to preserve the Quran. In fact, they actively discouraged the transmission of hadith, with some even ordering the destruction of collections. The preservation of hadith, in contrast, was not a priority in the early caliphate.

14. **Zayd ibn Thabit: The Key Scribe of the Quran vs. Hadith**

Zayd ibn Thabit, probably the most prominent scribe of the Quran, is cited in only a handful of hadith isnads (about 7 out of approximately 15,000 in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim).

15. **God's Protection of the Quran vs. No In-built Protection for Hadith**

The Quran is said to be protected by God (15:9, 29:49, 39:28, 41:41-42) and its authenticity supported by internal challenges e.g. contradictions/variance within it [4:82], bring a chapter like it [e.g. 2:23, 10:38]. Hadith collections, by contrast, are filled with contradictions and varying versions of events, with no in-built checking mechanisms.

16. **Hadith Gained Mainstream Legal Status Only After Imam Shafi'i**

While the Quran was universally acknowledged as the primary source of law from the beginning, the legal use of hadith as a primary source of law did not go mainstream (dominate?) until after Imam Shafi'i (>200yrs after prophet). Shafi'i is credited with elevating hadith to an equal footing with the Quran, and significantly altered the way sunnah was defined.

17. **Most popular Quran transmission is from Hafs**

Who is considered strong in Quran narration but weak in hadith narration.

Conversely the most prolific hadith narrator is Abu Hurayrah yet he is not known for being a Quran memorizer or Quran reciter.

18. **Earliest carbon dated partial manuscript**

For Quran it is to the time of prophet (e.g. Birmingham Quran).

For hadith it is a tiny fragment of Malik's Muwatta (approx 200 years after prophet).

Some claim Sahifa Hammam ibn Munabbih is the earliest but this is a reproduction of the original and there is no carbon dating.

19. ****Dating of Earliest Complete Manuscript****

The earliest extant carbon-dated complete manuscript of the Quran (e.g. Sanaa manuscript, Topkapi, Samarkand) is roughly 150-200 years after the Prophet. By contrast, the earliest complete manuscript of Sahih Bukhari dates to about 450 years after the Prophet, underscoring the differences in the preservation timelines of the two texts.

20. ****Question over primary transmitter of Sahih Bukhari****

The version of Sahih Bukhari that forms the basis of the widely accepted text today is transmitted through his student, Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Firabri. However, no contemporaries of Firabri are known to have explicitly vouched for his reliability —e.g. no one is recorded as describing him as *thiqa* (trustworthy). There is perhaps not even a record of any peer making a positive statement about him. It seems he is not well known by his immediate peers. Later students openly said his copy was incomplete and had variance with other copies.

21. ****Even the most attested hadith have issues****

The hadith considered most mutawatir (mass-transmitted)—"Whoever lies about me (intentionally) will enter Hellfire"—shows variation in its wording. [\[reference\]](#)

Likewise, the Prophet's Farewell Sermon, arguably the most widely witnessed hadith, exists in multiple versions with significant differences. For example, some versions instruct followers to uphold: (1) the Quran alone, (2) the Quran and Sunnah, (3) the Quran and Ahl al-Bayt, while others omit this instruction entirely. Among these, version (1) appears to be the most widely attested. [\[reference\]](#)

If even the most broadly transmitted hadith contain discrepancies, it follows logically that less well-attested hadith should be approached with even greater scrutiny and caution. Thus, even the most widely attested hadith cannot equal the Quran in terms of its textual integrity and precision.

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In the modern day it may be interesting to note that no Justice system to my knowledge uses attested hearsay (i.e. a system like Hadith) as evidence in a criminal court of law due its inherent unreliability and inability to cross-examine those referenced. Recently the well known Traditional Sunni scholar Dr Yasir Qadhi made waves by admitting to the following view among academics: "*Nobody in the academy affirms the Muslim Sunni science of hadith. Nobody. It is considered to be completely discredited. I'm just being factual.*" [\[reference\]](#)

To end here are some interesting (albeit ultimately unverifiable) reports about hadith from the first 4 Caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali:

Abu Bakr

Daughter of Abu Bakr, 'A'ishah is reported to have said:

"My father collected Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and it was five hundred Hadiths. One night, he was very uneasy, tossing and turning much. I also felt uneasy because of this, so I said, 'Are you turning because of an ailment, or have you heard news that upset you?' In the morning, he said, 'O daughter, bring the Hadiths.' I brought them, and he asked for a flame and burnt them. I said, 'Why did you burn them?' He said, 'I feared lest I die while they are with me containing narrations that I heard from a man whom I trusted and whose narrations I considered to be correct while in reality they are not; then I would have quoted incorrect narrations from him.'"

Ref: Tadhkirat al-huffaz, al-Dhahabi

Abu Bakr addressed the people after the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) passing, expressing concern over disagreements arising from narrations of the Prophet's sayings. He advised:

"You relate from the Messenger of Allah, upon whom be God's peace and benediction, traditions regarding which you disagree, and consequently severer controversy shall occur among people. So relate nothing from the Messenger of Allah, and when asked by anyone, you can say: The Book of Allah is the arbitrator between us. Deem lawful what it considers lawful, and deem unlawful what is considered unlawful in it."

Umar

Narrated 'Ubaidullah bin 'Abdullah: Ibn 'Abbas said, "When the ailment of the Prophet became worse, he said, 'Bring for me (writing) paper and I will write for you a statement after which you will not go astray.' But 'Umar said, 'The Prophet is seriously ill, and we have got Allah's Book with us, and that is sufficient for us.'"

Sahih al-Bukhari 114

Reports from Shu'bah, from Sa'id ibn Ibrahim from his father, that Umar detained Ibn Mas'ud, Abu al-Darda', and Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari, saying to them "You have narrated hadith abundantly from the Messenger of Allah." It is reported that he had detained them in Medina, but they were set free by Uthman.

Abu Hurayrah, asked by Abu Salamah whether he used to narrate traditions as freely in Umar's time as he was then doing, replied "No, for if I had tried, 'Umar would have had me whipped."

"the hadith multiplied during the time of Umar then he called on the people to bring them to him, and when they brought them to him, he ordered them to be burned." Afterward he said "a Mishna like the Mishna of the People of the Book" (mathna'a ka mathna'at ahl al-Kitab)
Ref: Ibn Saad's "Tabaqat" (Volume 5)

He said to Abu Hurayrah and Ka'b:

"They must stop this talk of the Prophet of God, or I will send them to the land of Daws / the monkeys."

Ref: Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāya wa-al-Nihāya. Al-Dhahabī, Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā, Vol. 2, and others.

Umar would say to his governors: "Be exclusively devoted to the Qur'an, and diminish the annotations of Muhammad, and I am your partner."

Ref: The History of al-Tabari [\[reference\]](#)

Uthman

Ibn Sa'd, and Ibn Asakir reports from Mahmud ibn Labid that he said: I heard Uthman ibn Affan addressing people from over the pulpit: It is unlawful for everyone to narrate any hadith he never heard of during the time of Abu Bakr and that of Umar. Verily that which made me abstain from narrating from the Messenger of Allah was not to be among the most conscious of his Companions, but I heard him declaring: "Whoever ascribing to me something I never said, he shall verily occupy his (destined) abode in Fire."

Ref: "Hadith Literature, Its Origin, Development & Special Features" by Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, p23

Ali

Narrated Abu Juhaifa: I asked `Ali, "Do you have anything of the revelation (wahi) besides what is in Allah's Book?" `Ali replied, "By Him Who splits the grain of corn and creates the soul. I do not know of it anything except we have the ability of understanding which Allah may endow a person with, so that he may understand the Qur'an, and we have what is written in this paper as well." I asked, "What is written in this paper?" He replied, "(The regulations of) blood-money, the freeing of captives, and the judgment that no Muslim should be killed for killing an infidel."

Bukhari 3047

Does the above sound like believers who uphold and strive to preserve hadith collections?

Background:

[Hadith_in_Quran.htm](#)

[Quran_True_Sunnah_of_Messenger_Naveed.htm](#)

[Rethinking_Tradition_Modern_Islamic_Thought.htm](#)

[Quran_clear_complete_detailed_explained.htm](#)

References:

[islamic-books-online.html](#)

[THE SAHIFAH OF HAMMAM IBN MUNABBIH](#)

[BukhariGate by Mufti Abu Layth](#)

[Quran and hadith manuscripts](#)

[QuranTalk blog](#)

This work would not have been possible without the many people who have contributed to this topic, and without the resources now available to anyone wishing to study The Quran in detail. For these stepping stones, I am indebted and truly thankful.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER:

This work reflects my personal understanding, as of May 3rd 2025. Seeking knowledge is a continual process and I will try to improve my understanding of the signs within 'the reading' (al quran) and out with it, unless The God wills otherwise. All information is correct to the best of my knowledge only and thus should not be taken as a fact. One should always seek knowledge and verify for themselves when possible: 17:36, 20:114, 35:28, 49:6, 58:11.

And do not follow what you have no knowledge of; surely the hearing, the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that. [17:36]

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